

Today there are opportunities for everyone from schoolchildren to senior citizens. Archaeology has a long history of non-archaeologists working closely with professionals. Early on only wealthy backers and locals with knowledge of the area were part of this relationship. Over the years the numbers and types of opportunities to participate have greatly expanded.

It is important that you find the right project for the experience you want.

Every opportunity is not suitable for every person. Some are designed with children in mind. Others might require camping for a long period. While another could entail a good amount of physical labor. You can even find laboratory work needing to be done

Once you have settled on the type of project you would like to be a part of, it is important that you check to make sure that it is operated by professionals.

Archaeologists follow ethical standards and respect the sites they investigate. Each project is designed to explore complex questions about the past. It is very important to make sure that your project leaders are professional archaeologists.

The key is to ask questions. Not only of the people running the project you are interested in, but also of other archaeologists and other participants. The more people you talk to, the better understanding you will have of the project, the people running it, and what your role will be.



The Arizona Archaeological Council is a 501c(3) non-profit organization



QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN AN ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT



Arizona Archaeological Council

(www.arizonaarchcouncil.org)

BEFORE YOU COMMIT: GET THE ANSWERS

There are a great variety of opportunities to join in the archaeological experience. The following are some questions to ask that will help you find a professionally run project that suits your interests and needs.

Is the project right for me?

Not all projects are for all people. Some require more time, money, or physical effort than you may want, or be able to, invest. In order to fit the project to your needs find out:

- A) How long you will be expected to commit to the project?
- B) How much will it cost?
- C) What accommodations are provided?
- D) What are you be expected to provide?
- E) What kind of work will you be doing? (Some tasks can be physically demanding; others might not be demanding enough.)
- F) What measures have been taken to provide a safe work environment?

Who is running the project?

When you join an archaeological project you agree to work under the direction of the professional staff. It is important that you understand the professional background, the personality, and the expectations of those running the project.

- A) Who is in charge of the project?
- B) For whom will you be directly working?
- C) What are the professional backgrounds of these individuals? (Feel free to ask to see resumes or names of other archaeologists who can provide references.)
- D) What have others thought of working for these people? (There is nothing wrong in asking for the names of those who have been there before you. They can give you the best feel for what to expect from the experience.)
- E) How do the archaeologists see the participants fitting into the project?
- F) How is the project funded? (Selling the artifacts that are recovered to fund the project is not professionally ethical.)

Is the legal and professional groundwork done?

Archaeologists do not just decide to go excavate or survey and head out to the field. There are professional and legal requirements that need to be completed. Ask to see the documentation if you have any doubts that these requirements have been met.

- A) Has the landowner given permission? (Work on Federal, State, and Tribal lands requires a permit.)
- B) Has a plan of the fieldwork and other research been completed?
- C) Have arrangements been made for the permanent storage of the recovered materials in a proper repository? Where?
- D) How will human remains be treated? Have Tribal groups been consulted?

Never hesitate to call archaeologists in the area to discuss the project. Tribal and Federal land-managing agencies and the State Historic Preservation Office have staff who can discuss the program with you.