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Citation Details

Butler, V., Merrifield, L., Parks, V., and Anderson, S. (2021). Ten Years On: Engaging the Public Through the Archaeology Roadshow. *Journal of Northwest Anthropology Special Publication* 4.

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1. Ten Years On: Engaging the Public Through the Archaeology Roadshow

Virginia L. Butler, Lyssia Merrifield, Virginia Parks, and Shelby L. Anderson

Public engagement is a critical part of archaeologists' tool kit for encouraging people to look beyond the glittering but superficial appeal of "artifacts" to appreciate and respect the peoples and cultures that made them. Engagement takes many forms—from museum exhibits, archaeological site tours, K–12 curriculum, and social media to heritage tourism, documentary films, and more (Little 2002; Cressey et al. 2003; Skeates et al. 2012; Richardson and Almansa-Sánchez 2015). Whatever the medium or approach, a common goal is to increase the public's understanding of the broader values archaeology strives to promote (e.g., scientific literacy, cultural diversity, civic engagement, critical thinking) and to open the door for discussion of the ethical and moral issues surrounding the destruction of the archaeological record. At a practical level, most archaeology conducted in the U.S. is publicly funded in accordance with federal and state legislation. However, the products of this work remain largely invisible to the public (Resnick 2021), and the potential public benefit of archaeology is often under- or un-realized. Finding ways to share what we learn from these expenditures, to communicate why cultural heritage *matters*, is critical to gaining and sustaining public support for heritage projects.

One successful engagement model involves creating an "Archaeology Day," a multi-hour fair-like experience, where professional and avocational archaeologists and heritage specialists share temporary exhibits and hands-on activities designed to educate adults and children about a range of cultural heritage topics (Thomas and Langlitz 2016). Inspired by this model, Portland State University (PSU) faculty and students launched the first Archaeology Roadshow in 2012. Now an annual event, we invite community members from Tribes, federal and state agencies, private companies, and avocational organizations to develop interactive interpretive experiences for visitors. Such exhibits showcase

findings from recent cultural resources management (CRM) projects; explain how we create chronologies; provide hands-on experience in faunal analysis, stone tool making, fire making, and spear throwing (Figures 1-1–1-3); or illustrate how archival records or oral traditions can teach us about the past. Many show how our current lives are shaped by the past or what connects us all—past and present. Visitors meet *real* archaeologists and heritage specialists and learn, often for the first time, about the range and diversity of public and private entities engaged in cultural heritage activities.

In addition to exhibits, the Roadshow features “artifact identification.” Visitors are invited to bring artifacts to a panel of experts (with backgrounds in lithic artifacts, ceramics, zooarchaeology, historical archaeology, geology, paleontology) who examine and provide understanding about artifact function or age (Figure 1-4). The main goal of this component is to establish personal connections between archaeologists and collectors in order to highlight, in a non-judgmental way, the issues around artifact collecting. The Roadshow provides an opportunity to educate visitors about the ethical and legal implications of artifact collecting, including why collecting hurts our ability to learn about the past and personally degrades the heritage of descendent communities with direct ties to archaeological remains. The Roadshow also provides a venue where visitors can share their knowledge about archaeology on private land (e.g., Pitblado 2014). Connections established at the Roadshow have led to subsequent visits to private lands where professionals recorded sites, which were entered into state records. Collections are also in the process of being donated and curated as a result of those positive contacts (Tipton 2020).

How did the Archaeology Roadshow begin? Archaeology fairs are typically hosted by museums, parks, or agencies where archaeology and public engagement is part of the organization’s core mission (Thomas and Langlitz 2016). Our model is different in that a university, PSU, has the leadership role, due to several factors. One primary reason is the absence of heritage organizations in the City of Portland with the interest or capacity to lead such an effort. PSU faculty Virginia Butler discovered this while teaching a Public Archaeology class for anthropology students in 2012. In reading about various public outreach models (including a fair hosted by Sonoma State University, which



Figure 1-1.
Interactive booth
hosted by Dennis
Griffin (State
Archaeologist,
Oregon), Portland
Archaeology
Roadshow, 2019.
Photograph by
Kathryn Berg.



Figure 1-2.
Practice with
stone-tool
making, hosted
by Archaeological
Investigations
Northwest,
Inc., Portland
Archaeology
Roadshow, 2017.
Photograph by
Corey James.



Figure 1-3.
Interactive
booth hosted by
Fio Law (PSU
student), Portland
Archaeology
Roadshow, 2019.
Photograph by
Alexis Crow.



