

Can Dowsing be Used as an Acceptable Technique for Research

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INTRODUCTION

It cannot be proven scientifically that dowsing can be used to find water, metal, graves and more underground. Yet for hundreds of years and probably longer, skilled and unskilled people have used dowsing to locate places to dig or drill wells for water supply, searching for underground utilities and much more. In spite of this knowledge, the academic community does not accept dowsing as a legitimate technique for use in research.

Lloyd Youngblood wrote in his article, *Dowsing: Ancient History* that “The Ancient art of dowsing has been practiced throughout millennia. Although the names used to identify it may have changed in different cultures and eras, the techniques have not.” He further stated that, “in 1949, a party of French explorers while searching for evidence of lost civilizations in the Atlas Mts. of North Africa stumbled upon a massive system of caverns known as the Tassili Caves, in which many of the walls were covered with marvelous pre-historic paintings. Among the many fascinating wall murals, they found a remarkably huge wall painting of a dowser, holding a forked branch in his hand searching for water. He was surrounded by a group of admiring tribesmen. These wall murals were carbon dated and found to be a least 8000 years old.”

During the pioneer exploration of this country, a family depended on finding water in order to build a homestead. In many places in the US, if one wanted to find water, they called the dowser. Victoria Foth of the Kansas Natural Resource Council wrote in 1988, “Swedish-born Ida Gillette purchased her Riley County farm in 1877 for a reasonable price--then learned that the previous owners sold out because they never found water. Discouraged and anxious, she consulted a local man who could water witch. He took a forked willow stick in each hand and held them straight out in front of him. Where there was water, he said the willow stick would point down immediately,” she recalled. Sure enough, after a little while, as he walked about the grounds, the willow stick pointed downward and still farther down more quickly and finally it went down suddenly. With a sigh of relief, I knew that water was found at last and very conveniently near the house.”

Victoria went on to say, “In Gillette's day, Kansans often turned to water witchers or "dowsers" in their efforts to cope with a hidden, unpredictable resource. Other frontier customs have faded--but the tradition of water witching persists. You can go most anywhere in Kansas and rural America and find yourself a water witcher, noted Tom McClain of the Kansas Geological Survey.”

In the old days, every utility crew had a set of dowsing rods with them in order to find the underground utility lines. Nigel Bunyan wrote an article in 2009 about one utility crew member from United Utilities in the UK. He stated that, “Steve Robinson generally uses radio waves to determine the location of a water leak. But occasionally he abandons his company's hi-tech

equipment and resorts to the two old welding rods he keeps in the back of his van.” Robinson has said, "I must confess I've absolutely no idea how the process works or even what it's called - but it certainly gets results. I just hold on to the rods and let them go where they want. When I hit water, they cross over."

The Utility Company quickly pointed out that they customarily use hi-tech leak detection equipment for their 25,000 miles of pipes. However, they did admit that Mr. Robinson has achieved some uncannily accurate results using his own methods. A scientific study carried out in Germany during the late 1980s concluded that some dowsers did achieved "an extraordinarily high" success rate which could not be explained by pure chance.

David Johnson’s skills with dowsing rods were first employed to find water in the arid parts of Peru and Chile in the 1990’s. He successfully found several locations where wells were drilled and water found within the boundaries of the mapped underground streams. His research for the water is what led him to discover that indigenous artifacts sites were also located over the underground streams. Throughout the 1990’s and continuing into today, he has discovered underground streams in North and South American as well as Africa where artifact sites were co-located with and directly related to the location of the underground streams. He shared his research with the Mountain Stewards in late 2015 and we are now employing it as a proven technique for researching indigenous sites.

The work of the Mountain Stewards and others researching Indigenous sites does not have to be accepted by anyone other than those of us doing the research and the Indian tribes for whom some of this research is being done. However, it might be warranted to prove to others that the use of dowsing in the hands of semi-skilled researchers can be an acceptable, repeatable technique in uncovering knowledge of ancient indigenous sites.

To order to legitimize the value of dowsing, sufficient empirical data must be provided to those who doubt its value. Thus, I undertook a research project on Sassafras Mountain in Pickens and Dawson County, GA to collect empirical data on the use of dowsing. Sassafras Mountain on the Southern Appalachian Mountain chain has several developed home-owner communities in an area where no city or county water supply exists. Every home has a well and that water comes from underground water sources. Further, there are multiple mountain streams, formed from springs, on the mountain that also has to come from underground water sources. Thus, if those wells and springs are connected to underground streams that can be located using dowsing rods, then that may be sufficient empirical data to validate the use of dowsing rods as a research tool.

SASSAFRAS MOUNTAIN SITE FINDINGS

Sassafras Mountain is one of three mountains on the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains which include Burnt, Sassafras and Oglethorpe Mountains. The community of Monument Falls Phase I & II was built on the west side of the mountain and Sassafras Mountain Estates is located on the east side. This research project mapped the underground water in a portion of Phase II, Monument Falls and the southern portion of Sassafras Mountain Estates which is located just off of Monument Road. Using dowsing rods, the underground streams were located and their relationship was related to existing wells and springs on the mountain.

There have been a number of well failures in the mountain communities so one might assume that there was little water on the 3,225 foot mountain. However, dowsing used to locate the underground streams, wells and springs on the mountain shows a different story.

