

Are you interested in Alaskan Archaeology?

An archaeologist carefully excavates artifacts. The dirt removed will be sifted through screens. All of the artifacts are collected and later measured, weighed, and classified in a laboratory.



- ☑ Are you curious about people who lived in Alaska long ago?
- ☑ Do you love Alaskan summers and being outside?
- ☑ Would you enjoy traveling back in time?
- ☑ Do you ever wonder how arrow points are made?

Alaskan Archaeology could be fun for you!

Find the bold words!

S Y O F T Q C A G E V T S M K
 T M Z B T X O O X Q S K G B N
 S D E I S F E C X V R D A Z A
 I Z N G X I A T S I T E W T P
 G U U V S V D A N C Y Y N B P
 O N E Q A S A I T O G Y R Q I
 L O W T J N E F A O C U B S N
 O Q E R B N Y E L N T E Y H G
 E J B O X J S O Y C X S B N M
 A V N B R H E K U J J S R J H
 H F W E I A X J F U V W E D G
 C G L E H C C C W C A P P P J
 R X J C Y F I S S A L C P R L
 A C R T K Q R T P V D N O G G
 X A R T I F A C T S M Q C N Z

Archaeology is the study of past cultures and how people lived long ago.

Archaeologists are the scientists who study artifacts.

Artifacts are anything older than 50 years that were left by a human.

Context is the relationship of artifacts to other artifacts and their surroundings.

Copper is the only metal found in archaeological sites dating to before European contact.

Obsidian is a volcanic glass formed by the rapid cooling of lava.

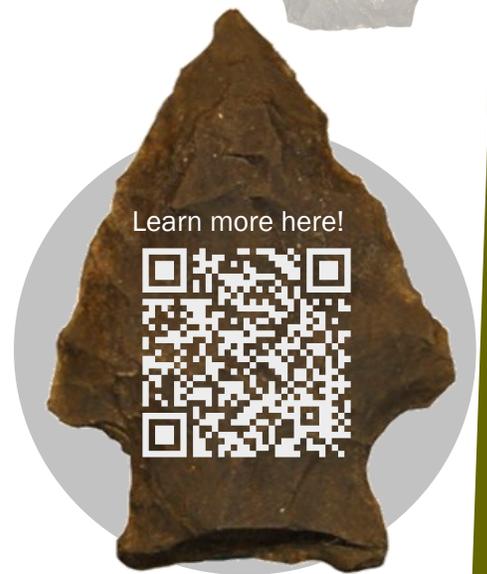
Knapping, which is also known as flint knapping, is the use of percussion and pressure to form stone tools.

Archaeologists **excavate** very carefully. This is a way of digging to remove dirt from around artifacts.

Archaeologists **classify** similar artifacts in groups for interpretation.

A **site** is a location where evidence of past human activity is preserved.

These artifacts are made of obsidian, a volcanic glass formed by the rapid cooling of lava. Obsidian is a great material for knapping—the use of percussion and pressure to form stone tools—and is extremely sharp along its fractured edges. Due to its unique chemical properties, obsidian can be sourced to its original lava flow, which helps archaeologists track people’s movements and trade patterns across the ancient landscape. These artifacts are ancient knives and hide-scraping tools.



Directorate of Public Works
 ATTN: IMFW-PWE (Cultural Resources Manager)
 1060 Gaffney Road, #4500
 Fort Wainwright, AK 99703-4500
 Phone: 907-361-3002
 Fax: 907-361-9867



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Archaeology on Army Lands

What is an Archaeological Site?

An archaeological site is a place in which evidence of past human activity is preserved. A site can be a single artifact, a buried scatter of stone tool-making debris, remains of structures or hearths, or even a place where an important event occurred. If you suspect you have found an artifact or archaeological site, leave the items in place. Archaeologists need to know the context of the artifacts in order to share their work and knowledge. This way they can protect sites, and we can all continue to learn about the many different ways there are to be human.



Copper is the only metal found in archaeological sites dating to a time before European contact. Native copper was hammered into projectile points by the ancestors of modern Athabascans living in central Alaska. These projectile points had a unique advantage over their stone counterparts. When the point hit (or missed) its target, the metal would bend instead of shatter and could be hammered flat and used again.



Test your Archaeology IQ!

Archaeologists help protect the past.

An artifact is at least 50 years old.

Archaeologists dig up dinosaurs.

If you find an artifact, you should pick it up.

True False

True False

True False

True False

Archaeology...

it's not what you find,
it's what you find out.

David Hurst Thomas,
Archaeologist at the American Museum
of Natural History in New York City



This large mammal bone, along with the bone in the archeologist's hand below, are dated to the end of the Ice Age 14,000 years ago.



Prehistory of Interior Alaska

Long ago, when glaciers covered much of the Northern Hemisphere, Interior Alaska remained ice-free. This created a route for people and animals to travel across the Bering Land Bridge from eastern Asia into North America. Fort Wainwright is found within this path and there are many signs left behind of past human activity. People moving across the land bridge into North America 14,000 years ago started a period of human occupation in Interior Alaska that has continued from prehistoric times to the present, through significant historic events like the arrival of European traders, the Klondike gold rush, and the development of the military post. Over 650 archaeological sites on Fort Wainwright and its Army training lands have been discovered, recorded, and studied by archaeologists. Lakeside camps, hunting vistas, campfires with charred bones of ancient animals, trapping cabins, and foxholes record long and short-term visits to the area by many different people through time.

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