

Field day to educate public on archaeological site

by JONELLE BOBAK Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, June 23, 2016 7:14 pm

The Exploring Joara Foundation is inviting the public to experience the 16th annual Fort San Juan and Joara Archaeological Field Day at the Berry Site in Morganton from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

The Berry Site is an active archaeological research and excavation zone that was discovered to have been the settlement of 16th century Native Americans and Spanish explorers.

“This will be a great family event,” Palacios said. “Most people do not realize that before Roanoke and before Jamestown there was Fort San Juan ... America's first European settlement in the interior of what is now that United States.”

The event will feature the three lead researchers, Dr. David Moore, and his research partners, Dr. Christopher B. Rodning from Tulane University and Dr. Robin A. Beck from the University of Oklahoma.

They will be discussing the history of the site and the progress that has been made in the 30 years of excavating at the Berry Site as well as hosting site tours, said Marie Palacios, executive director of the Exploring Joara Foundation.

Recently, the field school crew from Warren Wilson College has uncovered a Spanish chain link and multiple pieces of pottery, which will be on display for the public to see, she said.

“Field Day is the one day a year that the site is almost completely uncovered and the general public is invited for special tours and primitive skills demonstrations on site,” Palacios said.

The demonstrations will include fire by friction, black-smithing, blow guns, atlatls, hide tanning, pottery making and more, she said.

Over the years, 500 to 1,200 participants from North Carolina and surrounding states have traveled to Morganton to experience the unearthing of history, she said.

“We would love to see both familiar and new faces this year,” Palacios said.

The Berry Site is located at 1700 Henderson Mill Road in Morganton. The event is free, but a \$5 parking donation is appreciated.

For more information and directions to the Berry Site, visit www.exploringjoara.org or call 828-439-2463.



Berry site open house preview (1).jpg

Participants in a past open house of the Berry Site try their hand at excavating.

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