Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village Opens 49th Season This Weekend

-The National Historic Landmark will reopen the historic Pine Bank Covered Bridge after a recently completed restoration project-

PITTSBURGH, May 3, 2017 – Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, a National Historic Landmark and part of the Senator John Heinz History Center museum system, will kick off its 2017 season this weekend (Saturday, May 6 and Sunday, May 7).

Opening to the public for its 49th season, Meadowcroft – the oldest site of human habitation in North America – has become an international destination for out-of-state tourists, scholars, archeologists, and adventurers alike.

Visitors to Meadowcroft can marvel at the Rockshelter, a massive, rock overhang used by the region’s earliest inhabitants for shelter more than 16,000 years ago. Traveling forward through time, Meadowcroft offers visitors the chance to experience what everyday life was like for Upper Ohio Valley inhabitants over the past 400 years.

A 16th century Eastern Woodland Indian Village allows guests to step inside a wigwam and try their hand at the atlatl, a spear thrower used by prehistoric hunters. Two 1770s era structures help to spotlight the similarities and differences between the everyday lives of European settlers and American Indians in the Upper Ohio Valley during the frontier period.

Visitors to the Historic Village will come face-to-face with elements of everyday family life in the mid-19th century, such as watching a blacksmith forge red-hot iron or enjoying a lesson in a one-room schoolhouse.

In addition to experiencing living history, visitors can enjoy a stroll over the newly rehabilitated Pine Bank Covered Bridge, which is the oldest existing bridge in Washington County. The work addressed existing structural deficiencies, corrected drainage issues, and restored the appearance of the 35-foot-long bridge to be more consistent with its original 1871 construction.

**Meadowcroft to Host Exciting Slate of Public Programs in 2017**

- **Walk through Prehistory with Venture Outdoors, June 10 and Oct. 14:** Travel through time on a two-mile hike through the woods and fields surrounding Meadowcroft Rockshelter. Along the way, visitors will learn about the flora and fauna of the area as it relates to the survival techniques of prehistoric people struggling to survive in the tri-state area hundreds, and even thousands of years ago. To register for this event, visit [www.ventureoutdoors.org](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org).

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• **21st Annual Atlatl Competition, June 17:** Visitors can try their hand using the atlatl, a spear-thrower used by prehistoric hunters. This contest, which is sanctioned by the World Atlatl Association, is open to all ages and is free to enter with Meadowcroft admission.

• **Independence Day Celebration, Sunday, July 2:** Meadowcroft will celebrate the spirit of 19th century rural America with old-fashioned summer games, open hearth cooking demonstrations, and a pie-eating contest to commemorate the Fourth of July holiday.

• **Vintage Base Ball Day, Saturday, Aug. 19:** Batter up, 19th century style. Come watch a "base ball" game between the Somerset Frosty Sons of Thunder and the Addison Mountain Stars, who will wear vintage-style uniforms and follow rules used during the 1860s. Bring lawn chairs and enjoy traditional food and fun.

• **Insider Tours of Meadowcroft Rockshelter:** On select dates throughout the 2017 season, visitors can enjoy exclusive Insider Tours with James M. Adovasio, Ph.D., who achieved international acclaim with his archeological excavation of the Rockshelter in 1973. Dr. Adovasio will present a lecture and lead a special tour of the site on June 24, Sept. 9, and Nov. 4 at 10 a.m.; and on Sunday, Oct. 15 at 1 p.m. For reservations, please contact Frances Skariot at 724-587-3412 or frskariot@heinzhistorycenter.org.

Throughout May, Meadowcroft is open Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. and Sundays, 1-5 p.m.

From Memorial Day through Labor Day, Meadowcroft is open on Wednesdays through Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m., and on Sundays from 1-5 p.m. Admission is $15 for adults, $14 for senior citizens, and $7 for students and children ages 6-17. Children under 6 and History Center members get in free.

For more information on Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, please visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org/meadowcroft or call 724-587-3412.

**Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village** operates in association with the Senator John Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian and Pennsylvania's largest history museum. Meadowcroft, a National Historic Landmark, is the oldest site of human habitation in North America and features a massive, 16,000-year-old rock overhang used by the region’s earliest inhabitants for shelter. Meadowcroft’s 19th century village features a covered bridge, one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, church, and two log houses that create a charming country village setting. The 16th century Eastern Woodland Indian Village includes wigwams, recreated prehistoric artifacts, and hands-on activities related to American Indian agriculture. Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village is located in Avella, Pa., Washington County, within an hour’s drive of Pittsburgh, Wheeling, W.Va., and Steubenville, Ohio. For more information, please visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org/meadowcroft.
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