

The Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen: *A Manifesto in Opposition*

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**Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen
U.U.F.M.S.**

U.U.F.M.S.

Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen U.U.F.M.S.

Disaster for Regional Archaeology

Screen Size Discussions

- **Complex.**
- **Extreme / unique examples.**
- **Conflicting views on archaeology.**
- **Intuition.**
- **Emotional appeal.**



What the Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen Really Means...

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**Dramatic
Increase in
Screening
Time**

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**Dramatic
Increase in
Screening
Time**

=

**Less excavated out
of sites and less
excavated out of
different parts of
sites**

What the Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen Really Means...

**Dramatic
Increase in
Screening
Time**



**Less excavated out
of sites and less
excavated out of
different parts of
sites**



Fewer:

- **Tools**
- **Features**
- **Spatial info**

What the Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen Also Really Means...

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**Shifting
resources
to late stage
pressure
flakes**

What the Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen Also Really Means...

**Shifting
resources
to late stage
pressure
flakes** + **Shifting resources
away from tools
and features**

What the Universal Use of Fine Mesh Screen Also Really Means...



My Position On Mesh Size

My Position:

- **1/4-inch Screen as default.**
- **1/8-inch screen (or smaller).**
 - **For subsampling.**
 - **Used very judiciously.**



Presentation Outline

1. What is actually found in 1/4 and 1/8-inch screens?
2. Volume excavated, what is found, common and rare artifacts.
3. Archaeology is a zero sum activity.

What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch



1/8-Inch



What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

- **Almost all stone tools**
 - Points
 - Scrapers
 - Cobble Tools
 - Cores
 - Abraders
 - Used flakes
 - Etc.

1/8-Inch

- **Few stone tools**
 - Microblades
 - Some tool fragments

What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- **All stages of lithic debitage**

1/8-Inch

- Few stone tools
- **Late stage lithic debitage**
 - Mostly late pressure flakes
 - Undiagnostic debitage

What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- **Identifiable bone**
 - Identifiable bone
 - Bone with cut marks

1/8-Inch

- Few stone tools
- Late stage lithic debitage
- **Unidentifiable bone**
 - Unidentifiable bone
 - Some fish bone

What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- Identifiable bone

1/8-Inch

- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable bone
- Some Exotic items (e.g. beads)

What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- Identifiable bone

1/8-Inch

- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable bone
- Exotic items (e.g. beads)

- Chronology
- Site Function
- Subsistence

- **Significance Evaluations**

Volume Excavated, What is Found, Common and Rare Artifacts



Two Ways to Increase the Number of Items Recovered from an Archaeological Site

1. Excavate More Area / Volume

(Excavate more dirt)

2. Go Through the Dirt more Thoroughly

(Reduce Screen Size)

