



Use of Dowsing in Indian Cultural Heritage Research

Training Manual

**Coalition of Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, Inc.
and
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INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years people have used dowsing to locate places to dig or drill water wells. Today, dowsers continue to use a variety of dowsing techniques to locate underground water, graves, utilities, metal items and more. Yet, in spite of a great deal of empirical evidence, the academic community does not accept dowsing as a legitimate technique for use in research. Stephan Swartz in his book *The Secret Vaults of Time* first published in 1978 provided conclusive evidence over a century of time that showed dowsing had been in use and proven as an acceptable means for research. Further, the government Project Stargate accomplished in the 1980's to 2000 done at Stanford Research Institute for the CIA showed that dowsing was a useful tool for forward viewing.

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 Mountains 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 establish a homestead. To help 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. As the pioneers continued to move westward, the practice of dowsing moved with them.

In the old days, not only in the United States but in other countries as well, every utility crew had a set of dowsing rods with them to use for finding 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.

In the 1990s, David Johnson was invited to Peru and Chili to look for underground water. David's skill with dowsing rods allowed him to find water in the very arid parts of Peru and Chili. He located and mapped underground streams and identified locations where wells should be drilled. The wells were successful; and, easily obtained life giving water was added to the lives of those who lived there. While searching for water for the wells, David discovered that indigenous artifact sites were also located over underground streams. Since then he has used his dowsing rods to locate and map many of these special sites in North America and South America as well as in Africa. His research has proven that artifact sites are directly related to the underground water in many parts of the world. He shared his information with the Mountain Stewards in late 2015. We are now employing dowsing as a proven technique for researching both indigenous sites and Marker Trees.

This short manual provides information on how to use dowsing to locate and document Indigenous sites.

THE TOOLS OF DOWSING

There are a multitude of books and YouTube videos on dowsing. Many kinds of dowsing instruments, all of which have a price, are discussed in them. You can spend a lot of money or simply do what we do – use metal L-rods made from a Home Depot product. For the most part, dowsers use L-rods, V-rods, Y-rods, yoke sticks, bobbars, or pendulums. Dowsers who search for water for wells have traditionally used a Y-rod



or a forked stick. We have been told that only about 1 in 40 can dowse using the forked stick. However, many more people are able to use the L-rods. Some serious dowsers use especially crafted, expensive dowsing rods. For us, the metal L-rods do a good job. Another tool you may want to try is the bobber. It is used to determine how far the water is below the ground. A Bobber is more difficult and fewer people can use it. Dowsing, while there are some basic suggestions of how to do it, is a very personal, unique experience. As you practice dowsing, you will want to try different tools to see what works best for you.

We make our rods using the Simpson Strong-Tie product from Home Depot. The metal rods come in both an 18 inch and 24 inch length. We prefer the 24 inch length but you can use either. The product is found on the insulation aisle. It is designed to hold insulation between floor joists. Using a bench vice, we make a 90 degree bend about 4 or 4 ½ inches from one end, creating a handle. If you have a bench grinder, it is worth a few minutes to smooth out the ends to keep from nicking yourself on the sharp edges. We hold



the handle gently in our closed hand so we can feel the rods as they work. Some prefer to place the handle of the rod into a wooden, plastic, or cardboard sleeve. A drinking straw or the cardboard tube from a pants hanger can be used as sleeves. You will have to determine whether you want to hold them gently in your fist or use a sleeve.

THE SCIENCE OF DOWSING

Master dowsers say that dowsing is a form of a sixth sense. What the dowsing rods are reacting to is the energy associated with the area you are dowsing. The body has the ability to sense this energy which produces changes in the body that cause the rods to respond to the target for which you are searching. Recent scientific experiments have shown that the body can sense magnetic energies which is one of the energy fields associated with dowsing searches. Dennis Wheatley reported in his book, *The Essential Dowsing Guide* that “in the 1980’s. Dr Edith Jurka, MD recorded brain wave activity of dowsers using a “mind mirror” developed by Dr. C. Maxwell-Cade that was based on electroencephalographs (EEG). She found some remarkable correlations to the brain wave activity associated with dowsing. When in the dowsing mode, the brain wave beta frequency of the thinking state lowers in frequency to the alpha state which is a meditative state. When a dowsing target is found, there is a burst of the lower frequency theta state which corresponds to the brain wave activity in dream sleep.”

