

Call for Applicants
Content Coordinator / Editor
Grand Meadow Chert Quarry Project – Interpretive Program

Overview

The Mower County Historical Society (**MCHS**), the Prairie Island Indian Community (**PIIC**) and The Archaeological Conservancy (**TAC**) seek a qualified individual or organization to serve as the **Content Coordinator/Editor (CC/E)** for Phase 3 of the Grand Meadow Chert Quarry (**GMCQ**) Project. This phase of the project involves the preparation of the written drafts and associated images for the Interpretive Program materials, which will be developed in three formats:

- 1) on-site signage for a self-guided walking tour, consisting of at least 10 Dakota/English bilingual signs on themes and topics to be determined;
- 2) a related online Visitor’s Guide, relying on the same themes and topics with additional information;
- 3) a pair of 8-minute informative videos.

The CC/E will be responsible for coordinating the successful completion of preliminary drafts for all materials under each format. The actual construction of the signage, and the production of the guide and the videos, will occur within a separate, later phase.

Throughout the project the CC/E will collaborate with the Project Coordinator and a team of expert advisors, which includes four archaeologists, four staff members from Prairie Island Indian Community, a specialist on Minnesota lithics, two landscape architects, a DNR program officer and two educators, among others. This position is funded by a grant from the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant (MHCHG) program. The position is from **August 10, 2021 to May 31, 2022**.

Project Background

The Grand Meadow Chert (**GMC**) Quarry is a 170-acre archaeological site on the National Register of Historic Places near the town of Grand Meadow in Mower County, MN. Most of the site is now hidden below what is mostly cultivated farmland, but there is a notable exception: a small 8-acre patch of woods that contains a completely pristine remnant of the original Native American open-pit quarry, estimated to have been in use for at least 8,000 years. There are 88 pits and trenches clearly visible, and none of the original surface is easily seen on the undulating landscape.

The entire interior of the woodlot is made up of large pits dug by hand using tools of stone, antler, bone and wood, and the corresponding spoil piles of dirt removed as each pit was excavated to reach the layer of chert below. Surface collections of the surrounding fields indicate that the original quarry was substantially larger than this small remnant. Using the known density of pits within today’s woods, the entire site appears to have had well over 2,000 quarry pits.

The GMC Quarry is the most extensively utilized Native American site in the state for providing stone for making tools, and the only example where there is evidence of chert having been

extracted through digging. It is one of only a few such places regionally that have preserved quarry pits, and stands out for its remarkable condition: except for the additional trees and shrubs that have appeared since the prairie fires ended when farming began, it appears unchanged from its last day of use.

The distinctive and high-quality Grand Meadow Chert is found at sites in 52 counties throughout Minnesota and in Wisconsin and Iowa. Perhaps the finest of material from Minnesota for making chipped stone tools, all artifacts made of GMC are sourced solely from this site. Fortunately, The Archaeological Conservancy chose this untouched woodlot as their first property in Minnesota to purchase and protect. The MCHS, The Archaeological Conservancy and the Prairie Island Indian Community are now working in collaboration to develop the preserved wooded portion of the quarry site for public access, education and preservation. A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is required prior to any development of this National Register site, and that is now underway with the firm of Quinn Evans. As the CLR research continues, the Project partners are currently seeking a person or team for a significant role in the interpretation of the site.

Scope of Work

The Content Coordinator/Editor will:

- Report to the MCHS Executive Director (**ED**) and the Project Coordinator.
- Participate with all project participants, including the Project Archaeologist, the CLR Team, representatives from the Prairie Island Indian Community, members of the Advisory Team, and the MCHS staff.
- Manage communications to those participants regarding the Interpretive Program.
- Identify and propose writers with input and support from the project participants and PIIC staff, for providing text to be used on ten onsite signs and in the Visitor's Guide.
- Identify and propose artists and map makers for all formats.
- Research signage for passive interpretation used at other cultural and natural sites, for sustainability, readability, weather resistant characteristics and ease of cleaning.
- Research and make recommendations for materials for the signage.
- Work with writers to identify maps, artwork and photos to be created, as needed.
- Direct artists and map makers through to the completion of their work.
- Determine a proposed layout for each sign.
- Establish and maintain deadlines, and determine word budgets for copy to be used.
- Provide final drafts in English to the PIIC translator for versions in Dakota.
- Develop, with the writers, extended versions of their themes and topics as text for the online Visitor's Guide.
- Create a draft of the Visitor's Guide for the review and approval process.
- Coordinate with the video producer for outlines for the completion of two short videos.
- Edit all interpretive materials.
- Provide final drafts of texts to the ED for PIIC Tribal Council review and approval.
- Provide final drafts of texts to the ED for MNHS Legacy Staff for approval.
- Provide quarterly updates submitted by email to the ED and Project Coordinator that briefly summarize interpretive activities, for sharing with the MCHS Board and MNHS.

Project Timeline

Phase 1: The project began in late 2019 with multiple presentations to Mower County residents and leaders, and to the THPO staff at Prairie Island. An exhibit was created and opened at the MCHS museum in Austin. A request for Legacy Grant funding for a CLR was prepared in, submitted and awarded in 2020.

Phase 2: The Cultural Landscape Report contract was awarded to Quinn Evans in 2021. Their work continues into March of 2022.

Phase 3: Creating drafts for the materials to be used in the Interpretive Program will begin **August 10, 2021 and continue to May 31, 2022**. At 25% completion of the project, a report to MNHS is required listing research sources and methodology. At 75% completion, drafts for all 3 interpretive formats must be submitted to MNHS for review and approval.

Required Experience

The Content Coordinator/Editor *must*:

- Have a BA or above in Archaeology or Anthropology, American Indian Studies, Education or an accepted related field;
- Have experience with interpretive writing for public audiences;
- Have experience editing interpretive texts, and combining diverse voices into a single set of texts;
- Be able to attend meetings in person outside of the Twin Cities or by Zoom with project partners, advisors and writers. Travel stipends will be provided.

Additional Preferred Qualifications

- Be experienced in educational programs both for the public and for classrooms.
- Be a Member of the National Association of Interpreters, or a similar national organization.
- Have demonstrated experience in precontact Minnesota archaeology or cultural history.

MCHS Contract and Review of Proposals

Evaluation of proposals and the selection of the successful applicant will be based on the “best value” approach identified in MN Statutes Chapter 16C.02, Subd. 4, whereby ultimate selection of the winning contractor is determined not just by price but by other factors, including the proposer’s relevant experience and past performance. Proposals will be evaluated and scored on a consensus basis by an *ad hoc* committee of the MCHS Board.

The stipend for the CC/E is based on an anticipated 180 work hours, not to exceed a budget of \$9,000 regardless of time expended. Approved travel expenses will be covered separately. The Mower County Historical Society will make partial payments upon submission of invoices, no more often than monthly. No more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the total contract amount will be paid prior to the acceptance of the final report by the funder.

This is Phase 3 of a project in four phases. A separate Phase 4 in 2022 will involve the creation of materials based on the work referred to here, including construction and placement of signage, the building of a website for the visitor's guide, and the production of two 8-minute informational videos.

Reservation of Rights

The Mower County Historical Society and its Project Partners reserve the following rights:

- not to proceed with contracting of the position;
- to enter into contracts with multiple proposers;
- to re-issue a similar request for proposals at a future time.

Submission of Qualifications

Please reply by email indicating qualifications and experience no later than **4:30pm on Wednesday, August 4, 2021**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Please send any inquiries or responses to:

Randal J. Forster, Executive Director
Mower County Historical Society
director@mowercountyhistory.org
(507) 437-6082