

April 1, 2025

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to share some exciting news and to ask for your help with an important project that will shed new light on Ridgefield's Revolutionary War history.

The Ridgefield Historical Society has received another prestigious grant from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program to study and map the Battle of Ridgefield, which took place on April 27, 1777. As part of this effort, we've hired a team of professional archaeologists and historians from Heritage Consultants—led by Dr. Kevin McBride, David George, Dr. David Naumec, and Dr. David Leslie—to conduct hi-tech archaeological research this year in Ridgefield.

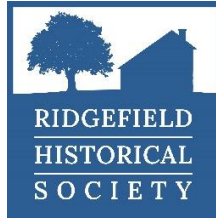
We are reaching out to homeowners whose properties may be part of the battlefield landscape. With your permission, the archaeological team would like to conduct a non-invasive survey using metal detection to identify areas that may hold Revolutionary War-era artifacts. The work is conducted with great care: when excavation is needed, it is minimal and done by hand with meticulous respect for your property. Any artifacts discovered will become part of the Ridgefield Historical Society's collection, preserved in the climate-controlled vault at the Scott House, where they will be credited to you as the donor and used to educate current and future generations.

This project is not only a significant once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to better understand the events of the Battle of Ridgefield—it is also a meaningful way for our community to come together and preserve our shared past as we commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of America in 2026 and the Battle in 2027. The success of the project depends on landowners allowing the archaeologists to access properties associated with the Battle. Your participation will make a real difference.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions. A fact sheet and landowner permission form are included in this packet. Please sign and return it to me at your earliest convenience. We hope you'll join us in this exciting work to uncover Ridgefield's hidden history.

Warm regards,

Stephen Bartkus  
Executive Director  
Ridgefield Historical Society  
sbartkus@ridgefieldhistoricalsociety.org  
203-438-5821



## **Battle of Ridgefield Archaeology Project Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Do I have to participate in this program?**

- No. Participation is entirely voluntary.

### **How would you survey my property?**

- First, we would visually inspect your property to assess its potential to contain evidence related to the Battle.
- If the property appears promising, we will request your permission to conduct a metal detector survey. Most evidence from the Battle is expected to be metallic.
- If significant artifacts are found, we may ask for permission to perform small, carefully hand dug shovel tests in specific areas of interest.

### **Will an archaeological investigation damage my yard?**

- No. Professional archaeological standards require that all excavated areas be returned to their original condition. This includes backfilling any holes and reseeding the grass, if necessary.

### **What happens if evidence of the battlefield is found on my property?**

- Finding evidence does not affect your property rights. You will still be free to use, sell, or develop your property as you wish.

### **What if artifacts are found on my land?**

- Any artifacts discovered through this program will become the property of the Ridgefield Historical Society, with you recognized as the donor, where they will be carefully studied, preserved, and exhibited.

### **Can the National Park Service take my property if it's part of the battlefield?**

- Absolutely not. The National Park Service cannot take or claim private property through this program.



**Dr. Kevin McBride** is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut and the former Director of Research at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. He has over 40 years of experience conducting archaeological and historical research throughout New England, Block Island, Baja Mexico, the Caribbean, and Portugal, including as the director of 15 National Park Service battlefield projects. His research interests include Indigenous and Colonial cultural and historical landscapes, maritime adaptations, historical archaeology, underwater archaeology, and battlefield archaeology. Dr. McBride is a member of the Society for American Archaeology, the American Anthropological Association, the Society for Historical Archaeology, and the Society for American Ethnohistory and is adjunct Faculty at the Institute for Exploration in Mystic. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Museum of Natural History and of the Governor's Task Force on Indian Affairs. He has written numerous articles on Native American and Colonial archaeology, ethnohistory, archaeobotany, underwater archaeology, and battlefield archaeology.



**Dr. David Naumec** is a Historian, Archaeologist, & Museum Consultant. He is an Archaeology Field Director and Military Historian for Heritage Consultants and is Historic New England's Revolution 250 Research Scholar, studying New England's indigenous and African American Revolutionary War veterans. Dr. Naumec is a graduate of UConn, holds a Master's Degree in History & Museum Studies from Tufts University, and a PhD in Race & Ethnicity in Early America through the Civil War from Clark University. His interests include Native American history, colonial North America, the history of Connecticut, and Battlefield Archaeology. He has published several articles on Connecticut History, Native American History, Military History, and the history of firearms.