Some scientific studies have been done to show that some of the earth energy is related to magnetic lines. Steve Hammons reported on the works of electrical engineer Benjamin Lonetree as he studied the effects of the Sedona energy fields on the human body. In his experimentation, Lonetree attempted to correlate connections between magnetic energy activities in the Sedona, AZ

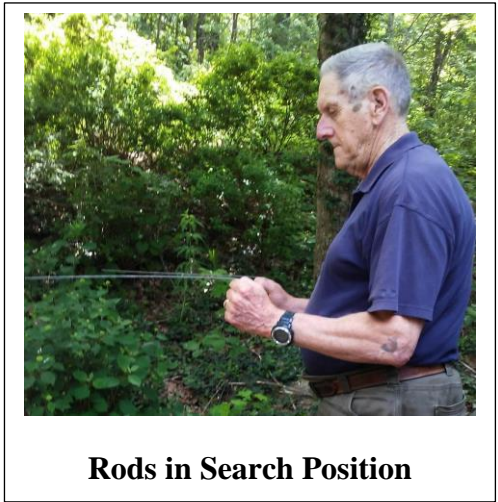
area and human consciousness. He measured human brainwaves of people (including himself) in the positive vortex areas (upwelling energy from the earth) using a portable EEG device, and matching that data with real-time measurements of environmental magnetic energies using a magnetometer. He discovered that there appears to be a clear relationship between the vortex energy and human brainwaves.

Schwartz stated in his book that, “A vast body of literature began to grow up, produced by some of the best minds in Eastern Europe. By 1971, this interest has escalated to a point where, in March, researchers from forty separate institutions, and fourteen cities, gathered in Moscow for a conference. There some fifty abstracts on the use of dowsing and its application in scientific research were presented.”

No scientific experiments have been able to show exactly how the body and the dowsing rods react to sensing energy or information at a site but most conclude there are small changes in the muscles that cause the rods to move when the target you are searching for is found.

PHYSICAL DOWSING PRINCIPLES

The L-rods are held in you hands with a relaxed grip. Hold the rods parallel to each other and about a foot apart. The rods should be horizontal to the ground. The upper arms and forearms will form a right angle. There should be little friction between your hands and the rods since the rods need to be able to swing freely so that they can react to what you are looking for. Begin dowsing from this search position- See figure to the right. With the rods in the search position, you can begin to search for a specific target. The target can be an underground water stream, an earth energy line, a grave, or other items. Be sure to have a clear picture in your mind of what you are looking for. Anything your mind has a clear picture of is what you are searching for. Master dowsers are very clear in their teachings that you must fix in your mind a clear picture of the search target in order for you to be “programmed” to find it. When the search target is found, the rods will react. For water, the rods will usually cross in front of you to let you know you have reached the edge of the water and will remained closed until you step out of the water. For energy lines, the rods usually rotate outwardly from the search position and align to the bearing of the energy. For graves, they cross in front of you when the grave is directly below you. You will need to practice to see just how your rods react to different targets. The exact reactions of the rods will be discussed in more detail for each type of target being searched.



Before you go out to dowse, gather the tools you will need to take with you: dowsing rods, compass, GPS unit, and something on which to record the information you discover. Before beginning to dowse, settle down, become quiet and calm. Remember, dowsing is an intuitive action, not magic. It is important to open your mind to the intuition that is a basic part of who you are. One friend of our waits calmly for a few minutes, gently rubbing her hands up and down her

rods before beginning to dowse. You will need to find out what works for you. Be open to receiving information from your subconscious mind.

