

EXPERIENCE ARCHAEOLOGY



FLORIDA PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY NETWORK
West Central Regional Center

WINTER EDITION

January 2014

Tampa Bay Times Articles on FWC's Operation Timucua Miss the Point

By: Jeff Moates &
Becky O'Sullivan

On Sunday, January 5th an article appeared in the *Tampa Bay Times* regarding the individuals caught selling artifacts taken from state lands throughout Florida. Instead of focusing on the real destruction caused by the choices these individuals made, the reporter instead chose to question why artifacts and archaeological sites are worth preserving at all. Below is our response. Please consider writing to

the editors at the *Tampa Bay Times* to let them know why you think the preservation of archaeological sites is worthwhile. To read the original article, or the related opinion piece by Daniel Ruth, follow these links:

[Original Story](#)

[Ruth Opinion Piece](#)

This week, Tampa Bay Times reporter, Ben Montgomery, and columnist, Daniel Ruth, dissed their readership by diminishing the

importance of Florida archaeology and by continuing the idea that artifacts of prehistory (and those from historical times for that matter) are worth something in dollars and cents. They are worth much more than that. These remains have value intrinsic to the knowledge they can provide about the past. Montgomery and Ruth understate this importance when they minimize the fact that these objects were made and used by people (Continued on pg. 4)

Inside this Issue:

Tampa Bay Times Articles Miss the Point	1, 4
Junior Archaeologist Camp at Weedon Island	1
Archaeology Month is Almost Here	2, 4
Site Seeing: Paleoindians at the Harney Flats Site	2
Upcoming Archaeology Month Events	3
Meet our New Intern	5

Register now for our Junior Archaeologist Summer Camp at Weedon Island

By: Becky O'Sullivan

It's that time again! Despite the cold weather, summer is right around the corner and that means time to start thinking about a fun and educational summer camp for your child. FPAN staff will be putting on our Junior Archaeologist camp again this year at the Weedon Island Cultural and Natural History Center in St. Petersburg.

This summer camp is designed for children with a strong interest in prehistory and history as well as learning how early people interacted with their environment. Campers will

learn about the importance of archaeology and will gain understanding about natural resources in the Tampa Bay estuary. Highlights of the camps include guest experts, a tour of an archaeological site, hands-on archaeology, experiments and crafts, pottery making, prehistoric hunting technology, and earning the certificate of Tommy the Tortoise, Junior Archaeologist.

The camp is open to kids 7-11 years old and registration is \$150 per camper per week. Camp runs from 9am-4pm and before-camp care is available from 7:45 am to 9:00 am for an additional fee of \$50 each week.



Campers get hands-on experience and learn from real archaeologists.

WHEN: July 21 - July 25 or
July 28 - August 1

For more information please contact Becky O'Sullivan at

rosulliv@usf.edu or 813-396-2325. You can also register or find more information at: www.awiare.org

Archaeology Month is Almost Here: Meet the Paleoindians

By: Jeff Moates

Every March, Florida Archaeology Month programs and events celebrate different aspects of Florida's fascinating past. As part of this, archaeologists representing four statewide organizations collaborate to develop a different theme and commemorative poster



