



Town of Avon

60 West Main Street
Avon, Connecticut 06001-3719
(860) 409-4300 • www.avonct.gov

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Media Contacts:

Brandon Robertson, Town Manager
Town of Avon
brobertson@avonct.gov
(860) 409-4300

Terri Wilson, President
Avon Historical Society
president@avonhistoricalsociety.org
(860) 798-0918

TOWN & AVON HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCE BRIAN D. JONES PALEOINDIAN SITE RECEIVES STATE HISTORIC REGISTER DESIGNATION

Avon, CT – May 5, 2023 – At its May 3, 2023 meeting, the Historic Preservation Council of the State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development enthusiastically approved the nomination of the Brian D. Jones Paleoindian Site in Avon for listing on the State Register of Historic Places.

The State Register of Historic places is an honorary designation established by the CT General Statutes, which outlines the responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Council. The State Register guides local officials, state agencies and the general public in identifying historical buildings or sites which merit preservation.

The Brian D. Jones Paleoindian Site, located at 800 Old Farms Road in Avon, was discovered in 2019 by Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. (AHS) as part of a cultural resource management survey for the CT Department of Transportation's replacement of the Old Farms Road Bridge. The site was named posthumously for the former State Archaeologist Brian Jones in recognition of his scholarship and prediction of the site's presence deeply buried beneath alluvium. The site preserves stratified Paleoindian archaeological deposits covering all the time periods of indigenous occupation from 12,500 years ago to 1,200 years ago. According to the nomination for the designation, "the site represents an unparalleled archaeological resource in Northeastern North America."

The site is buried six feet below the current surface along the banks of the Farmington River under the new Old Farms Road bridge. It is the oldest known dated Paleoindian Site in Connecticut and southern New England. During excavation, the site yielded 16,000 stone artifacts, thousands of botanical remains, and 31 cultural features, all of which are currently under analysis by AHS, with a comprehensive report currently in preparation.

These items provide a wealth of information about the early peopling of this region, including how they lived and traded as well as what they hunted and ate. Some of the material used for their tools came from places as far west as what is now Pennsylvania, as far south as what is now Delaware and many destinations north to Canada. "It has been an honor to work on both the excavation of the site as part of the CTDOT project, as well as for on the State Register nomination for the Town of Avon," stated Meg Harper, President of PAST, inc., which wrote the nomination, and AHS.

Since the discovery of the Town of Avon, Avon Free Public Library and Avon Senior Center in partnership with the Avon Historical Society, Farmington River Watershed Association, Institute of Native American Studies (Washington, CT) and Avon Land Trust have produced an ongoing webinar series on the time period of the Paleoindian. This is the third year of the series and there are now over 12,000 views logged on the Avon Library's YouTube channel of the episodes. The Avon Historical Society has a special section of their website dedicated to the Brian D. Jones Paleoindian Site with links to articles and reports published thus far. This educational mission was recently enhanced with the production of six 7-foot-tall pop-up banners highlighting various aspects of this time period. The banners will rotate around the town of Avon in public spaces for general information about the Paleoindian and the Brian D. Jones Site.

The designation on the State Register of Historic Places provides significance to the site and is a meaningful step in the Town's efforts to preserve the area that holds true historic value about the ancient history in this part of the world. "The Town of Avon is pleased that this designation will preserve and honor the legacy of former State Archaeologist Brian D. Jones. The site is a treasure for the Town, the State of Connecticut and the northeast region. We promise to continue to be good stewards of the site and to educate current and future generations about its significance," added Brandon Robertson, Town Manager, Town of Avon.

