

HORTON CREEK ARCHEOLOGICAL EXHIBIT OPENS

PRESS RELEASE: IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 6, 2022; Fayette County Water System’s (FCWS) “Prehistory in the Horton Creek Basin” artifact exhibit is on permanent display at the FCWS Administration building. This exhibit is comprised of elaborate pottery shards, spear points, arrowheads and semi-precious stone beads dating from the early Archaic to the early Mississippian telling the incredible story of prehistory in Fayette County.

Prior to Lake Horton Reservoir construction in 1995, 18 boxes of artifacts were recovered from four archaeological sites in the Horton Creek floodplain. Excavation of these sites revealed that Indigenous people occupied what is now Fayette County beginning over 10,000 years ago.

The “Prehistory in the Horton Creek Basin” exhibit focuses on the uniqueness of the Middle Woodland period in Georgia (300 A.D. to 600 B.C.) that represents an important transition as prehistoric peoples shifted away from living as mobile bands of hunter-gatherers to organizing into larger, socially stratified settlements. Unique exhibit pieces include complicated and elaborate bold-stamping pottery, examples of the Swift Creek culture (20 B.C. and A.D. 805) as well as photographs of the excavation.

The many Swift Creek pottery types recovered illustrate the advances of ceramic technology during the Middle Woodland period. Swift Creek pottery is distinctive by the complex rectilinear and curvilinear patterns that occur on vessel exteriors. Using carved wooden paddles, these patterns were carefully impressed repeatedly in the wet clay before the vessels were fired. It is thought these unique patterns represent clans or families.

As part of this same project, a traveling interpretive display explores the precontact American Indian Woodland Period occupation of the Horton Creek Valley, and how the archaeological method is used to learn about precontact people. Accompanying this traveling display is a middle to high school lesson plan, modeled after the National Park Service’s Teaching with Historic Places Lightning Lesson Plans.

“The Prehistory in the Horton Creek Basin” exhibit can be viewed at the Fayette County Water System Administration building located at 245 McDonough Road, Fayetteville. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8am-5pm.