Two Ways to Increase the Number of Items Recovered from an Archaeological Site

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- Identifiable bone

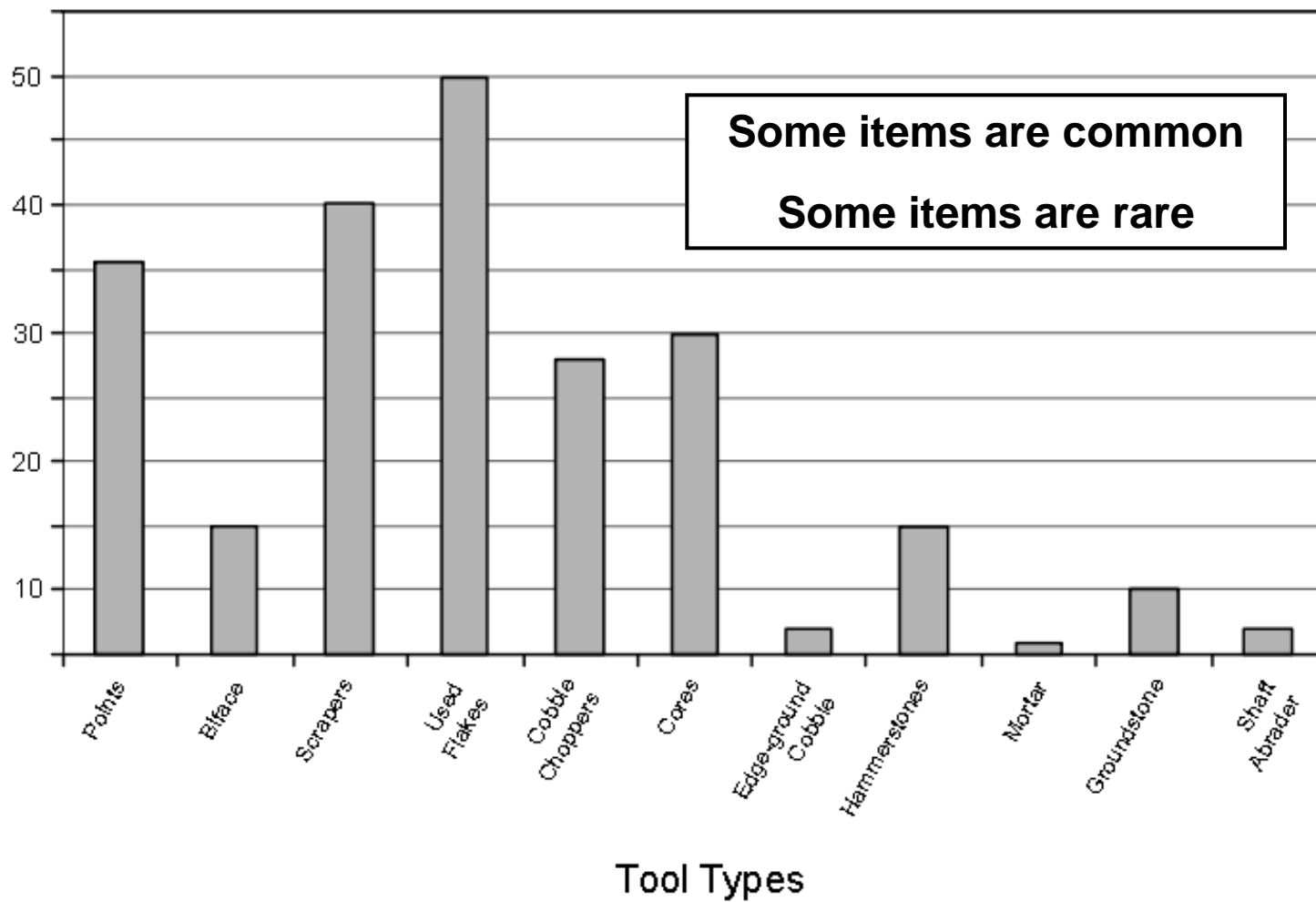
1. Excavate More Dirt

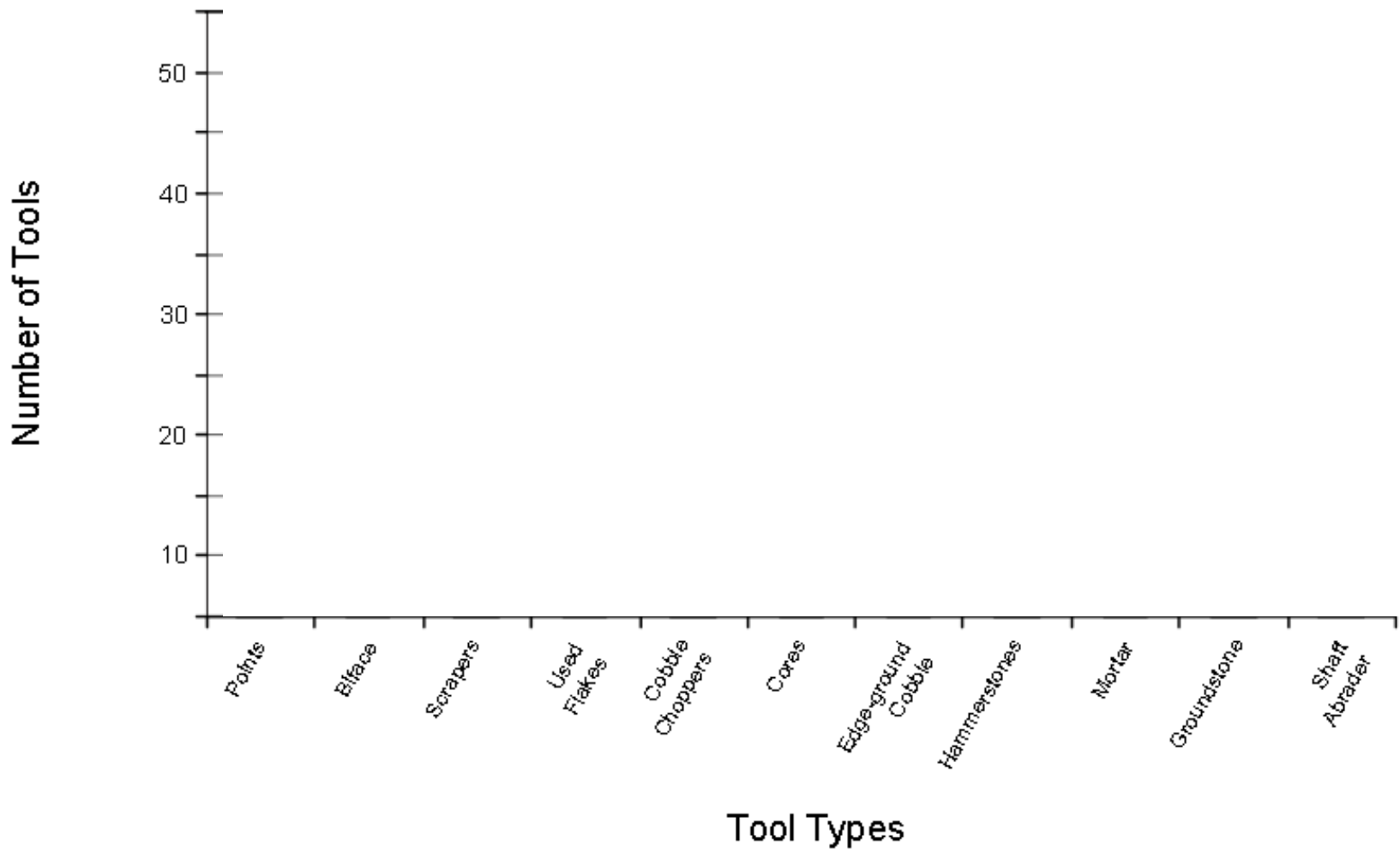
1/8-Inch

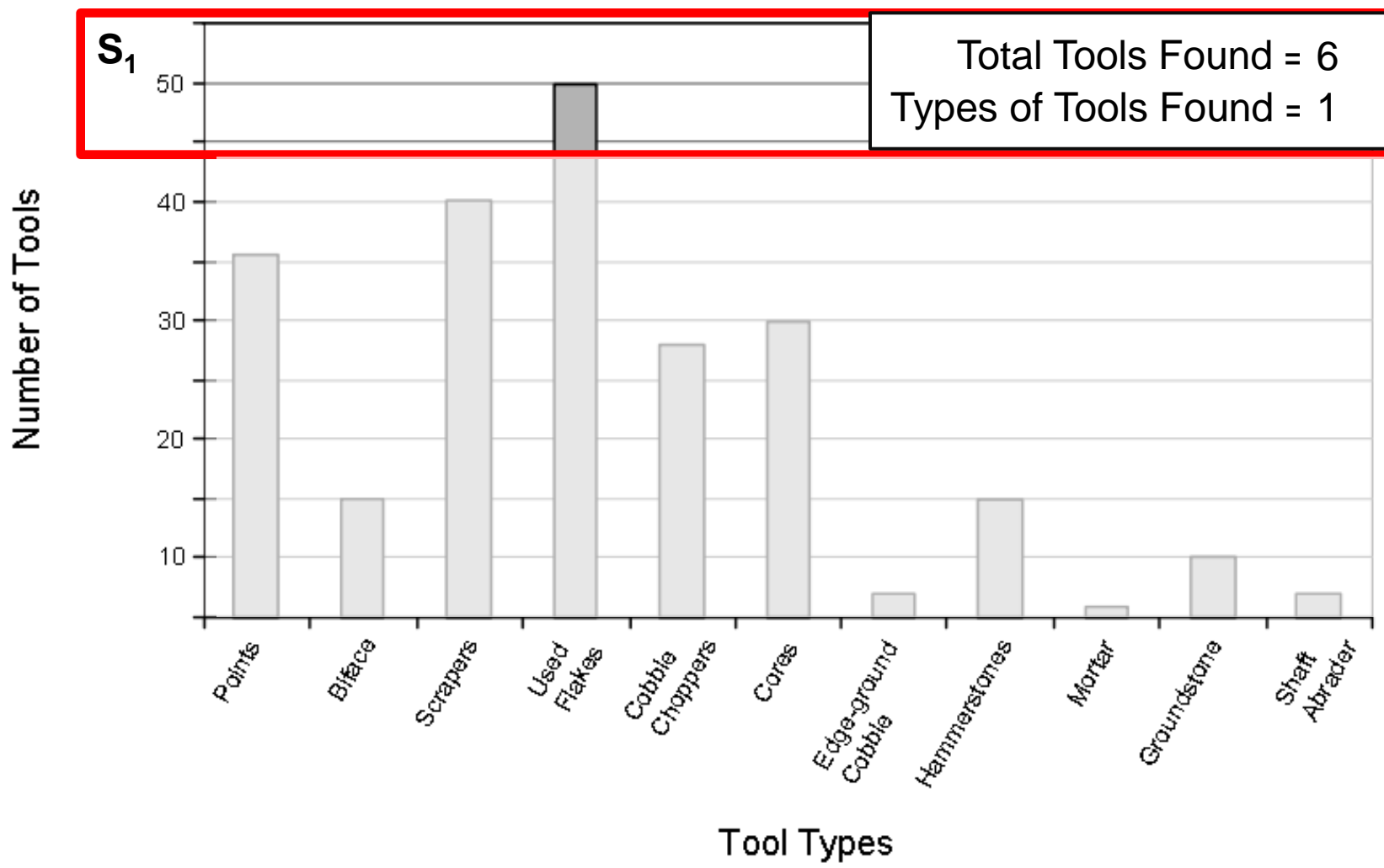
- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable bone
- Exotic items (e.g. beads)

