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Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth
Ministère de la Culture, de la Langue, des Aînés et de la Jeunesse

News Release

2004 Archaeology Field Season Underway

IQALUIT, Nunavut (June 23, 2004) – The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth is preparing for the third field season of its annual Nunavut Archaeology Program that is designed to bring more insight into Nunavut's past.

Five projects are planned from late June to early September 2004, with Inuit from Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, Pond Inlet and Baker Lake participating in the research.

The first project of the season will take place on Axel Heiberg Island, where an assessment will be conducted at a site thought to relate to German explorer Hans Krüger, whose expedition set off from Ellesmere Island in the spring of 1930 and never returned.

In early July, CLEY and Parks Canada's Nunavut Field Unit will team up to conduct site surveys along the Borden Peninsula in Sirmilik National Park, and on Bylot Island. An assessment of the ancient site of Satuut, much of which has been lost to erosion, is also planned.

While in Pond Inlet, CLEY will also assist the community with the relocation of the graves of Robert Janes and Hector Pitchforth. Janes was the trader who died on North Baffin Island in 1920. Hector Pitchforth was also a trader who died in 1926 near Clyde River. Both are buried at Pond Inlet. These graves are threatened by erosion and by human use of the area.

In late July, a team of researchers will travel to Lake Hazen in Quttinirpaaq National Park on Ellesmere Island, to recover information from an erosion site on the Ruggles River.

Planning is also underway to inspect and document a historic period site situated at the eastern end of Baker Lake. The site was reported in 2003 and contains several graves and, a locked trunk with unknown contents.

“Learning about the history of Nunavut through the archaeology program gives us insight into our past. It also teaches Nunavummiut to work together to help protect our past,” said Culture, Language, Elders and Youth Minister Louis Tapardjuk.

Dr. Douglas Stenton, Director of Culture and Heritage with the Department, will oversee the research program with the support of colleagues from Parks Canada, the University of Waterloo, and the Canadian Conservation Institute.

“These projects will help to develop better understanding of and provide appropriate protection to the archaeological sites of Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks,” said John Webster, Cultural Resources Manager with Parks Canada. “Parks Canada is very pleased to be working with the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth and looks forward to working with participating teams and community members.”

For more information about the archaeology program or how to apply for an archaeology research permit, please call 1.866.934.2035 or log onto www.gov.nu.ca/cley.

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