



WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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A 501(c)3 Corporation and Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

The Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society meets at the North Port Public Library in the Nello Juliano Room at 6:30 P.M. Beginning in October we will meet on the Second Wednesday of the month (except for November 18 meeting, see article included), The meetings are free and open to the public.

**SAFETY HARBOR REGIONAL MUSEUM TOPIC OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING
SEPTEMBER 17**

Ron Fekete, Director of Exhibits with the Safety Harbor Museum of Regional History, will be the speaker at the September 17 meeting of the Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archeological Society. Museum Trustee Jim Dwyer will accompany him and bring a few artifacts from their collections. His talk will focus on an introduction to the Safety Harbor Regional Museum (see Safety Harbor, page 2).



The prehistoric Exhibit Gallery at the Safety Harbor Museum (photo provided SHRMH)

**DR. RACHEL WENTZ TO SPEAK ON FLORIDA'S
ANCIENT POND CEMETERIES OCTOBER 14
MEETING**

"Beneath the Surface: Exploring Florida's Ancient Pond Cemeteries" is the topic of speaker Dr. Rachel Wentz at the October 14 meeting of the WMS/LSSAS. Pond cemeteries represent a burial practice known to have occurred in the Florida Early-to-Middle Archaic periods, and restricted to central and south Florida. No other similar burial practice is known of anywhere else in the world. (Cont. p.2)



Rachel Wentz in the field (photo provided RW)

Little Salt Spring (8SO18) was the first site to be recognized as such. Others include Republic Groves (8HR4) in Hardee County, Bay West (8CR200) in Collier County, and Windover (8BR246) in Brevard County. None date later than 5,000 radiocarbon years before present. The earliest interments in the Southeast, dating to more than 10,000 rcbp, were discovered at Warm Mineral Springs (8SO19) on the 45-foot ledge; however, their placement, whether intentional in a dry cavernous context or shallow water context, is an interesting and controversial issue.

Dr. Wentz is the Director of the East Central Region of the Florida Public Archaeology Network at Brevard Community College in Titusville. She graduated from Florida State University with a Ph.D. in Anthropology and specializes in the bioarchaeological analysis of human remains, with foci on ancient disease and population health. Her master's thesis was an analysis of fracture frequencies among the Windover skeletal population, a 7,000-year-old site in Titusville, FL.

Her doctoral dissertation was a bioarchaeological assessment of the same population using the Western Hemisphere Health Index. Dr. Wentz has also analyzed remains from Little Salt Spring and Calico Hill, both prehistoric sites in Florida. She has done skeletal work in St. Croix, England, and Ukraine. She obtained experience in forensic anthropology at the C. A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and received training in the analyses of stable isotopes at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory at Florida State University. Dr. Wentz has taught courses in physical anthropology, human osteology, and forensic anthropology at Florida State University.

This will be another presentation of regional importance and relevance you won't want to miss.

Safety Harbor Museum, (cont. from page 1) and the Powell prehistoric-artifact collection, featuring artifacts from the Mississippian Period.

A field trip open to members and guests to the Museum and nearby Safety Harbor Mound at Philippe Park will follow Saturday, October 3. Both locations are on the Trail of Florida's Indian Heritage.

Located in an area of placid surroundings overlooking Tampa Bay, one can discover a place where efforts are made to acquaint all who visit with Florida's cultural and natural history. The Safety Harbor Museum rests under a canopy of oak and palm trees on grounds that are themselves an archeological shell mound. Various excavations have yielded artifacts from prehistoric Indians, Spanish contact, the Civil War, and 20th-century Safety

Harbor.

