ARCH 2500  Evaluating Archaeological Field Methods

The goal of this exercise is for you to understand and evaluate how an archaeological field project is conducted and how field methods are linked to research problems.

1) Find an article in an archaeological journal that describes the field methods used in finding and/or excavating a site. Here’s a list of journals that should be good places to start.

Antiquity
Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society
Expedition
Journal of Field Archaeology
North American Archaeologist
Texas Archaeology

2) Photocopy the article to hand in with your answers.

3) Describe the problem orientation of the research. What are they interested in knowing about? What do they hope to find out about the site they are investigating?

4) Describe the methods that are used to find or excavate a site. Do they use systematic survey? Remote sensing techniques? What kind? Test excavations? How many units? Areal excavations? How large? How did they decide where to dig? Screening?

5) Discuss the reasons for using those methods. If it is not explicitly stated in the article, why do you think those methods were chosen? How do those methods help the researchers answer the questions they are interested in knowing about?

6) Evaluate the field methods. Do the field methods used provide the kind of samples needed to address the research problem? What else might the researcher have done to get the samples they needed?