



For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Please see the mid-Atlantic destination contacts with each section below. For general Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance information, please contact:

Julie Donovan, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
MATPRA Chairperson
724-238-5661, ext. 18
jdonovan@laurelhighlands.org
www.matpra.org

NEWS AND STORY IDEAS

Just Dig It

(U.S.MID-ATLANTIC – MARCH 14, 2007) Archaeology attractions in the Mid-Atlantic region bring to life the human past from Native Americans, through European colonization, to present day. Archaeologists have determined that Native Americans were present in the Mid-Atlantic region for at least 12,000 years. European and African peoples established some of the first colonies in the New World.

The archaeology of the Mid-Atlantic reflects the stories of seafaring trade and transportation, enslavement, plantation and city life, religion, and politics. Discover the region's rich archaeological heritage with museum exhibits, festivals and hands-on excavation experiences.

Visitors can explore the science and art of archaeology too. View the archaeological site collections – the artifacts, field notes, photographs, and drawings of professional excavations. Or survey underwater archaeology and historical shipwrecks.

Delaware

The First State celebrates Delaware Archaeology Month in May. For year-round adventure, explore Delaware's prehistoric archaeology with artifacts, photographs and paintings at the Delaware Archaeology Museum. Create your own fossil at Iron Hill Museum. At the DiscoverSea Shipwreck Museum, search for coins and artifacts washed ashore over hundreds of years. *Delaware Tourism Office, 302-672-6857 or toll-free 866-284-7483, www.visitdelaware.com.*

Plan a “dig” of your own at the Delaware Archaeology Museum. It highlights more than 11,000 years of human habitation in Delaware. Exhibited artifacts range from arrowheads, ceramics, and other stone and bone tools, to glass and personal objects used in Delaware from the 17th to 20th centuries. *Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau, 302-734-7511, www.visitdover.com.*

Learn the basics of why and how archaeology is conducted at Greenbank Mills, Northern Delaware’s 300 year old gristmill and 19th-century farm. Find out what tools and methods are used. Participate in a hands-on excavation at Greenbank’s prepared archaeological site. Work in an archaeological lab restructuring ceramics. *Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau, 302-652-4088 x215, www.VisitWilmingtonDE.com.*

The Zwaanendael Museum in Lewes, Delaware is home to a variety of exhibits showcasing artifacts from the Dutch settlement of Lewes in 1631, the bombardment of Lewes in the War of 1812, and artifacts recovered from an 18th century Royal Navy shipwreck off the coast of Cape Henlopen. Admission is free. *Southern Delaware Tourism, 302-856-1818, www.visitsoutherndelaware.com.*

Maryland

The National Park Service has recognized Historic St. Mary's City in Southern Maryland as "probably the most intact 17th-century English town surviving in our nation...represented entirely by archaeological resources." Visitors can watch ongoing excavations, and serious students are invited to complete a rigorous ten-week Field School in Historical Archaeology. *Maryland Office of Tourism, 800-719-5900, www.visitmaryland.org.*

A 17th-century port town comes to life before your eyes at Historic London Town and Gardens, home of Maryland’s largest ongoing archaeological dig. Lend a hand during public “Dig Days,” sift through artifacts, or simply observe. Finds will be on display at London Town’s new Visitors Center, opening in 2007. *Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau, 888-302-2852, www.visitannapolis.org.*

In historic Ellicott City, Maryland, walk through the stabilized ruins of the Patapsco Female Institute and learn about one of the most famous schools for young women in 19th century America. The granite Greek Revival structure with its four soaring Doric columns sits atop the town’s highest elevation, overlooking the dramatic Patapsco River Valley. *Howard County Tourism, 1-800-288-TRIP (8747), www.visithowardcounty.com*

Maryland celebrates history during Maryland Archaeology Month in April. With more than thirty museums, Washington County has many artifacts that tell the story of our past. There is ongoing archaeological research at several local historical sites, but kids can get their hands dirty digging for dinosaur bones at Discovery Station! *Hagerstown-Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau, 301-791-3246, or toll free 888-257-2600, www.marylandmemories.com.*

Pennsylvania

Celebrate the people and cultures of the past in historic Lancaster County. Artifacts serve as lasting reminders of the people who created local history at the Heritage Center Museum, and a new exhibit explores the “Natives of the Susquehanna” at the North Museum of Natural History and Science. *Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau, 717-735-0311 or www.padutchcountry.com.*

In the Independence Living History Center, the public can watch as archaeologists conserve artifacts discovered during the building of the National Constitution Center. The colonial-era conservation site once housed an integrated neighborhood of slaves, Quakers, and free African-Americans. Most *Once Upon A Nation* tours also depart from the Center. *Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, 215-599-7433 or www.gophila.com.*

Over 40,000 tools of more than 60 early American crafts and trades are displayed in the Mercer Museum, Doylestown. Constructed in 1916 by Henry Chapman Mercer, the museum is a National Historic Landmark. The towering castle houses dramatic displays of the implements, folk art and furnishings of early America before mechanization. *Bucks County Conference & Visitors Bureau, 215-639-0300 x231 or www.buckscountycvb.org.*

Virginia

Virginia’s archaeological heritage is in the spotlight more than ever with the commemoration of America’s 400th Anniversary: Jamestown 2007. Historic Jamestown’s new Archaearium puts visitors in close touch with the digs at the original Jamestown site. The new Virginia Natural History Museum in Martinsville showcases Virginia’s archaeological discoveries. *Virginia Tourism Corporation, 800-932-5827 or www.Virginia.org.*

History can be found around every corner in Alexandria, VA, but did you also know that it can be found just underfoot? Alexandria Archaeology is a group dedicated to preserving and sharing what lies just below the surface. Their museum hosts hands-on exhibits, classes, and ways for visitors to get involved. *Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association, 703-838-4200 ext. 207 www.funside.com.*

East of Roanoke, Virginia you will find Thomas Jefferson’s Poplar Forest. Jefferson kept his 1806 retirement villa retreat a secret. In 2007 archaeologists will be searching for the remains of plantation structures, gardens, and orchards known only through Jeffersonian documents. Special archaeology tours on October 6 for Virginia Archaeology Month. *Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, 540-342-6025 or toll-free 800- 635-5535 x 114, www.visitroanokeva.com.*

Learn about the critical role played by Navy divers turned archaeologists at The Mariners’ Museum’s USS *Monitor* Center. See how they challenged the “Graveyard of the Atlantic” to find and save over a thousand priceless artifacts. Watch an ongoing archaeology dig at an 18th-century site. All in Newport News, Virginia. *Newport News Tourism Development Office, 757-926-1429, www.newport-news.org.*

West Virginia

Interested in archeology? Then don't miss the Blennerhassett Museum's Stahl Collection of Prehistoric Indian Relics, one of the oldest and largest such exhibits in the United States. Assembled 1865 - 1923, hundreds of artifacts reveal what life was like for Native Americans in the Ohio Valley thousands of years ago. *Greater Parkersburg Convention & Visitors Bureau, 304-428-1130 or toll-free 800-752-4982, www.parkersburgcvb.org.*

About the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance

The Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance is a cohesive unit of regional tourism partners encompassing Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington D.C.

The group serves travel journalists by creating a regional resource that ignores geographical boundaries. The Alliance promotes common threads and offers saleable stories to journalists about the Mid-Atlantic destination as a whole. Learn more about our partnership at www.matpra.org.

Join us at the 4th Annual MATPRA Media Marketplace in Hampton, VA June 27-29, 2007. Contact Mary Fugere or Ryan Lafata at 800-487-8778 or 757-728-5328 for marketplace information.