

Field Day at Berry Site

BY TRACY FARNHAM Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, June 17, 2015 10:35 pm

Archeology and history buffs are invited Saturday to the site of the Spanish Fort San Juan to see a portion of the most recently discovered moat.

Warren Wilson College, Western Piedmont Community College and the Exploring Joara Foundation invite the public to visit the Berry archeological site from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday for the annual field day.

The free public, family-friendly event will provide archeology demonstrations and displays of Native American artifacts from the site.

Other field day activities include hands-on learning activities and pottery demonstrations.

EJF archaeologist John Krebs said Saturday activities will include tours of the Berry Site and several demonstrations and children's activities.

“There will be historic demonstrators (such as a) flint knapper, which is stone tool making, and gun smith and frontier demonstrations that will show what life was like on frontier.”

Krebs said members of the Catawba Indian Nation will be in attendance Saturday to teach about Catawba culture.

The site dates to the 15th and 16th centuries and is believed to represent an ancestral Catawba Indian town.

Archaeologists believe this site to be the location of the native town of Joara, where the Spaniard Juan Pardo built Fort San Juan in 1567.

Krebs said the 1567 date predates the building of other historical settlements in the United States, a fact that always amazes visitors.

It's hard to believe “that the Spanish created a fort and colony this far into the interior of the United States, 20 years before the Lost Colony at Roanoke and nearly 40 years before Jamestown was settled in 1607,” he said.

The discovery of Fort San Juan was featured in the New York Times and also was highlighted as one of morganton.com/.../article_aff8a1e8-15...



Berry site field day

Visitors can see artifacts during Field Day Saturday at the Berry Site.

Discover Magazine's top 100 science stories of 2013.

The Berry site, located in northern Burke County, was the subject of the UNC-TV documentary "The First, Lost Colony" and has been featured in Smithsonian, National Geographic, American Archaeology and Our State magazines.

"There are guided tours for a number of areas," Krebs said. "People can see and learn all sorts of things."

Representatives with various educational programs will share information on things to do in western N.C., Krebs said.

The History Museum of Burke County and Catawba Valley Science Center will be represented along with Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, which will provide tourism and education to cultural area of WNC.

"The BRNHA helped our program in grant funding," Krebs said, adding the organization also helps spread the word about Joara.

Krebs said the event, which attracts an average of 500 visitors throughout the day, is two-fold in purpose.

"This is a chance for people not only see the site but to learn about WNC," he said. "Field day is offered only one time a year."

Typically throughout the year the site is an outdoor digging classroom — the Warren Wilson College Field School — for students to learn about archaeology, Krebs said.

Warren Wilson College, in partnership with WPCC and other universities, in cooperation with the exploring Joara foundation make both the field school and field day possible.

"The whole site is roughly three acres, but realistically, the area people will be touring is 200 feet," he said.

Food is available onsite for purchase, and Krebs urged folks to wear sunscreen, bug spray, hats, and bring water and a camera to document their experience.

For additional information, Krebs suggested visitors check out the replicated historical living history exhibit located at Catawba Meadows Park in Morganton.

"It is based on the archaeological work that has been done at the Berry site and other sites in WNC," Krebs said. "It is free and open to the public."

Interpretive signs explain the exhibit at Catawba Meadows and guided tours can be scheduled by calling the EJF office.

Onsite parking is available Saturday at the Berry site, with a \$5 per car suggested donation that morganton.com/.../article_aff8a1e8-15...

supports the Berry site. Handicap parking and golf carts are available, Saturday, for those with mobility issues, Krebs said.

Signs will direct visitors from the road to archeology field day. The Berry site is located at 1700 Henderson Mill Road, just outside of Morganton.

For more information, visit www.ExploringJoara.org or call 828-439-2463.

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Uncovered Past



NEWS PHOTO FILE/STAFF

Participants learn about the significance of the Berry Site, located on Henderson Mill Road in Burke County. Field Day will be held 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Exploring Joara Foundation to open Berry Site

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Visitors to the Berry Site learn about the early Spanish settlement in Burke County.