



Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS) March 2018 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S CORNER *by John Furey, M.A., RPA*



This month I have included three articles of great interest that combine a number of themes along our Gulf Coast and that tie into the March presentation by Dr. Paul Backhouse. First, the article History and Culture of Egmont Key provides brief overview of the history of the island and only slightly mentions its role in the removal of captured Seminoles from Florida to the Oklahoma Territory. Egmont Key was a prison where the captured Seminoles were held for transit to New Orleans and then onward to the West. Today it is visited by day tripping beachgoers and is a National Wildlife Refuge Area and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The second article written by Dr. Backhouse deals with climate change, rising sea levels, archaeology, the erosion that threatens Egmont Key and the cultural heritage of the Seminoles; Egmont Key represents a dark part of their history and heritage. How to salvage that history is the role of the Historic Preservation Office of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and balancing all of the competing demands that this represents. This is a mixture of issues from the perspective of the Seminoles and how they came to a consensus.

The third article deals with a unique discovery off the coast of Manasota Key. An underwater site 300 yards off the current shoreline that was buried in the peat of a freshwater pond when sea level was much lower. The peat has protected and preserved the human and cultural remains and is dated at 7,214 years old. Heather Walsh-Haney is a forensics anthropology professor at FGCU and is one of the team of scientists analyzing the site. She will be our guest speaker at our April 18th presentation at the Collier County Museum in Naples, Florida.

SHADOWS AND REFLECTIONS: FLORIDA'S LOST PEOPLE

If you visit the FAS website (<https://fas.org/publications/>) they have posted an older 28-minute documentary that you may find interesting. "Before Spanish explorers arrived 500 years ago, Florida was home to a variety of sophisticated and colorful native societies, including diverse groups such as the Calusa, Apalachee, Timucua and Tequesta. In this film, artist Ted Morris follows his quest to recreate on canvas the lives and spirits of these vanished people. Archaeological evidence from the land and from below the clear waters combines with facial reconstructions and early historical accounts to paint a fascinating picture of people in tune with the subtropical environment."

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE NEWS: CARL HALBIRT, CITY ARCHAEOLOGIST HONORED

On February 12 a reception and awards ceremony was held in the Alcazar Room, St. Augustine City Hall to recognize Carl Halbirt and receive him into the Order Of La Florida. Carl has been the City Archaeologist for many years and this award recognizes his accomplishments and the appreciation of the city. The Order of La Florida was created 43 years ago to recognize a person "who over a lengthy period has unselfishly devoted his or her time and talent to the welfare and betterment of St. Augustine's citizens and heritage, who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship, and has contributed extraordinary services to the community". Over 43 years this award has only been presented to 19 others. Congratulations Carl.

SWFAS DUES

Please remit your 2018 dues to the Treasurer with the attached form. Dues run from January to December each year. Thank you if you have already sent yours in.

SWFAS ONLINE <http://swflarchaeology.org/>

Our SWFAS website is up and running and I ask that you check it out! It becomes the repository of all of our newsletters and is a history of the organization. Your feedback is important and please let us know what you like and what you recommend we change. Send comments to me at jffurey@charter.net. Thank you.

JAMES 'JIM' OSWALD PRESENTED THE GOLDEN TROWEL AWARD



At the March 21st SWFAS meeting at the IMAG in Ft. Myers, Florida, Jim Oswald was presented the SWFAS Presidential "Golden Trowel" Award for 2018. Jim joined SWFAS in 2001 and has been involved in many excavations over the years. He has held several positions on the Board of Trustees and has been the SWFAS Vice President the last two years. Jim is a SCUBA diver and enjoyed cave diving here in Florida. He commented, "I've had so much fun with this organization over the years". Congratulations, Jim, on an award well deserved.

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY (FSU) RECEIVES AWARD



The Anthropology Department at FSU received the Presidential Recognition Award from the Register of Professional Archaeologists. FSU's Anthropology Department requires Register certification for archaeology faculty and it is a formal part of the Department's hiring criteria. Additionally, the Department was the first to have a Register-certified field school. The Department also has an on-going effort in place to have graduate students ready for registration at graduation. Congratulations.

FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY 70th ANNUAL MEETING

The 70th Annual FAS Meeting is scheduled for May 11-13 in St. Petersburg and is hosted by AWIARE (Alliance for Weeden Island Archaeological Research and Education) and USFSP (University of South Florida St. Petersburg). On Friday, May 11 there is a Welcome Reception at the 3 Daughters Brewery with an Awards Ceremony and on Saturday, May 12 the presentation of papers during the day and an evening banquet. On Sunday, May 13 there are a number of trips to local archaeological sites. To register please go to the FAS Website at <https://fas.org/>. Further information is available in the FAS Newsletter. Reserve your room early. Space on many of the excursions is limited. See you there. If you are not a FAS member, the application form to join is at the end of this Newsletter.

MARCH 21, 2018 PRESENTATION: ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH - MADE FROM THE SANDS OF FLORIDA: EGMONT KEY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA, by DR. PAUL BACKHOUSE



Dr. Paul Backhouse, Ph. D, RPA, was our guest speaker at the March SWFAS meeting at the IMAG in Ft. Myers, Florida and explained the interesting history of Egmont Key and the Seminoles. Dr. Backhouse is the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Seminole Tribe of Florida and responsible for working with the US government to preserve the history of the Seminole Tribe. I will not go into many details of the story of Egmont Key since the Society for American Archaeology has graciously allowed us to reproduce Dr. Backhouse's article as a part of our SWFAS March Newsletter, however, one notices immediately the passion that Dr. Backhouse has for his subject and, through him, the reverence that the

Seminoles have for the land and preserving their history.

Dr. Backhouse is a long time SWFAS member and hosted our December 2017 trip to the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum in Clewiston, Florida at the Big Cypress Reservation. We highly recommend that you visit this unique museum as it is unlike any other you will ever see.

NORWEGIAN ANTHROPOLOGIST VISITS SOUTHWEST FLORIDA



SWFAS was honored to have a visit to our March 21st meeting by Cecilie Skjerdal, a Norwegian Anthropologist who is visiting Southwest Florida this winter. I spoke with Cecilie at the meeting and asked that she provide us with additional information about her anthropological work in Norway to share with our members. She lives outside of the capital of Oslo and has a degree that is between a Masters and a Ph.D from the University of Oslo. Cecilie did fieldwork in Spain and has focused on minorities. Europe and Norway are experiencing a large influx of displaced people and helping them transition into the mainstream of Norwegian life, language and culture is the focus of several government programs. Currently the largest group of immigrants and refugees to Norway come from Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Eritrea and the Philippines.

Cecilie currently works with these minorities and tries to bridge the cultural/language gap to help them make sense out of the systems put in place to aid them. She formerly worked in forming governmental policies for the Norwegian national minorities: Mainly the Roma/Romani, Kvens and Forest Finns and reporting the current status to the EU Council. She feels that her anthropological training has enabled her to be able to develop the skill of “moving between different perspectives”. “One of the most important anthropological skills I have made use of in my work is that of being able to communicate well with people with very diverse backgrounds. Knowing how to ‘translate’ complicated political messages and policies to people who cannot read or write, and who have a different mother tongue, is quite a task. And vice versa, ‘translating’ these peoples’ needs into political measures and academic reports also requires making sure that you respect their wishes”.

APRIL SWFAS PRESENTATION

APRIL 18

Wednesday, 7:00 pm

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF READING BONES

**HEATHER WALSH-HANEY, Associate Professor, Florida Gulf Coast University
Collier County Museum 3331 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112**



Fictitious Forensic Anthropologist Temperance Brennan from the television show, *Bones*, has shaped the public's perception of how human skeletal remains may contribute to solving a case. This presentation discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the latest techniques actually used by forensic anthropologists, highlighted through casework from the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania.

Dr. Heather Walsh-Haney is an associate professor and program leader for the Department of Justice Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University. She received her degrees in Anthropology from the University of Florida where she trained within the C.A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory for over a decade. She is the consulting forensic anthropologist for eight Florida Medical Examiner Districts and has been the principle investigator for over 500 forensic anthropology cases. As a member of the Department of Health and Human Services Disaster

Mortuary Response Team (DMORT), she helped locate and/or identify human remains from Hurricanes Wilma and Katrina and assisted in the recovery of human remains at the World Trade Center following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.



