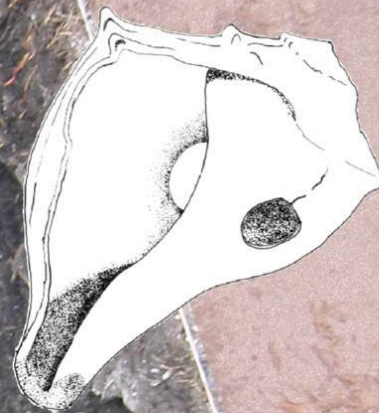


# Southwest Florida Archaeological Society Newsletter

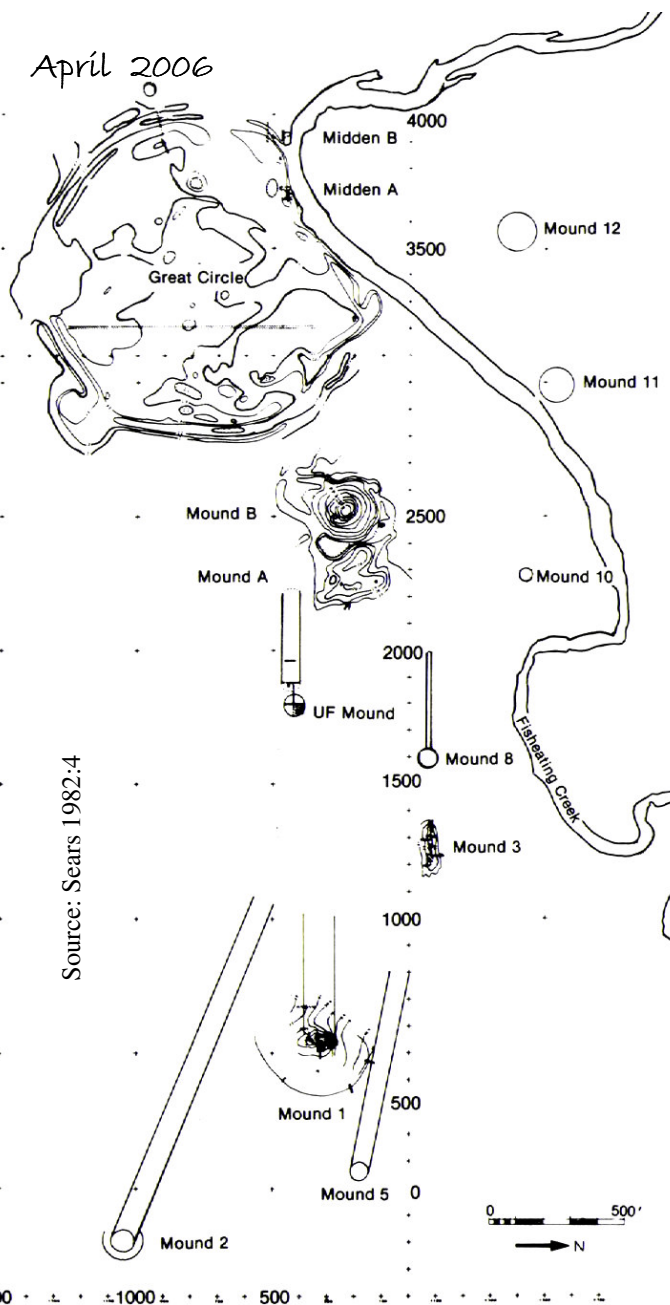


Vol. 22 No. 4

April 2006

## FIELD TRIP TO FORT CENTER PLANNED FOR APRIL MEETING By Corbett Torrence

On April 22, SWFAS members are invited to tour the famed Fort Center Site. The site is situated in Glades County along Fish Eating Creek about eight miles north of Moorehaven. Fort Center is one of the largest pre-columbian sites in Florida stretching over 4,000 feet (about 135 football fields) east to west and 2,500 feet north to south (see site map). The site is comprised of three major architectural features that include a large circular moat with associated embankments and a mound, a mound-pond burial complex, and three long, linear ridges with mounds at their western termini. In addition, there are several other mounded features at the site. The circular moat, known as the great circle, encloses an area of about 23 acres at the western end of the site. The mound-pond burial complex dating between 200 and 700 A.D. occupies the central portion of the site.



Here bundle burials and associated wood carvings of owls, cats, foxes, dogs, woodpeckers, osprey, hawk and other animals were recovered. The carvings and bundle burials are believed to be part of a burial platform that stood over the pond and later collapsed into it enabling preservation. Architectural construction stagnated at the site after A.D. 700, but beginning around A.D. 1300 and extending into historic times, the three long ridges and associated trenches and mounds were constructed and occupied at the eastern end of the site.