The Museum features a Pre-History Gallery and Heritage Gallery, which include over 12,000 years of history. There are also temporary theme exhibits, one currently on baseball. Exhibits trace Florida history from the Paleoindian period, with fossilized remains of mastodon, mammoth, and giant ground sloth, and the tools the first human inhabitants used to hunt them. Whole pottery vessels and large shards beautifully describe the evolution of pottery making in Florida. Shell implements such as hammers, cups, and bowls remain from mound-building cultures. An eye-catching illuminated wall diorama depicts the Tocobaga life atop the shell mounds, and collections of Spanish glass-trade beads are evidence of Spanish contact. The Heritage Gallery is dedicated to the area's pioneers, including Odet Philippe, who is recorded as Pinellas County's first permanent non-native settler. Photographs, antique postcards, and the actual Post Office Dispatch Case tell the story of Safety Harbor's first post office, established in 1880. Domestic vignettes provide a visual understanding of pioneer home life. Display cases hold archaeological artifacts dug on Museum grounds, including remnants of the Bayshore Hotel, which burnt in the mysterious 1908 fire. *[Information provided by the Safety Harbor Regional History Museum.]*

On October 3, members and guests will take a fieldtrip to Safety Harbor Regional History Museum, located at 329 Bayshore Blvd. South, Safety Harbor, Florida. The museum visit will be followed by a trip to the Safety Harbor Indian Mound at Philippe Park, site type for the Safety Harbor Culture, located a couple miles away. The Mound juts out over Old Tampa Bay. It was home to the local Tocobaga and inhabited from about AD 1000 to the time of Spanish arrival.

We will meet in the parking lot of the North Port Library at 8:00 AM for an 8:15 departure. We plan on getting a box lunch from a local restaurant and eating on the bay at Philippe Park. Maps with directions will be available. For those who cannot meet at the library, go online to <http://www.randmcnally.com/>; type in your address and destination and you will get directions from your house.

Take I-75 to I-275 over the Skyway (\$1.00 toll). Take exit 30 (SR 686) on right and go west on SR 686 to CR 611 ramp to 49th St., which becomes Bayside Dr. Take SR 60 ramp on right and left on Bayshore Blvd. South to Museum.

For more information visit <http://www.safetyharbormuseum.org/>.

VOLUNTEERS CONDUCT MINI-ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AT WARM MINERAL SPRINGS

Volunteers from Warm Mineral Springs and Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society conducted a mini-archaeological survey at Warm Mineral Springs in a location where an organic garden will be plotted. On a recent visit to WMS, archaeologist Steve Koski heard that a small area, approximately 80 x 25 meters, located in the northwest corner of the property, was being considered for a garden. While only the top 20 to 40 cm of soil was to be disturbed and no state, city, or county ordinance required a survey for the garden, Koski recommended to Spa Manager Jennifer Graham that a survey be conducted, which General Manager Gene Vaccaro approved.

The survey took place on August 5, 2009. WMS volunteers included Spa Manager Jennifer Graham, Jaid Graham, Kohl Graham, and Cyndee Peck; WMS/LSSAS volunteers included Jessica Askew, Hilda Boron, Ann



WMS survey crew Jaid Graham, Kohl Graham, Hilda Boron, Jessica Askew, Ann Hansen, Cyndee Peck, (Steve Koski taking photo).

Hansen, and Steve Koski. All work was done in-kind.

Koski planned and directed the dig, which included the excavation of eight shovel test pits from 10-to-20-m intervals and dug one meter deep, unless water was encountered. Soils were sifted through 1/4-inch screens and contents were examined for artifacts. Unfortunately, no evidence of Ponce DeLeon or other significant historic artifacts or prehistoric artifacts were discovered. A few rusted-metal and nail fragments and a small brick fragment, which related to the maintenance of the spa, developed in the late 1940's early 1950's, were all that was identified. A concrete foundation lies adjacent to the garden plot that was the location of a screened storage shed Koski

remembers from his work there in the 1980's.

A letter report detailing the survey and results was completed following the survey. If significant artifacts had been identified, the garden could have been moved to another location, or additional archaeological work could have been conducted.

Thanks go to all volunteers and Mr. Vaccaro for doing the right thing!

