Facial reconstruction reaises more questions than answers

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Caddo sheriff's detectives now have a face to go with a surprising discovery made in the woods of north Caddo Parish in 2005.

Experts have completed the facial reconstruction of a human skull discovered by a hunter on property that was once a parish landfill. The property is located on La. Hwy. 169 west of La. Hwy. 1. The skull was discovered in the grass on October 25, 2005.

Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator said detectives were unable to link the skull to any area missing persons cases and are now checking national databases. While foul play isn't suspected, detectives would like to put a name with the face to officially close the case.

Mary H. Manhein, director and forensic anthropologist at the LSU Forensic Anthropology and Computer Enhancement Services (FACES) Laboratory in Baton Rouge, completed the reconstruction, along with her team.They determined the skull is probably that of a white male between the ages of 20 and 33. Manhein said the color or "bleaching" of the skull indicates it had been in the sun anywhere from two to ten years.

At the time of the discovery, a team of professors from the LSU Agriculture Center concluded the skull had been at that specific location approximately seven to 10 days but no more than two weeks. The conclusion was based on the condition of surrounding vegetation. A cadaver dog searched the area for more remains, but none were found.

"We weren't able to determine the age of the skull," Prator said. "It could be a donation to science that dates back generations. We just want to make sure we've done all we can to identify him before we close the books."

Anyone with information should contact Detective Michael Escude' at 681-0700.