The tour will be led by SWFAS president Corbett Torrence, who will summarize the extensive research conducted at the site and point out and discuss the various architectural features. All the sites architectural features are visible, but much of the site is covered in thick vegetation beneath Oak hammock. Participants will be able to walk sections of the great circle and observe the moat, embankments, and associated mound. The entire circle is easily visible, but walking its entirety, while possible, would be a difficult thrash through the brush. Most of the mound-pond mortuary area is open grassland. The long linear ridges are less visible, but we will pass by and witness their terminal mounds. Reaching the site requires a mile and a half walk along a jeep trail, which is passable by vehicle, but not permitted. Thus closed-holed shoes or hiking boots are recommended. While the terrain is not difficult, it will be a long, HOT walk. **BRING LUNCH AND PLENTY OF WATER!**

### **DIRECTIONS WE WILL DEPART FROM THE TRAILHEAD AT 10:00 A.M.**

From I 75 take exit 141 and travel east 44.5 miles on Route 80 through La Belle to the Route 27 intersection. Head 7.6 miles north on route 27, through Moorehaven and then turn right onto Route 78 headed toward Okeechobee. Travel 7.5 miles on Route 78 and then take a left onto Banana Grove Road (this is a dirt road). Follow Banana Grove Road about one mile to Fish and Wildlife compound entrance. Park along the edge of the road outside the compound. Traveling at or near the speed limit, it will take about one hour and 20 minutes to make the drive from I75 to the Fish and Wildlife compound. Drive carefully and watch out for others!

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO MAKE RESERVATIONS CONTACT CORBETT TORRENCE OR THERESA SCHOBBER AT 239-765-0865.**

### **MARCH MEETING AT ROOKERY BAY**

By Corbett Torrence

Do you know that March is Archaeology Month in Florida? As part of an on going effort to promote archaeological education and preservations throughout the region, this year SWFAS teams up with Rookery Bay to present an Archaeology and History Festival on March 25. Speakers include Darcie MacMahon and Bill Marquardt from the Florida Museum of Natural History presenting "The Estuary and Its Human Legacy" and Bob Carr of the Archaeological and

Historical Conservancy discussing his recent archaeological investigations in the area. In addition, Rookery Bay's new historical exhibit will be open to the public, while historical actors and activity booths on the park grounds will provide a carnival atmosphere fun for all. For more information contact Rookery Bay at 239-417-6310.

We try to included a brief summary of each monthly meeting in the following month's newsletter, but due to the timing of this event, you will have to wait until next month to read about what you should not miss. Those who receive our newsletter via email are again encouraged to attend this cooperative and educational event. If last years Calusa Festival co-sponsored by SWFAS and the Collier County Museum is any indication, the event will be a tremendous success.

### **OLD FLORIDA FESTIVAL**

By Jack Harvey

Originally scheduled for November 5-6, 2005, the Old Florida Festival was a Hurricane Wilma Casualty. The Collier County Museum grounds were an unsafe jumble of broken trees and bushes following Wilma's tumultuous passage on October 24.

On March 18-19 the belated Festival was held among the neatly trimmed and restored greenery and attendance was especially heavy. As always, the Festival was a hearty mix of serious history and carnival buffoonery served up with delicious foods from the past such as pumpkin fry bread.

Uniformed soldiers were prominent – Spanish, English Colonial, Civil War and both World Wars. Pirates and pioneers, blacksmiths and banjos, Calusas and quilts, Minute Men and murderers – all juxtaposed in colorful array.



The SWFAS Craighead Laboratory was a highlight and hundreds of visitors toured it to learn about how the Lab Rats are analyzing material from the January dig at Goodland, FL. (See "Margood Mud" below.) With actual artifact cleaning and sorting underway, they saw shell tools being examined for the first time and learned to spot the telltale signs of human use a thousand years ago.

### **SOUTHWEST FLORIDA HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY FESTIVAL**

By Jack Harvey

On Saturday, March 25 we experienced a delightful combination of art, academic lectures, guided walks, theater, participatory handicraft, movies, kid stuff and BBQ food.





This year, the anticipated “Phase II” exhibits were dedicated at the Festival opening ceremony. These cover 3,000 years of human living on the Rookery Bay Estuary and surrounding lands. A Calusa man spears fish from his dugout canoe. A Type A whelk shell hammer appears as a glowing work of art. A pelican flies in through a window. A live aquarium teeming with estuary fish contains a cubby that children can enter to be surrounded by them.

Located on an arm of Henderson Creek, the Environmental Learning Center can also be reached by boat. The Back Lawn where most of the outdoor activities occurred includes a modern floating mooring platform.

