

The Lake George Examiner



Archaeologists return to Lake George Battlefield Park for a 3-week dig

June 3, 2024 by Gillian Burdett

Skidmore College Anthropology Department Chair Dr. Siobhan Hart will lead an archaeological survey in Lake George Battlefield Park beginning Monday, June 3. The project is sponsored by the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance and Skidmore College under guidance from the New York State Museum and Department of Environmental Conservation. The survey team will work in different locations in the park, approximately 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday during the weeks of June 3, June 10 and June 17.

This will be the first archaeological survey conducted in the park since 2016. The late Dr. David Starbuck led a series of explorations earlier in the 2000s and advocated additional research, writing in a book that summarizes his findings, "Sampling within Lake George Battlefield Park thus far has probably only located a small fraction of the 18th-century sites in the park. Our five years of fieldwork...should be viewed as just a beginning to the historical and archaeological research that can and should be conducted here at the southern end of Lake George."

Historian, author and Alliance Trustee Russell P. Bellico says of Hart's survey, "The forthcoming archaeological study of the Lake George Battlefield Park will provide valuable insight into the history of the site during the colonial period. As one of the longest continually occupied military sites in American history, the Battlefield Park affords researchers with a substantial opportunity to interpret this era."

Dr. Hart and her team of students will pick up from Starbuck's work using exploratory digging and ground-penetrating radar. In a press release, Alliance Trustee Pat Niles, who worked alongside Dr. Starbuck on two of his surveys, says "For me, it is nice to be a bridge between David Starbuck and Dr. Siobhan Hart, even in just referencing recollections of my small part in the 2015 and 2016 projects. Lake George Battlefield Park has so many layers of occupation that it is critical to try and get a greater understanding of its grounds."

The public is welcome to observe the team at work. The Lake George Battlefield Park Visitors Center will be open each day during the survey 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visitors may check in there to learn where the team is working in the park each day. Anyone wishing to volunteer with the project during the weeks of June 10 and June 17 may email the Alliance at info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org. Professor Hart will discuss her fieldwork on Saturday, June 15 at 9:45 during the Alliance's regular radio program, "Lake George Battlefield Moments", which is aired on WLGR Lake George Radio, 93.5 FM or streamed at <https://www.lakegeorgeradio.com/player/>.

Hart will also make an informal presentation at the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitors Center on Sunday, June 16, at 2 p.m. as part of the Alliance's participation in New York State's Path Through History weekend. The public is welcome.

Featured image: Skidmore College Associate Professor Siobhan Hart (center) tours Lake George Battlefield Park earlier this year with (left to right) Mark Silo, Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance; Charles Vandrei, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation; Pat Niles, LGBPA; Peter Wuerdeman, LGBPA/courtesy LGBPA