TO GO TO THE COLLIER COUNTY MUSEUM:



Take the I-75 toward Naples, then exit at County Hwy-886 exit, EXIT 105, toward Naples. Go about 1 mile and turn left onto Livingston Rd/County Hwy-881. Go 1.4 miles and turn right onto Radio Rd/ County Hwy-856. Then go 1 mile and turn left onto Airport-Pulling Rd S/County Hwy-31. Go about .5 miles and turn left onto Tamiami Trl E/US-41 N. 3331 TAMIAMI TRL E is on the left. It is the large government center complex. Follow the signs for the museum to the rear of the complex.

Mound Key Mondays!

Tour the Island Capital of the Calusa Indians

Join archaeologist Theresa Schober on a cruise across Estero Bay and tour of Mound Key

\$50 per person + tax

February 26 + March 12 (9:30a only)

March 26 + April 9 (9:30a, 1:30p)

Excursions launch from Fort Myers Beach

<https://bananabaytourcompany.com/mound-key-tour.html>

Reservations: (239) 728-8687

Tours are limited in number
and typically sell out



A portion of tour proceeds benefit Mound Key Archaeological State Park

LOOKING FOR TRAINING IN LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE MONITORING?

FPAN is offering a training session as a part of their Heritage Monitoring Scout program to check on sites impacted by climate change and erosion due to sea level rise. Southwest Florida is vulnerable to both of these processes due to archaeological sites located on our low lying coast and hurricanes. Learn how you can help.



TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



WHEN: April 4, 2018 9:00am-3:00pm

WHERE: IMAG History and Science Center
2000 Cranford Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida 33916

With an afternoon site visit at the Fort Myers Cemetery

HOW: Register online at <https://HMSimag.eventbrite.com> or email
Rachael Kangas: rkangas@fau.edu

Heritage Monitoring Scouts (HMS Florida) is a public engagement and citizen science program focused on tracking changes to archaeological sites at risk, particularly those impacted by climate change in the form of erosion and sea level rise. Join Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) staff for this full day training session to become a heritage monitoring scout!

This event is free and open to the public!



HISTORY AND CULTURE – EGMONT KEY

from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Egmont Key at https://www.fws.gov/refuge/egmont_key/visit/history.html



During the Pleistocene era, the Tampa Bay Refuges were part of the mainland of Florida. At the end of the last glacial period, ~20,000 years ago, ice began to melt rapidly and the sea level rose swiftly, separating them from Florida. Artifacts of aboriginal/Indian pottery dating back 2,000 years have been found on the island. Since there is no freshwater source and because travel to the key entails crossing open water, it is likely that the key was used only periodically by Native Americans for hunting, crabbing, and shell fishing. Spanish

expeditions first sighted the key in the early 1500s. The first recorded contact with the key was in 1757 by Don Francisco Maria Celi, a Spanish explorer. Egmont Key was named in 1763, after the second Earl of Egmont, John Perceval, the first Lord of the British Admiralty, and a member of the Irish House of Commons.

Historic Landmark

When mapped by the Geodetic Survey in 1875, Egmont Key was approximately 50 percent larger than it is today. The first lighthouse was built in 1848 and was the only lighthouse on the western Gulf Coast of Florida. After hurricanes damaged the lighthouse in 1848 and 1852, the lighthouse was moved inland and rebuilt in 1857-58, and remains in service today. In the 1850s, Egmont Key was used as a holding area for Seminole Indians as they were being transported to Arkansas and Oklahoma. Early in the Civil War, the key saw occupation by Confederate blockade-runners; while later in the 1860s, Union forces used Egmont Key to operate their Gulf Coast blockade of the Confederacy. The key was also used as a refuge for Union sympathizers and a military prison during the war.

Take a Step BackTake a Step Back in Time

Construction of Fort Dade began in 1898, with temporary gun batteries built to protect Tampa at the outbreak of the Spanish/American War. The Spanish fleet never came, but by 1910 a small town of about 300 residents, brick streets, a narrow gauge railroad, an electric generating plant, and 70 buildings existed. At this time, during World War I, Fort Dade was used as a training center for National Guard Coast Artillery Units. The Fort was deactivated in the early 1920s, but later reactivated and used during World War II as a harbor patrol station and an ammunition storage facility.

