

RESULTS FROM JUNE 6, 2011

Today, we met on campus from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm for an orientation session.



This year marks our last of seven field seasons at Castalian Springs – we will take a break after this year to complete laboratory analyses and writing on our discoveries.

This year also marks the largest crew ever assembled for the project – our field crew consists of project directors Dr. Kevin E. Smith and Emily Beahm; field director Michael K. Hampton; and 28 undergraduate and graduate students from Middle Tennessee State University and Texas State University.

With such a large crew in our last year, we have an ambitious set of research goals and questions that we hope to investigate (pending weather mostly!). In 2008, we investigated part of two features that we will return to this year. First, we discovered a large section of what might be a poorly preserved part of the ditch for the palisade that we suspect enclosed the core of the mound site. This year we will return to that area to open up additional units in the

hopes of finding a better preserved part of the ditch. Secondly, we also investigated part of what appears to be a large structure set in a deep basin or pit. After abandonment this large basin was filled with trash, including large quantities of broken pottery, animal bone from meals, and other discarded tools. We will expand those investigations this year to further explore what this feature is – and to gather additional artifact samples for analysis.

Finally, we will focus some substantial efforts investigating Mound 3. Mound 3 is the last major earthwork on the site that we have not examined in the past six years. Sitting on the northwest corner of the town plaza, this mound is clearly a critical feature of the town plan – and critical to our understanding of the history of the site. William Edward Myer explored part of this mound in 1893 – he recorded finding no sign of burials in this mound, suggesting that it is an important flat-topped pyramid that once supported important buildings. He also documented finding large quantities of discarded pottery and other artifacts associated with the mound. We plan to re-examine this mound using modern techniques to confirm and expand upon his interpretations from over a century ago.

We will begin our work in the field tomorrow. Yesterday morning as I left the site for Murfreesboro, a hawk was perched atop the post we use for our elevation readings. An unusual and rare event marking the beginning of Season 7.

