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Wall Center for Archaeological Research to Celebrate Open House

Pam Walker



Morganton, NC –The Exploring Joara Foundation will host an open house at the Carl and Linda Wall Center for Archaeological Research on Saturday, September 12th from noon to 3:00 pm, 220 New Street in Morganton. The open house will

include displays and interactive exhibits, light refreshments and a raffle. The public is invited.

Open House

Carl and Linda Wall Center for Archaeological Research

Saturday, September 12

Noon to 3pm

220 New Street, Morganton, NC

The Wall Center, located a few blocks from downtown Morganton, is a new facility established to encourage large-scale public involvement in regional archaeological research and education. The Center, donated to the Exploring Joara Foundation (EJF) by Carl and Linda Wall in 2008, was quickly put into use this summer as a dormitory and operations center for students and participants in the annual field school.

Archaeological discoveries at the Berry Site, north of Morganton, reveal glimpses of the sixteenth-century Native American and Spanish settlers in Western North Carolina's Catawba River Valley. These finds suggest that Fort San Juan was the earliest European settlement in the interior of the United States – predating the Lost Colony of Roanoke by 20 years.

Spanish explorer Juan Pardo and his army of 125 men trekked through the Catawba and Wateree river valleys in the mid-1500s. In 1567 they built Fort San Juan near the Native American town of JOARA, the first of six forts constructed along the river valley. All six were destroyed by fire in 1568.

Locally known as “the Berry Site,” the burned remains of Joara, the Native American village, and Fort San Juan are archaeological treasures. As such, they are irreplaceable.

Excavations continue at the site each summer during the annual field school. Archaeologists and students representing Warren-Wilson College, Western Piedmont Community College, Tulane University and a host of volunteers participate in the digs. Significant discoveries include Spanish glass beads, chain mail, nails, pottery shards and Native American artifacts. Once unearthed the finds are carefully cataloged, cleaned and preserved for continued study.

Many of these artifacts will be on display through interactive exhibits and demonstrations. Senior archaeologist David Moore and students from Warren-Wilson and Western Piedmont will guide visitors through the excavation process and be available to discuss the significance of the artifacts discovered thus far.

There will be a raffle for handcrafted pottery created by Courtney Long, Coordinator of Professional Crafts at Western Piedmont. The pieces are replications of the sixteenth-century Majolica pottery that has been found at the Berry site. Members of the Exploring Joara Foundation, including those that join the Foundation on the day of the event, will be eligible to participate in the raffle.

The Exploring Joara Foundation is committed to public archaeology and the study of Native American and Spanish settlement in the upper Catawba and Yadkin river valleys between 1450 and 1700. Linda Wall is a student of archaeology and a long-standing dig volunteer. She is also a member of the EJF Board of Directors.

The Exploring Joara Foundation • P.O. Box 296 • Morganton • NC • 28680

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