Egmont Key became a national wildlife refuge in 1974 and was named to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1989, the State of Florida established Egmont Key State Park through cooperative agreement with the Service. At the present time, the US Coast Guard maintains the lighthouse and owns 55 acres at the north end of the island. The lighthouse is believed to be the oldest structure still used for its original purpose in the Tampa Bay area. The historic ruins of Fort Dade and Egmont Key State Park are managed by the Florida Park Service in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Also, the Tampa Bay Pilots Association leases a 10 acre tract of land, 5 acres from Hillsborough County and 5 acres in two additional tracts from the Service along the east side of the island to conduct its business of piloting large ships into and out of Tampa Bay.

Egmont Key NWR, established in 1974, is administered in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966. The refuge has four basic purposes:

1. provide nesting, feeding, and resting habitat for brown pelicans, terns, and other colonial nesting waterbirds;
2. conserve and protect barrier island habitat and preserve historical structures of national significance;
3. provide habitat and protection for endangered species such as manatees and sea turtles; and
4. provide wildlife-dependent recreation and environmental education for the public (USFWS Visitor Services Review Report, March 2004).

MADE FROM THE SANDS OF FLORIDA

EGMONT KEY, SECTION 106, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE SEMINOLE TRIBE OF FLORIDA

Paul N. Backhouse

Paul N. Backhouse is Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Director and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Seminole Tribe of Florida.

*My father, King Phillip, told me I was made of the sands
of Florida, and that when I was placed in the ground,
the Seminoles would dance and sing around my grave.*

—Coacoochee

I write this article on September 10, 2017, shuttered in the dark, waiting for the largest hurricane in Atlantic history to make landfall in southwest Florida. I wonder what will be left of the Gulf Coast island of Egmont Key, which I write about here, after the storm? Heritage is always fragile, disputed and vulnerable, and climate change has always been a major factor in what remains preserved in the archaeological record.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida (STOF) and south Florida are bound together in a union that defines the very being of one another. Today, the Seminoles' home in the low-lying Everglades is critically threatened by climate change. The offshore island of Egmont Key has become the front line for the Tribe in a community effort to remember a difficult past that is today threatened with being washed away. Community engagement, archaeology, and climate change collide on Egmont, an island that is central to the past, present, and future of the Tribe.

Who Are We?

The Seminole Tribe of Florida is one of two federally recognized tribes residing in the modern State of Florida. Descendants of a group of less than 500 who held out against impossible odds in the swamps of south Florida, the proudly unconquered Seminoles now number roughly 4,000 members. During the nineteenth century, United States history records three wars between the Seminoles and the United States, which have been collectively dubbed "the Seminole Wars" (Covington 1993; Mahon 1967; Missall and Missall 2016). The Seminoles do not recognize the US military historians' distinction and consider the whole period to be one

in which their very survival as a people was in peril (Willie Johns, personal communication, 2017). It is estimated that thousands of Seminoles were shipped or forcibly walked west during this period of bitter conflict. The social memory of the hardships the Tribe faced very much affect their identity in the modern world.

Historic preservation is traditionally aligned with the core values of the Seminole people, who philosophically strive to live in harmony with their environment (Cypress 1997). However, as is the case across Indian Country, the manifestations of indigenous forms of historic preservation often look very different from how they are enacted by non-indigenous practitioners (cf. Atalay 2012). This is also the case at the Seminole Tribe of Florida (e.g., Backhouse et al. 2017). The Seminole Tribe of Florida Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) works in unison with the Tribal government and Tribal communities to protect and preserve a collective and fragile past.

Yanh-kaa-choko

Miccosukee speakers have a separate word for an island in the ocean (Yanh-kaa-choko) that differs from the name given to their island homes in the interior of the Florida Everglades. One such oceanic island, located in the Gulf of Mexico, in the channel of the entrance to Tampa Bay, is Egmont Key (Figure 1). This small elongate spit of land, approximately 1.75 miles long and half a mile wide, exhibits all the trappings of a tropical paradise—crystal clear water, white sand beaches, and copious palm trees—all of which attract both itinerant day-trippers and sun bathers. This tropical mirage, however, hides a much darker Tribal past.

