

GEOCHEMICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EXAMINATION OF FRENCH AZILUM, PA

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Phosphate analysis is a geochemical technique that is used in archaeology to identify areas where organic debris was discarded or collected in the soil. Phosphate patterning is used to differentiate between areas where debris was deposited and areas that were kept clear of debris. This presentation will discuss the two sections of the historic site of French Azilum, Pennsylvania, that were tested using the Eidt and Wood Spot Test method (Eidt and Wood 1974: 51-52). Several activity areas were identified; some phosphate concentrations were associated with previously excavated features and others were located in areas of decreased human activity in the archaeological record. The phosphate patterns were interpreted to identify areas of possible structures, pathways, storage areas, and middens. This information was used to create use-of-space models, help determine land-use patterns over the site and aid the archaeological interpretation of site dynamics. Phosphate testing at French Azilum also illustrates how the technique is applicable to historical archaeology.