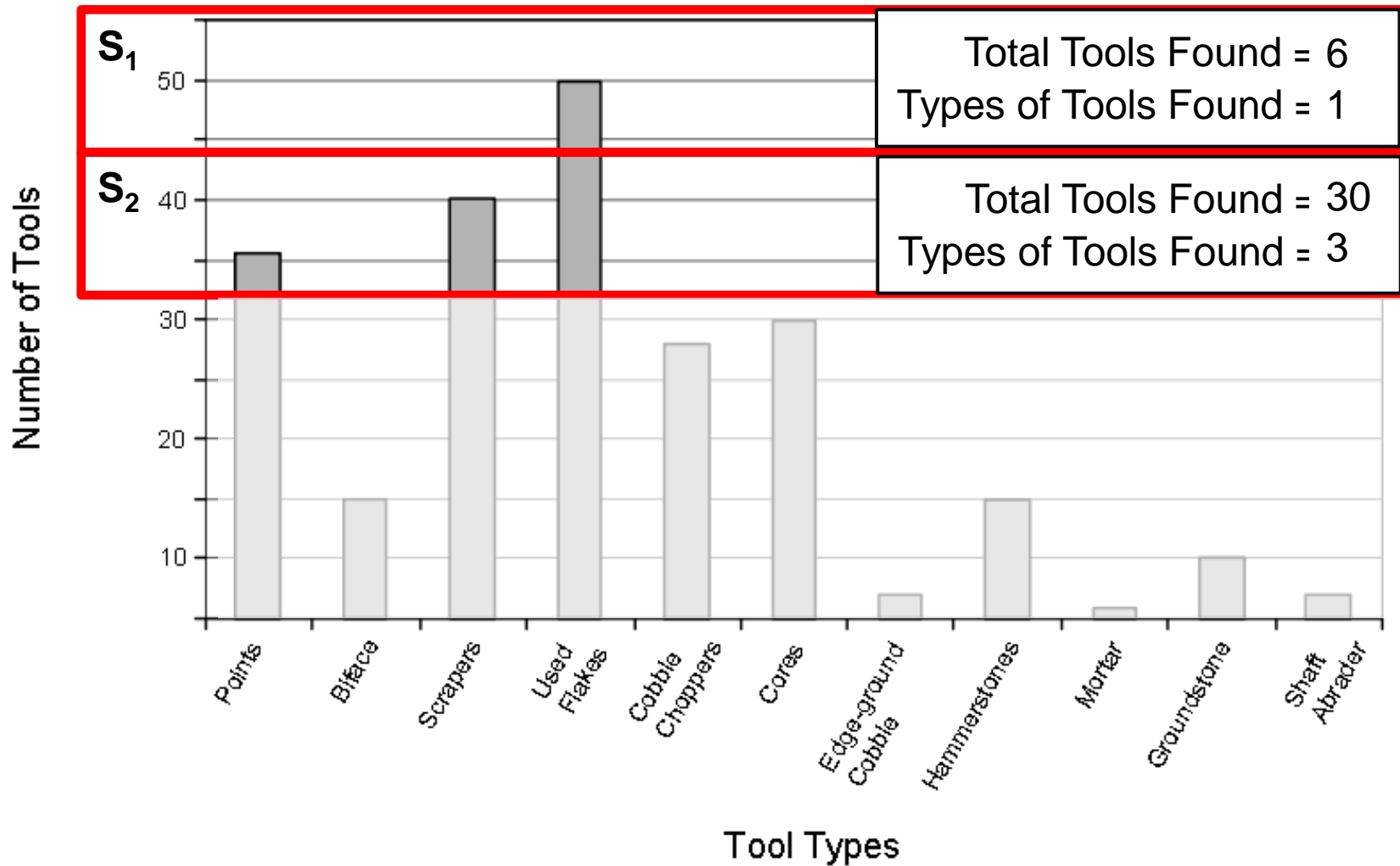
2. Reduce Screen Size

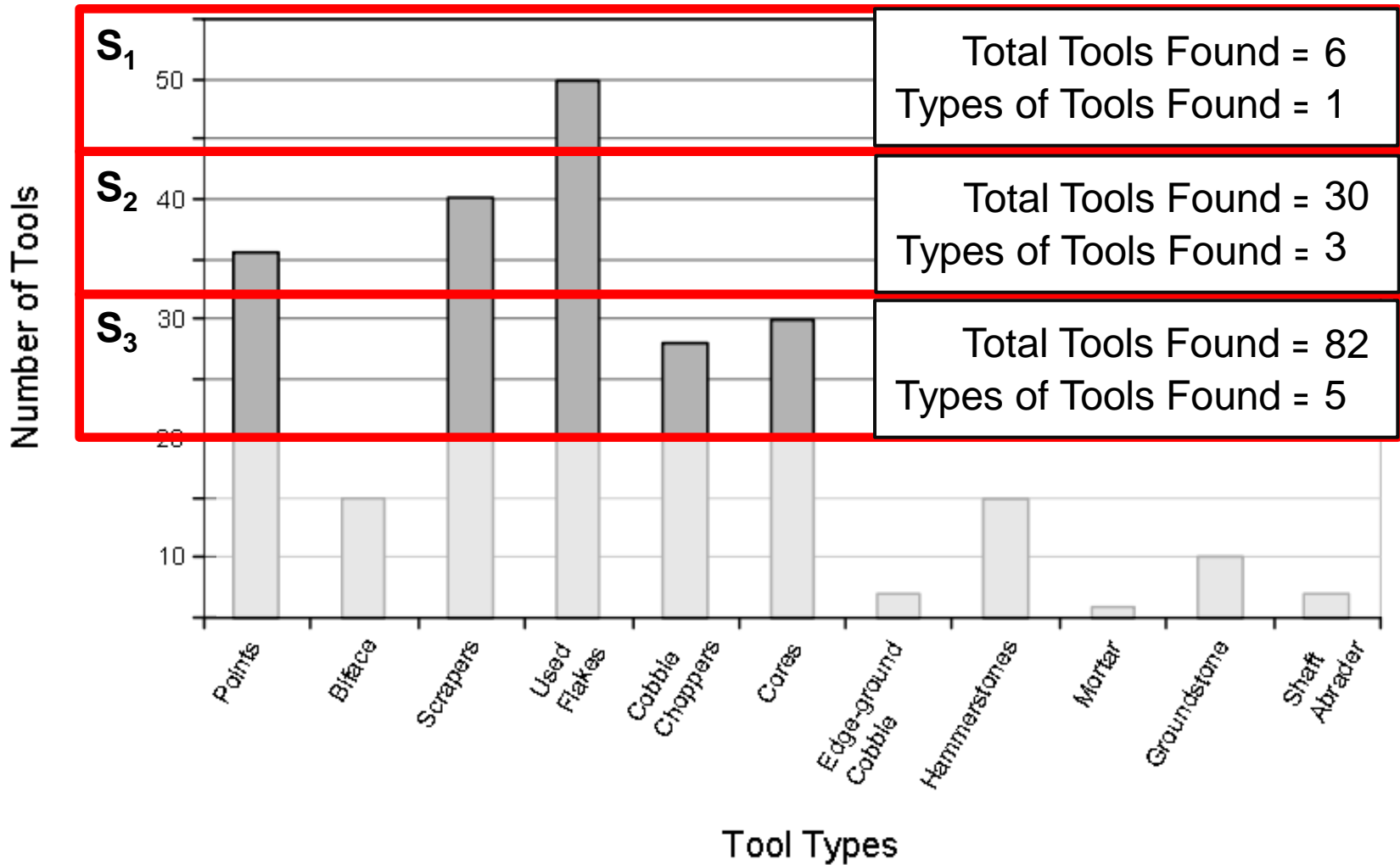
Number of Tools

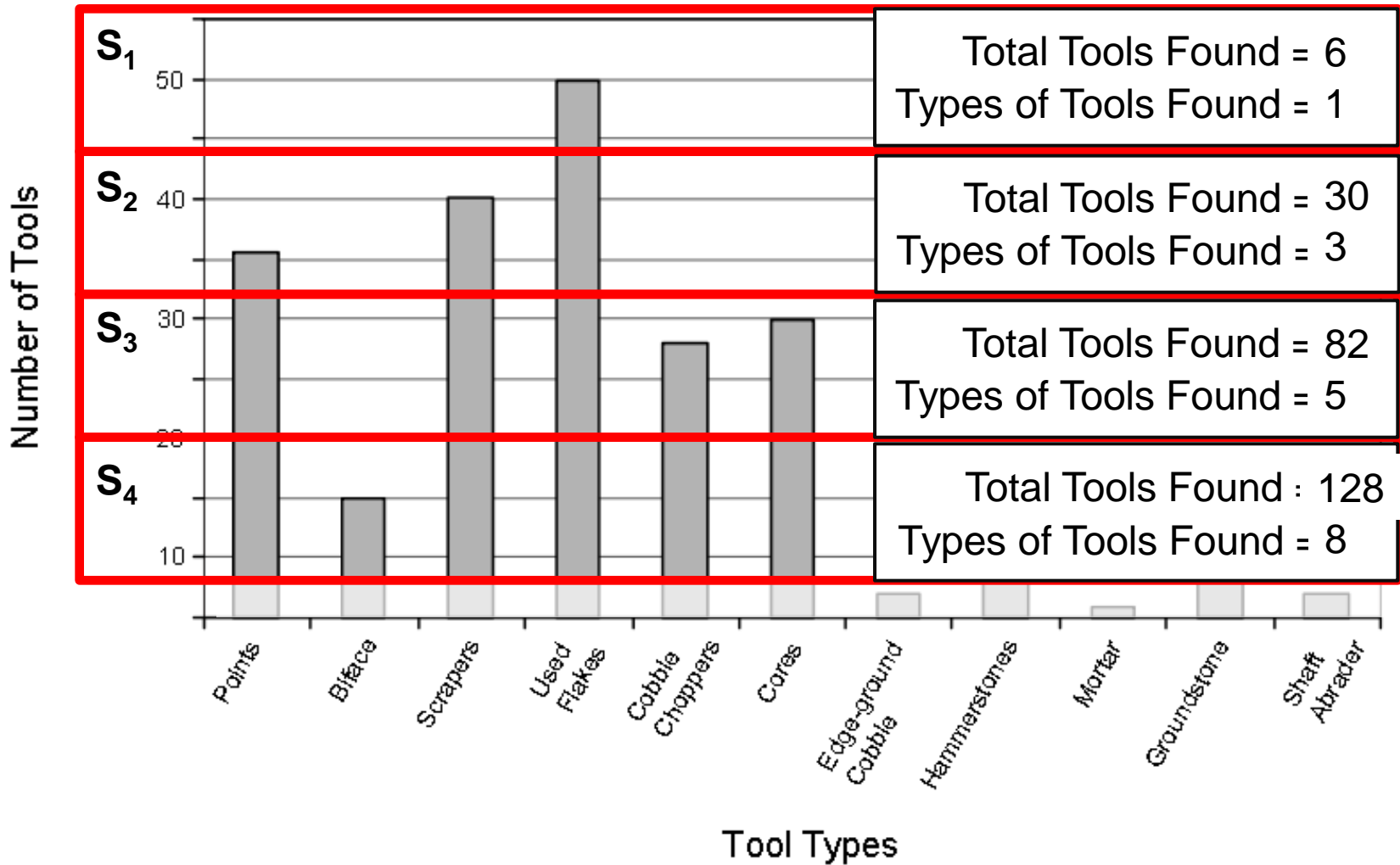


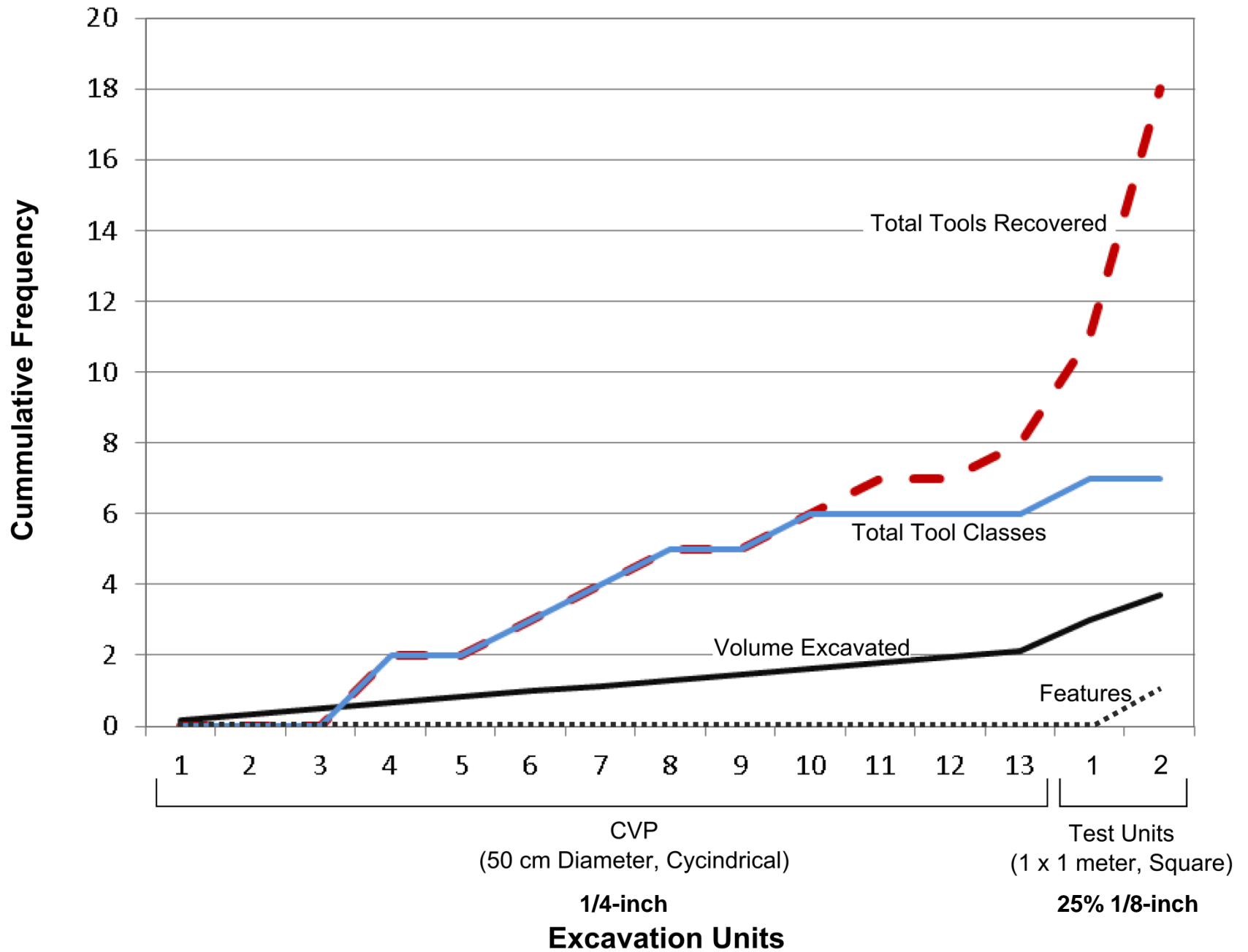


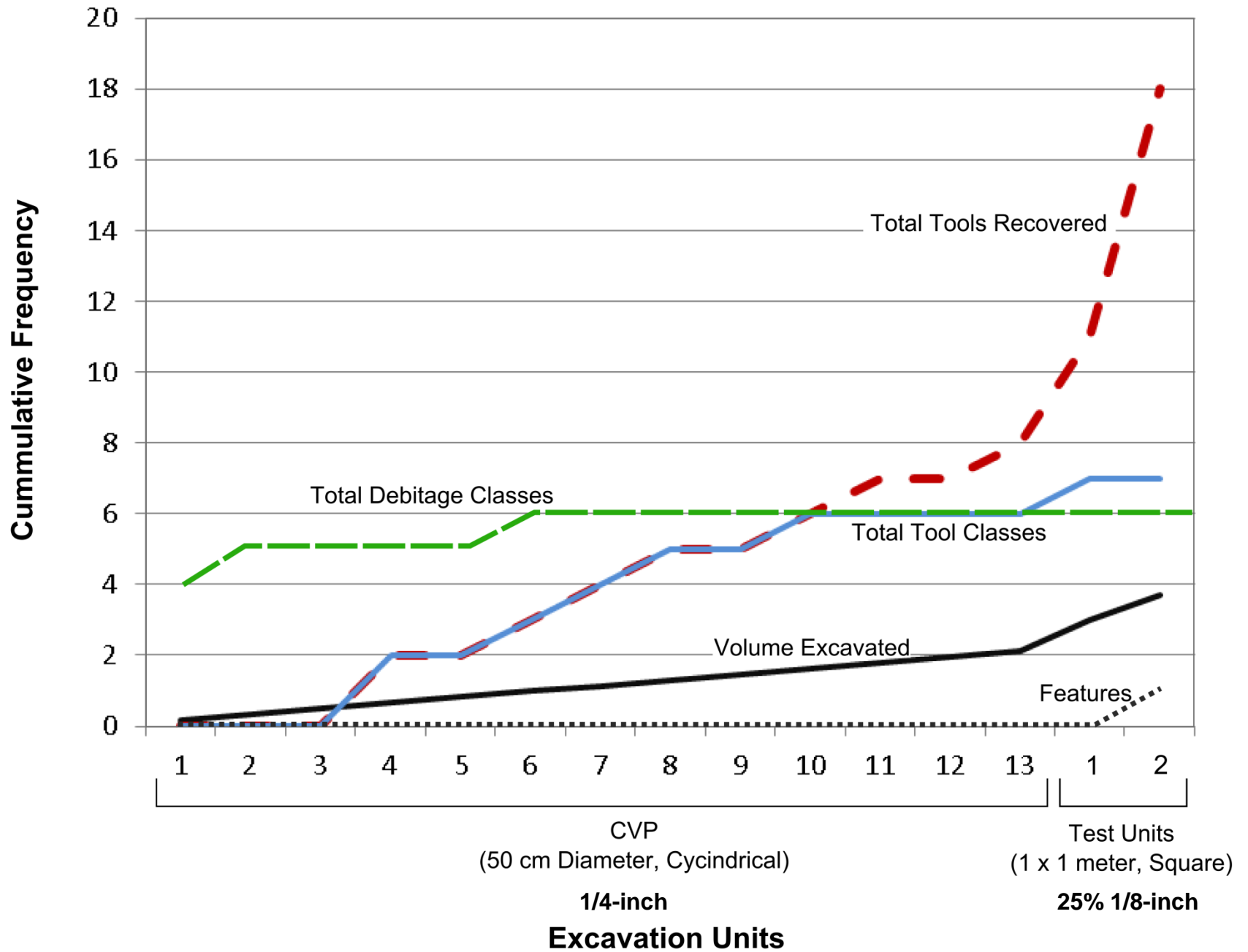


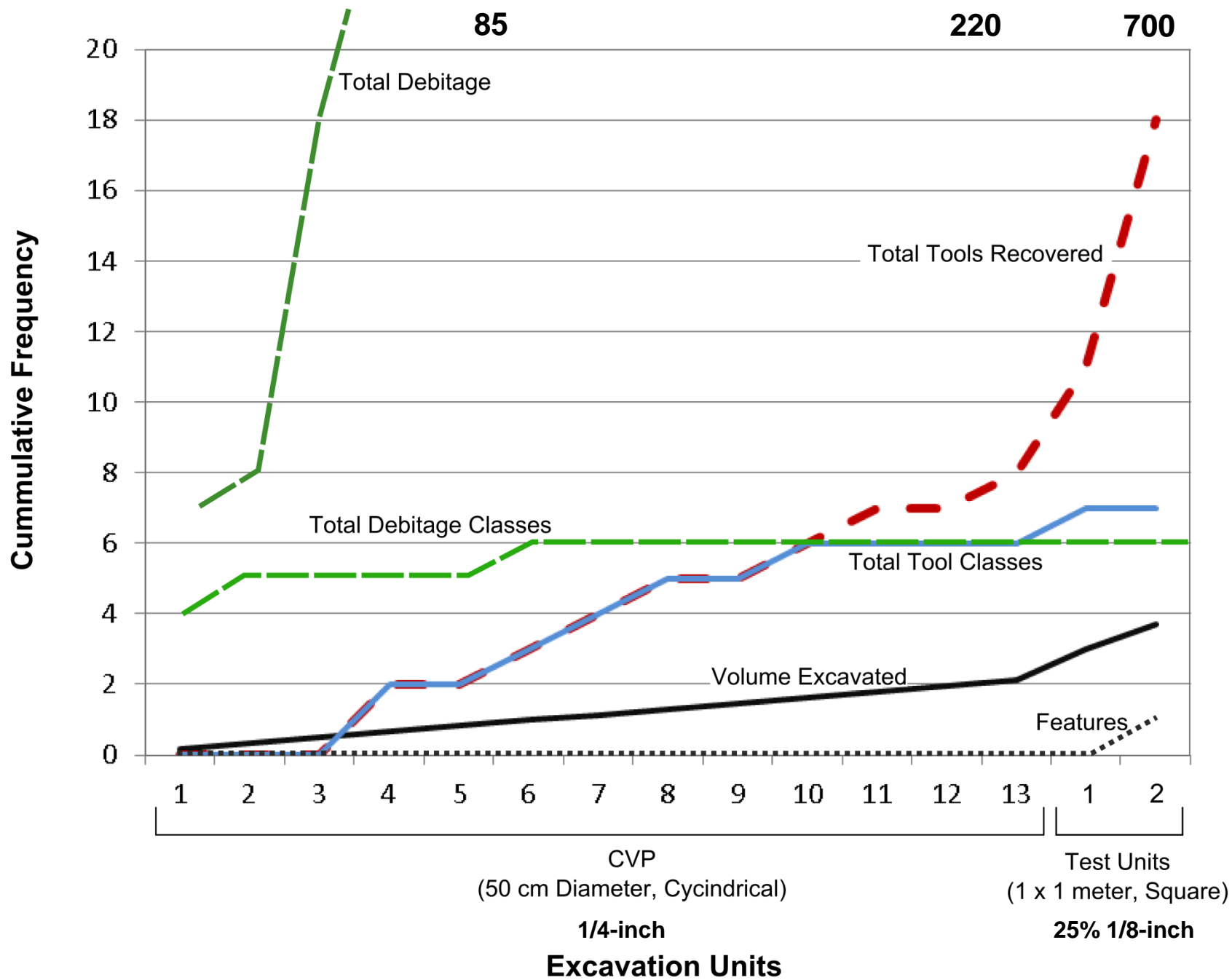


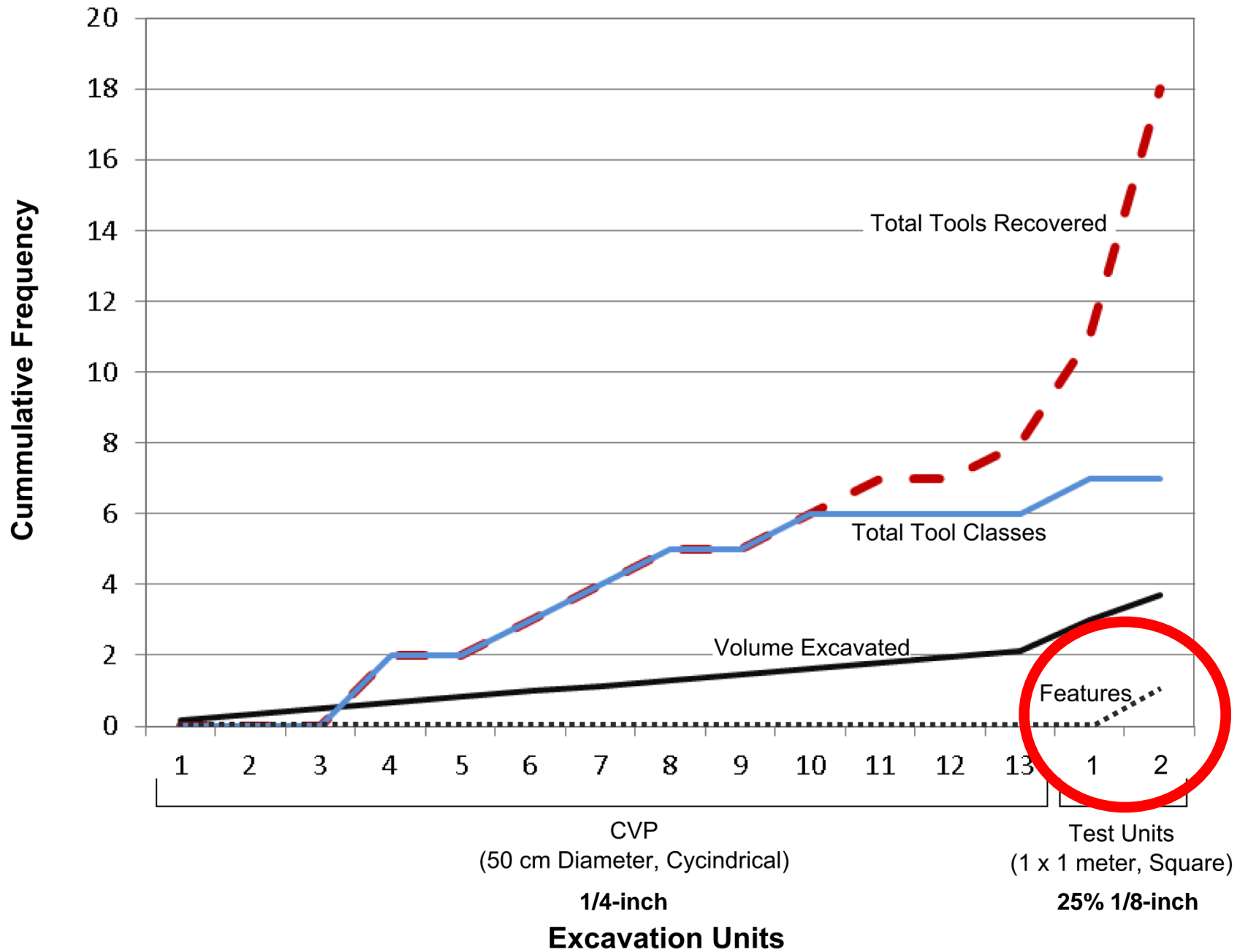






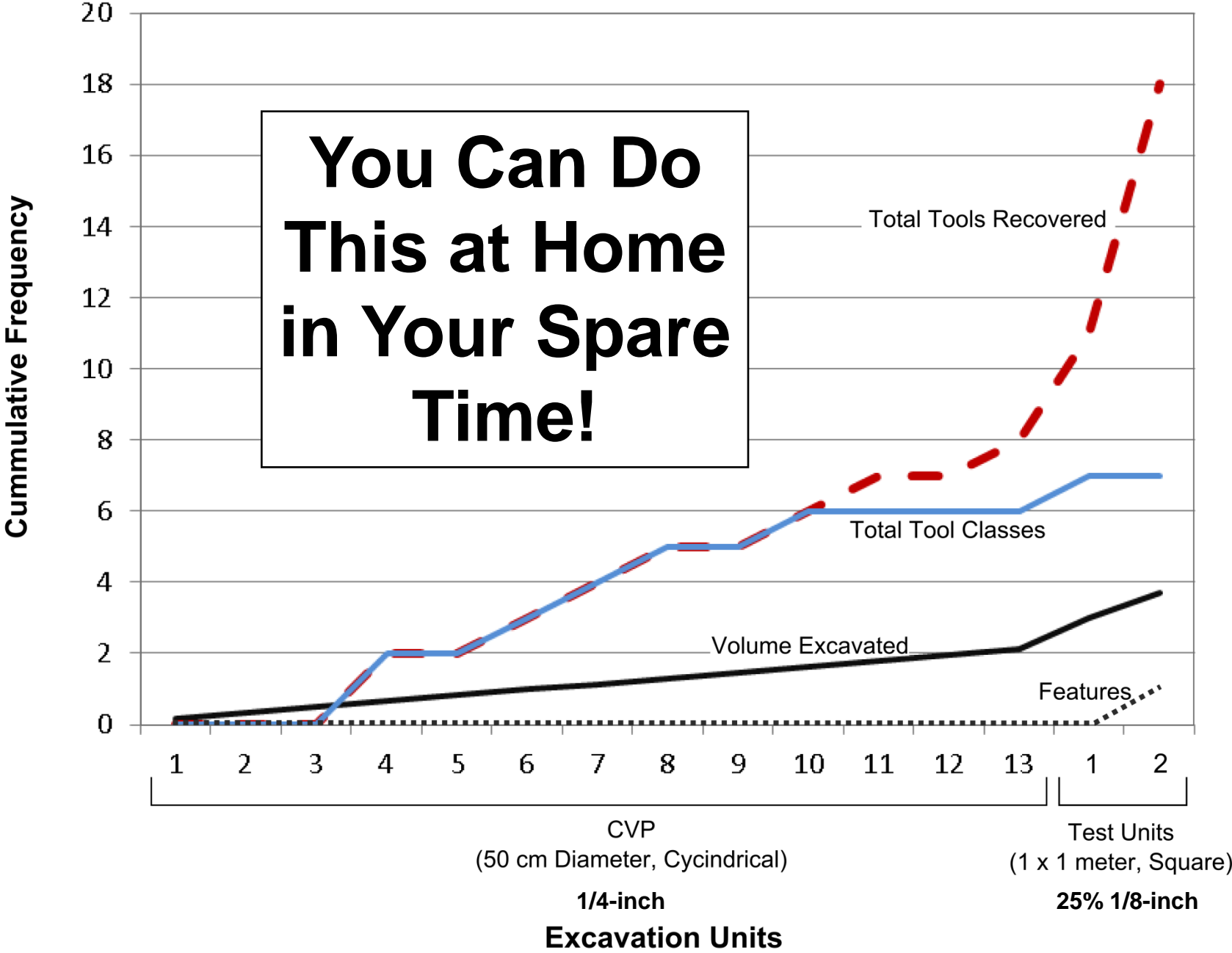


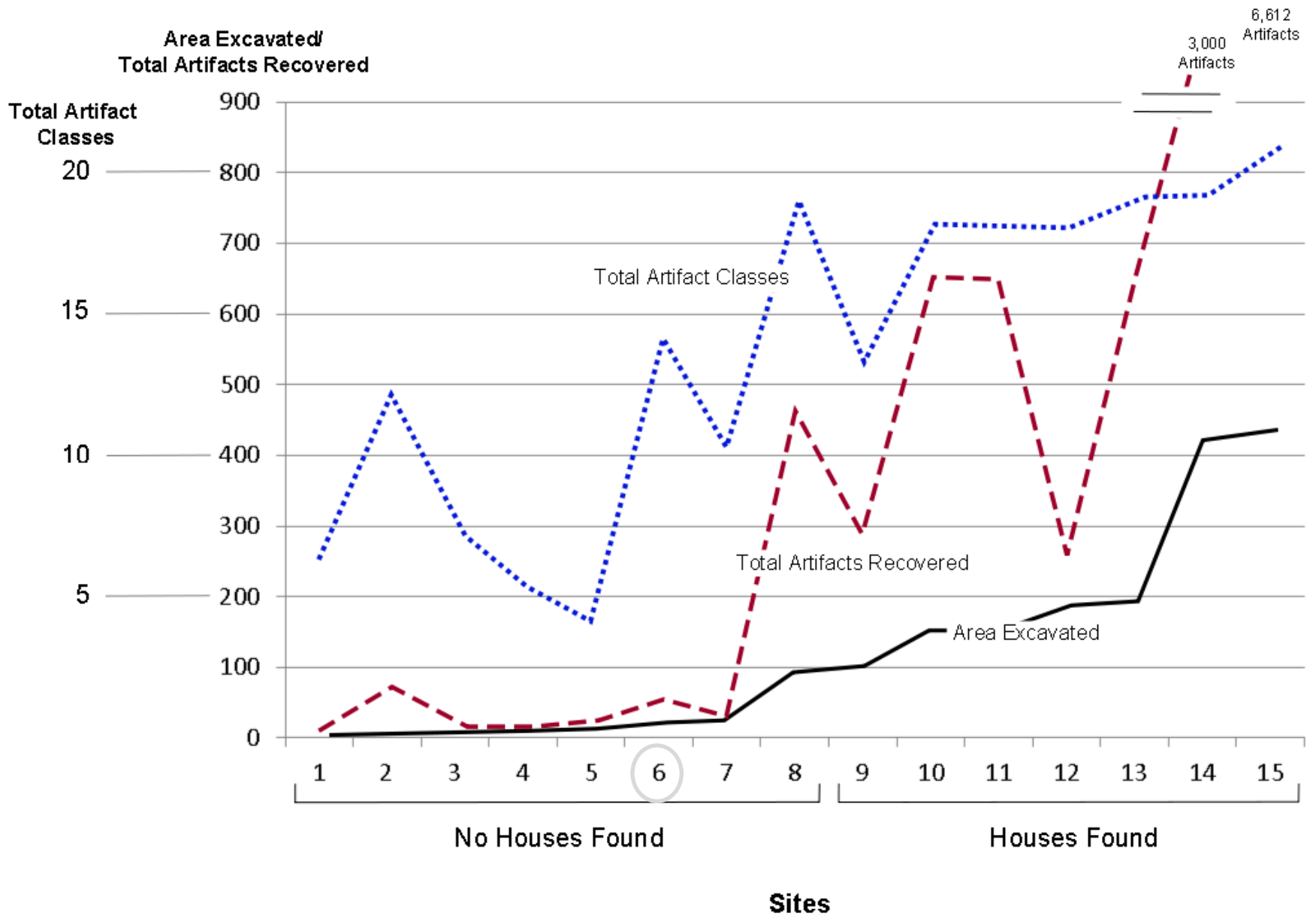






**You Can Do
This at Home
in Your Spare
Time!**





What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- Identifiable bone
- Features
 - Pits, hearths, ovens, house

1. Excavate More Dirt

1/8-Inch

- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable bone
- Exotic items (e.g. beads)

2. Reduce Screen Size

What Comes Out of What Screen?

Common

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- Identifiable bone
- Features
 - Pits, hearths, ovens, house

1/8-Inch

- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable bone
- Exotic items (e.g. beads)

Rare

What Comes Out of What Screen?

Common

1/4-Inch

- Almost all stone tools
- All stages of lithic debitage
- Identifiable bone
- Features
 - Pits, hearths, ovens, house

1/8-Inch

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Rare

1. Excavate More Dirt

2. Reduce Screen Size

What Comes Out of What Screen?

