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On the Mound: Saturday event to recognize effigy mound

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Rob Nurre holds one of the yellow signs that will help direct people to the Man Mound, just outside Barab Saturday. An event is being held to recognize the historical impact of this and other effigy mounds in Wisconsin. Rhonda Siebecker, News Republic

When you run over the legs, you'll know you're there.

Man Mound Park was established to protect the effigy mound, Man Mound, which has parts that are, literally, on Man Mound Road. This Saturday, a celebration will take place to honor the human-shaped effigy mound.

Man Mound Day goes from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the park. The celebration will be held rain or shine. The park is located on Man Mound Road (which was built over the mound and cuts off the legs of the effigy mound) about 4 miles northeast of Baraboo.

Volunteer Rob Nurre said it is a “pseudo annual” event.

“It actually started in 2008 to mark the 100th anniversary of the preservation of Man Mound,” Nurre said. “The guy who did the original mapping of the mound in 1859 will be there.”

That “guy” will be an impersonator of William Camfield, who will talk about the mapping at 11 a.m. and 1 and 3 p.m.

Exhibitors will include the Center for Wisconsin Archaeology, the Wisconsin Archaeologists office and the Sauk County Historical Society, where Bill Schuette will be manning the booth.

“We will have some photographs of the mound, how it looked at the turn of the century,” Schuette said. “It was burned this spring to facilitate growth and we will also have photographs of that.”

Schuette said the International Crane Foundation facilitated the burning and, with the use of drones, he was able to get some aerial-view photographs. He said there will also be arrowheads on display.

According to Nurre, in 1908, The Sauk County Historical Society, the Wisconsin Archaeology Society and the Wisconsin Federation of Women’s Clubs, raised roughly \$300 to buy 1 1/4 acres of land to preserve the mound.

He said Man Mound holds special, historical significance, in that, when it was established, it was the first recognized effigy mound in Wisconsin.

“They (effigy mounds) only exist in the southern half of Wisconsin, a little in Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois,” Nurre said. “When we talk about effigy mounds, we’re talking about mounds made in the shape of an animal. There are other kinds of Indian mounds in other parts of state.”

Man Mound is truly unique, Nurre said, because it is the only effigy mound in human form in the state. He said the effigy mound is about 1,000 years old and was built by “native peoples of the area.”

“At one time, there were 225 effigy mounds (in southern Wisconsin),” Nurre said. “Most have been destroyed.” Schuette said he thinks there were many more mounds that went undiscovered. “It could be two or three times that number,” he said. “A lot of them were plowed under by farmers.”

Nurre said he hopes people will take time out of their weekend to stop and see the mound. “It’s a chance for people to understand this part of our cultural landscape,” he said.

If you go

- **What:** Man Mound Day
- **Where:** Man Mound Park, about four miles northeast of Baraboo on Man Mound Road
- **When:** Saturday, Aug. 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Rhonda Siebecker | News Republic

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