

8,000-year-old artifacts

Mantua Creek dig yields bonanza

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Staff Writer

EAST GREENWICH TWP. - In a few years, people in the township may be pressed to remember that a strip of land along Berkley Road was once an active farm rather than the housing development that is planned for the site.

But it's probably a safe bet that no one in the area remembers a person leaving behind an arrowhead more than 8,000 years ago.

Archaeologists found the arrowhead, estimated to be between 8,000 and 9,000 years old, about 300 feet from Mantua Creek at a housing development site to be known as Berkley Landing. By observing the serrated edges and style of the weapon, archaeologists from Richard Grubb and Associates in Cranbury were able to place the age of the artifact.

While the arrowhead's approximate age can be determined, it is hard to discern who the owner may have been, said Paul McEachen, principal investigator with the company.

"The earlier in time you go, the harder is to tell if something belonged to certain peoples," McEachen said. "It is a lot of guess work."

Even though McEachen and colleagues have not been able to create a profile of the former owner of the arrowhead, they've had no difficulty attributing the other 2,000 artifacts they have found at the site to the Delaware Indians, also referred to as the Lenni Lenape.

About 10 years ago, land adjacent to the site and part of the development was surveyed for cultural resources, McEachen said. Part of that site was excavated and later, Native American artifacts,



Staff photo by Chris Harubin

Paul McEachen, principal investigator for Richard Grubb and Associates, shows several of the Indian artifacts found at a housing development site in East Greenwich Township.

between 1,000 to 2,000 years old, were found, giving McEachen an indication of what would be discovered at the current site.

When the farm for Berkley Landing was purchased, a waterfront development permit was applied for. In order to receive the permit, an archaeological assessment must be completed and reviewed by the

Department of Environmental Protection's Historic Preservation Office, McEachen said. Richard Grubb and Associates was retained by CBD Development to perform the assessment. The property has since been sold to Signature Homes, he said.

To complete the assessment, the archaeological team first gathered any artifacts that

were on the surface.

Some of the artifacts found on top were in the "plow zone" of a tractor or from old asparagus trenches, he said. Even though these artifacts were thousands of years old, they were at or close to the ground's surface because of past cultivating of the ground,

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