

## Welcome to the Murray State University Archaeology Laboratory

The MSU Archaeology Laboratory has launched this web page to share data and resources. We are in the midst of a long-term effort to recatalog our collections and digitize our records. This effort is still in its early stages, but we have decided to go ahead and offer what we can, and update periodically as we go. For further information about the formats of our catalogs and data files, please see below. Libraries of data for specific projects digitized so far and research tools used in MSUAL projects are listed to the left. Current projects include recataloging of our accessions beginning with 1978, recataloging the Savage Cave collection and updating the management plan, inventorying our library and map holdings, completing the catalog of the 2006 Columbus-Belmont project, and washing the 2007 Wickliffe Mounds fence mitigation and the 2007 Ford's Bay field school excavation. For comments or questions, please contact Dr. Kit Wesler, Director of the lab, at [kit.wesler@murraystate.edu](mailto:kit.wesler@murraystate.edu).

### The digitization project

The MSU Archaeology Laboratory has been working on developing digital versions of the field forms used in archaeological projects, and implementing digital field recording for the past couple of years. Field data are recorded in several formats: MS Word, MS Excel, and MS Access. Word and Excel files can be converted easily to Adobe .pdf files, which can be read or downloaded over the internet.

MS Access files are trickier. Most (maybe all) security settings treat an Access database as an executable program, meaning that they see an Access file as a virus and do not allow transmittal by electronic means. Many of our basic record forms are designed with an Access data-entry form, creating a database with hyperlinks to photos and drawings.

As an experiment, we have uploaded the Access files in two ways: as html tables and as zipped versions of the original form-and-database. Visitors are welcome to browse the data files as tables. Visitors who would like to see the originals as they were designed will need to download the zipped database and also the "linked photos" and "linked drawings" or "linked scans" folders, and group them all into a project folder. At this point, we do not know if this will actually work, but we would appreciate somebody trying it and letting us know.

There also may be some problems in using the Access 2002 files in Access 2007, and we are working with the conversion. Eventually we hope to coordinate the whole mess into a set of relational databases and publish them to the internet via SQL server, but that program is a bit beyond our resources for the time being.

This whole thing is an experiment, so please be patient!

Note that our catalog files are basic inventories, not complete analyses.

Eventually, we hope to have all of our records, minus exact site locations and private ownership data, for all sites represented in our collections or researched by MSUAL personnel. The MSUAL was first organized by Dr. Kenneth Carstens in 1978. The current organization, recataloging and digitization projects build on the basic structure he established. Digitizing the entire collection is a long-term process, but we take seriously the proposition that our program is funded by taxpayer dollars and exists to be a steward of information about our common heritage in the public interest, and therefore our results must be accessible to the interested public. To the extent of our resources and programming skills, we are working towards that goal.