Figure 1-4.
Artifact
Identification
Table, Portland
Archaeology
Roadshow, 2013.
Photograph
by Kendal
McDonald.

is the namesake for our event), the class perceived the potential of organizing a fair on PSU campus. Realizing that there was no existing heritage organization to collaborate with on an outreach fair, Butler and the class decided to assume a lead role and organize the first Archaeology Roadshow. After about seven weeks of planning, the first Archaeology Roadshow was held on a Saturday in mid-March. Local CRM companies, agencies, Tribes, and avocational organizations were invited to create their own interactive exhibits about their organization's heritage projects, and an "artifact identification" panel was staffed by PSU faculty. By design the event coincided with the popular downtown Portland Farmers Market held on PSU campus, with the vision that visitors to the market would find their way to the Roadshow through signage and leaflets.

We regarded our first Roadshow as a success. PSU students and seven community partners participated, and 180 visitors came to the event (Table 1-1). Students gained firsthand public outreach experience through creating their own activity and working on the planning and logistics of the event. Community partners welcomed the chance to share their projects with the public and visitors were surprised and enthusiastic to learn about archaeology happening close to home. The event was even featured in *The Oregonian* (Budnick 2012).

We interpreted the positive feedback as an invitation to cultivate the project. We have hosted the Archaeology Roadshow annually in

Table 1-1. Overview of the Archaeology Roadshow, 2012–2021.

Year	Location	# of Visitors	# of Exhibits	# of Volunteers*	Theme
2012	Portland—PSU	180	7	-	-
2013	Portland— Museum of Science & Industry	575	~20	-	-
2014	Portland— Museum of Science & Industry	475	~25	35	-
2015	Portland—PSU	~800	40	40	Archaeology of Food
2016	Portland—PSU	728	34	70	Archaeology of Dwellings
2017	Portland—PSU	1100	~35	65	Archaeology of Travel and Trade
2017	Harney County	~375	~25	30	Archaeology of Travel and Trade
2018	Portland—PSU	1200	~40	40	Archaeology of Change
2018	Harney County	150**	~30	30	Archaeology of Change
2019	Portland—PSU	1200	~40	-	Archaeology of Daily Life
2019	Harney County	350	~35	-	Archaeology of Daily Life
2019	Central Oregon	~250–400***	~30	-	Archaeology of Daily Life
2020	COVID-19 Pandemic: Events planned for Portland, Harney County, and Central Oregon cancelled				
2021	Virtual	****	35	-	-

* In most years, volunteer counts include individuals who helped with the overall day-of logistics not for individual booths or activities.

** Extreme weather (rain, hail, high winds, etc.) affected attendance.

*** Difficult to estimate as visitors entered the event space from multiple sides.

**** The [Archaeologyroadshow.org](https://www.archaeologyroadshow.org) website was visited a total of 3.7 k times from June 1 until June 30, 2021. Site hosts 35 videos and blogs; recordings of 12 live presentations presented in Zoom; and a dynamic map of Oregon, showing places the public can visit.

Portland since 2012 (with the exception of 2020); and community participation and visitor counts have increased through time (Table 1-1). Our latest in-person event in Portland in 2019 attracted 1200 visitors that engaged with exhibits and activities hosted by 40 partners (Table 1-1). After five years of hosting the Portland event, we recognized the potential value this format offered for sharing Oregon's heritage across the state. In 2017, we expanded our outreach efforts in partnership with sister communities who expressed interest, taking the event to Harney County in 2017–2019 and to Bend starting in 2019 (Table 1-1) (Attachment 1-A and 1-B are examples of “day-of” brochures, which illustrate the range of activities hosted in Portland [2016] and Harney County [2017]).

The core components of the Roadshow have changed little over time. The events occur outside in late spring to coincide with the academic calendar and optimal weather. Students in PSU's Public Archaeology class remain central to the project, creating individual or group exhibits and activities which they share both in Portland and at one of the rural communities; they also help with the planning, publicity, and logistics. All of these efforts help them develop skills rooted in the ethics and practice of public engagement that they will take into the workforce. The Roadshow is made possible through the efforts of dozens of community partners and an army of volunteers that return to participate each year because they have fun and enjoy sharing their passions with visitors. Group photos taken at the end of the three events in 2019 illustrate the scale of commitment and volunteerism (Figure 1-5a–c).