1/4-Inch

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2. Reduce Screen Size

Rare

Common

Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity

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Zero Sum

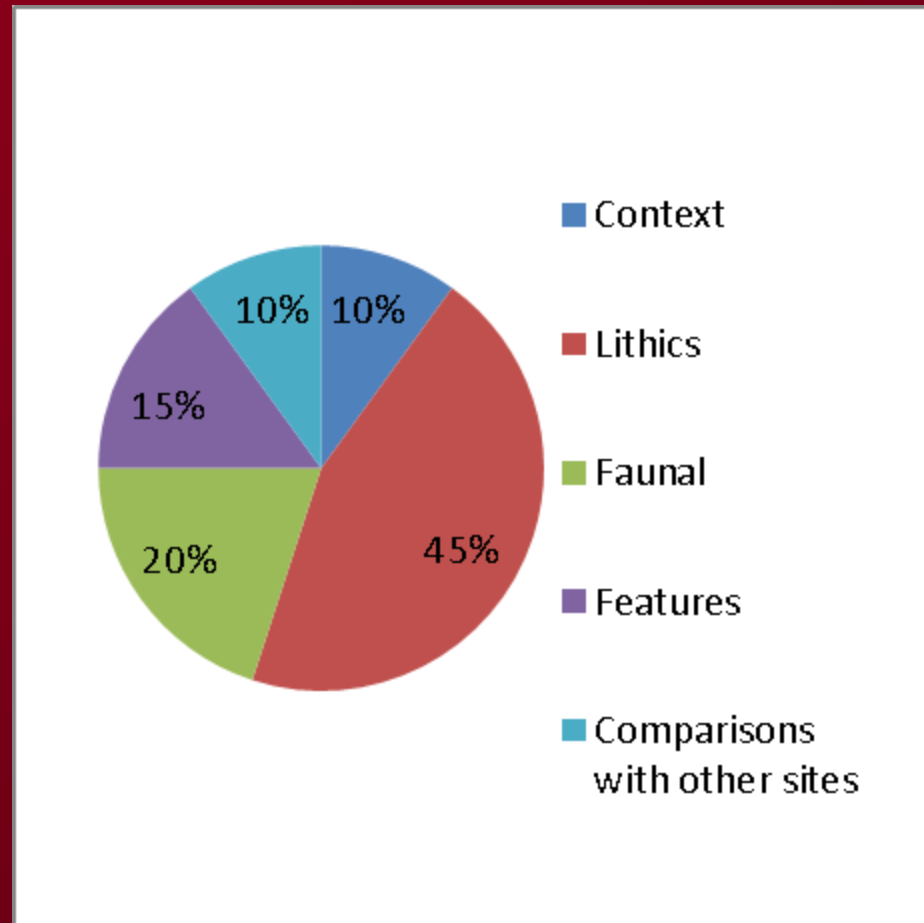
- Increases in one aspect must be offset by decreases in another aspect.
- Finite, not expandable.

Non-Zero Sum

- Increases in one aspect do not have to be offset by decreases in another aspect.
- Infinitely expandable.

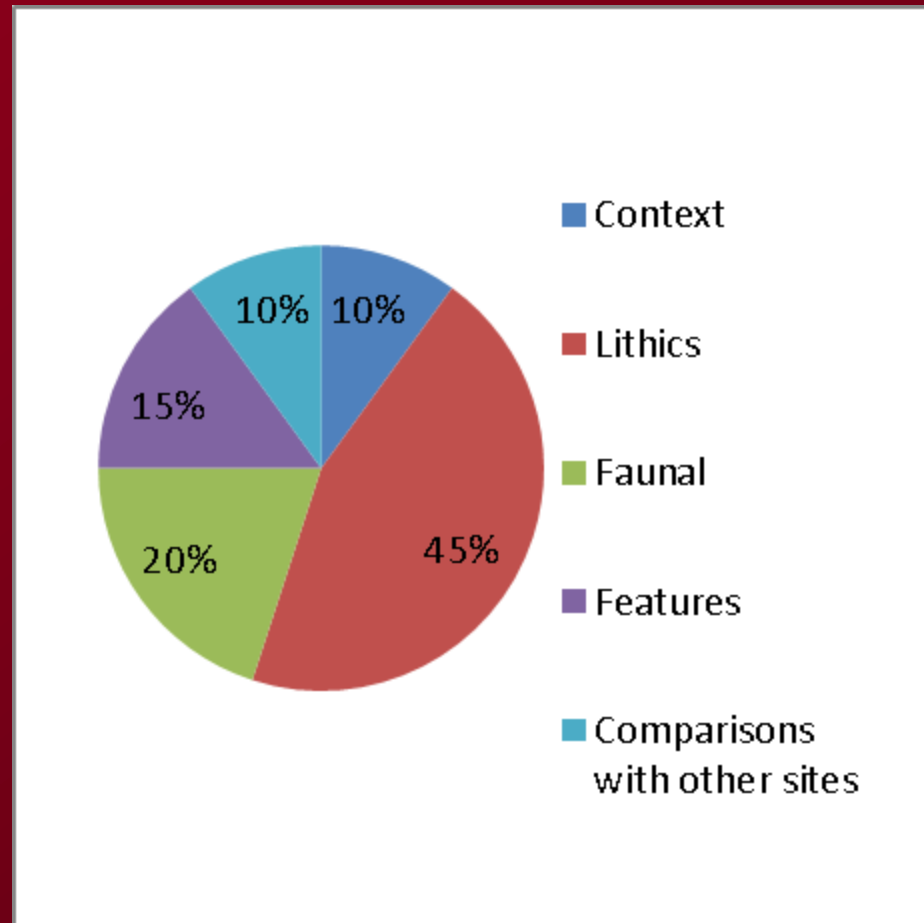
Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity

