

# Short-Circuiting Conflict Over Historic and Cultural Resources in the Inlet Valley

George R. Frantz, ASLA, AICP

Presented to American Society of Landscape Architects Annual Meeting  
Philadelphia, PA October 4, 2008

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## • SYNOPSIS

• In 1993 when the Town of Ithaca Planning Department and Cornell University began the jointly-sponsored Inlet Valley Archaeological Survey (IVAS) the objective was to complete a pre-emptive cultural resources survey to identify areas of archaeological importance in the valley, including the location of Coreorgonel, a Cayuga-Tutelo-Saponi town destroyed in the Revolutionary War. With extension of public water and sewer service into the area the Inlet Valley at the time was slated for substantial residential development. A cultural resources survey conducted prior to receipt of development proposals would permit the Town of Ithaca Planning Department to plan for future residential development in the area while protecting those critical historic and cultural resources.

• Typically in New York the identification and protection of archaeological sites has been spotty, and most often has occurred as an outgrowth of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process. This approach can involve conflict and controversy, but almost always it can involve enormous costs to developers, both for the required archaeological investigations and even a complete redesign of the project should an archaeologically significant site be uncovered. A key objective of the IVAS was to short-circuit both the potential controversy, and the potential costs, of an eleventh hour discovery of an archaeological site.

• The IVAS achieved its immediate objective of identifying and protecting important cultural resources and facilitating the environmental review and approval process for two major residential developments in a cost effective manner. As the original objectives of the Inlet Valley Archaeological Survey were achieved, however a new constituency for the protection of a unique historic and cultural heritage comprised of American Indians, scholars, local residents and government officials developed. Through media coverage descendants of the Tutelo and Saponi inhabitants of Coreorgonel from around the country heard about the project. They have become key partners in raising public awareness of the site, providing historical data and advocating for the preservation of the town site.

• The IVAS unexpectedly became a catalyst for a multi-year research, design and public education initiative involving local planners, educators, residents and Native Americans that continues today. The interest in the area's Native American heritage sparked by the survey has resulted in a new Town of Ithaca park dedicated to the commemoration of the Native American heritage in the Inlet Valley. An annual commemorative gathering by Tutelo, Saponi and other Native Americans held each September at the park since 2001 has grown to be a full-day public celebration of Native American culture.

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**TETRA TECH**  
ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS



# “Town Destroyer,” 1779

- ❑ According to the chroniclers of the time, the cooking fires of Coreorgonel’s residents were still burning when the Americans arrived on September 24th, 1779.
- ❑ As they did to some forty other Iroquois communities in the Finger Lakes region of New York, the American soldiers burned the town to the ground. They burned all the granaries, and what crops may have been still in the fields, and they cut down the fruit trees.

# The Issue

- ❑ Native American historical and cultural sites have fared poorly at the hand of the design professions.
- ❑ “Shovel and shut-up” approach unfortunately still exists in too many places.



# Project Genesis

- ❑ Desire to locate and protect the site of Coreorgonel, destroyed by American forces during the Revolutionary War.
- ❑ Avoid the conflict that many times erupts when developers' plans are pitted against protecting cultural resources.



# The Challenge



- ❑ Accommodating growth and development.
- while**
- ❑ Protecting and cultural resources and sensitive Native American sites, and doing so in a unique, cost effective and non-adversarial manner.

