



In 2015, the Florida Division of Historical Resources conducted a public survey to collect information for a feasibility study of a proposed one-time artifact amnesty program.

The amnesty program was intended to “forgive” people with illegally collected and/or owned artifacts.

The survey consisted of 6 questions, listed on the next slide.

The Florida Public Archaeology Network created the following graphics to provide the public with more information about each question.

*** 1. Did you know that it is illegal to remove, without authorization, any specimens, objects or materials of historical or archaeological value from land owned or controlled by the state or on land owned by a water authority?**

*** 2. Do you think it should be illegal to remove, without authorization, any specimens, objects or materials of historical or archaeological value from land owned or controlled by the state or on land owned by a water authority?**

*** 3. Do you support the implementation of a one-time amnesty program of limited duration for persons who possess specimens, objects or materials of historical or archaeological value collected from land owned or controlled by the state or on land owned by a water authority?**

*** 4. If you were in possession of any specimens, objects or materials of historical or archaeological value from land owned or controlled by the state or on land owned by a water authority, would you return them during an amnesty program?**

*** 5. Do you think other people would participate in an amnesty program?**

6. Please list the positive and/or negative impacts you feel that an amnesty program could potentially have on the stakeholders and historic resources of the state.



THIS IS A
DESIGNATED
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ZONE
DO NOT REMOVE
ANYTHING
FROM THIS AREA.
(INCLUDING SHELLS)

Question 1

Chapter 267.13 of Florida Statutes makes it illegal to remove artifacts from, or otherwise destroy or damage archaeological sites on State property without a permit.

Fossil permits from the Florida Museum of Natural History do not cover the collection of artifacts.

Question 2

Artifacts are clues to the past.



When they are removed from their original locations we lose information that ***can never be replaced*** about people and events in the past.



QUESTION 3

Amnesty programs can be useful for educational purposes and to retrieve information that would otherwise be lost. However, past amnesty programs in Florida have made enforcing the law more difficult and led to confusion about the legality of removing artifacts from state lands.

QUESTION 4

The most important thing about an artifact is knowledge of the location it came from or its context. Without this an artifact can only tell us so much, but when we know where an artifact came from we can learn even more about the past.

QUESTION 5

From 1994 to 2005 Florida had an “Isolated Finds Program” that allowed individuals diving in Florida’s rivers to collect and keep isolated artifacts provided they reported their finds. In 2005, the program was discontinued due to wide-spread non-compliance in reporting finds. Records show *only 7 individuals* accounted for the majority of reported finds.

QUESTION 6

Positive Impacts:

- Can sometimes provide a bridge between interested members of the public and archaeologists.
- Could provide information about unrecorded sites.

Negative Impacts:

- Does not prevent present and future illegal collection of artifacts and looting of archaeological sites on state lands.
- Provides a pathway for the reinstatement of the failed "Isolated Finds Policy"