

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
EDUCATION

RESEARCH
CONSERVATION



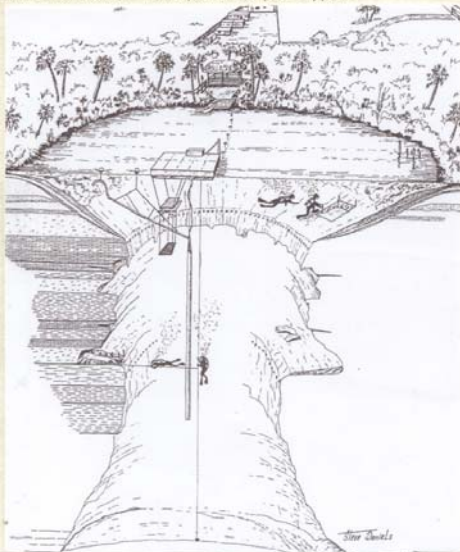
WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

Vol. 19, No 1
January/February 2008

LOCATION FOR NEXT MEETING - NELLO JULIANO ROOM, NORTH PORT LIBRARY
The Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society meets the second **THURSDAY** of each month (except June, July, and August) at the North Port Public Library in the Nello Juliano Room at **6:30 pm**. The meetings are free and open to the public.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2008!

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2008! We hope you all had a nice holiday with family and friends and are enthusiastic about another great year of speakers, field trips, and events. We are currently planning our speaker series and events, many of which will be announced in this and the March/April newsletter. Thank you all for your support!



Profile of Little Salt Spring
(1979 illustration for Science magazine by Steve Daniels).

RESEARCH ON THE 27-METER LEDGE AT LITTLE SALT SPRING TOPIC OF JANUARY 10 MEETING

Archaeologist Dr. John Gifford will return for a presentation at the January 10 meeting of the WMS/LSSAS. Dr. Gifford's presentation will include an overview of the Little Salt Spring site, a discussion on past discoveries on the 27-meter ledge, and an exciting future research project on the ledge scheduled for June 2008. Dr. Gifford is currently on site with students from the University of Miami diving this and next week, so it was a perfect opportunity to get him to speak about the new research initiative planned for the 27-meter ledge.

Little Salt Spring is a circular, 250-foot-deep sinkhole (or cenote) located in south Sarasota County, Florida. The spring lies on a 112-acre parcel owned by the University of Miami. As early as 1959, archaeological discoveries were made in the basin of the spring 10 to 40 feet below the surface dating from 6,000 to 10,500 years ago. Even deeper, on a ledge at



Director of Research Dr. John Gifford

90 feet (27 meters), were the bones of extinct and extant Pleistocene fauna, including ground sloth, bison, tortoise, and mammoth remains. Of unprecedented significance was an intentionally sharpened wood stake wedged between the plastron and carapace of an extinct tortoise, radiocarbon dated to 12,030 +/-30 BP. Numerous wooden stakes have also been identified on the lower slope of the basin, radiocarbon dated to 10,500 BP. Artifacts made from stone, bone, shell, and wood have been found in the basin of the spring, and the upper slope was used as a cemetery site in the Middle Archaic period 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.

Dr. Gifford is Director of Research at Little Salt Spring and an Associate Professor of Marine Archaeology, Division of Marine Affairs, University of Miami/Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. Come to the meeting and hear about exciting past discoveries and future research being planned for the summer of 2008. Interested in our local treasure, underwater archaeology, or past, present, and future research at Little Salt Spring? You won't want to miss this meeting.

FEBRUARY 14 SPEAKER TO BE ANNOUNCED

The speaker for the February meeting will be announced at the January 10 meeting. Due to our meeting-date change and scheduling conflict, our February speaker became our March speaker. The February program will also be announced in the local papers or call Hilda Boron at 426-1719.

HISTORY OF CHARLOTTE HARBOR TOPIC OF MARCH 13 MEETING

Archaeologist and author Chuck Blanchard will return for another interesting presentation centered on discussion of his new book, *Boca Grand: Lives of an Island*. It is a book of edited oral histories, historical essays, historical vignettes, historic photos, etc. It is already in its second printing and is both interesting and very readable. Signed copies will be available.