GIANT SLOTH

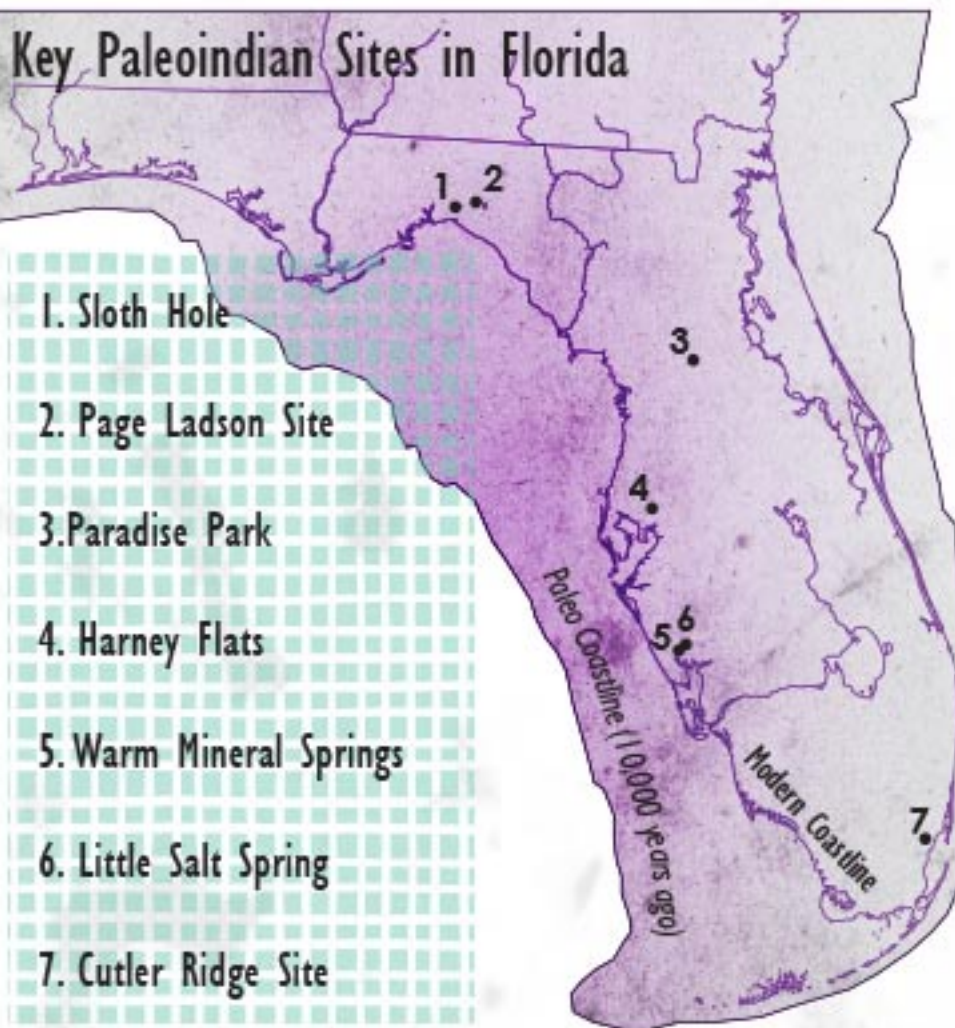


MAMMOTH

each year. In keeping with this, Florida Archaeology Month 2014 discovers Florida's first peoples: Paleoindians.

Before this unique landform became the state of Florida that we recognize today, Paleoindians encountered a much colder and drier environment. With huge amounts of water locked up in vast ice sheets to the north the level of the ocean was much lower than it is today. For someone living in the Tampa Bay area more than 10,000 years ago a trip to the beach would mean an extra 60 mile hike to the west. What that means for archaeologists today is that many of the sites occupied by Paleoindians in the past are now beneath the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

One theory about the Paleoindians is that they were nomadic hunters who followed large herds of game



1. Sloth Hole
2. Page Ladson Site
3. Paradise Park
4. Harney Flats
5. Warm Mineral Springs
6. Little Salt Spring
7. Cutler Ridge Site

during this time. Based on the remains of animals they killed, archaeologists theorize that they targeted megafauna as well as the abundance of much smaller game. We also know this from the stone and

bone tools Paleoindians left behind. More and more, however, archaeologists are realizing that it was just as likely that Paleoindians gathered and ate nuts and edible plants as well. (Continued on pg. 4)

Site Seeing: Paleoindians at the Harney Flats Site

By: Becky O'Sullivan

You might not know it, but there is a good chance you recently drove over the earliest known archaeological site in the Tampa Bay area. But don't worry, it happens thousands of times every day! While some of the most famous Paleoindian sites in Florida are located either to our north in the panhandle or to our south at Little Salt and Warm Mineral Springs an equally important one is located right here in our area: underneath I-75.

