

History, future c

St. Cloud State students use high-tech equipment to map 1680 farmstead near Mille Lacs Lake

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MILLE LACS KATHIO STATE PARK

— At a historic intersection between American Indians and Europeans, a group of State Cloud State University researchers and park staff formalized another, less-historic partnership over the weekend.

In the same area where Father Hennepin lived for several months with the Mdewakonton Dakota in 1680, a St. Cloud State professor and several students wrapped up the first stage of analyzing a more recent archeological site Sunday. This was an abandoned farmstead dating to the turn of the century.

The event marks the birth of an information and research-sharing partnership between the state park and the university. It is being supervised through the university's fledgling Archeological Computing Laboratory, which is devoted to archeological study. Richard Rothaus, a history professor, directs the lab.

Rothaus and his students mapped, photographed and collected artifacts laying on the ground at the site, cataloging their finds. The weekend's activities will benefit both the university and the park, Rothaus said. He will be able to develop extensive classroom materials on computer, and the park will benefit from the group's cleaning and understanding of the site.

"We want to develop this into an area where we can teach people about this park's 4,000-year continuous habitation," said Jim Cummings, park naturalist. At the farmstead, this will mean planting grass over the sandy areas, placing a low fence around the rock-strewn hole of the house cellar and posting informational materials.

The farmstead is typical of the era, Rothaus said. Many European settlers came to the area to farm at the turn of



TIMES MAP

the century. The land is part of a glacial moraine. It's composed of rocks, gravel and poor soil — nearly impossible to farm.

"The fact that it was abandoned indicates how hard it was to farm," Rothaus said.

The site was thought to have been farmed by a family named Quale, although the property history is complicated. The house was removed, probably more than 40 years ago, but foundation stones are visible around the cellar opening.

Although the St. Cloud State contingent basically was cleaning up the site, it still requires knowledgeable people, Cummings said. It's being done in such a way that people can learn from it.

The research wouldn't have been possible without the complicated technology of the global positioning system Rothaus said. The university rented the system gear, which receives satellite messages and uses them to triangulate locations. All the data is stored in a small yellow box that can be plugged directly into a computer to download information.

"When we download that data into the computer, we'll have a very good map of the area," Rothaus said. The measurements are accurate within a few centimeters.

Without the equipment, researchers would have had to rely on a surveying team, Rothaus said. The cost of training novices or hiring experts could have doomed the project.

"They are on the cutting edge of modern archeological research," Cum-

onverge at park



Professor Richard Rothaus used a global positioning system to mark the site and items found Sunday at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park. The system helps with mapping the site.

mings said.

That fact wasn't lost on the students who volunteered to spend a weekend mapping and clearing the site of hundreds of artifacts.

"We're free labor, and we get good experience," said Marcus Manley, a

senior anthropology major.

Amber DeMorett, a senior anthropology major, said this hands-on experience will help her after college.

"You get exposed to GPS, and it's really helpful when you get out in the job field," DeMorett said.

'They are on the cutting edge of modern archeological research.'



TIMES PHOTOS BY JASON WACHTER

St. Cloud State University student Amber DeMorett marked a broken jar with a flag so it could be plotted during an archeological

dig Sunday at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park. St. Cloud State students helped analyze a 17th century farmstead in the park.