

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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## SEARCH FOR MOUND BUILDERS' STATUS SYMBOLS IS UNDERWAY ON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

A search for the status symbols of a prehistoric race of North Americans is underway on a national wildlife refuge in Minnesota.

For the second summer, Professor Richard Lane of St. Cloud State College and five students continued excavating 50 Indian burial mounds on the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge near Princeton, Minnesota. The 32,000-acre refuge is operated by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The mounds are helping reveal burial patterns and caste status differences. Cultural clues dating back to 3,000 B.C. have been unearthed so far on the refuge's Rice Lake area, which is believed to have been occupied intensively for most of the preceding 5,000 years.

The group, working under an Antiquities Act permit issued by the Interior Department, has found traces of four or five mound building cultures and an archaic development which predates the mound builders. One of the smaller mounds yielded 10,000 pieces of pottery, which Professor Lane thinks is indicative of an affluent culture.

The St. Cloud group will try to determine why people develop status-conscious civilizations, and if concepts of wealth and property are essential to existence.

To determine how the people lived and adapted to the environment, however, the group must find the village sites.

Sherburne personnel hope that excavations also will indicate Indian relationships to wildlife and land. Artifacts will be made available by the college for use in the refuge's educational program.

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