The island first came to the attention of the Seminole Tribe of Florida THPO during a routine government-to-government consultation meeting with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). We learned the island was in danger of



Figure 1. Seminole Tribe of Florida Tribal Historic Preservation Office field visit to Egmont Key in Tampa Bay. (Photograph courtesy of Dave Scheidecker, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Seminole Tribe of Florida)

washing away, and Corps staff wanted to get an opinion from the Tribe regarding activities focused on the possible preservation of the island. Having a vague recollection of reading about a Seminole presence on the island, the THPO began to investigate further.

“It’s Kind of Like Our Holocaust”

A letter dated August 15, 1857, written at Egmont Key and recently uncovered by historian Patsy West, illuminates part of the heartbreaking history: “Sir, I have the honor to report that one of the Indian Prisoners at this station a young female child whose mother was not taken – died on the 15th inst. – disease fever. This child was very sick when it left Fort Myers” (M. L. Lothrop to Maj. Gr. N Page, Asst. Adj. General, Fort Brooke, Tampa, Fla: National Archives, 1979).

During our research it became apparent that during the late 1850s (non-Seminole historians’ Third Seminole War) the army was having difficulty holding Tribal members in Fort Myers, on the Florida mainland, while they awaited deportation. Rather than risk losing potential deportees back into

the tropical labyrinth of Florida’s interior, the army identified a simple and harsh solution. Seminoles were transported by boat from Fort Myers to Egmont Key while they waited for the paddle steamer called the *Grey Cloud* to take them to New Orleans and the west (*New York Herald*, 27 May, 1858). As the letter above illustrates, captivity on this remote island was a harsh ordeal for a people that had already been mercilessly hunted down for nearly half a century. Seminoles could visibly see the land they loved, but could not get there. Under guard on the island many Seminoles perished. A story of a Tribal member named Tigertail ingesting a crushed glass bottle on the shore of Egmont reinforces the desperation and fear that must have permeated the group (Thompson and Thompson 2012).

The Dark Place

The Tribal members that survived the horrific ordeal of incarceration on Egmont faced more perils on their trail of tears to the west. Indeed, the descendants of those who survived form part of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma today. Anthropological interviews with the Oklahoma community



Figure 2. Loss and shifting landmass of Egmont Key 1877–2010. (Map courtesy of Juan J. Cancel, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Seminole Tribe of Florida after Panamerican Consultants, Inc., 2006: Figure 2.01)

reveal a distant memory of Egmont Key, which they identify as the “dark place” (Brent Weisman, personal communication, 2014). For the modern descendants of the 100 or so Seminoles who survived unconquered in south Florida, the harrowing story of what happened to their sons, daughters, parents, and grandparents was lost to history.

Washing Away

Temporarily setting aside the cultural history of the island, the physiological transformation of Egmont Key over the last century is striking. The earliest accurate survey of the island in 1870 shows a landmass that is roughly twice the size of that remaining today (Figure 2). A 2006 Cultural Resources Management report cites “sea level rise, a decrease in the landward transport of offshore sands, and changes in tidal hydraulics and wave refraction as being responsible for the loss of landmass over the last 125 years” (Panamerican Consultants, Inc. 2006:6). With the majority of Egmont Key lying below 4 feet in elevation, a rise of just 0.5°C would put the island largely underwater.

Do We Want to Remember?

The question for the Seminole Tribe of Florida became “Do we want to remember?” In seeking an answer the STOF THPO began, as it always does, by actively engaging the Tribal communities and government we serve in the story of Egmont Key. Because the island is small and very remote (there is one ferry in and one ferry out each day), we structured engagement via field visits for community members and communication of the emerging story in the Tribal newspaper (*The Seminole Tribune*). Concurrently Tribal leadership was kept informed through ongoing updates and discussion. Finally, a program of archaeological research was initiated to determine whether physical traces of the concentration camp still existed on the island.

Community Engagement

Community members visiting the island were greeted with a stark reminder of the Tribes’ fight for survival in Florida. In a poignant moment during one early visit, Seminole spiritual leader Bobby Henry freed an entangled pelican from



Figure 3. Seminole spiritual leader Bobby Henry helps an injured pelican during a field visit to the island in 2013. (Photograph courtesy of The Seminole Tribune)

some fishing line, Mr. Henry's brightly colored patchwork jacket standing out in stark contrast to the white sand beach (Figure 3). Moments like this allowed Tribal members the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the brutal story of the island and whether it was something that they felt should be preserved. Because the field visits involved both Tribal youth and elders the opportunity to share knowledge across generations was inadvertently facilitated.