Chuck will also briefly discuss current archaeological activities in Charlotte Harbor, including the \$750,000 grant for the Big Mound Key project and the \$100,000 Coastal Zone Management Public Lands mapping and profiling program, which continues this year. This will be another meeting you won't want to miss--really, I'm not just saying that.

DECEMBER 2007 MEETING REPLACED BY SUNSET CRUISE OF SARASOTA BAY ON *LEBARGE*

Due to a meeting day-and-time change due to budget cuts at the Library, we were unable to meet in December. So nine members went on a holiday sunset cruise of Sarasota Bay on the *LeBarge* December 10. Folks met at Marina Jack's and set sail at 5:00 pm for a two-hour cruise. All enjoyed the festive evening, which may turn into an annual event! Thanks go to Phil Trembley for the suggestion.

NOVEMBER 2007 MEETING FEATURED JEFF MOATES, CURATOR OF FLORIDA MARITIME MUSEUM IN CORTEZ, FLORIDA

by Phil Trembley

Jeff Moates's presentation covered two divergent topics. The first topic, which consumed the greater amount of time, described the museum and its setting of the historic fishing village of Cortez, located in Manatee County just

off Cortez Road at 119th Street West. The second topic was a description of archaeology activity involving historic barge remains, which Jeff recently examined with the Maritime Museum on the Wacissa River.

Jeff explained that the purpose of the Florida Maritime Museum is to collect, preserve, and interpret maritime heritage at Cortez. The Cortez community is focused on preserving their historic past and was able to acquire 95 acres previously owned by a developer and turn it into a fishing preserve. The presenter displayed an aerial view of Cortez and it showed a large area of mangrove. Some of this area had been used in the past as a dumping ground and, besides debris, it contains invasive vegetation. Thus far, about 10% has been cleared.

Cortez was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites in 1995. In 1639, DeSoto explored the Cortez area, which is situated just west of Bradenton. During the 18th century, Cuban fishermen established fishing ranchos on Florida's Gulf coast. By 1879, Cortez was considered one of Florida's most important fisheries. During this time, it was increasing its population with settlers from the Carolinas. A post office was established in 1896 and at that time the settlement took the name of Cortez. The very next year, a school building was built, which was later replaced in 1912. The design for the 1912 building was used for five other schools in Florida (only two remain) and now houses the Florida Maritime Museum.

The oldest building in Cortez is the Burton General Store, which is in the process of being restored. At one time a hotel structure (Albion Inn) was attached to the store but has since been razed. When built, it boasted that every room had a bathroom. The Burton store was moved to the museum's five-acre compound and will soon be joined by the Pillsbury Boat Works, whose buildings will also be restored. The museum sponsors a volunteer boat shop where visitors can see reproductions of the craft settlers from the Carolinas built. The museum has a fleet of small craft and sponsors a Youth Sailing Program. Cortez has a Small Craft Festival in April in addition to a Fishing Festival in February.

The speaker gave an additional presentation on the remains of a barge on the Wacissa River. It was determined that the barge was constructed just after the Civil War (or the "War of Northern Aggression," as some Southerners call it) and was typical of the craft used by the rice plantations in the area to



WMS/LSSAS Vice President Phil Trembley presents Jeff Moates with one of our world-famous WMS/LSSAS T-shirts.

move shipments of goods. The presenter displayed a map to show how early attempts to dredge a channel to the Gulf were carried out using slave labor; however, the attempt failed due to expense and less than a mile was dredged.

We thank Jeff for coming and sharing the interesting history on Cortez and his current research on the Wacissa. A field trip to the Maritime Museum at Cortez is being planned for January 19, 2008. Additional information will be available at the January 10 meeting. For those interested in signing up, who might not be attending the meeting, please call Hilda Boron at 426-1719.

NATURE WALK AND PEPPER PULL AT LITTLE SALT SPRING TO BE HELD SUNDAY JANUARY 27

Want to attend an educational nature experience/walk and help control exotic vegetation at Little Salt Spring? Come to the site Sunday, January 27, at 9:30 am for a tour of the spring and creek and a walk-through of the bay-head hammock. We usually conduct these events on Saturday, but our tour guide, Steve Koski, is taking a Master Naturalist class on Saturdays during January and part of February.

