May 7, 2003

Dear Dr. Overstreet,

I read with great interest your article (Dreaded Dolostone and Old Smudge Stories...) in the 2001 Centennial Issue of The Wisconsin Archaeologist.

The Backlund Mounds site here in Menominee County, Michigan is located on state land; however nearby associated archaeological sites on private land are currently threatened with destruction by exploratory drilling and potential mining operations.

Much more archaeological work needs to be undertaken along this stretch of the Menominee River to confirm the premise that Menominee pottery since about 1000 A.D. does indeed contain an Oneota component. Menominee and Oneota influences are found herein close propinity, namely woodland pottery, Oneota pottery, woodland pottery with Oneota influence, conical mounds and garden beds.

I'm not an archaeologist (just an interested local historian), but it has occurred to me too that perhaps there is more truth than fiction to the Menominee legend describing how thunderers bring corn and fire from the south merged with the Menominee bear clan which contributed wild rice. Old settlers in this region (deceased now) remembered seeing grasslands here (instead of the present day trees). They said the land had been burned over many times by the Indians (which indicates the use of fire was necessary to grow corn).

I wish funding for professional archaeologists to conduct on-site work along the Menominee River was available now, before mining interests prevail in this region. Do you have any suggestions concerning how such investigations might be accomplished soon?

Sincere best wishes,

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