In the early 1980s, archaeologists working for the State of Florida excavated the Harney Flats site ahead of road construction along

I-75. Deep beneath the surface they uncovered evidence of a stone tool workshop and possible camp dating back more than 10,000 years. Harney Flats is unique because of its location; many of the Paleoindian sites found in other parts of Florida are in rivers or springs while Harney Flats is high and dry.

During the Paleoindian period the location of the Harney Flats site would have looked much different than today. The site sits on an ancient sandy ridge that today over looks dry land and the Tampa Bypass Canal, but thousands of years ago would have been on the edge of a large estuary much larger than present day

Hillsborough Bay. The ridge would have been a great place to live for Paleoindians not only because of the higher elevation, but also because of the rock outcrops located nearby that would have provided the raw materials for their stone tools.

Archaeologists have been able to date the Harney Flats site because of the types of stone tools found there, as well as information obtained from OSL dating. Chert cores used to produce stone flakes, as well as stone scrapers, abraders, and points at different stages of the production process were all recovered. Suwannee and Simpson points typical of the

Paleoindian period were also found there, along with a distinct new subtype (called a Harney point) recently identified by archaeologist Jim Dunbar.

Next time you are driving on I-75 near the bypass canal take a moment to think about what life would have been like for people living in Florida more than 10,000 years ago!



SUWANNEE



SIMPSON

Upcoming Archaeology Month Events

FEBRUARY:

2/15 Archaeology Works: Dating

10-Noon, Weedon Island Preserve, 1800 Weedon Drive NE, Saint Petersburg

From looking at how artifact styles change through time to running high tech tests on them to get a better date, archaeologists have many different dating techniques at their disposal. Learn about a few of these different dating methods, then try them out and see if you can get a date!

2/21 Lecture: Tracing the First Floridians, the Paleoindians

2-3pm, South Manatee Branch Library, 6081 26th St W, Bradenton

Archaeologists hunt down clues from the past using scientific methods to study what people's lives were like hundreds or thousands of years ago. Exciting research by archaeologists across Florida is shedding light on some of our state's earliest residents: the Paleoindians. This talk will explore what we know about Florida's first residents, as well as how archaeology can inform us about this part of our past.

2/22-23 Silver River Knap-In

9am-4pm, Silver River State Park, 1425 N.E. 58th Ave, Ocala

Expert flint knappers, archaeologists, potters, hide tanners, bow makers and other specialists in prehistoric skills will gather from across the eastern U.S. to demonstrate and sell their arts. There will be archery, tomahawk and atlatl dart throwing demonstrations as well as a flint knapping competition and on-going prehistoric skills demonstrations.

MARCH:

3/1 Archaeology Works Expo

10-Noon, Weedon Island Preserve, 1800 Weedon Drive NE, Saint Petersburg

Children and adults will experience archaeology in various ways, ranging from the methods archaeologists use to learn about the past to recreating the technologies of Florida's early residents. Bring the family to this free event to hang out with archaeologists from FPAN and see if you could survive life in Prehistoric Florida!

3/1 Pinellas County Archaeology Tour

12:30-3pm, Weedon Island Preserve, 1800 Weedon Drive NE, Saint Petersburg

After the Archaeology Works Expo, join members of the Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society for a guided tour of some of Pinellas county's most fascinating archaeological sites. The tour will begin at the Weedon Island Center at 12:30 where you will receive a map of sites and directions on how to get to each one. At each site a guide will detail the unique and amazing archaeology that went on there. The tour is free but donations are appreciated.

3/6 Ybor City Archaeology Exhibit Opening

5-10pm, Ybor City Museum State Park, 1818 E 9th Ave, Tampa

Join us for the grand opening of a new exhibit all about the history of Ybor City as told through its archaeology! This exhibit will feature artifacts recovered by FPAN archaeologists as part of their survey of the Ybor City Museum State Park grounds. For more information go to www.ybormuseum.org

3/15 DeSoto County Pioneer Day

9-5pm, DeSoto Veterans Park on State Road 70 just west of Arcadia

Enjoy a day of fun and celebrate the pioneer history of DeSoto county. FPAN will be on hand with displays and activities all about archaeology in our area.