# Project Objectives

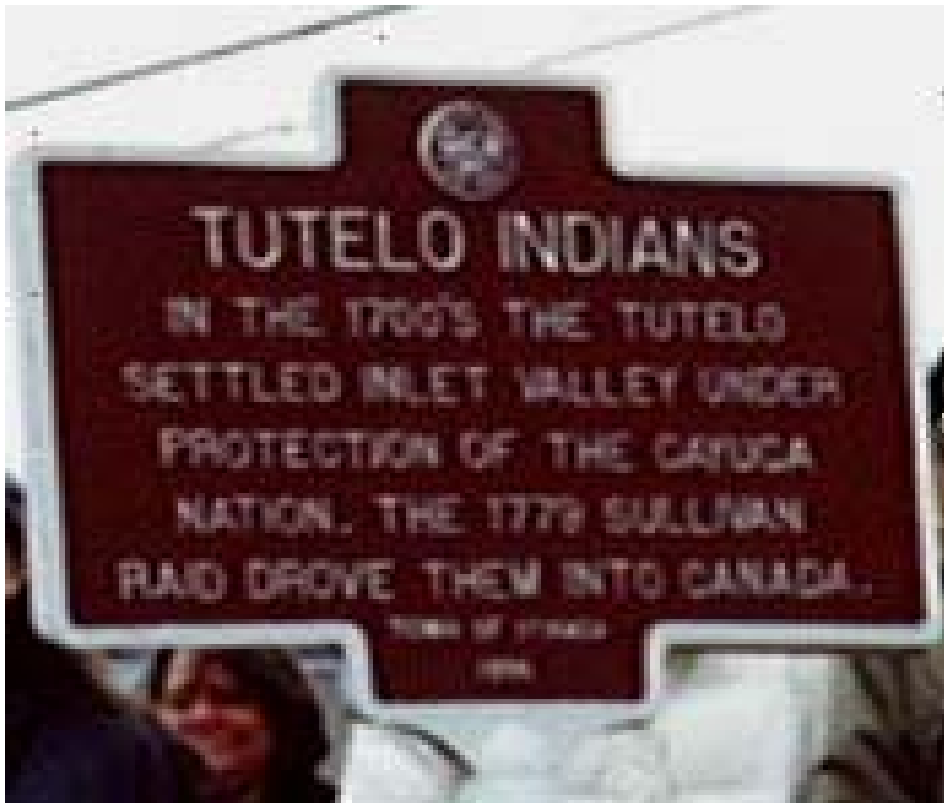
- ❑ Short-circuit potential controversy using pre-emptive cultural resources survey to identify areas of archaeological importance in the valley.
- ❑ Develop a model for collaboration between academic institutions, local governments and landowners to identify & protect cultural resources.

# Project Objectives



- ❑ Permit the design and approval of two future residential developments in the area while protecting critical historic and cultural resources.
- ❑ Create a constituency within the community for the protection of cultural resources.

# Evolution



- ❑ A catalyst for a multi-year research, design and public education initiative.
- ❑ A place redefined: the Inlet Valley from highway corridor to an area rich in history.

# “We’re Not Dead Yet”



- ❑ A rediscovery of a rich native American heritage in the occupation of the Inlet valley by the Tutelo/Saponi peoples.
- ❑ A new public park that includes a space set aside for contemplation and commemoration of Native American heritage.

# Participants

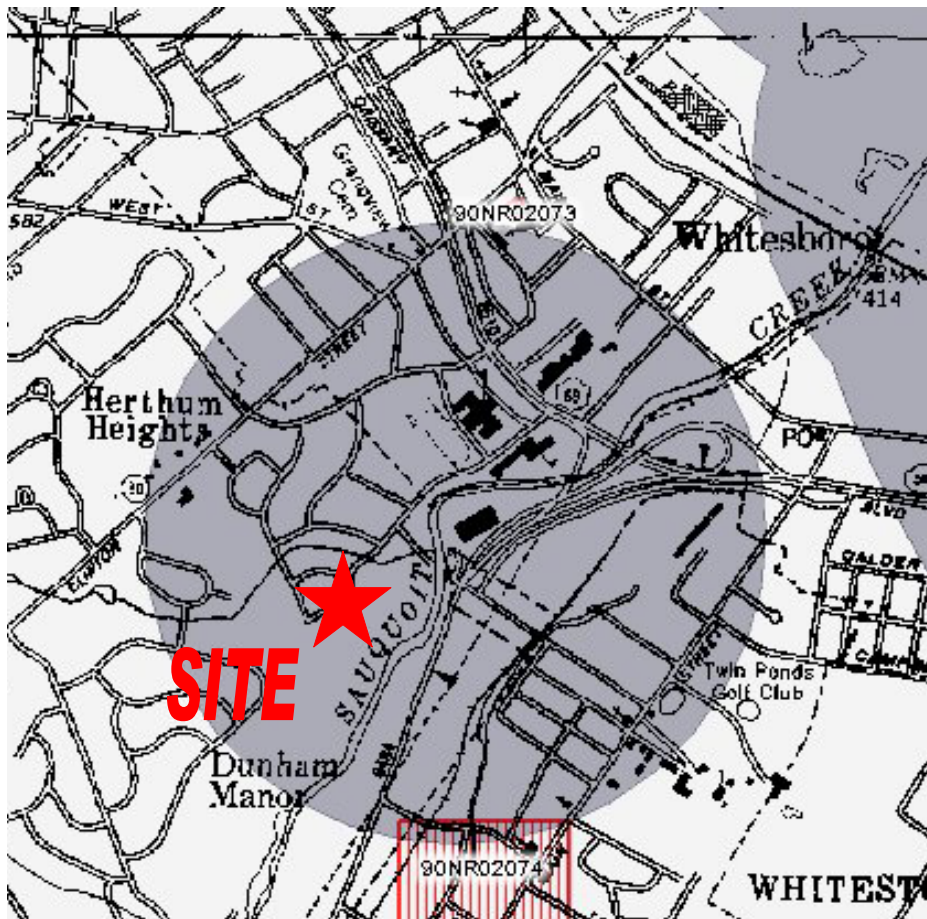
- ❑ Department of City & Regional Planning, Department of Landscape Architecture, Cornell University.
- ❑ Town of Ithaca Planning Department.
- ❑ Developers : Eddydale Homes & E. Tomlinson, III
- ❑ Cayuga Nation of Indians
- ❑ Tutelo and Saponi nations

