Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum Cultural Resources Program supports local school students with virtual history tours

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – Local students are welcome to join the Fort Drum Cultural Resources Program on a series of archaeological field trips, and no permissions slips are required to attend.

That’s because the outings are virtual, and school children throughout the tri-county region are invited to explore regional archaeological history with the help of these educational videos.

Posted on YouTube and shared with local educators and administrators, the series titles include “Industrial History,” “Ancestral Places on Fort Drum” and “Glacial Lake Iroquois.”

“Our hope is that students will gain greater respect, appreciation and admiration for the indigenous ancestors and people of the past,” said Dr. Laurie Rush, Fort Drum Cultural Resources manager. “I am especially proud of the fact that we are encouraging the students who are watching these videos to also visit the Nation partner websites to learn, as we said in the tour, from the ‘true authorities.’”

Rush said that the subjects are applicable to elementary school curriculum in this area.

“New York state schools include the study of the Haudenosaunee people, so we were able to talk about the ancestral sites on Fort Drum and the indigenous people of New York,” she said. “Fifth or sixth grade curriculum includes peopling of the Americas, so we can also supplement that because of our very early sites, which is probably my most favorite topic in this realm.”

Ancient boatbuilding, a subject covered in the first video, is another one of Rush’s favorites. In it, she uses artifacts to show the types of tools used by ancestral people thousands of years ago.

“I like the topic because it brings back amazing memories of Dennis Stanford, the archaeologist from the Smithsonian who came to Fort Drum because he felt our sites were so important,” she said.

Rush said that virtual tours have some distinct advantages – one being that attendees won’t have to worry about ticks while traversing the training ranges.

“Also, virtual trips enable us to reach many more students,” she said. “During a typical student tour, we can’t have more than 20 children at a time for any sort of meaningful in-person experience, and I always feel terrible when we have to turn down requests.”

Educators can schedule a virtual meeting with students to discuss what they saw in the videos, and this will be offered for a limited time on a first-come, first-served basis. They can also suggest additional content material to include in the video series by contacting Wendy O’Sullivan, Fort Drum school liaison officer.

“The Cultural Resources team has always done a good job supporting the community with educational tours, and until they can do that again, the hope is that this video series will help fill that void for our local schools,” O’Sullivan said. “We welcome any feedback from students and teachers for future virtual field trips.”

The video series is accessible on YouTube under the “Fort Drum Educational Videos” channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9j9dJre7L_b3SSgKPWNrgg>.

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