3/18 Lunch and Learn with an Archaeologist

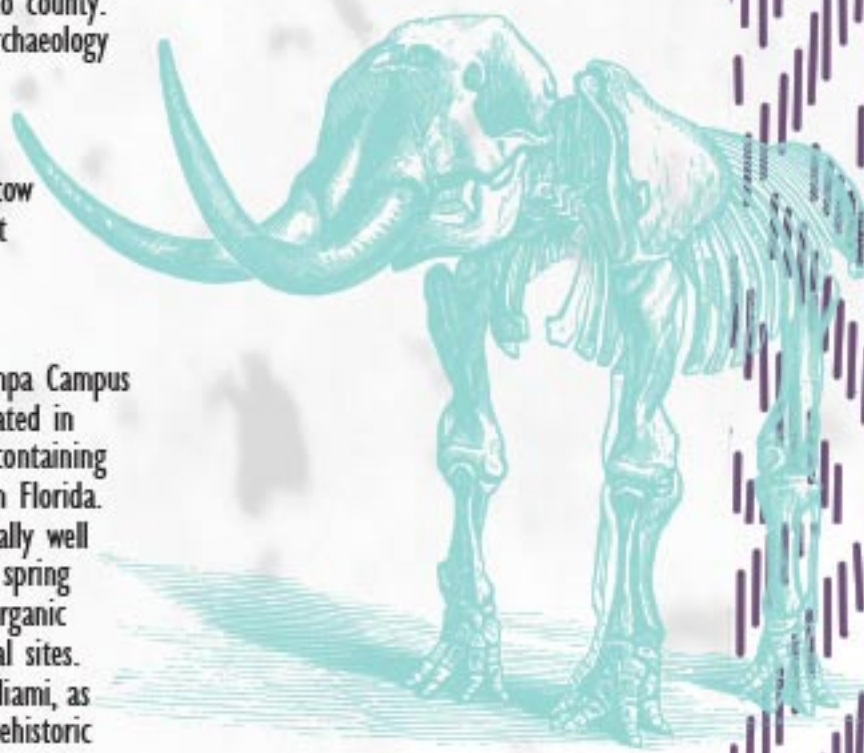
Noon-1, Polk County History Center, 100 East Main Street, Bartow

Join FPAN West Central Jeff Moates for lunch and a chat about underwater archaeology in Florida.

3/26 Lecture: Archaeology at Little Salt Spring

1-3pm, USF Tampa Library's Grace Allen Room (4th Floor), Tampa Campus

Since the 1960s it has been known that Little Salt Spring, located in Sarasota County, is a drowned sinkhole over 70 meters deep, containing some of the oldest and most unique artifacts yet discovered in Florida. Wooden tools 6,000 to 10,000 years old, as well as exceptionally well preserved plant and animal remains, are submerged in anoxic spring water that has minimized decomposition of a wide range of organic remains and artifacts missing almost completely from terrestrial sites. Join Dr. John Gifford, Professor Emeritus at the University of Miami, as he discusses some of the exciting findings from this unique prehistoric deep-water site.



Tampa Bay Times Articles Miss the Point (Continued from pg. 1)

that were entirely culturally different from us today.

However, similar to the great and mysterious state within which we live, Florida in the past was just as distinct and unique as it is today. Artifacts and archaeology sites, when properly preserved and purposefully excavated, offer clues to help tell these stories. Stories that, for instance, revolve around monumental architecture and land modification, burial practices and trade patterns, daily lives, the civic and domestic routines of people whose ancestors arrived some 14,500 years ago. Archaeology and the basic artifact can only deliver these stories to us in pieces. It's up to us to fill in the blanks. Each piece adds value to these stories.

Some of these stories can be found near Lake Okeechobee or on Hontoon Island, on Tyndall Air Force Base or at Pinellas Point where early Floridians built huge mounds and earthworks from sand and things that we



Some of the sites the subjects looted have been completely destroyed.

call artifacts but to them were used up and discarded food and tool remains. Together these bits and pieces of oyster, clam and whelk shell, animal and fish bones, ceramic pots and flakes of chert or agatized coral comprised the building materials of the day. If you believe Montgomery and Ruth's portrayal you might think that these people were just chunking rocks into rivers and moving along, or worse you might not think of these people at all.