The archaeological survey consisted of largely remote investigative options including historical document reviews, map analyses, pedestrian survey, GPR survey, and a "catch and release" metal detector survey. The archaeological surveys allowed additional Tribal Members to visit the island and participate with the field crew to learn the history and phenomenologically think more about their cultural connections to the island. The archaeological survey demonstrated that despite the palimpsestic nature of the cultural occupation of the island, which is overshadowed by the massive footprint of the later Fort Dade (1898–1921), physical traces of the imprisoned Seminole presence remained.

Pet-Elee-Ke

A participatory project to construct a Tribal map for display during the President's Forum during the SAA Annual Conference in Vancouver, Canada, allowed for additional community engagement (Figure 4). In order to make the map as culturally authentic as possible, it was almost necessary to completely rethink the mapping process. Custom symbology, background geographic regions, and viewpoint of the observer were all discussed, as was the level of detail the Tribal Members wanted to present in such a document. The resultant map is richly symbolic of the Tribes' deep connectiveness to the cultural geography of south Florida. Rather than presenting a static image of camp locations and physiographic regions, it communicates the key ideas of movement and interconnectedness. The Colonial elements of the map stand out in stark contrast to the color palette selected for the indigenous themes. Perhaps most strikingly the use of the Miccosukee word Pet-Elee-Ke or "Death Boat" designates the *Grey Cloud* that would carry Tribal Members west. This is a map of resistance, remembering, and defiance.

2016–2017). A Climate Change Summit hosted in partnership with the Florida Public Archaeology Network on the Hollywood Reservation in 2017 featured the Egmont story prominently and allowed Tribal Members to engage with a largely non-Tribal scientific community to discuss this important issue (Snyder 2017). The story above is atypical of the “normal” National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 consultation process, but hopefully demonstrates that the Trust Responsibility and government-to-government consultation really can matter.

Acknowledgements

A version of this paper was originally presented at the President’s Forum on Climate Change, Archaeology, and Community Engagements during the 2017 Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The author is grateful to former SAA President Diane Gifford-Gonzalez for the opportunity to participate in the session and to Anna Prentiss for encouraging submission to *The SAA Archaeological Record*. We remain committed to a humanistic and community-driven approach to archaeology and thank the Seminole Tribe of Florida leadership and communities for all their continued support.

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ANCIENT BURIAL SITE FOUND OFF SARASOTA COUNTY BEACH

by Chad Gillis, cgillis@news-press.com, dated 02-28-2018



Nicole Grinnan measures a section of a 7,000-year-old archaeological site found in the Gulf of Mexico. (Photo: Ivor Mollema/Florida Department of State)

Archaeologists have discovered a 7,000-year-old burial site in the Gulf of Mexico after a tip from a recreational diver who found human remains at the site in 2016. Called Manasota Key Offshore, the site is off of Sarasota County and appears to have been preserved in what was at the time a freshwater peat pond. Although other sites in Florida predate this one by thousands of years, researchers called this latest discovery unprecedented. "Despite thousands and thousands of years of hurricanes, storms, erosion and rising sea level, the continental shelf can contain deposits with organic material," said Ryan Duggins, with the Florida Division of Historic Resources. "I think that's going to be the ripple effect (in the science community)."

Duggins said he and others always assumed that there weren't any preserved sites in the Gulf of Mexico because it has a sandy bottom, and sand does not preserve organic material very long. This site, however, is made largely of peat soils. "I was always kind of told that a site like this wouldn't exist in the Gulf of Mexico, that it wouldn't be able to survive," Duggins said. "Just out of sheer luck, a citizen brought this information to our attention and it's been a great experience." The site is about 300 yards off Manasota Key and is being patrolled by law enforcement officers and volunteers to make sure no one dives too close to it. A recreational diver found human bones at the site in the summer of 2016, and Duggins and his team started diving and researching the site soon after.