Sig Lonegren in his book, *Spiritual Dowsing* suggest that to prepare yourself for a dowsing event, you ask yourself several questions with your rods held in the search position. These questions are:

- “Am I ready for the task?”
- “Am I right to proceed now?”
- “May I proceed?”

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then you need to wait until you get a yes response.

THE DIVINING MIND AND SPIRITUAL DOWSING

Searching for water, graves and physical objects is easier to understand. But there is a higher level of capability with dowsing which is much harder to comprehend and for which there is little scientific proof. This dowsing involves asking “Yes” and “No” questions to determine if a target is nearby or if historical information maybe available at a location. Elder Tom Belt, a United Keetoowah Cherokee Indian said in an interview in 2010 that, “When you are born, you come into a room. Every thing that ever happened and all the people who had ever been there, were there and maybe all the people that would ever be there are all in that room. Your job before your journey is over to is the ascertain as much wisdom from all of these people, from all of the events that happened at this place before your journey is over.” He is referring to the fact that all of the historical information about a place is always there and if you can sense it, you can learn from it.

Don Hill interviewed Dr Leroy Little Bear as they walked about Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park in Alberta, Canada in 2008. His article, published in *Alberta Views*, was titled *Listening to Stones*. In that article, Dr Little Bear shared his view of the spiritual connection to place. He told Don Hill that, “The native paradigm consists of several key things. One of them is constant motion or constant flux. The second part is everything consists of energy waves. In the Native world, the energy waves are really the spirit. And it is the energy waves that know. It is not you who know, it is the energy waves that know. You know things because you are also made up of energy waves”

The Native American viewpoint is the world of spiritual dowsing. At any Native American place and maybe any historical place, a dowser can use the rods to determine a sense of the place by asking yes and no questions. You can learn the history and importance of a place and what may exist at that location. This take a bit of time to learn but it works well and has become a proven technique for researching Native American sites as well as other sites. Equipped with information about the site, you can begin to search: what was its purpose, when was it occupied and for how long, who occupied it, what events happened at that site and so on. The rods will help with your informational search by responding to the questions. For us, if the answer is yes, the rods will close in front of us. If the answer is no, the rods will flip backwards away from us. We begin with a simple question and then keep going deeper searching for the truth. Sometimes it takes several trips to a site to find out all the information. After a first visit, you need to sit and review your results which often leads to more questions to be done at a subsequent visit. In some cases, we

have visited a site 4-5 times to get a complete understanding of a site. You will need to work with your rods to determine how they respond for you.

To a non-dowser, seeing someone standing with a pair of metal rods in their hands asking questions and expecting answers is the ultimate in weird and strange behavior. The doubters cannot accept that dowsing is a repeatable and effective research technique. A person with a “divining mind,” however, can accomplish amazing things with the rods - finding unmarked graves, underground water, sacred indigenous sites and more. In our practice, we have asked questions such as: “Are there Indian graves nearby?” or “In what direction are the Indian graves located?” Other questions might be: “Are there Indian Marker Trees nearby?” If the answer is yes, follow up by asking: “Which direction should I go to find one of the Marker Trees?” In finding graves we have asked whether the person is male or female and gotten answers. When searching for water we might ask: “Is there underground running water nearby.” If the answer is yes, we then ask which direction to go. Determining how far an underground stream is below the surface we ask question such as “Is this underground stream less than 30 feet below the ground? Less than 50 feet underground? More than 40 feet?” Keep narrowing the possibilities until you get a “No” answer. While asking a yes or no question may sound easy, asking the right question, a properly worded specific question, can be difficult. However, what those with the proper frame of mind and the right questions can accomplish is beyond common understanding.