We have typically organized each year's event around a theme, with past examples including *Archaeology of Food*, *Archaeology of Dwellings*, *Archaeology of Trade and Travel*, the *Archaeology of Change*, and the *Archaeology of Daily Life*. New themes each year offer heritage partners a lens through which to highlight new stories that are unique to their area and to the organization's mission. It also incentivizes visitors to return each year and find out more.

Another common element to the Roadshow experience is an interactive guide designed for children (Figure 1-6). The scavenger hunt-style handout encourages young visitors and their parents to interact with exhibitors, to ask questions, and to process what they learn. The card includes a tear-off strip through which we collect



Figure 1-5a. Volunteers at the Archaeology Roadshow event in 2019—Portland, Portland State University Campus. Photograph by Brian Crabtree.



Figure 1-5b. Volunteers at the Archaeology Roadshow event in 2019—Central Oregon, Deschutes Historical Museum, Bend. Photograph by Scott McKenzie.



Figure 1-5c. Volunteers at the Archaeology Roadshow event in 2019—Harney County, Hines, Oregon. Photograph by Lyssia Merrifield.

non-identifying information that helps us gauge participation. The children's experience culminates with creation of a souvenir such as a trade bead necklace or a button featuring their own artwork.

What is the organizational structure of our project? At the core are PSU faculty, our long-time agency partner—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and one part-time paid staff along with a volunteer Planning Committee, which provide organizational and logistical leadership and general support for both the Portland Roadshow and the sister Roadshows in Harney County and Central Oregon (Bend) (Attachment 1-C). This central “umbrella” organization serves several functions, including: creating and maintaining a webpage including online registration forms (part of PSU-Anthropology <https://www.pdx.edu/anthropology/archaeology-roadshow>) (Attachment 1-D); creating t-shirt designs and publicity materials tailored for each venue (Attachment, 1-E); creating and implementing visitor surveys (Attachment 1-F); and developing children's interactive activities (Figure 1-6). The PSU-based organization works collaboratively with each sister community through online meetings and conference calls throughout the year leading up to the annual events. PSU staff and faculty help to set agendas, review action items, and address questions and concerns that arise throughout the event planning process. The centralized Roadshow organizational structure supports economies of scale and a unified “brand” across the Roadshow venues.

The outreach value of the Archaeology Roadshow is demonstrated in myriad ways. First, the events provide a platform to communicate the importance of Oregon's rich heritage and need for stewardship to a broad range of Oregonians. Second, visitors gain an appreciation of local archaeology and heritage, and citizens' role in stewardship. Visitors have come to know the heritage specialists in their own area with whom they can communicate as they have questions about heritage. Third, the Roadshow provides organizations a mechanism for communicating what they *do* in the public interest, i.e., through public funds. Without the Archaeology Roadshow, many of the insights and values of archaeology and heritage funded by the public would remain locked away in academic articles, technical compliance reports, and museum basements. Fourth, as we have witnessed in both Harney County and Central Oregon, hosting an outreach celebration focused on heritage helps the local partners build their own community

support for heritage activities after the Roadshow event is over. In addition, because the sister Roadshows require the collaboration of urban and rural professionals, volunteers, and students, the event has had the effect of building bridges across the state, joining people with common interests in heritage education and stewardship. Last but not least, participating in the Roadshow has provided hands-on public outreach experience to the next generation of archaeologists and heritage specialists who will pursue their careers imbued with the ethos that public archaeology is a professional responsibility.

A project like ours is always a work in progress and we have several goals for the future. Indigenous voices are essential to telling the stories of Oregon's heritage, and increased Tribal involvement is a key goal. Expanding the Roadshow to other communities in Oregon is another goal, along with developing a sustainable funding model to ensure continuity and increase confidence for organizations who may use the Archaeology Roadshow model as part of mitigation featuring public outreach.

Postscript: Coping with the Coronavirus

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Roadshow in two main ways. First, federal and state rules issued in March 2020 restricting large public gatherings forced cancellation of our planned spring events. Then in fall 2020, continuing uncertainties associated with the coronavirus prompted the Planning Committee—which includes members from the Portland area, Harney County, and Central Oregon—to pivot once again and host a *virtual* Roadshow during the month of June 2021.

Over multiple Zoom calls, our group developed a plan for a new website (archaeologyroadshow.org) where we hosted virtual exhibits (videos, blogs) created by community partners and PSU students as an alternative to the usual face-to-face exhibits; and a dynamic map featuring Oregon's cultural heritage locations that will be accessible to the public once COVID restrictions are relaxed. We hosted a speaker series for the month of June, including 12 real-time public Zoom presentations on topics such as Indigenous views about archaeology and heritage, ancient coprolites, citizen science to protect coastal Scotland's heritage, and new insights from recent projects across Oregon. The talks were recorded and are freely accessible

on our website. We also hosted two real-time Zoom-based “artifact identification” panels where visitors met virtually with specialists in archaeology and geology to learn more about their personal objects.

