

Bering Land Bridge to be studied this summer

Archeologists will study Bering Land Bridge National Preserve this summer to learn more about the cultural heritage of the area, according to Preserve Superintendent Larry Rose.

Park Service archeologist Jeanne Schaff will lead an on-the-ground survey of the preserve's interior lands this summer. Next summer the study will continue in the coastal areas of the preserve.

"The goal of the survey,"

Schaff says, "is to identify sites likely to reveal information about early inhabitants, so important sites can be protected from development or other disturbance." She anticipates there are many significant sites in the area.

The Bering Land Bridge is believed to be the primary route of prehistoric hunters and gatherers into North America, but knowledge of these early people is quite limited, she explained.

"We are interested in the whole historical picture of the area, from early man up to recent times."

Study emphasis will be on a surface survey, said Schaff, with a minimum of ground disturbance and artifact collection. People who know the area well may be most helpful in identifying and protecting these sites, she said.

The most important site we know of in the preserve—Trail Creek caves—was discovered in 1928 by two hunters from Deering. That site," she says, "reveals people were in the area 10,000 years ago, and they may have been there earlier."