DOWSING FOR WATER

Water dowsing is one of the simplest tasks to learn. You can walk all over a property to search for water but it is easier if you ask if potable water is located nearby. If you get a yes, then follow up with the question “In which direction is it located.” The rods will swing in the direction of where the water is located. Now, with the rods in the search position and following the direction they pointed, start walking until you find the first boundary of the water. Mark that spot. Keep going in the direction you were going until you find the other boundary of the underground stream. Now you have a width. It is best to do this again 10-20 feet on either side of where you crossed the water so you have four points to define the stream. Go the center of the stream and hold one rod over the underground water and ask which direction is the water flowing. The rod will rotate and point to the direction of flow. Another way to find the depth of the water is to stand in the center of the stream and with the rods crossed in front of you, turn 360 degrees around and walk out perpendicular to the stream. When you reach the depth of the water, the rods will flip backwards from your body. Measure the distance from where the rods flip backwards to the center of the stream and that is the depth of water. If this is difficult because of the terrain, you can go back to asking questions about the depth by asking questions such as “Is the depth of water greater than 20 feet?” If you get a yes keep add more depth until you get a no and then you have it bracketed. Now you can get specifically in feet to find the exact depth. You can also ask questions to find the flow rate.

DOCUMENTING UNMARKED GRAVES

Rationalizing that dowsing rods can locate such things as metals, utilities, a variety of man-made lines such as pipe, power, telephone, sewer and other things buried underground is somehow easier to accept than that they can indicate graves. And yet, the rods do react to graves. Not only can they indicate a burial site they can provide knowledge about the gender of the body.

In most Christian cemeteries people were buried with the head to the west and the feet to the east. This practice was based on the idea that Christ, in the second coming, would come from the East. Thus, the body should be facing that direction. Many Indian tribes believe that east is the most important direction so many of their bodies are also buried facing east. Therefore, in most graves the head will be to the west and the feet to the east. If a marker, often called a headstone, is placed on the grave it usually does indeed mark the head. Beginning dowsers can practice locating graves and identifying gender in a local cemetery. If you choose to do this, please be respectful of the cemetery's sacredness. Do not do anything that might be considered disrespectful by those who have relatives buried there.

DOWSING A GRAVE

Most adult graves are about six feet in length. Holding the dowsing rods in the search position and about a foot or so apart, approach the grave about five feet from the side of the grave. When you reach the grave, the rods will cross inwardly when crossing over the grave and when you have passed over the grave, the rods will uncross. This marks the width of the grave. Determining the height of the person buried there can be done by dowsing between the head stone and the foot of the grave. The rods will remain crossed as you dowse from one end of the grave to the other. When you reach the ends of the grave, they will uncross. To check on the gender of the person, switch to one rod, hold the rod over the center of the grave. If the person was a female, the rod will swing toward the head. If the person was male, the rod will swing toward the feet. If you are not sure whether the grave is oriented east/west or not, use a compass to determine its orientation. If it is an unmarked grave and not oriented east/west, then you have to ask a question, "Is the grave a woman? Is this grave a male?"

Many old cemeteries have unmarked graves. These graves can be located by dowsing. Sometimes these graves will have a small upturned stone to give you a clue about where to look. Sometimes it is a matter of walking back and forth with the rods until they cross and indicate a possible grave. Other clues may be a mound of dirt which was piled up when the person was buried. Other times, if no dirt was added to the top of a grave, you will find a depression in the ground. Graves may also be marked by a pile of stones. When you locate an unmarked grave, follow the same process as used in a cemetery to determine information about the grave. Graves found outside of a cemetery may be pioneer graves, Indian graves, or, based on what you know about the history of the area, some other determination. If the site is near an old homestead, the person was probably a settler. If the site is near a known Indian village, hunting, or cultural site, it probably is an Indian.

Using spiritual dowsing, you can determine a lot about a grave. First find the grave by asking if there are graves nearby and if you get a yes, then ask which direction and follow the rods pointing

to the grave location. Once you find one grave you can ask where the next one is located and so on till you find them all. The rods will swing and point to the grave.