While we knew a virtual experience wouldn’t replace our live celebrations, we wanted to keep the Roadshow spirit alive during this challenging time. Looking for silver linings, we also hoped that a virtual Roadshow might generate more public participation and perhaps encourage more organizations from around the state to host events since people could join in without having to drive long distances. Also, since we’d be able to host our virtual activities long after June, the public (both in Oregon and around the world) could keep engaging with the Roadshow project long after June’s events ended. Our website garnered 3.7 k visits during June 2021; a total of 378 visitors attended our Zoom presentations and panels. As we plan for 2022 and hopefully a return to face-to-face events, we will consider ways to include elements of our virtual Roadshow in future events.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are extremely grateful to the many individuals and organizations that have made the Archaeology Roadshow possible: the dozens of volunteers who have helped out in countless ways over the years; the Tribes, agencies, companies, schools, and heritage organizations who have participated as exhibitors and financial sponsors; the local businesses who have contributed funds and in-kind materials and services; the Planning committees in Portland, Harney County and Central Oregon for the great ideas and practical solutions they brought to all of our meetings; PSU staff, students, and faculty who have supported this project from the beginning; and the PSU Foundation for help with administrating funds. The Archaeological Roadshow has received financial support from the State of Oregon (Oregon Heritage Grant; the Cultural Trust of Oregon); and Sigma XI. Staff from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office were instrumental in helping us develop a strategic plan.

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HOW DO WE REACH MORE?

ATTACHMENT 1-A. "Day-of" brochure and visitor guide for 2016, Portland Archaeology Roadshow.

Thanks to our Contributors!

PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION
Healthy Parks. Healthy Portland

Willamette Cultural Resources Associates, Ltd.
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<p>Daniel and Maria Gilmour Mary Alice Hestetter Mary Rossi and Eppard Vision Amanda Taylor and Matthew Saunders Oregon Historical Society Bonneville Power Administration Oregon Archaeological Society Cathlapote Plankhouse Field and Vine Events Southern Oregon Laboratory of Anthropology Archaeological Services LLC Peet's Coffee</p>	<p>Architectural Heritage Center Laurelwood ChefStable Gerber Gear SWCA Rewild Portland Dr. Cameron Smith Rogue</p>
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Archaeology Roadshow 2016

"The Archaeology of Dwellings"

This project is funded in part by the Oregon Heritage Commission

Table # Exhibit Name		
1. Welcome Table 1	15. Architectural Plank House Styles of the Southern NW Coast & Archaeology (Lower Columbia Research & Archaeology LLC)	27. Portland Heritage Trees & Your History (Urban Forestry, Portland Parks & Recreation)
2. Welcome Table 2	16. Survival Arts: Making Fire, Baskets & More (Rewild Portland)	28. Raffle Table - Help us take the Archaeology Roadshow to the rest of Oregon!!
3. History of Household Fabrics (PSU Student)	17. Constructing a Plankhouse & Flintknapping (Archaeological Investigations/NorWest, Inc.)	29. Know Your City
4. Aurora County Archaeological Site (Willamette Cultural Resources Associates, LTD)	18. Making Baskets (Robert Kennta, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians)	30. Sustainable Architecture? Fur Trade Houses & WWI Tents (Nat'l Park Service)
5. Grand Ronde Tribes Historic Preservation Department	19. Expert Table - Bring your personal artifacts for ID! (No Financial Valuation)	31. Excavate a Northern Fur Seal (Bovacavations)
6. Natural Resources of NW Tribal Regions (Southwest Clatter School)	20. Insects in Archaeology (Pulco insect Research)	32. Archaeology of Houses Occupied by Chinese in Jacksonville (OR) (Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology/ Oregon Historical Society)
7. Stump Houses (Historical Research Associates)	21. Chinookan Foods & Tools (Cathlapote Plankhouse/ Friends of the Ridgefield Natl. Wildlife Refuge)	33. Dwellings of Chinese Miners in Southern & Eastern Oregon (U.S. Forest Service, Malheur Natl. Forest)
8. Bureau of Land Management	22. Explore Archaeological Field Methods! (PSU Student Preservation Commission)	34. Dwelling on the Past - Historic Living & Working (U.S. Forest Service - Gifford Pinchot & Mt. Hood Natl. Forests)
9. Powering Your Home (Bonneville Power Administration)	23. Historic Sites in Clark County (Clark County Historic Preservation Commission)	35. Scavenger Hunt Adventure (Association of Oregon Archaeologists)
10. Recreating a Recipe: A Refreshing Look at Beer History (Oregon Hops & Brewing Archives/Green Dragon)	24. Household Archaeology (Archaeological Services, LLC)	36. Atlatl & Dart Throwing Activity (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)
11. Dwell on Ceramics & Glass (PSU Student)	25. Oregon Archaeological Society	37. Flintknapping with Dennis Torresdal (Oregon Archaeological Society)
12. Tribal Plankhouse Technologies of Western Oregon (David Lewis, Grand Ronde Tribes; Greg Archuleta, Clackamas Chinook, Santiam Kalapuya, Shasta, & Grand Ronde Tribes)	26. Photo Booth: Tell us What Archaeology Means to You (PSU Student and Alumni)	
13. Oregon State Historic Preservation Office		
14. SWCA Environmental Consultants		

