

## Session Title

### **Out-of-Place? Early Neolithic Farming Communities in the European Alps**

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## Keywords

Early Neolithic; Mesolithic-Neolithic Transition; Alpine Archaeology; Early Farming; Mobility; Resilience; Marginal Landscapes; Settlement Dynamics; Adaptation

## Abstract

Characterized by its distinctive material culture package, the Linear Pottery Culture (LPC) (5.600 to 4.900 BCE) has long served as one of the key models for early farming lifeways in Central Europe. It was believed to be closely tied to a specific type of landscape: fluvial terraces near rivers, on fertile loess soil. In the summer of 2025, an early LPC site was unexpectedly discovered at Lake Hallstatt (Austria), deep within an inner-alpine valley – far from the fertile loess soils typically associated with LPC sites. This new discovery challenges our assumptions about the LPC and offers a rare opportunity to reconsider how, where, and why early Neolithic communities moved beyond their expected environmental range.

This session invites papers that examine Early Neolithic communities in remote, mountainous, or otherwise marginal landscapes. Key questions include:

- Why did Early Neolithic communities move into (for their lifeway and subsistence) unfavourable or hard-to-access areas?
- How did they adapt their lifeways and subsistence strategies to these environments?
- How did animal husbandry evolve in alpine contexts?
- Did their social organisation differ from groups in more favourable lowland regions?
- What do these sites reveal about mobility, flexibility, and resilience?
- Can we find traces of interactions between these earliest farming communities and local Hunter-Fisher-Gatherer Communities in these types of landscapes?

- And last, what avenues of research would increase our knowledge/understanding of the way the Neolithic spread into alpine areas?

We welcome interdisciplinary contributions exploring settlement dynamics, environmental adaptation, mobility networks, and socio-economic strategies. Comparative case studies from other mountainous regions worldwide are especially encouraged. By focusing on unconventional settlement patterns, this session aims to reframe the Neolithic frontier – not as a cultural boundary, but as a dynamic zone of experimentation, interaction, and innovation.