

CASTLE HILL EAGLE SCOUT, TROOP 1, COCHITUATE KIOSK PROJECT

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Introduction

Gavyn Davies, from Wayland's Scout Troop 1, Cochituate arranged with the Wayland Conservation Commission to undertake his Eagle Scout project to build a kiosk at the trailhead of the Castle Hill Conservation Area. Members of the Wayland Historical Commission (WHC) met with Conservation Department Assistant, Ryan Brown on March 2, 2020 at the proposed location for the kiosk, to give him some background about the early history of the present soccer field which borders the trailhead.

The soccer field was built on a much disturbed Native American multi-component site (Castle Hill site, Massachusetts Historical Commission site # 19 MD 339) which was excavated by the newly formed volunteer Wayland Archaeology Group under a state permit and under the direction of Dr. Charles Nelson, professor of Anthropology, in 1978-1980. The site was repeatedly occupied for short terms over a period of time ranging from approximately 7,000+ to 4,000 years. Two radiocarbon dates from two specific areas showed these areas were occupied 4,400+ years ago. Stone tools pointed to much earlier time periods. The present boundaries of the site are unknown and some archaeological work in conjunction with the scout project might shed light on this question since no work was done beyond the soccer field project boundary.

Those attending the site meeting were shown a sample of Mylonite, one of two unusual lithic materials used in manufacturing stone projectile point, which were found in significant quantities during the excavations. I also provided Ryan with a copy of the publication which discusses this lithic material (Largy and Ritchie 2002) so that he and the Conservation Commission would understand our interest in the Scout project.

Project Description

The project took place on August 12, 2020. Matthew Karpacz, Chairman of Scouting in Wayland, was leading the project. Scoutmaster Tom Kemper and members of Troop 1 and their parents gathered at 9:00 am at the trailhead. Gavyn directed the scouts and their parents regarding the tasks to be done.

Historical Commission member, Ann Gordon, also attended to observe and take photos to put on the Historical Commission web site to illustrate our support of community projects which could impact a local cultural resource as well as provide an experience for troop members.

Field Methods

Two holes were excavated for the kiosk supports by fathers of troop members with post-hole diggers. The holes measured approximately 50 cm in diameter and went down to approximately one meter in depth. All soils were shoveled into a manual rocking sifter with one quarter inch hardware cloth. Fathers and scouts screened the soils while Tonya Largy examined what was left in the screen. There was no attempt to track the depths of the predominately modern artifacts that were recovered as it immediately became apparent that the soils had been mixed by construction of the field or the previous agricultural activity that was known to have taken place on the parcel.

Result

All materials appear to be from the twentieth century with the exception of two possible fire-cracked rock fragments which came from the deepest level of the post holes. Shrubs had grown over the area and some clearing including root removal had to be done to begin digging the post holes. Table 1 enumerates the artifacts by quantity and weight that were retrieved from the screen.

Table 1. Castle Hill Eagle Scout Project - Artifact recovered from Post Holes

Inv. #	Description	Qty.	Weight (grams)	Comment
1	Clear vessel glass	17	41.6	Likely bottle glass
2	Brown vessel	1	0.7	Bottle? glass
3	Clear thick plate glass	1	1.7	
4	Thin aluminum foil fragments	3	0.2	Candy wrapper?
5	Plastic label fragment	1	0.04	Small fragment
6	Golf ball	1	46.11	Pinnacle Practice ball
7	Coal Clinker	1	23.69	Large fragment
8	Possible fire cracked rock (FCR)*	2	189.0*	From a deeper level of post hole
Total		27	303.04	
	* FCR weighs more than scale limit. Fire cracked rock may be from the Native American occupation			

Discussion

Twenty-seven artifacts were recovered from the screen. Glass fragments include clear vessel glass (N=17), brown vessel glass (N=1), and clear thick plate glass (N=1). The eighteen fragments of vessel glass represent broken bottles. The single fragment of thick plate glass seems too thick to be regular window glass, but may represent another use.

Glass is a common recovery from sites where houses were nearby and where people congregate. In fact, the Castle Hill Trail was home to several families who lived in the houses along the present Castle Hill Trail whose properties are marked by such features as the stone walls, a tall Norway spruce tree and ornamental perennial plantings such as the day lilies which grow and flower every spring around the former house plots. When we were excavating in the proposed soccer field area in 1978, a middle-aged man visited us as we worked and said he had lived in one of the houses when he was much younger.

Miscellaneous artifacts include thin aluminum foil fragments (N=3), which may have come from a candy wrapper or some other type of packaging. A small fragment of a plastic green and yellow label with the incomplete word “Hand” in the green part of the label, and a “BA” printed on the yellow part of the label (N=1). It likely represents a packaging material of an unknown product. Perhaps the most interesting artifact that we recovered is a complete “Pinnacle practice” golf ball in excellent condition (N=1) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Pinnacle Golf Ball from Castle Hill

The Pinnacle golf ball was introduced in 1972 by Titleist, a company based in Acushnet, who developed “the two-piece ball which was a revolution in long-distance drives.... The Pinnacle was a less pricey version of the ball designed for the amateur...” (Pinnacle Golf Ball History, golfink.com). The ball has undergone further development, having a “thinner, far more pliable cover” (<https://golfballdivers.com/collections/pinnacle>).

The ball found during the Eagle Scout project, was examined by golf pros John Gordon and Bob Quirk at the Wayland Country Club for their assessment of whether this ball was one of the later thinner covers. The consensus is that the Castle Hill golf ball “...was likely from around 2000, and it is more likely that it be newer than older, because of the dimple pattern. It could be

from the 1990's but that is less likely than it being a 21st century ball” (John Gordon, personal communication, November 4, 2020). It likely was lost by a golfer practicing his drives on the level area of the present soccer field.

Conclusion

Thanks to the Conservation Commission informing the WHC about the Eagle Scout project, we were able to examine subsurface levels near the boundary of the former Castle Hill Site now under the Alpine Road Soccer Field. The purpose was to examine a small area to gain an understanding of the site boundary. Archaeological surveys must stay within project boundaries and try to understand where the site might extend. We know from our previous work that the site extended across the present road and likely into residential parcels.

Another purpose for engaging with Troop 1 Cochituate was to provide an educational experience to troop members. Much of Wayland’s early history lies below ground and we are fortunate in our Town to have the opportunity to examine past history which might lie below the ground on our public parcels. Hopefully, this cooperation will continue with the Boy Scout projects.

REFERENCES CITED

Tonya B. Largy and Duncan Ritchie

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Pinnacle Golf Ball History

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