The site is so well preserved that even wooden stakes found there look as though they were buried recently. "It looks like it was almost put there yesterday," Duggins said. "We've recovered sticks that are sharpened on the end, they have marks on them and you can see charring, and normally wood is the first thing that goes. It disintegrates." The oldest site in Florida found so far is in the Big Bend area and dates back 14,500 years, according to researchers. The Manasota site is about three-quarters of an acre in size and was located along the shoreline. The stakes were carved 7,214 years ago, according to carbon dating. Sea levels were much lower during that time, and the remains at this site were well preserved because they were in a peat-bottom pond. The peat stayed in place while the sea levels rose, protecting the artifacts and bones.

A Florida Gulf Coast University professor is in charge of preserving the artifacts that were extracted. "In all of the work that I do, I never lose track of the fact that I am handling materials that are of special importance to families and groups, especially those of the Miccosukee and Seminole tribes of Florida," said Heather Walsh-Haney, an FGCU forensics professor.

Due to the sensitive nature of the site, the exact location is not being released to the public. The location is protected under Florida law, and it's illegal to disturb the site or remove anything from it. "As important as the site is archaeologically, it is crucial that the site and the people buried there are treated with the utmost sensitivity and respect," said Timothy Parsons, director of the state's division of historic resources. "The people buried at the site are the ancestors of America's living indigenous people. Sites like this have cultural and religious significance in the present day." Duggins said he'd like to explore other areas near Venice and off Charlotte County to see if this burial site is part of a larger ancient community that will offer more clues as to what life was like here 7,000 years ago. "I'm very confident that Florida's continental shelf holds a lot more archaeological material that can be found," Duggins said. "I would definitely like to have a more concerted effort around Sarasota and Venice."

SWFAS OFFICERS FOR THE 2018 CALANDER YEAR

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Find us on Facebook at Southwest Florida Archaeological Society!

Check out our new website at <http://swflarchaeology.org/>

SWFAS AND FAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

We encourage those interested in Florida archaeology to become members of The Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) and The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS). Annual dues are due in January and membership applications to both organizations are attached. Membership in the FAS provides you with four annual volumes of *The Florida Anthropologist* and occasional newsletters on anthropological events in Florida in addition to the annual statewide meeting. More information on FAS can be found online at: www.fasweb.org. Membership in SWFAS offers you a local series of talks on archaeological and anthropological subjects that you can attend. The SWFAS monthly newsletter keeps you up to date on local events as well as other important archaeological topics. We urge you to support both with your membership. All of the SWFAS Lecture Series are open to the public at no charge.



JOIN US!

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society

<http://swflarchaeology.org/>

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS) was founded in 1980 as a not-for profit corporation to provide a meeting place for people interested in the area's past.

Our goals are to:

- Learn more of the area's history
- Create a place for sharing of this information
- Advocate for preservation of cultural resources

Its members include professional and amateur archaeologists and interested members of the general public. Members come from all walks of life and age groups. They share a lively curiosity, a respect for the people who preceded them here, and a feeling of responsibility for the conservation of the places and objects they left behind.

The Society holds monthly meetings between October and April, attracting speakers who are in the forefront of archaeological and historical research. Occasionally members join in trips to historical and archaeological sites.

A monthly newsletter, Facebook page, and website keep members abreast of our events and happenings.

The organization is a chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society, a statewide organization that publishes quarterly newsletters and a journal, *The Florida Anthropologist*, and holds an annual conference.

I want to help The Southwest Florida Archaeology Society preserve and interpret Florida's heritage!

Name (please print) _____

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I hereby agree to abide by the rules and bylaws of the Southwest Archaeological Society. I further release from any and all liability due to accident and injury to myself, dependents and any property owners cooperating with the society.

Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Please make your check out to SWFAS and mail to:

Charlie Strader
SWFAS Treasurer
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FAS Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested individuals who are willing to abide by the [Florida Anthropological Society Statement of Ethical Responsibilities](#), which can be found on our website: [fasweb.org](#). Membership is for one year.



MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Student*	\$15
Regular	\$30
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Student membership is open to graduate, undergraduate and high school students. A photocopy of your student ID must accompany payment

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Signature _____ Date _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____

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Membership dues can be paid with PayPal.
To submit your membership form electronically and pay with PayPal,
go to the Membership form page on our website: [fasweb.org](#).

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