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Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project

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Public Archaeology at Fort St. Joseph

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project practices community service learning.

This method involves field school students interacting with local people, providing students an opportunity to learn by engaging with real world settings while providing a community service. One of the main goals of the Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project is to incorporate the local community in all aspects of the archaeological enterprise in the investigation. Each year, the project offers various activities for those

"...If the community does not help define the questions, the answers probably will not interest them."

Derry 1997:24

interested in learning more about archaeology and French Colonial life. An Open House weekend at the site invites the public to tour the site, interact with archaeologists and learn more about the history of the fort and the project. Past open houses have featured an outdoor museum, a French Colonial village, tours of the site provided by project archaeologists and other activities. Week long summer camps for students, adults and teachers are also offered through the Fort St. Joseph Museum. During the camps, students learn about archaeology and get to excavate right



WMU archaeologists speak to visitors at the 2007 Open House.

along with project archaeologists. Members of the project also work to spread knowledge of Fort St. Joseph. Project archaeologists present fort history and our public archaeology program at various conferences. Recently, presentations were given at Williamsburg, St. Louis, Albuquerque, Québec, Vancouver, Puerto Rico and La Rochelle, France, as well as throughout Michigan and the Midwest. Integrating community service learning into the field school makes Fort St. Joseph archaeology a unique project.



Summer campers excavate alongside project archaeologists.