

A DAY OF EXCAVATION IN ALBERTA'S PARKLAND.

July 30, 2015 duncans Commercial Archaeology,Excavation, Explore Posts



My Day of Archaeology 2015 is a continuation of the project I reported on for [DOA 2014](#). Last year we were surveying and shovel testing for a linear development. This year we are excavating the sites we found. We are on day 5 of our third 21 day shift. My site is separated from the main site which entails a march up the sand-dunes along our “goat-trail”. The round trip between the sites is 15 minutes, and a large part of my day will be spent ferrying tools between them.



The site looks lovely in the early morning light with mist in the river valley below, one of the few benefits of our 6am start.



Our site has the benefit of tents, which are leftovers from the two winters we have worked on these sites. They get a bit green-house hot in the sun, but are a godsend for rainy days and storing equipment in. I'm a big fan of the shanty-town look of them.



We are working in sand-dunes, with 2.6m of archaeological deposits, so substantial timber shoring is a must. Unfortunately, this often means working in confined spaces or in precarious positions.



The first part of my day after opening up the site involves some shoring up and moving the tools required between the sites, here, a camera set, a reciprocating saw, and the photographic scales. Five round trips for the day!



Later, I do a soil compaction survey using the tool pictured. This is to record any compaction of archaeological deposits following a period during the winter when the site was covered by rig-matting to allow machinery to travel over it.



Hearth feature



I take a lot of the pictures for the excavation, such as the hearth feature.



Profile pictures



Artefact pictures

The day is always brightened by a visit from the baby chipmunk family. There are four of them somewhere in this picture, but they move fast and I'm not a wildlife photographer!



After lunch, since I don't currently have an excavation unit of my own, I help my colleague Alex by mapping & tagging lithic finds. She is into our very rich Besant period lithic workshop deposit, and it is slow work. Our record for a 5cm level is approximately 450 lithics, which gives you an idea of the density. I'm quite happy to be down here as the temperature has climbed during the day into the low 30's C and it is marginally cooler down in the excavation area. While I'm doing this we are visited by archaeologists from the Royal Alberta Museum; just one of many tours we have given this week.



Our day ends at 4pm with tent close-up and moving all the finds and records down the hill, a final debrief with the site bosses and other crew chief, and a short trip back to the hotel. All in all, a fairly typical day and pretty representative of our work for the last year and a half. I hope you enjoyed joining us!