



# *Friends of the* **Randell Research Center**

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## **A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound: A Geological, Archaeological, and Historical Perspective**

### *Part 14: Galt Island – Archaeology and History*

*by Denége Patterson*



*Galt Island, looking toward Pine Island, Sanibel, and the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River on the horizon. (Photo by Ron Mayhew.)*

**G***alt Island rises from Pine Island Sound* about 2.5 miles northwest of St. James City. The island originally consisted of 43 wooded acres with a shoreline protected by a thick mangrove fringe. Today a gated causeway connects the island to Pine Island.

Galt Island homeowners have set aside a preserve to protect the site of a once active indigenous village. There are burial mounds, platforms, and numerous shell middens. There is evidence of continuous occupation from 500 B.C. through A.D. 1710.

#### **Historic Era on Galt Island**

According to historian Elaine Jordan, the island's original name was Goat Island after a resident of St. James City rowed his boat to and from the island to tend his goats. Historians later assumed that Lee County either changed the name or misspelled it unintentionally.

In the late 1950s John Price and his wife Aliese purchased the island and built the causeway. They planned to develop until Hurricane Donna in 1960 removed causeway pieces. The Prices drilled an artesian well, capped in the 1980s, that still flows today.

In 1979, developers purchased the island and requested a zoning

change from agricultural to multifamily, potentially allowing high-density development. At that time, archaeologist Robin Futch determined vandals had destroyed half the burial mound.

In 1981 and 1982, Pine Islanders led a campaign to nominate the island for preservation through the Conservation and Recreational Lands Program. It was on the list when bulldozers cleared nearly four acres of vegetation from the fragile shell middens. The island was about to be stamped with 380 condominium units.

Lee County Commissioners voted to change zoning from ten-units-per-acre to one-unit-per-acre. The developers sold the land, and the result is single-family homes, preservation of water-front mangroves, and protection for the archaeological site.

#### **Archaeology of Galt Island**

"A decided contribution to American archaeology is made in the mere announcement of this Key," wrote Wells Sawyer, photographer-artist in the Pepper-Hearst Archaeological Expedition 1895-1896 led by Frank Hamilton Cushing of the Smithsonian Institution.

*Continued on page 2*





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Sawyer wrote a description of Galt Island as it appeared in 1895, herein paraphrased. Starting on the south side, seven ridges of twelve to fifteen feet in height appear south of a central lagoon. Beyond these ridges are other, low ridges on a platform mound. North of these is the central lagoon enclosed and protected by elaborately-planned low ridges of shell.

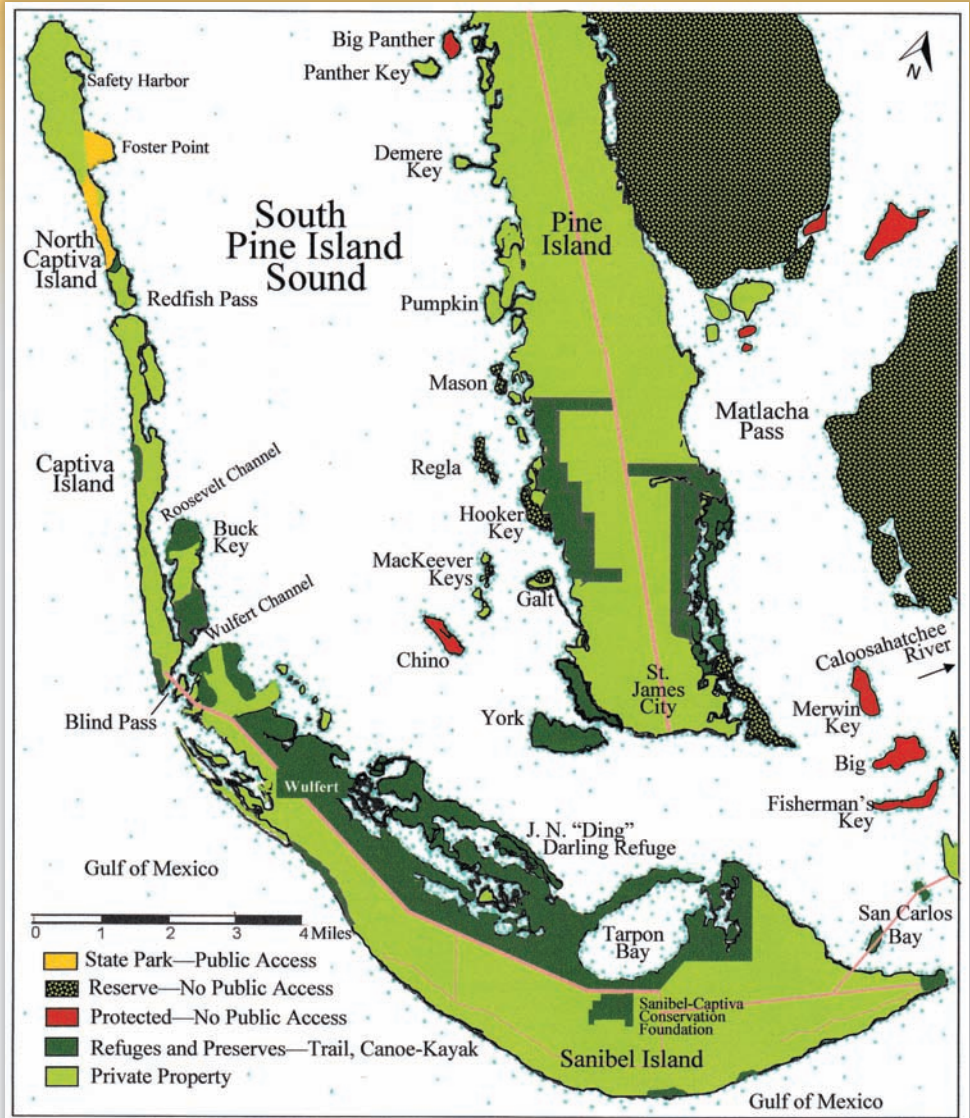
North of the central lagoon is a shell mound structure so steep it is difficult to ascend. The top of the steep mound is narrow with two well-defined ridges and a hollow between and traversing its length. On one side is a small lower mound with a level top. Both shell mound structures are comparatively small, the taller being probably eighteen or twenty feet high by maybe thirty feet in length. The mound rises on one side from the central lagoon and on the other from a broad, nearly level roadway leading off north.