# Lessons Learned



- ❑ **Communities can and should proactively embark on cultural resources surveys wherever the historic record shows the potential presence of archaeological sites.**

# Lessons Learned



- Landscape architects can and should work with clients and communities to determine presence of archaeological sites before design begins.

# Lessons Learned



- ❑ Colleges and universities have an important role:
  - ❑ critical expertise in archaeology;
  - ❑ resources to conduct excavations.

# Lessons Learned



- The Native American community can be brought to the table early on as an active partner and valuable informant.

# Lessons Learned

- ❑ A proactive, cooperative approach to identifying cultural resources is both practical and cost effective.
- ❑ Controversy over historic and cultural resources can be short-circuited.
- ❑ The development review and approval process does not have to be delayed.



# Present & Future

- A new constituency for the protection of the Coreorgonel townsite is established.



# Present & Future

- ❑ Town of Ithaca in September 1999 named one of two park sites acquired as a result of the IVAS “Tutelo Park.”
- ❑ Dedicated the park to preserving the heritage of the native American presence in the Inlet Valley.



# Present & Future



Tutelo Park, albeit a serendipitous product of the Inlet Valley project, has become a new marker on the psychic map of the Tutelo odyssey through place and time.

# Present & Future



- Since September 2001 descendents of the Tutelo and Saponi peoples from New York, Ohio, North Carolina and Ontario have gathered each September at the new park to commemorate a symbolic return to the Inlet Valley

# Present & Future



- In September 2006 the commemoration was expanded into the *“Homecoming Festival of Native American Culture,”* a one-day event featuring music, dance, food, presentations and exhibits at Tutelo Park.

# Questions?



# Synopsis

- **Client:**

- Town of Ithaca, New York

- **Results:**

- An integration of cultural resources protection into land use planning and growth management;
- A re-identification of a place – the Inlet Valley – with its Native Indian history;
- A public space for contemplation and commemoration;
- A heightened awareness of place and history in the Inlet Valley;
- A new constituency for the preservation of Native Indian heritage of the Inlet Valley;
- Two public park sites that preserve important elements of a cultural and ecological landscape;
- Complete documentation of the archaeological resources within the study area.

# Synopsis

- **Participating Agencies & Institutions:**

- Town of Ithaca Planning Department
- Town of Ithaca Highway Department
- Town of Ithaca Engineering Department
- Archaeology Program, Cornell University
- Department of City & Regional Planning, Cornell University
- Department of Landscape Architecture, Cornell University
- Department of Anthropology, Ithaca College
- Dewitt Historical Society

- **Constituent Groups:**

- Cayuga Indian Nation
- Tutelo and Saponi Nations
- SHARE (Supporting Haudenosaunee - American Relations through Education)

- **Funding Sources:**

- Town of Ithaca
- Cornell University, Dept. of Landscape Architecture
- Cornell University, Dept. of City and Regional Planning
- Cornell Faculty Fellows-in-Service
- Preservation League of New York
- Eddydale Farm Associates
- Jacob & Hedwig Hirsch Fund
- Ephraim Tomlinson, III