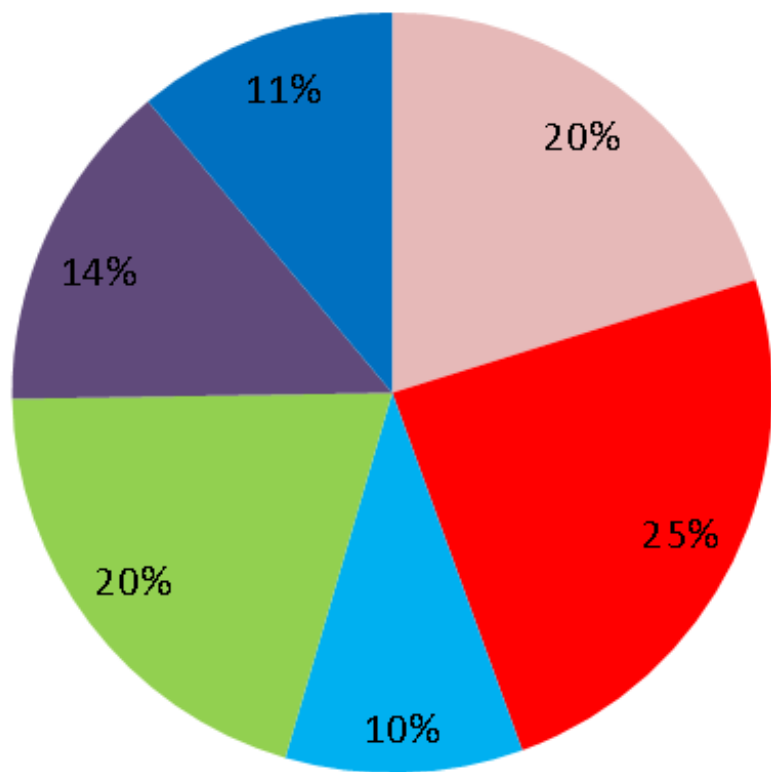
Budget = \$10,000



Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity

Budget = \$1,000,000





1/4 Lithics

1/8 Lithics

Context

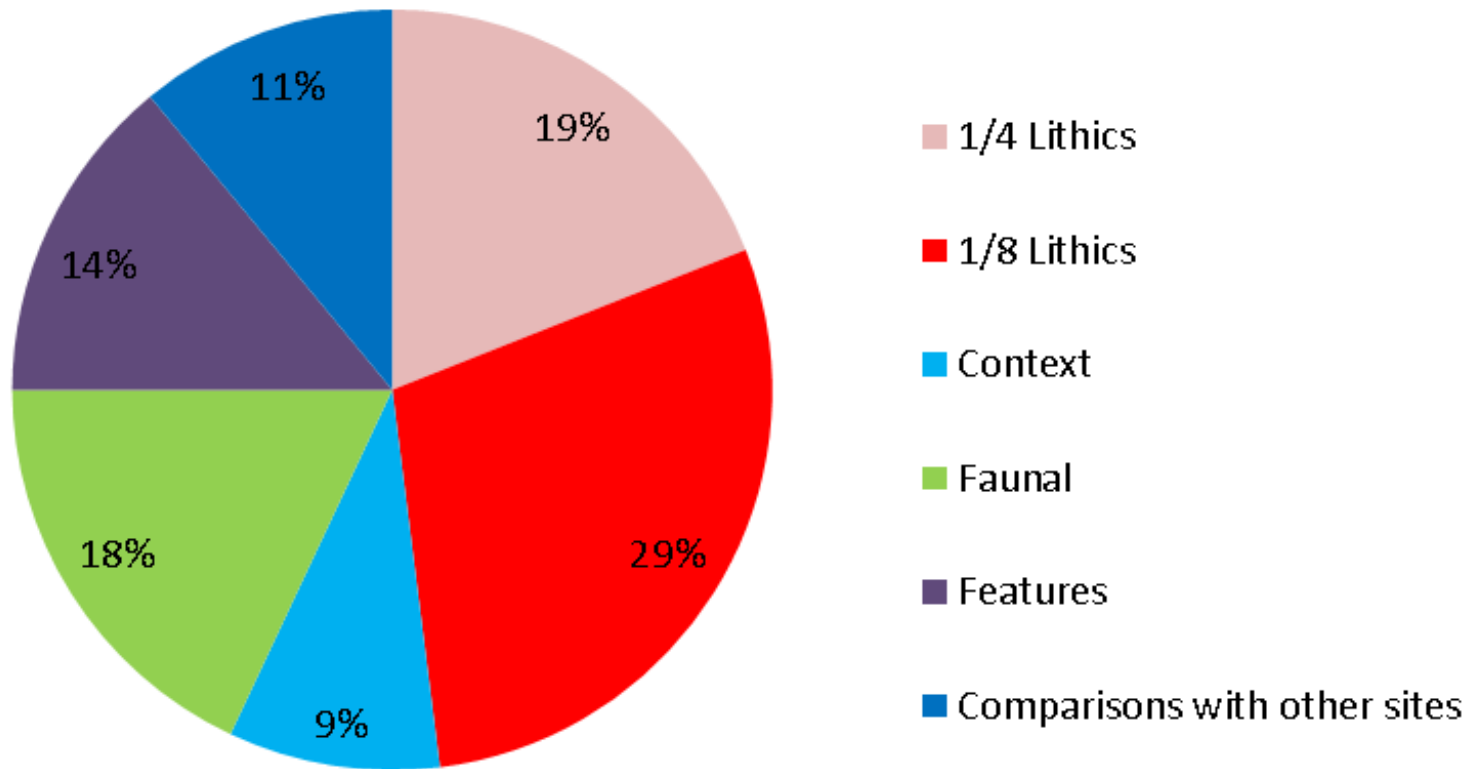
Faunal

Features

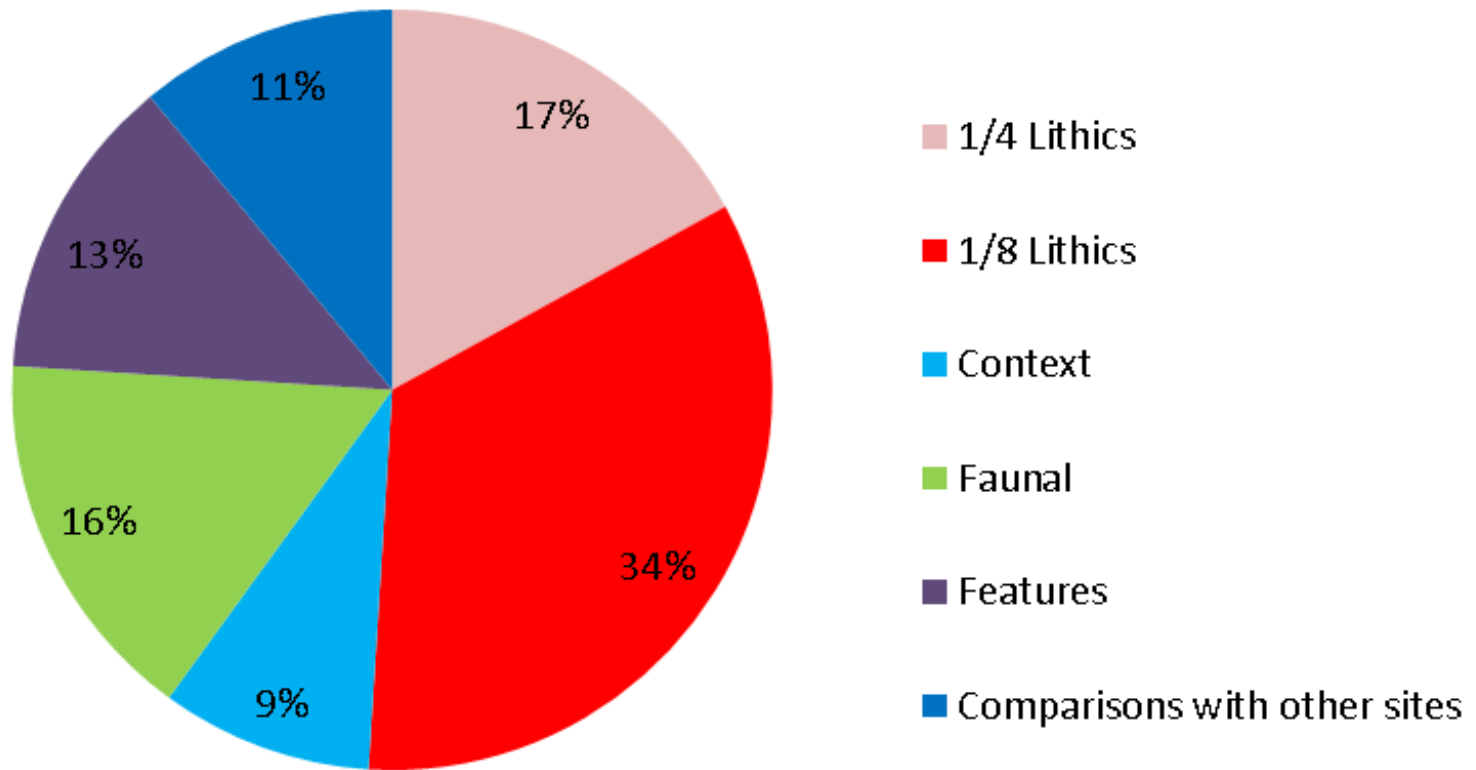
Comparisons with other sites

Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity

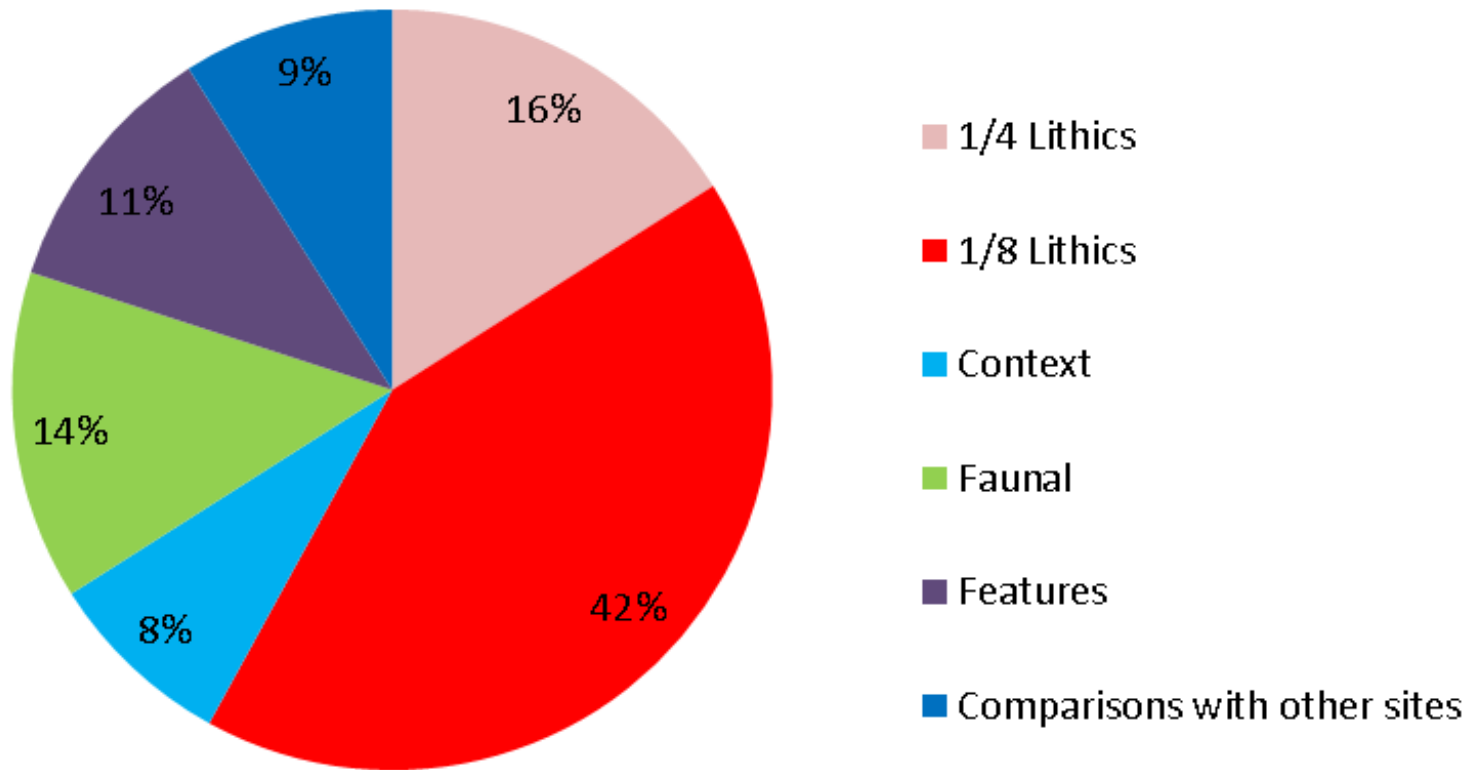
All



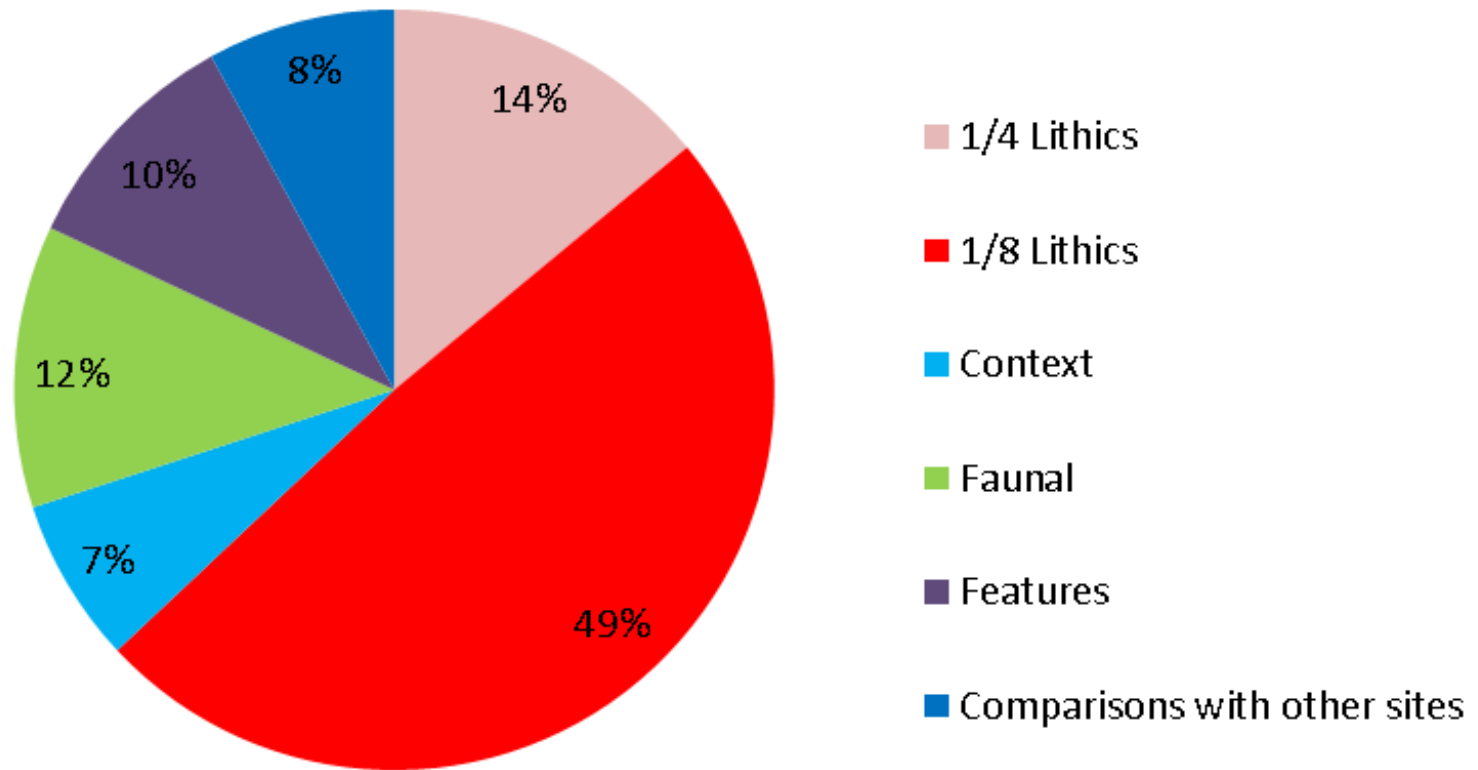
Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity



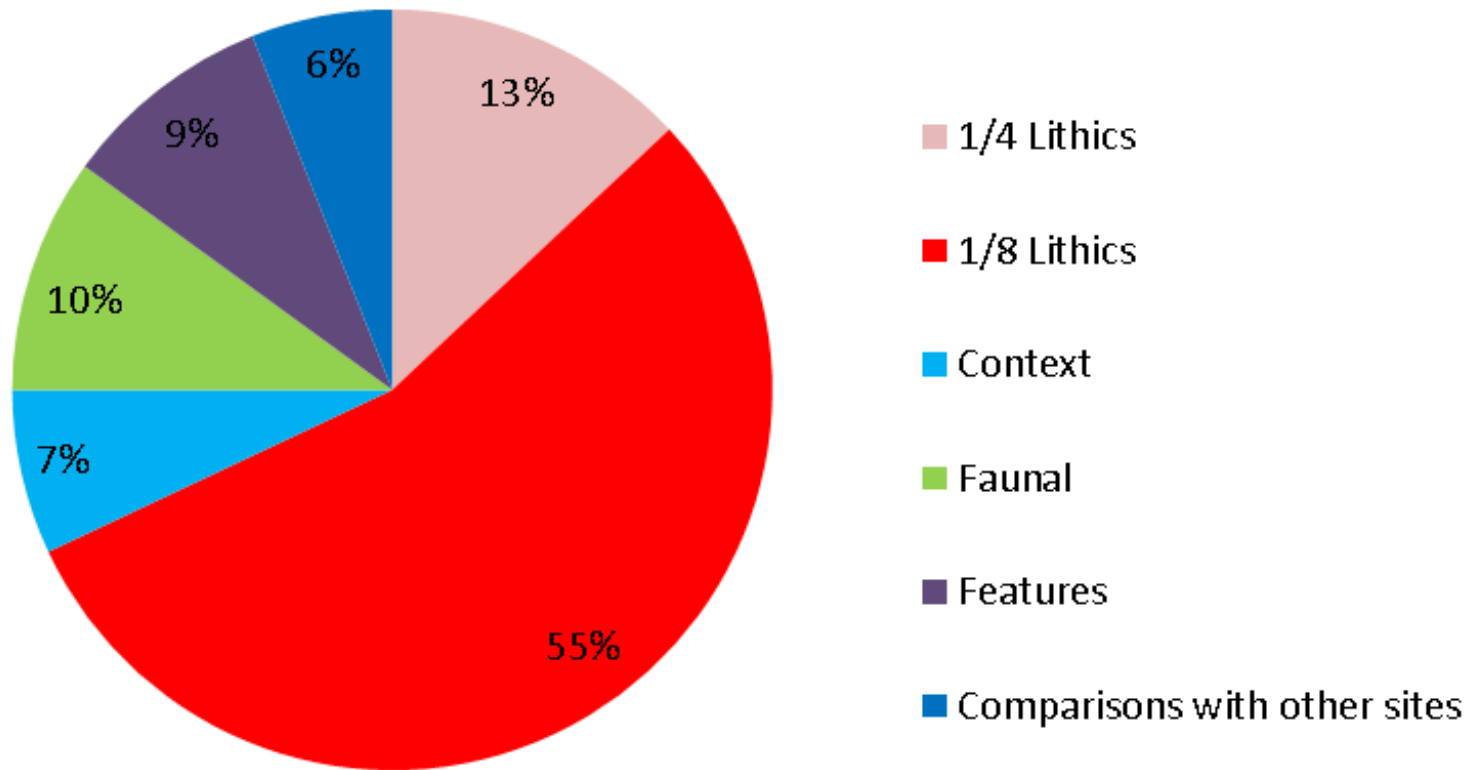
Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity



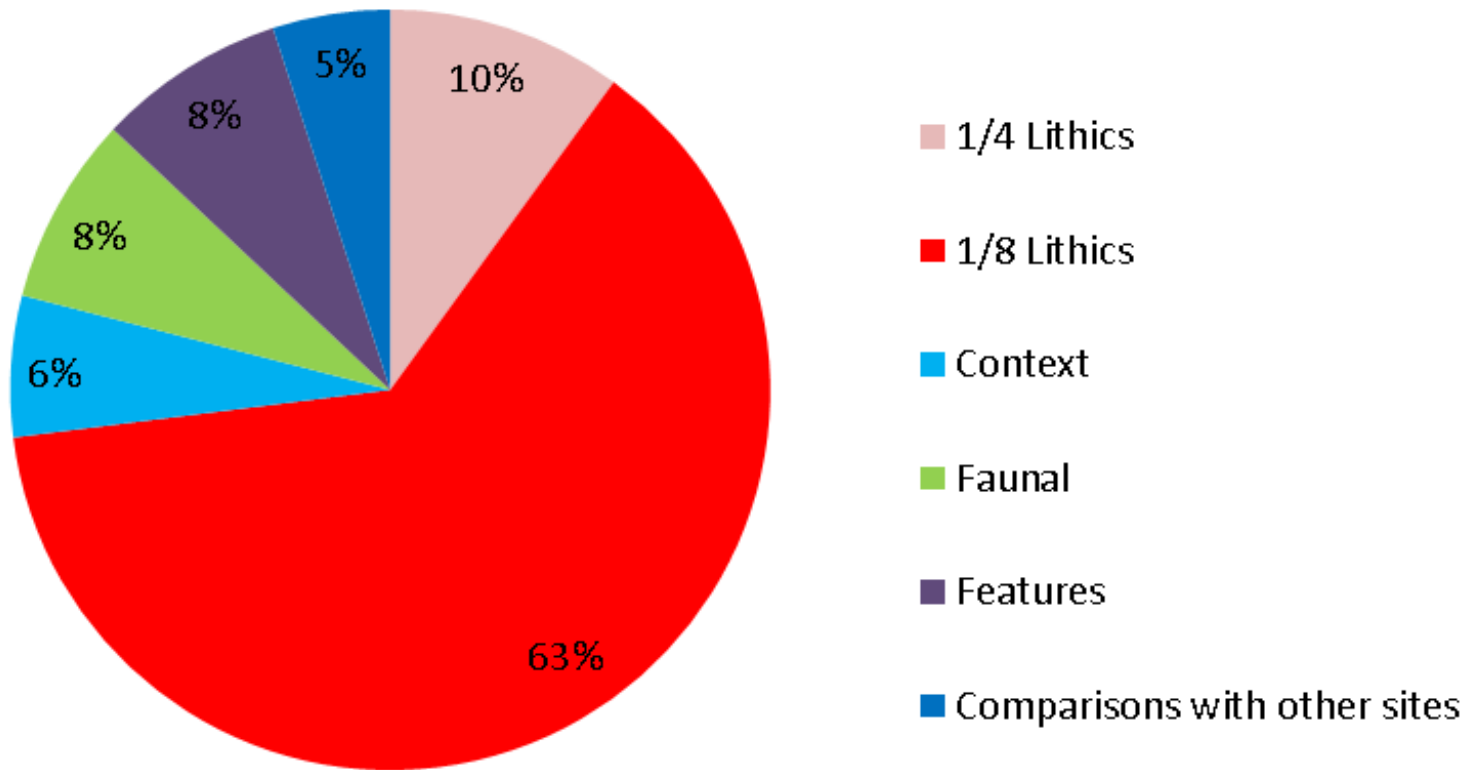
Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity



Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity



Archaeology is a Zero Sum Activity



So, What We Are Really Doing is Making a Decision to:

Select Against:

- Almost all stone tools
- Identifiable Bone
- Spatial distribution of activities
- Features
- Intersite comparisons
- Regional syntheses

Select For:

- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable Bone

So, What We Are Really Doing is Making a Decision to:

Select Against:

- Almost all stone tools
- Identifiable Bone
- Spatial distribution of activities

Features

- Intersite comparisons
- Regional syntheses

Select For:

- Late stage lithic debitage
- Unidentifiable Bone

Significance

**So, What We Are Really Doing is
Making a Decision to:**



the end