Come visit the site and learn about the local plants and animals. The tour will also be combined with exotic vegetation removal for those who are interested. As we walk we will identify and pull Brazilian pepper shoots before they overtake the grounds.

Three years ago, the environmental consulting firm Earth Balance conducted an exotic-vegetation eradication-and-mitigation project at the site, killing and removing many of the pepper in the hammock and along the driveway. Well, new shoots are coming back with a vengeance and they need to be removed. The problem is exacerbated by hundreds of snowbirds: robins that have been vacationing at the spring the last month. They have stripped the pepper trees of their berries, spreading the seeds throughout the landscape. Until all the pepper is removed from all 112 acres, new sprouts will be continually growing.

The spring, hammock, and creek are a beautiful place and Koski envisions trails through the hammock and along the creek, with perhaps a bridge over the creek and an overlook at the spring. It is a labor-intensive project and one that he would like to see completed by the end of 2008. In late 2007, he mowed and cut a trail through a portion of the fields and hammock north and west of the spring and a walk through that area is planned as well.

Sound interesting? Give site manager Steve Koski a call at 423-0835 to get on the list of attendees. A sign-up sheet will be at the January 10 meeting. If you enjoy nature and like the woods and being outdoors, this is for you! If you plan to attend, wear long pants and shirt, shoes with socks, gloves, and hat, and bring insect repellent, water, and a camera--you never know what you might see.

FEBRUARY 23 WMS/LSSAS ANNUAL YARD SALE DRIVE IS ON!

This is it, time again for our annual yard sale to be held February 23. So please go through your closets and garage for things cluttering up your home and donate them to a worthy cause: our annual yard sale. This is important. We could not make it through the year without this fundraiser. You can deliver items to the lab at LSS after January 12 after calling Hilda Boron (426-1719) or Steve Koski (423-0835). Some items can be picked up as

well with notice.

The yard sale is our primary fundraiser, initiated by past-president Verla Eisele and several of our long-time members, such as Hilda Boron and Ann Hansen. Many members help prior to and on the day of the event. It is actually a fun event that has turned out to be more of a social event than hard work. But it is work collecting, pricing, delivering, setting up, and spending the entire morning and early afternoon at the site. We average about a thousand dollars each year, which allows us to do more for our members and historic preservation than before we had one. We will need membership help again this year prior to and on the day of the event.

The yard sale again will be next to the Warm Mineral Springs Motel at the corner of US 41 and Ortiz. We will be setting up from 7:00 to 7:30 am. If you would like to volunteer, contact Hilda Boron at 426-1719. It would be great to see some new smiling faces as well.

TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP!

It's January, end of another fine year and time to renew your membership. Membership dues are important to keep us solvent and every person's membership is important, whether you just come to the meetings or participate in our field trips and events. We could not survive without our members. Please fill out the enclosed membership form and mail to the address on the envelope. Want to become more involved? Come to the next board meeting. We meet at the lab at Little Salt Spring once a month. The date of the next meeting will be announced at our January 10 meeting. Thank you all for participating and making our club the successful and respected group we are!

WHERE DOES OUR MONEY GO?

[adapted from our January 2007 WMS/LSSAS Newsletter]

Ever wonder where all our money goes? Well, it's not that much. We operate with about a \$2,500 annual budget, coming mostly from membership dues and our annual yard sale. Without either, we would not be able to get through the year. Before our first yard sale seven years ago, at year's end we were near bankruptcy. Now we have more than \$1000 in the treasury going into the new year! However, without your renewal and our annual yard sale, we would never make it through the year. Another reason why our members are so important.

First, our money goes to providing speakers for our monthly series. Speaker expenses include motel (if coming from out of town), dinner the evening of the talk, an honorarium of a minimum of \$50, and a world-famous WMS/LSSAS T-shirt. Printing and mailing of our newsletter is another expense that runs about \$100 each issue. While the editor volunteers, in the past we have given our professional typesetter, Valerie Grey, a \$70 gift certificate to the Crow's Nest Restaurant every Christmas; however, this year she insists that the two beautiful, world-famous WMS/LSSAS T-shirts she received are more than enough compensation. We also belong to several preservation- and education-oriented organizations, including Randell Research Center, Historic Spanish Point, Friends of the North Port Library, Florida Humanities Council, Crowley Museum, Trail of the Lost Tribes, Florida Frontier Gazette, and the Historic Preservation Coalition (that's all I can think of right now). So, please renew your membership and help support the Society, as well as other worthy organizations. Many thanks!

