

## NOTES ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR FIELD NOTES AND OTHER TEDIOUS POINTS WORTH REMEMBERING

1. Note if the quantity of artifacts is going up or down., e.g. there were many more pieces of FCR in this level than the previous level.
2. Note relative quantity of artifacts—dozens, hundreds, thousands?
3. Always note datum corner and elevation—ask your instructor what these are.
4. Please note who the recorder was.
6. Note roots, pebbles, clay, rodent burrows, etc. Be specific, are there many or few, are they filled in or new?
7. Note if the level you are in is a destruction level—e.g. full of broken rubble.
8. If you don't put your EU # down on the bag tag you might as well throw out the artifacts. All tags should also have depths as well as stratum designations. When the artifacts are cataloged they are cataloged directly from the tags.
9. Do not wash any burnt wood—the wood will fall apart.
10. Do not wash any projectile points—amino acid samples and other samples cannot be taken from washed artifacts. Place projectile points and stone tools in a separate bag to help preserve possible adhering residue.
11. Be sure that your team leader's name is somewhere on your notes. We want to know who to blame ☺.
12. Strata are layers of soil that share common qualities of color, texture, and composition. They can relate to natural activities—wind blow soil deposits, or cultural activities—plowing, knocking down a building. Levels are, for our purposes, subdivisions of strata (singular stratum). If you encounter a level of homogenous-looking soil more than two and one-half tenths of a foot deep (0.25'), you should start a new level. Levels should be designated numerically and start with the number one in each new stratum encountered. So, you could conceivably have a soil designation that was Stratum A-horizon, Level 2 (i.e. the second level excavated in the A-horizon stratum). You always want to use numbers for your levels so they don't get mixed up with your strata. We will be attempting to use geological terms for the soil horizons. A typical soil profile may be O-horizon (organic layer), A-horizon (topsoil), B1-horizon (subsoil), B2-horizon (subsoil). However, disturbance between soil layers or added soil layers as a result of human activities, may alter this profile. Be sure to indicate on your notes what type of soil stratum is being excavated, as well as the rough time period. Strata usually get older with depth so that the top stratum will have been deposited more recently than the

underlying stratum. This is extremely important to note on your field notes as it will help explain the sequence of events that lead to the site's formation and use.

13. If soils are mixed in a stratum or mottled, note the relative percentages of the different colors/textures of soil.
14. Always use a Munsell book to determine colors. Don't call something brown just because it looks sort of brown. Brown means different things to different people.
15. Do not dig with the point of the trowel. Scrape back towards yourself with the side.
16. Don't fill buckets to the brim. This is not an ironman or ironwoman contest. The point is to get the soil from the excavation unit to the screen with a minimum of effort. Even with light buckets you will find that you no longer need to go to the gym.
17. Never ever pull artifacts, no matter how strong they look, out of the side of the excavation. They will break in your hand. It will be embarrassing, and you might pick up a nasty nickname like weasel.
18. A well-dug excavation unit should look like a cube was dropped into the ground by a giant. The sides should not bow or slope. It should not look like a bathtub. Keep unit walls as vertical as possible.
19. DO NOT stand, sit, or place heavy buckets next to unit walls. Doing so will ensure that the walls will collapse. Please keep a distance of 1.5 feet between the edge of the unit and yourself. Don't sit on the side of the excavation.
20. Do not lay or sit in the unit! You cannot successfully excavate or examine differences in soil in this manner.
21. Always remember to use tools properly. This also means being aware of how and where you place them on the ground. Shovels and rakes should be placed blade edge toward the ground!!! Far too often are rulers and Munsell books destroyed. These are very expensive pieces of equipment, and some are on loan to the field school. We expect to have them returned in their original condition. Please fold rulers when done with them. Also, handle Munsell books with care. Don't rub soil into the book pages or remove color tabs.
22. Bag tags should be placed in a separate bag with the artifacts. Moist or dirt covered artifacts will make a bag tag moldy and illegible within days if placed together.
23. Students will be responsible for site setup and cleanup each field day.
24. No smoking anywhere near the excavations.
25. Don't even think about drinking—alcohol--on the site.

26. When in doubt, **do not be bashful. Ask questions.** The professors and field staff are there to instruct you in proper archaeological excavating techniques and are happy to answer any questions you may have.