

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,  
1956-present

University Relations

---

12-7-1972

### Eastern Montana artifacts undergoing study at University

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Eastern Montana artifacts undergoing study at University" (1972). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 22747.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/22747>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Relations at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).



news

Information Services • University of Montana • Missoula, Montana 59801 • (406) 243-2522

IMMEDIATELY

sale/eh  
12-7-72  
state + cs +

EASTERN MONTANA ARTIFACTS  
UNDERGOING STUDY AT UNIVERSITY

By Dennis Sale  
UM Information Services

MISSOULA--

Artifacts discovered this summer by University of Montana archaeological survey teams on Burlington Northern's Sarpy Creek branch line right-of-way in Treasure and Big Horn Counties are being studied at UM to determine their historical values.

The archaeological surveys are part of an extensive program sponsored by BN in eastern Montana to preserve valuable sites which might otherwise be damaged or destroyed during railway construction.:

As field director for the Statewide Archaeological Survey in the UM Department of Anthropology, Dale E. Fredlund is in charge of the scientific excavations as well as the preservation of the artifacts found at several sites.

Fredlund said he and his survey crews have found artifacts that indicate one survey area was occupied several thousand years ago by nomadic hunters and food-gatherers in the prehorse era and by Indians with horses up to and including the historical period, dating back about 250 years.

"One site, adjacent to and extending across a portion of the new BN line is significant for its size and the variety of artifacts found there," Fredlund said. "We found artifacts from shelters, hearths and observation points at that location.

"The artifacts from that site, which include projectile points, stone knives and scrapers and edge-ground cobbles--a type of hide tanning stone--indicate that Indians worked stone by percussion and pressure-flaking methods while observing the Sarpy Creek Valley and other nearby areas for game or the approach of unfriendly persons," Fredlund explained.

more /

## WESTMORELAND RESOURCES STUDY

Fredlund said he also directed a survey crew comprised of University students and Crow Indians in the excavation early last summer of other archaeological sites sponsored by Westmoreland Resources in the Little Wolf Mountains, adjacent to the east and west forks of Sarpy Creek, 30 miles northeast of Hardin.

Following the survey phase necessary for the Little Wolf study, Westmoreland Resources contracted with the UM Department of Anthropology to conduct excavation of sites threatened by possible destruction because of coal mine development.

"We found a variety of archaeological site types among the Westmoreland land holdings," Fredlund said. "These include the first vision-quest sites of apparent Cheyenne Indian origin known to exist in the Little Wolf Mountains, as well as occupation and lookout sites of undetermined origin."

Among the artifacts found at the Westmoreland sites were projectile points and other stone objects "dating from 3,000 years ago to the present," Fredlund said.

Regarding the overall purposes of the scientific studies in eastern Montana, Fredlund commented "Westmoreland Resources and Burlington Northern are supporting these archaeological research programs as one phase of the companies' environmental protection and historical preservation plans."

Fredlund said he and his staff have concluded that because of the detailed research sponsored by BN and the Westmoreland firm "there will be no destruction of archaeological sites in the survey areas."

Four other firms--Western Energy Co. and Peabody Coal Co. in southeastern Montana; Decker Coal Co. in southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming, and Ayshire Coal Co. in northern Wyoming--also have sponsored archaeological research projects to preserve a significant portion of Montana's prehistoric records, Fredlund said.

###