

DAILY
HERALD

Guarding a piece of history

4-26-15

Preserve holds key to previous residents

Carpentersville's Raceway Woods could gain a bit of stature soon when a part of the property is likely to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

An area archaeologist is seeking to have a small area of the 50 acres owned by the Dundee Township Park District placed on the register following the discovery of artifacts dating between 200 and 800 A.D.

Archaeologist Douglas Kullen said the site is significant because there are few registered sites for that time period. He said the site should be preserved because a lot can be learned from the pottery pieces, stones, and sharpened objects found at the site.

See story on Page 6.



Daily Herald Map



Archaeologist Douglas Kullen found numerous pieces of pottery and a few arrowheads at the Raceway Woods site in Carpentersville.

Daily Herald Photo/Jeff Knox



Archaeologist Doug Kullen shows off some of the artifacts he found when digging at Raceway Woods in Carpentersville. Daily Herald Photo/Jeff Knox

Artifacts at Raceway Woods may lead to historic listing

By BONNIE BOOTH
Daily Herald Staff Writer

A local architect is recommending a portion of Raceway Woods in Carpentersville be listed on the National Register of Historic Places following the discovery of artifacts that date back between 200 and 800 A.D.

Douglas Kullen, principal investigator for Aurora-based Allied Archaeology, said the site — buried deep in the 50 acres of Raceway Woods owned by the Dundee Township Park District — is one of the few known archaeological sites from that time period in Illinois.

"This is a fairly important find," Kullen said. "While these types of artifacts may have been found in other locations, they have not been registered. We are still trying to paste together prehistory in this area."

Kullen said prehistory is considered the time before the first written records were available, which was around 1670 in Illinois.

He said the site — about the size of a two-car garage — is not large enough to have been home to very many people, probably just a family. But, he said, the hundreds of pottery fragments, stones and some sharpening pieces recovered are likely to provide several clues to life in northern Illinois during that time period.

"The pottery pieces will contain a lot of information about how pottery was made and what it was used for," Kullen said. "Pottery style has changed over time so it also helps us identify the site's time frame."

Kullen said because there were no human remains found, archaeologists don't know who occupied the site.

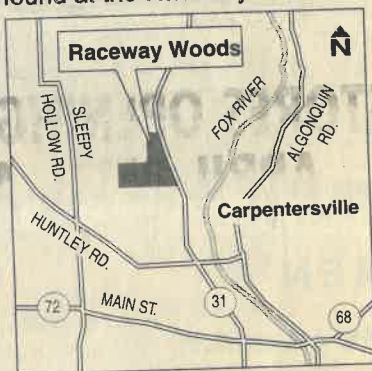
Kullen said he is recommend-

A rare find at Raceway Woods

Here's a sampling of what was found at the Raceway Woods archaeological site in Carpentersville. The artifacts have been dated between 200 and 800 A.D.

- Grinding stones, probably used to grind nutmeats and berries.
- Projectile points, either affixed to wooden spears for hunting or to short wooden handles and used as knives.
- Remnants of pottery
- Fire-cracked rocks indicating the use of fire, probably for cooking.

Source: Allied Archaeology in Aurora.



Daily Herald Graphic

"This is a fairly important find. While these types of artifacts may have been found in other locations, they have not been registered. We are still trying to paste together prehistory in this area."

— Douglas Kullen, Allied Archaeology

ing the site go untouched unless a qualified archaeologist wants to do more excavation at some point in the future. Development of any kind, he said, should be considered forbidden. In fact, he said the park district would be under an obligation to make sure nothing happens to it.

That's not a problem, according to Dundee Township Park District Director Tom Mammoser.

"We plan to make Raceway Woods a passive recreation area with a series of trails," Mammoser said. "If need be we can design the trails so they don't go through the site."

"This gives the property a little bit more status and gives some

national recognition to what is a pre-history to this area," he said.

Ironically, the artifacts could have gone undiscovered indefinitely if the park district had not applied to the Department of Conservation for a \$400,000 grant to help offset the \$1.5 million cost of purchasing a portion of the former Meadowdale Raceway.

An archaeological survey was a condition of the grant application.

Park district officials expect to receive the grant once the state's Historic Preservation Agency has made its recommendation about whether to place the property on the register.