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(Neb.) - 4th Grader Finds Ancient Archaeological Artifact While on School Field Trip

By: John Thayer Posted at: 05/15/2012 07:38 AM

(Crawford –May 10) Dennis Vogl, age 10 years climbed on the Crawford School Bus with Mrs. Cook and his 4th Grade Crawford Elementary Class yesterday knowing it would be a good day with the planned class field trip. But neither he nor anyone in the class was prepared for the excitement to follow at the Hudson-Meng Bison Kill Research and Visitor Center just 17 miles north of Crawford.

According to Dennis Kuhnel, the Hudson-Meng Director and students' tour guide for the day, the young student found a Plains Indian projectile point that could be up to 5,000 years old. Appropriately the historical find came during Kuhnel's instruction on archaeology and history of Plains Indians in western Nebraska.

"We visited Hudson-Meng as amateur paleontologists and during our walking tour with Dennis Kuhnel, I told the class as we walked down the trail, 'This would be a good place to find artifacts.' Dennis (Vogl) looked down and found the point right there!" said Mrs. Cindy Cook, Crawford Elementary 4th Grade teacher.

"I thought, 'Wow! This is a great find!'" said young Dennis Vogl. "I knew right away that it was an arrowhead!"

Kuhnel capitalized on the teachable moment with importance of federal laws that preserve treasures of the past of everyone, known as ARPA or the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979. "The class enthusiastically agreed to help the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands protect against artifact and fossil looters on the Oglala National Grassland," said Kuhnel.

Kuhnel said Hudson-Meng plans to open to the general public for Memorial Day weekend on May 26th with a special "Meet the Archeologists" event. "I also hope many visitors can come and visit with the Saint Cloud State University archeologists while they excavate at Hudson-Meng for the sixth consecutive field season later this summer."

Hudson-Meng Bison Kill Research and Visitor Center is located on the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands, Pine Ridge District and one of seven rich archaeological sites in western Nebraska's Fossil Freeway. Admission is \$5 and tours are welcome year round.