Once you locate the grave and determine gender, then next is to determine who is buried there. I usually ask first if it is an Indian grave. If I get a yes, then we proceed further. If not an Indian grave, then it usually is a pioneer grave or later.

For Indian graves, we usually ask first the tribe starting with tribes that were in that locale and if not getting one of them we keep at it till we get a yes. After finding out the tribe, we then determine how they died by asking, "Did you die of old age?" and if no, "Did you die from a disease?" or were you killed and then how were you killed. You can age the grave by asking "is this grave older than 100 years" and then continue to you bracket the age to about ten years and then in increments of one get an exact year of death.

We were once taken to a family cemetery and shown the graves of this particular family. All the graves of the family were laid inside a concrete curb plot of about 40 feet square. We were shown the grave of a great grandfather. We asked where the great grandmother was buried and were told they did not know. We asked what her name was, then using the rods asked if she was buried nearby and got a yes response. We then asked where she was buried and the rods pointed to a pile of rocks ten feet away from the concrete curb. There were several other graves with rocks piled on them. The great grandmother was a Creek Indian and she had been denied the right to be buried inside the family plot.

DOCUMENTING INDIGENOUS SACRED SITES USING DOWSING

Managing the nationwide Trail Tree Project, the Mountain Stewards, along with a number of associated colleagues, have been documenting Marker Trees throughout the US and Canada for the past decade.

As of 2019, there are over 2,600 trees from 44 states in the database. Most of those trees have not yet been dowsed to check for underground water. For many years we thought that the Indians selected a young sapling to bend as a marker for the feature they wanted to call attention to. Now we have learned that every Marker Tree has an underground stream of water directly under the tree. We now know that the Indians located the underground stream and then planted a tree above it. After it grew to be a small sapling, they would bend it. It seems that one of the primary purposes for the marker trees was to indicate a water source and we have discovered that these trees most always point in the direction the underground stream is flowing. Many times the trees point the way to a spring. This may not be true for trees that point to places of shelter or along Indian trails, but that remains to be discovered.

We now know that the easiest way to document a Marker Tree is to test for water. If there is no water under the possible tree, then it is most likely not a marker Tree.

DOWSING A POSSIBLE MARKER TREE

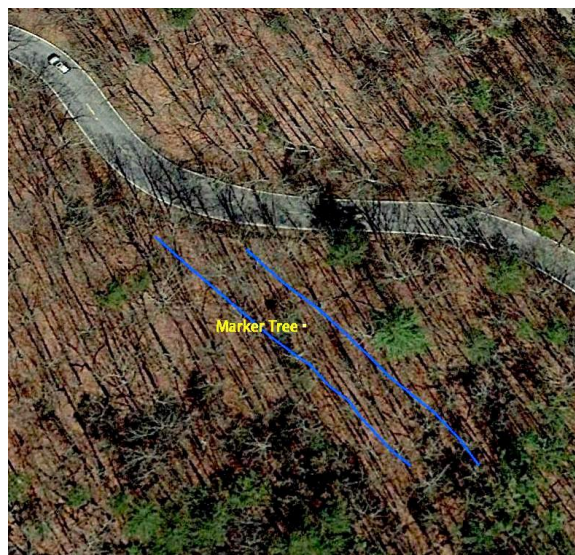
Look at the tree. Which way is it pointing? In your mind, picture a stream of water running under the tree in the direction the tree is pointing. Go “downstream” about 10 to 20 feet in front of the pointer. Now, move back several feet from where you visualize the underground stream to be. Holding your rods in front of you, start walking toward where you have pictured the stream. If your rods cross before you can start walking, you are already over the water. Move farther back and try again. Continue moving back until your rods remain pointed straight out and then walk toward your visualized stream. When your rods cross, you are at the edge of the real stream. Mark that place with a flag or a GPS mark. Continue walking across the underground stream. When your rods uncross, you will have reached the other side of the stream. Mark that place. You now have two points indicating the width of the underground stream. Assuming the pointer is the front of the tree, go behind the tree and repeat the steps of finding and marking the edges of the stream. You now have four points and can record the stream for later study.

