

## Archaeology Fast Facts: What Should People Know?

*Hint: look for keywords*

- [Archaeology](#) is the study of the human past through material culture and human impacts on the environment. Archaeologists do not study dinosaurs or fossils.
- In Connecticut, archaeologists identify and study the sites, artifacts, and physical remains that make up the past [13,000 years of human settlement](#). This includes any site that is 50 years or older!
- Archaeology is only way to learn about the past and it often is combined with other information, such as oral history, primary documents, or ethnographic analogy.
- Archaeology is not just about artifacts! Artifacts and archaeological sites help to understand the lives of people in the past who are the ancestors of people who are alive today.
- Most of human history does not have written records – either because written language did not exist, the records did not survive, or the people were not important enough to be documented.
- Archaeology is a destructive science. Sites are non-renewable resources; once they're excavated or destroyed, they are gone forever!
- Digging is not the only activity an archaeologist does to understand a site. There are multiple steps in a professional archaeological investigation, and an excavation is often only one of those steps. This is called [the archaeological process](#).
- There are many ways to do archaeology without digging! Archaeologists use innovative [technology](#) like [aerial or drone surveys](#), photogrammetry and 3D modeling, [ground penetrating radar](#), mapping, and photography to learn about past peoples.
- Archaeological sites can be damaged by weather, erosion, agriculture, development, and looting. It is important to protect sites from further natural or cultural destruction through preservation and stewardship.
- It is illegal to take archaeological artifacts from land owned by the United States or the State of Connecticut, and it is illegal to trespass onto someone's private property to look for sites or artifacts without their permission.
- Archaeologists work with descendant communities, such as Native American Tribal Nations, who are connected to the people who lived at archaeological sites. The oral histories and memories of descendant community members are very important to learning about the past!
- Indiana Jones was not a good archaeologist. We love his movies, but professional archaeologists are guided by [ethics](#)!

### Select and Cite Reliable Sources

Be cautious when researching archaeology! There is a lot of bad information on the internet. It's best to contact a local archaeologist to learn accurate information and get quality resources. Almost [every state networks with the Society for American Archaeology](#) to communicate archaeology to the public. You can also contact your [State Archaeologist](#), [State Historic Preservation Office](#), or a [Tribal Historic Preservation Office](#). Other trusted sources include the

[Society for Historical Archaeology](#), [Archaeological Institute of America](#), and [National Park Service](#), [the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology \(FOSA\)](#), [the Institute for American Indian Studies \(IAIS\)](#), and local universities with archaeology professors (UCONN, CCSU, SCSU, WCSU, Wesleyan, and Connecticut College).

### **Experience Archaeology In-Person**

- Zoom with a professional archaeologist (upon request)
- October 4: Archaeology Fair at Eli Whitney Museum, Hamden

### **Watch, Visit, and Learn More**

#### ***Watch:***

- [Archaeology Tube \(Host: Dr. Bill Farley of Southern CT State University\) on YouTube](#)
  - [#RealArchaeology of New England](#)
  - [Discovering/Cleaning Artifacts from the Henry Whitfield State Museum #1](#)
  - [Discovering/Cleaning Artifacts from the Henry Whitfield State Museum #2](#)
- [Avon Free Public Library: Unearthing History](#)
- [Archaeological Society Connecticut](#)
- [A Point in Time](#): A 45-minute film that presents how archaeological research is conducted
- [A Typical Day in Archaeology](#): Playlist by Archaeology in the Community

#### ***Listen:***

- [Archaeology of Connecticut](#): An online radio show anchored by CT State Archaeologist Dr. Sarah Sportman covering topics related to our State's Cultural Resources

#### ***Visit:***

There are many sites and museums across Connecticut where you can see archaeological sites, archaeological exhibits, or cultural exhibits. OSA highly recommends the following:

- Old New-gate Prison and Coppermine, East Granby
- Putnam Memorial State Park, Revolutionary War Encampment, Redding
- People's State Forest, Soapstone Quarry, Barkhamsted
- Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center, Ledyard
- Fort Trumbull, New London
- Prudence Crandall Museum, Canterbury
- Henry Whitfield State Museum, Guilford