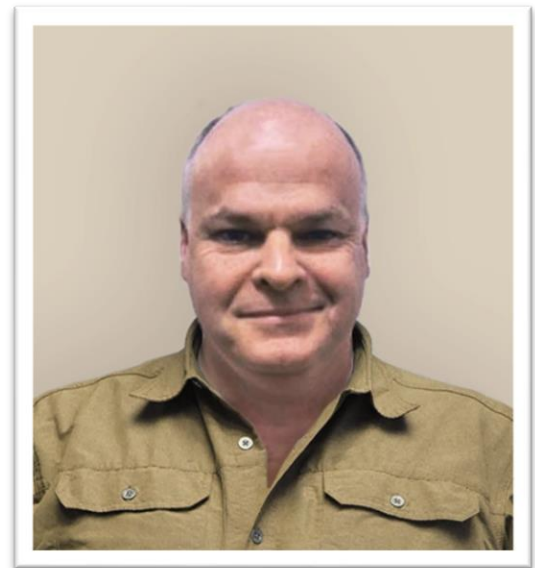


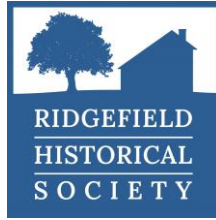
Dr. Naumec was a consultant for historian Keith Marshall Jones's latest book "The Battle of Ridgefield: Benedict Arnold, the Patriot Militia and the Surprising 1777 Battle that Galvanized Revolutionary Connecticut."

**Dr. David Leslie** is a Registered Professional Archaeologist with two decades of experience specializing in New England archaeology and geophysical investigations. He has completed more than one hundred investigations under all phases of Section 106 compliance throughout the greater Northeast. Dr. Leslie currently serves as Director of Archaeological Research at Heritage Consultants, and is also a Research Scientist in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut. In addition, he is President of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut and actively serves on several archaeological boards, including the Conference on New England Archaeology, the Eastern States Archaeological Federation, and the Editorial Board of Northeast Anthropology. A leading expert in Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), magnetometry, and metal detection, Dr. Leslie has applied these technologies to significant sites such as Fort Pentagoet in Maine, Historic Jamestown in Virginia, and numerous historic cemeteries.



**David George** is the Owner and Principal Investigator of Heritage Consultants, with over 34 years of experience in southern New England archaeology. A Registered Professional Archaeologist, Mr. George specializes in Connecticut's late precontact, contact, and early historic periods, with particular expertise in Revolutionary War-era sites and War of 1812 fortifications. He holds an M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Connecticut. Mr. George has led numerous high-profile projects, including a three-year investigation of Fort Decatur in Ledyard, Connecticut, where he oversaw excavations, geophysical surveys, and preservation efforts in collaboration with the SHPO and The Archaeological Conservancy. He is currently managing the National Register nomination for the fort and authoring a book on Commodore Stephen Decatur and the War of 1812's impact on coastal Connecticut.





## **Landowner Permission to Conduct Archaeological Research**

I/we \_\_\_\_\_

Who own property at: \_\_\_\_\_

Hereby give permission for representatives of Heritage Consultants, LLC to conduct archaeological research at the above-referenced property. I acknowledge that this research is associated with the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program grant awarded to the Ridgefield Historical Society. I acknowledge that the purpose of the grant is to document the battlefields and sites associated with the Battle of Ridgefield and will include archaeological investigations on the above-referenced property to identify artifacts associated with the Battle. If associated artifacts are identified, they will be used to assess the integrity, boundaries and significance of the entire battlefield site for eventual inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. I also acknowledge that any artifacts recovered from the above-referenced location will become the property of the Ridgefield Historical Society.

I acknowledge this research will occur with the following stipulations:

1. Archaeological research will consist of three phases; a) preliminary walkover of the property, b) metal detector survey, c) recovery and identification of objects located during the metal detector survey.
2. Prior to any additional archaeological investigations, I will be notified as to the precise date when the archaeological investigations will take place.
3. If I wish to be present during the archaeological investigations, the investigations will be scheduled on a day(s) when I can be present.
4. No archaeological investigations in the form of excavations will take place without my expressed permission.
5. If I decide to permit any excavation, the land shall be restored to its pre-existing condition.
6. Any person entering the property does so at their own risk, and I bear no responsibility for injury or loss.
7. I understand that Ridgefield Historical Society representatives may photograph and/or videotape the archaeological investigations on my property.

Is there anything you'd like to share about the history of your property?