

# ARCHAEOLOGY CURATOR: DR. LAURA KOZUCH

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As Curator at the Illinois State Archaeology Survey (ISAS), I care for the artifacts and documents that describe them and archaeological sites. This means I have to keep a watchful eye on temperature, humidity, pests, and other environmental issues such as rainwater and pipe leaks. I maintain and create databases so that a good inventory is available.

My personal research is on sea shells that were traded to Midwestern and eastern U.S. archaeological sites. These shells were used for beads, pendants, cups, and earrings, and some of them were highly prized for their ideational aspects. I also replicate these artifacts so we can understand what it takes to make marine shell artifacts.

Most of my time is spent answering e-mail requests, handling loans out to researchers, and in from other institutions, as well as donations from private citizens. I also handle requests for image use, and take care of the legalities surrounding copyright issues. I also ensure that artifacts and documents are available to researchers, both for ISAS staff and outside researchers. I spend time moving boxes in and out of our warehouse spaces, in order that proper inventories are done, and to get artifacts for researchers to analyze.



Another big aspect of my job is to write grant proposals for collections improvement. I got one in 2008-2010 to catalog our Cahokia collections, and another in 2012 to assess our collection needs. I am currently writing two grants: one to catalog our Cook County (Illinois) artifacts, and another to the National Endowment for the Humanities to install humidity control in our collection rooms on campus.

All of this keeps me very busy! But the tasks are so varied that I rarely do the same thing from day to day, and I am never bored. □