WET SIEVING ORGANIC SEDIMENT SUB SAMPLES (USA ONLY)

Equipment

1. Large plastic 1.5 litre graduated bucket
2. Stack of geological sieves
3. Sink with silt trap

Consumables

1. Plastic bags

Personal Protective Equipment

Lab coat
Gloves

Protocol

This should all be carried out in the Penn Paleoecology Lab

NB- Before starting check with the field archaeologist that no hazardous chemical or biological contamination is present in sediment samples.

1. Ensure the sink is clear.
2. Get 1.5 litre plastic beaker.
3. Fill beaker with 1 litre of tap water.
4. Prepare a grip lock bag marked with sample details.
5. Take circa 300ml of sediment and place in beaker
6. Measure sediment volume using the displacement of water.
7. Add the sample volume data to grip lock bag label.
8. Leave sample to soak until soft (from 5min to several hours, depending on compaction).
9. Whilst sample is soaking get the 4mm/2mm/1mm/500µm/300µm geological sieves, stack largest to smallest, and place in the sink.
10. Disaggregate the sample using a gloved hand.
11. Once partly separated and water muddy, decant the water and any floating items into the sieve stack.
12. Rinse the sieve stack through with tap water to ensure there are no blockages.
13. Refill beaker with water and continue to soak and disaggregate.
14. Repeat steps 10 to 13 until you are left with only stones and grit in the beaker.
15. Wash the stones and grit separately in a 1mm sieve to recover any heavy ecofacts/artefacts.
16. The organic remains in the sieve stack are to be put into labelled bags to be analysed or stored in the fridge.