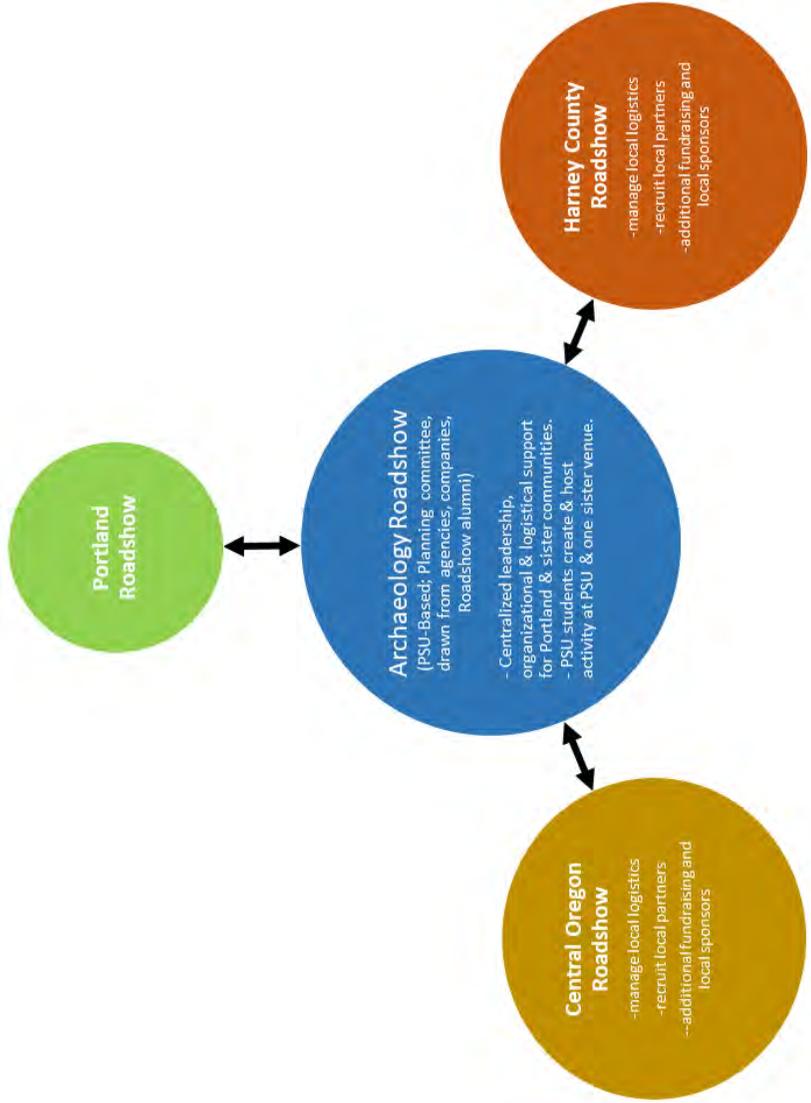
Thank you for joining us for the 5th annual Archaeology Roadshow! This event, hosted by universities, tribes, government agencies, private companies and avocational organizations, is our chance to share our knowledge and passion for humanity's past with the public.

Our goal is to host this event every year and keep it free and open to the widest public possible. We're even planning to take the Roadshow "on the road" in 2017, partnering with organizations in Burns, OR to host a mini-Roadshow there. Since all our funding comes from donations and grants, we need financial support from visitors that can help us. Consider purchasing a raffle ticket or go on-line and support us via our webpage: pdx.edu/anthropology/archaeology-roadshow Credit Cards welcome.

