

## **The Connecticut College Arboretum**

### **Stewardship of Cultural Resources Policy**

The Connecticut College Arboretum Mission Statement specifies seven topics or areas of activity: Teaching, Research, Conservation, Plant Collections, Cultural Resource Stewardship, Public Education and Recreation. Policies provide history, context, management guidance and goals for Arboretum staff, College community and others. The portion of the mission related to cultural resources is:

“To provide stewardship of cultural resources on College lands by protecting, studying and interpreting archaeological and heritage sites.”

Encompassing lands that have been used by humans for over 6,000 years, the Arboretum contains an abundant and uniquely protected material record of past lifeways, including those of Indigenous people, European colonists and their slaves, and later generations who farmed much of the land until acquisition by the College beginning in 1911. Shell middens, burial sites, well guards, residential and other building foundations, stone concentrations, and many hundreds of miles of stone walls are some of the more obvious features that can be used to document past land use and other cultural activities.

Cultural resources are non-renewable. Once removed, disturbed, or destroyed, the archaeological record cannot be remade, and opportunities to study and understand the diversity and details of past lifeways are forever lost. The value of cultural resources on College property is realized not only in the rare opportunities to train students in applied research during the regular semester but also in the fact that this rich archaeological record is evidence of a variety of subsistence strategies, ways of managing natural resources, and forms of social life that are an integral part of the heritage of southeastern Connecticut.

### **Research and Management of Cultural Resources**

Cultural resources on College property have long been the subject of historical and archaeological research by Connecticut College faculty. Beginning as early as the late 1970s, anthropology Professor Harold Juli (1948-2007) and students conducted investigations at six archaeological sites in the Arboretum. Five of these are Indigenous residential and seasonal food resource sites and located near the Thames River. The sixth site was the Samuel Bolles Farmstead located north of Gallows Lane. A summary of the significance and outcomes of this research can be found in Arboretum Bulletin No. 33, *Archaeology in the Connecticut College Arboretum* (Juli 1992).

When the college acquired Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology in the early 2000s and began teaching undergraduate courses in GIS, projects were developed to accurately map the stone walls that delineated historic farm fields and property boundaries. These walls are the most

obvious and enduring record of past land use, although recent archaeological research has made evident that College properties contain hundreds of other cultural sites and features.

Since 2010, Anthropology Professor Anthony Graesch has instructed archeology methods courses in the Arboretum. His *Field Methods in Archaeology* (ANT406) course, in particular, has been a vehicle for training students in rigorous archaeological survey methodologies while conducting a multi-year, comprehensive surface reconnaissance of Arboretum lands. Over 300 archaeological sites, features, and stand-alone surface artifacts have been documented with project-tailored field forms, GPS, and photography. Geospatial and other data are being stored and analyzed using GIS software and methods. This compendium of surface data is expected to double over the next several years, and future archaeological research will also make use of subsurface investigatory methods. Professor Graesch was appointed College Archaeologist in 2022.

### **Cultural Resource Policy Statement**

Heritage is complex and dynamic. We carry on and express our traditions in relation to the ever-changing world of which we are a part. Conservation and preservation of both the material and non-material aspects of heritage, or cultural resources, are critical to developing a fuller understanding of the ways that the past has shaped the present and future.

The Arboretum Cultural Resources Policy is intended to protect, preserve, and manage all cultural resources – historical buildings, sites, cultural objects, and features – on Connecticut College property. Specifically, the purpose of the policy is to:

- support archaeological, anthropological, and historical research on Arboretum lands;
- promote cross-cultural awareness, interpretation of heritage sites to the public, and awareness of the need for conservation and preservation of cultural resources;
- support accurate record-keeping of cultural resource information through the use of photography, and GIS, among other means, while ensuring that relevant records are transferred to the College Archives and Special Collections;
- advocate that all construction and land-use projects on College property be subject to archaeological and natural resources reviews before final plans are developed;
- and to ensure that mitigation occurs where existing surface and/or subsurface cultural resources are intended to be altered, disturbed, or destroyed or when impacts to cultural resources are unavoidable or otherwise happen.