

Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

October 2016

Do you ever wonder where your trash goes? Of course not! Most archaeologists, on the other hand, are enthusiastic about historic, prehistoric, and sometimes modern trash because they can retrieve, process, and interpret information that can give clues to how people lived in the past. Archaeologists refer to areas where trash was discarded as *middens*. A midden on-reservation more than likely has a significant amount of faunal bones. So, why is this important?



Deer metapodial fragment cut along shaft
2016.6.1

The presence of faunal material helps archaeologists identify and interpret the diet of past societies. The artifact of the month is a leg or arm bone fragment of a deer that has a straight cut mark on one end of the bone. Archaeologists examine and observe the presence of cut marks on bones to determine if the animal was processed for consumption and utilitarian use. This bone was probably cut to get at the marrow.

When an animal was hunted generally most parts of the animal was used and this included the skin, shell, and sometimes bones. Middens on the reservation generally consist of snakes, turtles, fish, shellfish, snails, bobcat, turkey, alligator, opossum, rabbit, raccoon, and deer. This is just a short list of the different types of animals hunted, but it's this type of information that provides archaeologists with an idea of what was on the menu.