Please keep following your interest in archaeology and heritage throughout the year. Many organizations host lectures, archaeological site visits, and heritage celebration days. Ask someone at the Welcome Table about ways you can participate in these.

HOW DO WE REACH MORE?

ATTACHMENT I-C. Organizational chart, illustrating the relationship between PSU-based Archaeology Roadshow, which provides leadership, staff, and a volunteer planning team to support events in Portland and sister communities, hosted by local planning committees.



ATTACHMENT I-D. Screen shots of 2019 Archaeology Roadshow webpage, and links to sister events for 2019.

Registration Forms:

Portland OR Archaeology Roadshow

Exhibitor and Volunteer registration for the 2019 Portland Archaeology Roadshow has closed. View the [Exhibitor Registration form](#) for reference. If you have any questions please email us at archshow@pdx.edu

Please donate to the Roadshow to keep it free and open to widest audience possible:

GIVE >

Having trouble or have any questions? Please email us at archshow@pdx.edu

Central Oregon Archaeology Roadshow

Exhibitor registration for the 2019 Central Oregon Archaeology Roadshow has closed. View the [Exhibitor Registration form](#) for reference. Interested in Volunteering? Register here: [Volunteer Registration by May 7th](#) Please donate to the Roadshow to keep it free and open to widest audience possible:

GIVE >

Having trouble or have any questions? Please email us at archshow@pdx.edu

Harney County Archaeology Roadshow

Interested in Exhibiting? Register here: [Exhibitor Registration by March 15th- Deadline Extended!](#) Register Now! Interested in Volunteering? Register here: [Volunteer Registration by May 7th](#) Please donate to the Roadshow to keep it free and open to widest audience possible:

GIVE >

Having trouble or have any questions? Please email us at archshow@pdx.edu

ATTACHMENT 1-F. Example visitor survey used in 2019 Portland Event.

Archaeology Roadshow 2019 PDX Participant Survey

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. Your responses will help us improve the event in future years! Please note that we are not collecting or sharing any personal identification information.

Turn this in at the survey booth to receive a FREE raffle ticket!

Zip Code		Your Age	
# Adults in Group 18 & older		# Youth in Group 17 & younger	
Is this your first visit to Archaeology Roadshow?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no, how many times have you attended?	

How did you hear about Archaeology Roadshow? (check all that apply)					
Sandwich Board/ Farmers Market <input type="checkbox"/>	Just walking by <input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media: <i>Facebook</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reddit</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	Friend <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Flyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Print media
				Where posted?	Which publication?
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe):					

What was your favorite thing at the Roadshow?

What would you suggest we do to improve it for next year?

What Theme would you like to see for next year's Archaeology Roadshow?

What is one thing you learned about archaeology today?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Virginia L. Butler earned a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Georgia, and an M.A. in Anthropology and a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Washington. She joined the Department of Anthropology at Portland State University in 1995 and retired in 2020. Her primary research focuses on the long-term relationships between people and animals, especially fishes, which she has addressed mainly through zooarchaeology. Her regional focus is the Pacific Northwest, but she has also carried out work in Oceania and the Great Basin of western North America. Since 2012, Butler has been the lead organizer of the Archaeology Roadshow, an annual large-scale public outreach event that takes place on PSU campus and sister communities in Oregon.

Lyssia Merrifield is the Project Manager for the Archaeology Roadshow, a public outreach event series celebrating archaeology and Oregon's cultural heritage. For 9 years she has worked to grow the Roadshow from a single event to a series of events across Oregon and helped create a new virtual event platform and web hub for archaeology and cultural heritage. She is a graduate of Portland State University with a B.A. in Anthropology and of Linfield College with a B.A. in Studio Art and Creative Writing.

Virginia Parks has been an archaeologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Pacific Northwest Region, in Portland, Oregon for 25 years. After earning a B.A. in Classical Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College and a MAT in Museum Education at George Washington University, she headed west to develop teaching curriculum and resources focusing on the site of Cathlapotle at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in Washington. She has been conducting cultural resource compliance and public education and outreach for the FWS ever since.

Shelby L. Anderson is an Associate Professor in Anthropology at Portland State University. She obtained her B.A. from Western Washington University, and her MS and PhD from the University of Washington. Her research interests include human eco-dynamics; food preparation technologies; applied archaeology; and archaeology of the Arctic, Subarctic, and Pacific Northwest.