Research was begun on the west side of the mountain in Monument Falls using existing springs as good place to start locating associated underground streams. The intermittent springs that feed Mountain Springs Way Creek were mapped first. It was assumed that this would be a straight forward effort locating perhaps one underground stream. However, that turned out not to be the case. A small underground stream was located that fed an Upper and Lower Spring for Mountain Springs Way Creek.

This underground stream was discovered to branch off of a larger underground stream that crosses Sassafras Mountain in north-south direction (see Green underground stream on map). In fact there are seven underground streams that branch off of the north-south stream. Four of these streams head in a westerly direction and junction with another large stream (Red) coming down the mountain in a generally SE-NW direction. These branch streams off of the main stream are generally intermittent in performance. The Mountain Springs Way Creek fed by one of more of these branches dries up in the summer months.



Mountain Springs Way Lower Spring

The large NW-SE stream (Red) was tracked 0.6 miles downhill from the top of Sassafras Mountain where mapping was terminated at a well drilled by the DeKok family who reported that their well produces over 15 gallons per minute. This well is approximately 300 feet deep and the water rose to 75 feet below the surface. This larger stream was determined to cross over the North-South (Green) stream across Sassafras Mountain. The two streams may be connected but that cannot be determined with the dowsing rods. The larger underground stream (Red) after crossing over the North-South stream continues on to the SE heading down the steep mountainside toward surface streams on the east side. Because of the steepness on the east side of the mountain, mapping of the underground streams was terminated. At the top of Sassafras Mountain on the Red underground stream, two wells are located. Both of these wells are associated with the large underground stream. Bessie Stephenson's well is located adjacent to the stream and produces an adequate supply of water. This well was not located using a dowser so it could have been moved about five feet to be directly in the center of the stream. A previously drilled well is also located near the stream but it has failed intermittently. The Rush well was located near the center of the underground stream with the help of dowsers. This is their 2nd well. This new well is producing 5 gallons of water per minute. Their previous well was located on a finger stream off of the main North-South stream and went dry often.

The North-South underground stream surfaces on the west side of Sassafras Mountain to become a surface stream. This spring located 289 feet below the top of the mountain feeds Boundary Creek which is the boundary between Phase I and Phase II of the Monument Falls community. The south end of this underground stream was mapped to a well on Monument Road whose conditions are not known. Just to the south of the well is another East-West underground stream that feeds the spring on the east side that forms the Fall Creek and may feed the spring on the west side. The spring on the west side along with others create small streams that feed Lake Tamarack in the Bent Tree community. Two other branch streams were located on the south end of the Green stream. One of those branch streams feeds a well whose condition is not known.

Mapping the North-South (Green) underground stream, led directly to the Broussard's new well, which is located dead center on the underground stream. Previously, the Broussard's had drilled a well where the well company decided to put it without the using a dowser. That well frequently dried up often in the summer months causing great hardships on keeping water flowing for household needs. Mr. Broussard hired two dowsers to help locate a new well. Both dowsers independently located the same spot for the well. The well was drilled down 600 feet and produced 5 gallons per minute since it was located on the stream that supplies Boundary Creek. Below the Broussard's is the Wagner family off of Monument Road who also has a well on that underground stream which produces good water.

One well on the Affolder lot next to the Broussard's was located on Sassafras Mountain that produces 5-8 gallons per minute. It is not located within the boundaries of an underground stream which seems odd. However, there is no home on this location and the well has not been fully tested under annual water supply conditions. This may be a perched water table which if pumped continuously, may go dry. One other well in Monument Falls Phase II was determined to be a perched water table well. When pumped over a longer period of time, it went dry.

While mapping the underground streams on the mountain, a number of previously located Indian Marker Trees were seen. Other researchers have shown that these Marker Trees are found directly over the top of underground stream. This is another indication that dowsing can help in the discovery and documentation of Indian artifact sites.

CONCLUSIONS

Two major underground streams with multiple connecting branch streams were found using dowsing rods. Seven producing wells were located within the boundaries of these streams. This shows that the located underground streams are providing the water supply for these wells. Also, three springs were found to be associated with the underground streams. With additional research of following the streams down steep hills, more springs are likely to be found. Lastly, four Indian Marker Trees were located and each of these trees were within the boundaries documented for the streams.

A significant amount of empirical data was obtained from the research of the underground streams on Sassafras Mountain to conclude that the use of dowsing should be considered as a research technique. However, those results were obtained by one researcher at one site so there

can be some doubts regarding the repeatability of this technique. If we add to those results the empirical data obtained from the surveys of the Big Canoe Indian Rocks Park, the Effigy Mounds in Putnam County, GA, the multiple Indian sites in Upson and Talbot County, GA, surveys in Colorado by Dr. Forrest Ketchin and David Johnson and finally the twenty years of research results in Peru, Chile and the United States by David Johnson, there is an overwhelming amount of data to validate dowsing as an acceptable research technique.

While this plethora of data may not convince those in the academic community, it more that demonstrates the value of dowsing as a research technique for Native Americans who are interested in rediscovering cultural heritage sites of importance to them.

In the future, all Mountain Steward surveys of Indian Cultural Heritage sites will include the use of dowsing rods as a tool for discerning underground features connected to and associated with the indigenous artifacts on the surface placed.



Sasfras Mountain Underground Streams – Partial Data



**Trail Tree Marking one Underground
Stream**



**Marker Tree for Mountain Spring
Way Lower Spring**