Some of these stories can also be found around Char-

lotte Harbor or along the Crystal River, on hilltops near Tallahassee or in a wetland near Titusville where people with basic community needs shared in religious and ceremonial activities and rituals. At these places, archaeology and artifacts tell us of trade networks that stretched as far away as present day Michigan. These sites can also tell us about a person's last meal, as some of their bodies and stomach contents remained preserved in muck and mud for some 5,000 years. Archaeologists carefully recover these

remains because they are finite, and they are the only evidence we have of these past ways of life. They cannot be replaced and they cannot be remade.

When we have the choice we choose to preserve these things in place but if that's not possible it is then and only then that they are carefully recovered. Instead of selling our history short by relegating it to the corner of a collector's living room we should celebrate and honor it in the best way we can by preserving it where it is or at the very least preserving the knowledge hidden within it. The men and their "plight" profiled by Montgomery and Ruth in recent articles are not just stealing rocks from state lands. What they have done is to steal knowledge from past, present, and future residents of this great and wacky state. This activity is more than worthy of punishment.

*Jeff Moates & Becky O'Sullivan
FPAN West Central*

Archaeology Month is Almost Here: Meet the Paleoindians (Continued from pg. 2)

The material evidence of Paleoindians sheds light on a period of time when Florida's first people went about their daily routines of hunting, gathering, and living with those around them. The further we travel back in time unfortunately the more difficult it can be to piece together details of these routines. However, the Paleoindian Period in Florida presents many exciting opportunities to continue to learn and discover more about Florida and the first people to have lived where we live today.



This year the poster for Florida Archaeology Month will have two different versions, each celebrating a different Paleoindian site. The photographs on the front of the posters, taken by Curt Bowen, showcase the beauty and importance of both Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring.

You can pick up your own copy at any of our Florida Archaeology Month events!

Meet our New Intern at the New College Public Archaeology Lab

By: Aric Archebelle-Smith

My name is Aric Archebelle-Smith and I am a third year anthropology student at New College of Florida. I was recently granted a position as an intern with the Florida Public Archaeology Network and the New College Public Archaeology Lab. I'm interested in pursuing a career in archaeology and I would really like to focus on the study of burial practices. I'm incredibly excited to have been given the opportunity to work in collaboration with both FPAN and NCPAL.

I have a good deal of experience in engaging with the general public about

archaeology. Last year, I volunteered to assist Professor Uzi Baram with the events "A Day at the Lab" and "Archaeology Fest". Over the summer, I attended the PIARA bioarchaeology field school in Hualcayan,



Peru. The field school director emphasized the importance of communicating with the village residents about the work we were doing and the artifacts we were excavating. While I was there we organized a pop-up

museum to display our finds to the village residents and university students from the nearest town. I also helped organize and lead tours of our work sites so that people from the village could see exactly what we were working on. I look forward to using the skills I have acquired at field school and from working with NCPAL in the past to further the great public outreach work that NCPAL and FPAN are doing.

To see more of what Aric is up to, or to learn more about the New College Public Archaeology Lab:

www.facebook.com/NewCollegePublicArchaeologyLab

FPAN West Central
University of South Florida
4202 E Fowler Ave, NEC 116
Tampa, FL 33620-6758

Phone: 813.396.2325
Fax: 813.396.2326

Director: Jeff Moates
jmoates@usf.edu

Outreach Coordinator:
Becky O'Sullivan
rosulliv@usf.edu

The Florida Public Archaeology Network is dedicated to the protection of cultural resources, both on land and underwater, and to involving the public in the study of their past. Regional centers around Florida serve as clearinghouses for information, institutions for learning and training, and headquarters for public participation in archaeology.

For more information about archaeology and events in your area, check out our website or click on the images to the right to follow us on Facebook or Twitter.



www.flpublicarchaeology.org/wcrc
www.facebook.com/FPANwestcentral

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Little Salt Spring, Photo by Curt Bowen