MEETING DATES CHANGE IN OCTOBER

Due to changes in hours of operation at the North Port Public Library, we need to change our meeting date again back to our original meeting time of the second Wednesday of the month, beginning October 14. The library will now close at 5:00 PM on Thursdays. HOWEVER, because the library will be closed the second Wednesday in November for Veterans Day, we will meet the third Wednesday, November 18 (Only date that week available). The remainder of the year we will be on the second Wednesday schedule at 6:30 PM, as usual.

SARASOTA NEW COLLEGE TO HOLD FIVE-SPEAKER LECTURE SERIES

A five-speaker lecture series sponsored by Time Sifters Archaeological Society and New College, with funding from the Florida Humanities Council, will be held on the third Wednesday of September, November, January, March, and May. The presentations will be held at the Mildred Sainer Pavilion, New College of Florida, 5313 Bayshore Road, Sarasota, Florida. This will be an exciting series of programs!

September 16: Kenneth Sassman, Ph.D., University of Florida, will present "Coping with Rising Sea Water."

November 18: Jerry Milanich, Ph.D., Florida Museum of Natural History, will present a program on "Archaeology in the Archives: the Seminole Indians, Photographs of Julian Dimock, 1905-1910."

January 20: Brent Weisman, Ph.D., University of South Florida, will present "Archaeology of the Unconquered People."

March 17: Barbara Purdy, Professor Emeritus, University of Florida, will present "Ancient Art of Florida's Native People," a story of Florida Seminole and Miccosukee.

May 19: William Lees, Ph.D., Florida Public Archaeology Network, will present "Discovering Civil War Florida."

Reservations for the events are recommended, so make sure you call if you are interested. For more information and reservations, call New College Events

Hotline at 941-487-4888 or go to www.ncf.edu/media-events.

LITTLE SALT SPRING NEWS *By Steve Koski*

To keep folks informed on happenings at LSS, I started the following section of the newsletter

RESEARCH CONTINUED ON THE 27 M LEDGE AT LSS IN JULY

From July 13 to 31, archaeologists and technical divers from the University of Miami/Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science and the Florida Aquarium, Tampa, returned to the 27 m ledge at Little Salt Spring. The project represented the conclusion of a Phase I, National Geographic-funded project, initiated to reexamine the 27 m ledge in an area on the south side of the spring where previous discoveries were made in the 1970's, and



July 2009 27 m Ledge Field Crew (left to right): Jason Minnear, Rick Gomez with son Trey, Dr. John Gifford, Mike Terrell, Kristine Sanchez, Steve Koski, George Guy (kneeling), Research dive team members Casey Coy and Tom Wagner not in photo (photo 7/30/09 SHK).

on the north side of the spring where additional late-Pleistocene material had been identified more recently. Research teams included University of Miami archaeologists and research divers Dr. John Gifford (Director of Research), Rick Gomez (Dive Safety Officer), Steve Koski (Research Associate), and surface support volunteer George Guy; and Florida Aquarium research divers Jason Minnear, Mike Terrell, Kristine Sanchez, Casey Coy (Florida Aquarium Dive Safety Officer, not in photo), Tom Wagner (not in photo).

One week was spent on the south side of the spring in a 1x1 m excavation unit, where excavations

were conducted in July of 2008. In 1977 a single wood artifact was found in that location in association with an extinct tortoise (*Geochelone crassiscutata*), dating to 12,030 rcybp. The second week was spent on the north side of the spring where three 1x1 m units were established. All work was video documented. While excavation of the 1 m unit on the south side of the spring proved somewhat uneventful, the north side was tremendously exciting. There, another articulated extinct giant ground tortoise was uncovered! In addition, an item of interest and of potential great significance was uncovered close to the tortoise. At the close of the week, samples were recovered for radiocarbon dating and the excavation units covered for another field initiative. Additional funds will be raised to return in 2010 to conduct additional excavations and document the recovery of what was found.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI ON FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT LSS

As many of you know, the University of Miami is on a fundraising campaign to raise \$1 million dollars for improvements at the Little Salt Spring Archaeological and Ecological Preserve. The campaign was initiated by UM President Donna Shalala, who visited the site for the first time in January 2008. She was so impressed with the research and education potential of the property, she visited several local foundations for support. So far, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice has pledged \$250,000 and the Selby Foundation, another \$100,000 to kick off the campaign. UM must match the grant and raise a minimum of \$350,000 and plan to raise another \$300,000 to total \$1 million.