As promised, Darcie MacMahon and William Marquardt of the Florida Museum of Natural History gave a beautifully illustrated lecture on “The Estuary and its Human Legacy.” This overview of estuary life set the stage for understanding the archaeology of this region.

John Beriault of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc., took us through Florida pottery from the earliest to the Spanish Contact period. His lecture, “Man, Ceramics and Rookery Bay over 3,000 years” showed us the evolution of the many styles of pottery decoration and changes in tempering methods.



On the Back Lawn, Theresa Schober taught how to braid native plant fibers to make strong cords. Visitors quickly picked up the technique and made their own necklaces, bracelets, tools and fishing lines.

Members of the Marco Island Historical Society gave a Chautauqua show in the excellently equipped auditorium. They presented vignettes of personages and events since the 1870 arrival of Collier family members on Marco Island.

## MARGOOD MUD

By Jack Harvey

On January 17-25, the Lab Rats worked at the Margood dig in Goodland on Marco Island. The material they found was bagged and transported to Craighead Laboratory.

Following incoming inventory, the first step in analysis of the material is to remove the black mud clinging to everything. (Professional archaeologists at Bob Carr's Archaeological and Historical Conservancy are performing a detailed column sample analysis on some of the material so we don't need to preserve the important clues in the charcoal-rich mud itself.)



Marilyn Mayo hoses mud off artifacts from Goodland

The Rats use outdoor washing stations behind the Lab where they open the plastic bags and clean off the ancient dirt using toothbrushes and occasionally dental tools.

After this, each bag of material goes into a rack where it is dried for several days. The dried material is then sorted into major categories (shell, potsherds, bone) and bagged again for our quantitative analysis to come.

The Rats are happily nibbling away at the boxes from the dig at Goodland so.....

## The Scrubbing Has Begun

By Liz Clement

As ancient dirt is washed away,  
What sights we can behold.  
The artifacts are coming clean,  
Their stories to behold.  
The Scrubbing has Begun

Then we will weigh and measure,  
And identify each one.  
If you would like to come and help  
We'll guarantee some fun.  
The Scrubbing Has Begun.

## NEWSLETTER NEEDS EDITOR

As of January 2006, the SWFAS Newsletter is without an editor. Communication with SWFAS members is a critical need requiring close interaction with board members and others arranging events. Volunteers interested in this ever-fascinating job should contact any of the Directorate. See "ABOUT SWFAS" on the last page.

## GEOLOGY RULES

By Jack Harvey

### This Month – Sea Changes

When ice piles up on terra firma in continent-sized sheets, the water in them comes from the world's oceans. (Frozen ocean surface

doesn't count: When ice cubes in a cold drink melt, the level of the drink doesn't change.) Continental ice means sea levels dropping by as much as 120 meters (400 ft.), most recently about 17,000 years ago. And the waltzing planets and continents cause this to repeat periodically. If we go back in geologic time, we find the most recent sea level minimums (ice age maximums) occurring at about these times in thousands of years before the present:

K Years BP	Interval
17	
	28
62	
	89
151	
	38
189	
	42
231	
	63
294	
	57
351	
Average:	53 ky

The right column (Interval) above shows the elapsed time in thousands of years (ky) between sea level minimums. These are just the major ice ages. Many little ice ages occurred between these. And the known list continues back millions of years.

These numbers are speculative, backed by sketchy evidence. Authorities can't agree on the numbers above. But for our purpose they can be used as a rough guide. As we saw previously, South Florida didn't exist 100 million years ago. So based on the 53 thousand year av-

erage interval, a couple of thousand ice ages might have occurred during its formation. On a time scale for South Florida land creation, the sea level has been frenetically sloshing up and down a hundred meters or so. But ice ages are like planet sandpaper; each erases most of the evidence of any previous so we can't expect to see clear evidence of individual sea level shifts. Yet many lines of evidence show they occurred. We're just not sure exactly when.

To see the effect all this had on the formation of South Florida, it would help if we could drain the oceans dry and see what the peninsula looks like then. We'll try that next time.

#### ABOUT SWFAS

The Directorate:

President – Corbett Torrence

1<sup>st</sup> VP – Theresa Schober

2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Tom Franchino

Recording Secretary – Jo Ann Grey

Treasurer – Charlie Strader

Membership – Charlie Strader

SWFAS Committees:

Field – John Beriault

Lab – Jack Thompson

Hospitality – Jeanne Sanders

Education – Dr. John Worth

Finance – Charlie Strader

Publicity – Victoria Rans

To Join: Address your check to:

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society,

PO Box 9965,

Naples FL 34101.

Dues are:

Individual - \$20. Sustaining - \$50.

Family - \$35. Student - \$15.

Send news articles to: jakharve@earthlink.net

Board meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7 PM, Hampton Inn, Bonita

Springs

All welcome