



Friends of the Randell Research Center

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An Ancient Pineland Shoreline

*RRC volunteers and archaeologists
join forces to investigate rare
waterlogged deposits*

by Bill Marquardt

From February 27 through March 11, archaeologists and RRC volunteers excavated at the Pineland site near the corner of Waterfront Drive and Pineland Road, in front of the historic Wilson Sisters house. Our purpose was to investigate in more detail the waterlogged deposits we first encountered in the summer of 2015 when a septic tank was installed on the property (see *Friends of the RRC Newsletter* for September, 2015). Karen Walker and I were joined by University of Georgia archaeologists Victor Thompson, Isabelle Lulewicz, and Jake Lulewicz during their UGA spring break, March 6-11. Our paleoethnobotanist colleague Lee Newsom, now with Flagler College in St. Augustine, worked with us March 11-15. Also helping out were FPAN archaeologists Rachael Kangas and Sara Ayers-Rigsby and FPAN intern Victoria Lincoln.



Some of the RRC volunteers who were an integral part of the project. Screening, foreground: left, Gloria Andrews; right, Phyllis Faust; background: Lawrencine Mazzoli, Tom VanderVelde. (Photo by Karen Walker.)

We opened a 1-x-4-m trench a meter west of the 2015 excavation and soon encountered the familiar shell midden deposit, which quickly became wetter as we excavated deeper. Using a pump, we kept the water under control and were able to recover many normally perishable remains including fragments of cordage and knots from one or more Calusa fishing nets, unburned seeds, and fragments of wood. Radiocarbon dates show that these materials, along with pottery, shell artifacts, shells,

and fish and other animal bones, had been left behind by Pineland residents on a shoreline between AD 1000 and 1200, then rapidly covered over by more recent deposits, sealing in the old shoreline materials and creating an anaerobic (oxygen-depleted) deposit that favored excellent preservation of organic materials.

Selected samples from the excavated deposits were water-screened through a series of nested screens by our hard-working volunteers, and are now awaiting detailed analysis by Lee and her students. As we wrote in the 2015 article, preservation of such normally perishable materials is quite rare in archaeology, but the Pineland site has now yielded deeply buried, waterlogged deposits at several locations, adding to its overall scientific value.

A big thank-you to our RRC volunteers who worked long hours excavating and carrying buckets of heavy, wet sediments to the screens, carefully screening for finds, keeping the finds

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The 1-x-4-meter trench, being excavated below water table, assisted by a pump. Top to bottom: Bill Marquardt, Victor Thompson, Jake Lulewicz, Isabelle Holland Lulewicz.

(Photo by Karen Walker.)



Twisted palm-fiber cordage, about 1000 years old. (Photo by Karen Walker.)



Hundreds Attend Calusa Heritage Day

New Trail segment opens to the public for the first time

by Bill Marquardt

On March 25, more than 800 people visited the Randell Research Center to enjoy a day of speakers, exhibits, and guided tours. The RRC classroom hosted displays on finds from the Blueberry site in Highlands County (Nate Lawres), recent Pineland and Mound Key excavations (Karen Walker and Jeanne Gossman), ongoing research on Calusa fuelwoods and other wood uses (Jen Haney), and the environmental histories of Pine Island Sound and Estero Bay (Mike Savarese). The speakers tent featured talks by Torben Rick (archaeologist, Smithsonian Institution), the Florida Museum/RRC's Bill Marquardt, artist/anthropologist Merald Clark, and Florida Public Archaeology Network Southwest Region's archaeologist Rachael Kangas. Free samples of foods eaten by the Calusa – oysters, clams, mullet, and papaya – were enjoyed by many visitors. Local artists showed and sold their creations, replicators demonstrated Native American crafts such as stone tool making and weaving, and information booths



Chelsea Collison, Danielle Nelson and Meghan Audo hosted an information table for the Florida Museum of Natural History, which this year celebrates its 100th anniversary. (Photo by Kristen Grace.)



The Char-Lee Weavers engaged visitors in twining and weaving with plant fibers from plant types that have been found in excavations at Calusa sites. (Photo by Kristen Grace.)

were staffed by representatives eager to share information about their museums, archaeological and historical societies, and conservation programs. Three Captiva Cruises boat tours of Pine Island Sound moderated by Dené Patterson, author of our new book *A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound*, were much enjoyed.

The highlight of the day for many was a first look at the new Calusa Heritage Trail

extension that leads to the Smith (burial) mound and Low Mound. Culminating a nearly year-long project to clear the new property of invasive vegetation, install fencing, and prepare walking paths, the first guided tours were given by our expert docents to many tour groups throughout the day.



Torben Rick gives a talk to a capacity crowd of more than 120 in the speakers tent. (Photo by Kristen Grace.)



FGCU geologist Mike Savarese, assisted by FGCU students Kylie Palmer and Aiden Ari, explains how cores reveal environmental histories of Pine Island Sound and Estero Bay. (Photo by Karen Walker.)



As this newsletter goes to press, three full-color interpretive signs designed by Merald Clark and funded by the Florida Humanities Council are being manufactured, and they will soon enhance the new Trail segment for our visitors. We are grateful to the Florida Humanities Council for their support of tent rental and travel expenses for our out-of-town speakers,

and to the dozens for RRC volunteers who managed parking, logistics, visitor assistance, Calusa Tastings, and site tours during the day.



(Top left) Future scientists learn from Florida Museum volunteer Jeanne Gossman, who traveled from Gainesville to help with our outreach activities. (Photo by Karen Walker.)

(Top right) Visitor tries her hand at throwing the atlatl, while FPAN archaeologist Rachael Kangas looks on. (Photo by Kristen Grace.)

(Bottom left) A young visitor was pleased with her newly painted face. (Photo by Kristen Grace.)

(Bottom right) Helen Fox, RRC docent, explains the significance of the Smith Mound during the first public tours on the new Trail extension. (Photo by Kristen Grace.)

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March 1, 2017 to May 15, 2017

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organized and properly hydrated, keeping records updated, and later water-screening the column samples and cataloging them. We appreciate the cooperation of property owners Crandon, Debbie, and Ricky Randell, who allowed us to excavate on their property. P.R. Smith cheerfully tolerated the daily activity and noisy pump in his front yard. We thank neighbor Lawrence Massey, who used his tractor to carefully move fill dirt from the excavation area prior to our excavations and then place it back over the area when we completed the work. A grant from the National Geographic Society's Waitt Fund helped pay for travel, field, and lab expenses.



Lee Newsom examines the extraordinarily well preserved wood and cordage in the RRC lab, Ruby Gill House. (Photo by Karen Walker.)



Volunteers Polly Eldred and Paula Streeter admirably handled the complex task of field-processing the finds as they came from the excavations and screens, including careful storage of delicate waterlogged materials. (Photo by Karen Walker.)



A wooden plank uncovered in the waterlogged levels. (Photo by Karen Walker.)



Some of the recovered wood shows evidence of having been worked with an adze, probably made of shell. (Photo by Karen Walker.)

RRC News

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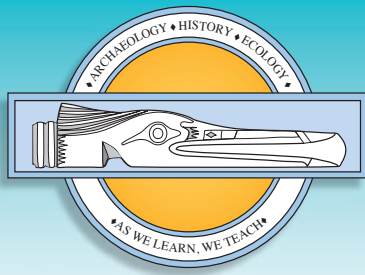


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Friends of the Randell Research Center

Pineland, Florida • June 2017
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Dear Friend,

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Sincerely,

William H. Marquardt
Director
Randell Research Center



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Photo by A. Bell



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