The funding will be used to construct one of three buildings. The first, to be a multi-purpose building to house a hurricane-proof conservation/curation lab, research lab, offices, and a classroom. The classroom will be for visiting UM students, local school students, and scheduled group public visits so we can begin on-site education programs. LSS has a wealth of cultural and natural resources on the 112- acre property where students can learn about the significance of our finite resources and the importance of protecting those resources for future generations to learn from and experience.

The second building will provide housing for visiting students and scientists, the third, an education center that will house a classroom and meeting room and permanent exhibits on the archeology and natural history of LSS.



University of Miami President Donna Shalala visits Little Salt Spring in January 2008 with Dean of Communications Sam Grogg (left) and John Gifford (right). Communications Director Barbara Gonzalez in background (photo 1/08 SHK).

In preparation for such educational activities, Steve Koski began an ecosystem restoration project focused on exotic-vegetation removal. No small job. When he is not underwater with Dr. Gifford and students or in the lab, he is preparing trails that will eventually be used for guided interpretive nature walks. It will take time and money to see this to fruition, but UM is dedicated to making it happen. Programs have already been started on a limited basis (see May/June 2009 WMSLSSAS Newsletter), but because adequate facilities, staff, and funding are currently lacking, things have to start slowly. In addition, while level of public access is being considered, it must be balanced with habitat protection as to not disturb the plants and animals we are protecting. Excessive public use could lead to ecosystem degradation and habitat loss. Such adverse impacts would not be responsible stewardship or good land management practices.

So, stay tuned. For more information on LSS and UM initiatives, or if you would like to make a donation to the cause, please visit www.littlesalt.spring.org.

VOLUNTEERS HELP CLEAR LSS CREEK FROM SPRING TO INTERIOR BOUNDARY FENCE

A major volunteer effort in a restoration project along the creek at LSS took place over the past several months. A small group of volunteers has cleared the spring run from the spring to the inner fence, approximately 40 meters. The LSS creek is likely one of the few waterways in Sarasota County that has not been modified, ditched, or channeled. It meanders for approximately 350 meters south to Spring Haven Blvd., where it enters a culvert and flows under the road into a modified ditch along the back yards of houses.

The original flood plain was completely obliterated and filled for a residential development. From Spring Haven, it flows to a series of ditches into the Myakkahatchee Creek, the Myakka River, and into Charlotte Harbor.

With Koski on the chainsaw and volunteers dragging and stacking, 40 meters down, approximately 300 meters to go. The restoration project to clear the creek was initiated in an effort to restore the natural ecosystem along the creek. It is a small part of an ongoing project to restore the entire 112 acres of the archaeological and ecological preserve, which is off to a good start. Volunteers have also been assisting to clear Brazilian pepper north and west of the entrance drive from inner gate to Price Blvd. More than to 100 hours have been documented.



LSS Spring Run after clearing. Note the whitish sulfide-induced biofilm on the creek bottom. Two weeks prior water was brown as over-steeped black tea from the rain-induced tannin. Research questions abound in all areas at LSS (photo 9/4/09 SHK).

While volunteers have been helpful, it is a slow and time-consuming project and one to which Koski can only dedicate a few hours per week. He is also looking into grants and private funding to continue the restoration efforts. A rolling grinder to mulch the piles of cut pepper is approximately \$900 per day for the machine and operator. It will take two days to grind what has been cut and stacked, and another three days to clear around the research compound to mitigate the fire hazard. Continued volunteer maintenance is essential to ecosystem management.