Now that you know where the stream is, hold one rod out over the water. Ask the rod to show you the direction of the flow. The rod will turn and point in the actual direction of the flow. Note the direction in your records. By periodically checking to find the edges of the stream, you can follow the stream in the direction the tree is pointing. Following the stream may help identify what the purpose of that particular tree might be. Did you find a spring, a grave, a trail or some other feature? Note that in your record.

MARKER TREE PURPOSE

Using spiritual dowsing, you can probably determine the purpose of the Marker Tree. The main purposes the trees served were: marking a water source; a stream crossing, a shelter, a grave or graves; a sacred site; direction to a place and other purposes. Using yes and no questions, you can begin asking about the tree’s purpose.

Go through the list of purposes until you get a yes response. Once you know the purpose you can ask further questions to get to more details. You can also ask which tribe bent the tree by cycling through the varies tribes from that area to see if you can get an answer. The elders have told us that sometimes we are not to know the answers and we will be blocked from knowing. We usually carry sacred Indian tobacco with us and sprinkle it on the ground before we start to ask permission to come into the site and to be given the opportunity to learn about the site.



**Underground Water Associated with
Marker Tree**

SPECIAL MARKER TREES

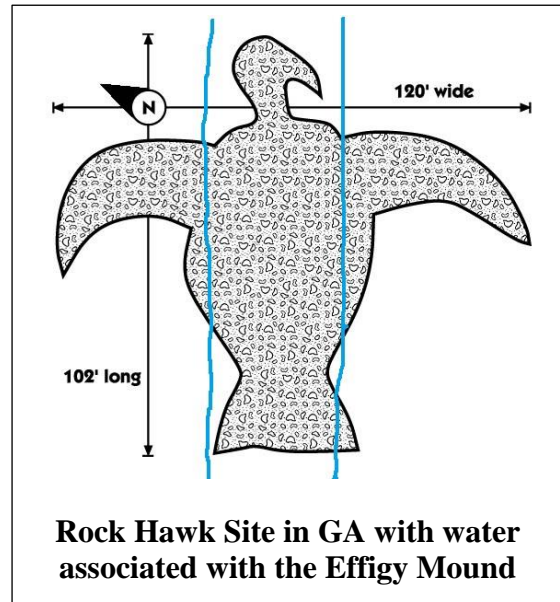
It may take a long time to understand the purpose of a particular tree. The Bankhead Cemetery tree located in Alabama took three visits to make a final determination as to its purpose. This tree is located where the Cherokee lived. However, it is marking the grave of a Chickasaw warrior who was killed by hanging around early 1700. The bending of the tree is hard to see in the picture but the tree was bent down at 45 degrees and then the branch was bent back on itself to form a noose which signified the event of the hanging. We visited this tree again in 2018 with a Ute Indian lady who when she got there visualized another hanging. This hanging was a Cherokee woman who was hung from the Marker tree over a hundred years later. We did not determine why she was hung. Perhaps we will need to visit this tree again to discover more of its history. Could she have been hung just because she was a Cherokee during the removal period?



Bankhead Cemetery Marker Tree

ARTIFACT SITES

Researching and documenting artifact and sacred sites takes a lot of time. To document these sites, it is best to have several dowsers involved as these sites are harder to interpret. In most cases, these sites have a multitude of interconnecting underground streams. They will also have energy lines and other features that should be documented using GPS and compasses so they can be plotted on a Google Earth imagery to document the site.



Rock Hawk Site in GA with water associated with the Effigy Mound

Locating energy lines is a bit complicated and take more advanced instruction. In general, the energy lines will cause the rods to flip outwardly to align with the energy line direction which can then be measured with a compass and a GPS.

For more information:

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