WMS/LSSAS IN NEED OF LIBRARIAN

After many years of organizing and maintaining the WMS/LSSAS library, Carol Lehmann has resigned as head librarian. Thankfully, she will still participate on a limited basis in the archiving of our historic documents, but now has limited time to spend on the library. Anyone with good organizational skills who would like to assist with our library, please call Hilda Boron at 426-1719. If interested, come to our next board meeting (date to be announced at the January 10 meeting) and see what we have.

We would like to thank Carolyn for her dedicated work over the years with the library and her updates for the newsletters!

ARCHAEOLOGY AT SPANISH POINT COMING SOON

A significant archaeological research project is soon to begin at Historic Spanish Point on the Hill Cottage Midden. The Hill Cottage Midden is one of the largest Archaic-period shell-ring sites in Florida in terms of height and volume of shell and one of 53 known shell-ring sites in the country. A recent National Historic Landmark historic-context study identified the Hill Cottage Midden as one of only 13 shell-ring sites in the United States with enough scientific integrity and research potential of national significance to be designated as a National Historic Landmark. The designation is critical to its continued preservation.

Specific investigatory tasks involved in the research design include:

1. Identify boundaries, size, and shape of the shell-ring site.
2. Determine the integrity of the site.
3. Examine and determine the earliest and latest periods of construction of the site.
4. Address the site's potential to answer questions of national significance.

The final element will include writing and submitting the National Historic Landmark nomination.

Chief archaeologist on the project will be Dr. Mike Russo, an archaeologist with the National Park Service's Southeast Archaeological Center, who will work with a team of archaeologists and Historic Spanish Point staff. Volunteers will join the team to assist with surveying, excavation, and lab work, which means volunteer opportunities could be available for interested WMS/LSSAS members.

We will keep the membership informed as the project develops, as no

schedule has been set to date. This could prove to be a very interesting opportunity for both volunteer work and site visitation to see the work in progress. Stay tuned!

FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH MARCH 2008

Florida Archaeological Month (FAM) is an annual event sponsored by the Florida Anthropological Society (FAS), the Florida Archaeological Council, the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, and the Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. The purpose of the event is to provide opportunities for Florida residents and visitors to learn about the extensive archaeological resources in Florida and their precarious existence. The event highlights some of the important archaeological research projects being conducted by the State of Florida, universities, and private for-profit and non-profit organizations statewide. Florida Archaeological Month strives to teach about the importance of stewardship of both historic and pre-historic archaeological resources.

The FAS is the lead organization that conducts and promotes Florida Archaeology Month. FAS is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff, and there are no paid staff involved in developing the poster, bookmarks, and booklets or conducting the extensive programs sponsored by the 15 FAS chapters. No staff receives compensation from the historic-preservation grants for their duties in conducting FAM.

FAM has become an important program for Florida's schools, as many classes take advantage of FAM information to teach about the history and pre-history of Florida. Some events are specifically designed for the classroom format or for field trips. FAS chapters have developed special relationships with schools to provide posters and bookmarks that are displayed in the schools. Florida State Parks is an avid supporter of FAM, displaying the posters in park entrance stations, visitor centers, and high-use areas in kiosks. Many private museums and public libraries display the posters and make bookmarks available for students of all ages to promote stewardship and sources of information about Florida's vast archaeological resources.

[The above from its website. FAM Posters and other materials will be available at the February 14 meeting and additional information about events will be published in the March/April newsletter.]

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	George Haag
VICE PRESIDENT	Phil Trembly
SECRETARY	Hilda Boron
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Linda Massey
TREASURER	Kate Cattran

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Crescenzo • Judi Crescenzo • Robert Dunay • Ann Hansen
 Steve Jasecko • Steve Koski • Carol Myers • Sid Scott
 Bob Strayer • Elfrieda Wuerz • Wilburn Cockrell, Honorary
 Newsletter Editor: Steve Koski 423-0835, skoski1044@aol.com
 Librarian: In search of • Media Correspondent: Ann Hansen



Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society • P. O. Box 7797, North Port, FL 34287