Prior to their efforts, you could not even tell that a creek existed and could not see the fields and hammock north and west of the driveway. The areas were a dense wall of pepper. The creek was so clogged with pepper that even mama gator had trouble navigating its course. Now she swims through with ease. Which is a good thing—I

think. Herons have also begun to frequent the spring run for the first time in more than 30 years. I don't think they even knew it was there before. Entrusted and experienced member volunteers, who will pluck pepper shoots and inhibit the reestablishment of exotic vegetation, will now maintain the creek. An ongoing success story!

WEDU'S *A GULF COAST JOURNAL*, WITH JACK PERKINS, FEATURED TWO SEGMENTS ON LSS

The June and July 2009 program, *A Gulf Coast Journal*, featured segments on LSS. The June segment focused on the archaeology of the spring with Dr. John Gifford and the July segment on the ecology of the spring, with interviews with Steve Koski. Field producer Colleen Hamilton and cameraman Brad Clore were sent on assignment to LSS and spent several days on site over a three-week period. They planned to produce one segment, but ended up with too much footage. Colleen did not want to edit anything out, so they made it into two segments, one on the archaeology and another on the ecology of LSS. As it turned out, both were longer than others they had produced before. The June segment will be submitted for a 2009 Emmy Award, and the July, submitted in 2010.

To view the segments, go to www.wedu.org, click Programs, Gulf Coast Journal, June 2009, July 2009. The first segment in June is on LSS and the segment following the Myakka State Park segment is on LSS in July. Check it out!

SWFWMD VISITS LSS

David DeWitt and an associate from the Southwest Florida Water Management District came to LSS August 11 to measure the spring flow and monitor water quality and chemistry with a YSI instrument. Dave measured the flow rate in the creek near the inner fence and found it to flow approximately 1.5 cubic feet per minute, or about 900,000 gallons a day, which is considered a small, third-magnitude spring. Warm Mineral Springs, on the other hand, is a second-magnitude spring with approximately 6 to 9 million gallons per day flowing into the creek. Good stuff to know if you are into springs!

WMS/LSSAS VOLUNTEERS ASSIST WITH RESEARCH

Volunteers also assist with research when needed. Several have been helping to screen sediment recovered from the 27 m ledge in July. The sediment has to be removed as the excavation progresses, and all is placed in bags and recovered for screening on the surface.

Volunteers water screen through 1/4 and 1/6-in mesh and all bone, wood, and shell are selected from the 1/4-in screen and all material is saved from the 1/6-in screened for later microscopic analysis. The screening is conducted to look for small artifacts and other materials related to environmental conditions at the time of their deposit, as early as 12,000rcybp.

PHENOLOGY OF LITTLE SALT SPRING

By Steve Koski

"Phenology is the study of periodic plant and animal life-cycle events and how these are influenced by seasonal and interannual variations in climate. The word is derived from the Greek phainomai (φαινομαι – to appear, come into view) and indicates that phenology has been principally concerned with the dates of first occurrence of biological events in their annual cycle" (Wikipedia).

While I try to document times and changing patterns in nature, this is also about general natural observations, not just dates of occurrences, so "phenology" may not be the best title for the article, but I like it!

As fall approaches and cooler weather will soon arrive, we should be observing changing natural phenomena. The frequent rains will cease, grass will brown (brown is beautiful), ferns will begin to die back, and the snowbirds will begin to arrive. Literally. Two weeks ago, the first kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) was spotted at the spring. Very fun to watch, flying from edge to edge of the spring with a redundant cackling sound, surface diving for small fish along the way. While I'm no ornithologist, I've had multiple sightings of what I believe to be a pair of red-bellied woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*). They have been flying around the hammock and compound for most of the summer, as I recall, hanging in the palms and oaks looking for bugs. I saw two immature individuals a few days ago, so they must have recently had hatchlings. There is also a resident pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), who likes to wake me up in the morning pecking the metal box on the light pole. What's up with that? Love the way they fly.

The female anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) has returned after several weeks away, or perhaps a new one has arrived; not sure where she's been hanging. I expect a pair of moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) to return any day, although I did not think they were migratory. I guess you don't need to be migratory to go on vacation. Mama gator is around, but I have yet to see new babies.

Of the several coco orchids (*Eulophia alta*) on the property, I have seen only one in bloom. Started to shoot a stock two weeks ago and now in full bloom. The tooth rein orchid (*Habinaria floribunda*) are numerous in the hammock

and should be in bloom in a couple weeks. Another beautiful and somewhat plentiful flowering vine that grows on the west side of the spring and in areas of the fields is the Glades morning glory (*Ipomoea sagittata*). They bloom from April-October.



Mama, our 6-foot mascot chill'in on the east side, waiting for a meal. (really, not that big, as gators go, right?) Glad wet suits are too chewy for her (photo SHK 8/09).



Glades morning glory flower (*Ipomoea sagittata*) blooms on a leather fern on the west side of the spring. Guess that's why they call them morning glories, west side first to see the sun (photo SHK 7/29/09).

There are a variety of butterfly around this summer, but no more than usual. I have seen five or more zebra long-wing butterflies (*Heliconius charitonius*), our state butterfly, on a cluster of shepherd's needle (*Biden pilosa*) flowers in an area near the drive. Their larval host plant includes the purple passion flower (*Passiflora incarnata*). Cloudless sulfur butterflies (*Phoebis sennae*) are plentiful as well. There is a gangly bean-bearing legume, of which the name slips my mind, on the property that serves as its larval host, I am told. The Gulf fritillary (*Agralis vanillae*) has been observed around the two lantanas on the

compound. I should cut them out, as they are an exotic variety, but they have not become invasive and I like the numerous butterflies they attract. Also got a nice photo of a white peacock butterfly (*Anartia jatrophae*). It was the only one I could get to pose for me. I've learned it pays to always carry a camera in your pocket. You never know what you will see when working about and by the time you get your camera its too late. Like the time I encountered the two bobcat cubs that sat and watched me as I observed them no more that 20 feet away. Soon they ignored me and continued playing.



White peacock butterfly (*Anartia jatrophae*) (photo SHK 9/09)

A fawn arrived in the yard in July. Could not have been more than a few days old. Somewhat unsteady on its feet. It must have gotten lost in the inner fence, so I guided it out and she was soon seen with mom. I have seen it with its mother on several occasions since around dusk.



A fawn wanders into LSS compound (7/15/09 SHK)



Rainbow over Little Salt Spring (7/28/09 SHK)



Coco orchid bloom at LSS
(*Eulophia alta*)(9/4/09 SHK)

WMS/LSSAS WEB SERVER TO CHANGE

Within the next month, we will be moving our web site to another server (thanks to Bill Gibson who designed the site). As of September 10, you could still view the site, but we can no longer modify it. We'll announce the new site in the November/December issue of the *WMS/LSSAS Newsletter*.

OCTOBER ISSUE OF *NORTH PORT MAGAZINE* TO FEATURE LITTLE SALT SPRING

North Port's own local magazine will feature an article on LSS by Justin Ossmann. Justin spoke with Dr. Gifford and Steve Koski on the site, research, and future plans for the article. The magazine should be out by the time you get this or shortly thereafter.

SEE YOU SEPTEMBER 17!

Hope you all had a wonderful summer and looking forward to a great season of programs and events!

OFFICERS

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- MEMBERSHIP..... Linda Massey (lmassey628@msn.com)
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Newsletter Editor: Steve Koski 423-0835, skoski@rsmas.miami.edu; Media Correspondent: Linda Massey, lmassey628@msn.com

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WARM MINERAL SPRINGS/LITTLE SALT SPRING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. 7797 North Port, Florida 34290