Cushing conducted excavations confirming evidence of indigenous occupation. He found no Spanish or modern artifacts. The excavations were hurried and inadequate. He described Galt as a "gigantic shell settlement" to which he wanted to return.

In 1952, archaeologists William Plowden and Floyd Barnes recovered artifacts including types from prehistoric and post-contact periods. By then evidence of vandalism and illicit digging could be seen in the oval, two-tiered, eighty-foot-long burial mound. They recommended site protection and it was listed in the state archaeological site file at that time.

Archaeologists also reported "prone burials in alternating layers of white, black, and red sand, and bundle burials or cremations in small, intrusive pits." Soil specialists interpreted the sand colors as naturally occurring.

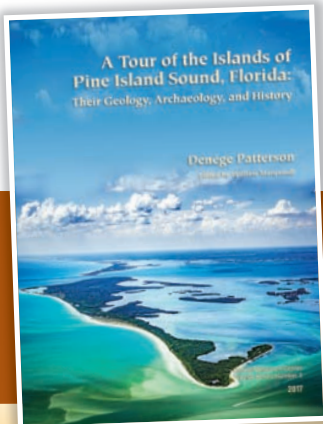
According to archaeologists, the earliest part of the shell midden represented 500 B.C.—A.D. 500. The people of that time were contemporaneous with those on Sanibel Island, Useppa Island, Cabbage Key, Hooker Key, Mason Island, Josslyn Island, Pineland (after A.D. 50), Mound Key in Estero Bay,



*Southern Pine Island Sound.* (Map by Dené Patterson.)

and at least six other local sites. The evidence suggests that some islands surrounding Galt Island had shell tool workshops.

Today, the archaeological portion of Galt Island is listed on the National Register of Historic places. It is gated and protected by the Galt Island Homeowners Association. They have hosted archaeologists and students from the Florida Museum, University of Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University, and University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), among others. This was essential for discerning a pattern in Pine Island Sound of several ancient village centers surrounded by smaller island settlements and for the long-term preservation of Galt Island.



**This article was adapted from *A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound, Florida*, by Dené Patterson, RRC Popular Series No. 2. The map is reprinted from the book. It is for sale at the RRC bookstore and other local venues or by mail, see insert for details. Proceeds from sales of the book benefit the RRC endowment.**



## Upcoming Events

### October Features Fascinating Speaker & FMNP Class

#### ONE WORLD

#### Florida Museum Speaker Series 2018

The mission of the Florida Museum, our parent organization, is to understand, preserve and interpret Florida's biological diversity and cultural heritage. *The One World Speaker Series* brings Museum faculty and staff, who are skilled in sharing their work, to our classroom. Admission to the talks is free. However, pre-registration is REQUIRED. To reserve your seat, call Linda at 239-283-2062 or email at [lheffner@flmnh.ufl.edu](mailto:lheffner@flmnh.ufl.edu).

**October 27, 2018, 11 a.m.**  
**Calusa Heritage Trail Classroom**

#### *Bats: Demystifying One of the World's Most Misunderstood Mammals*

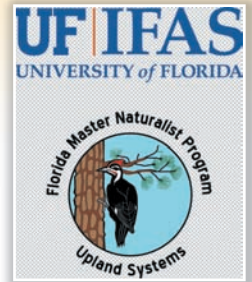
Verity Mathis is the Mammalogy Collections Manager at the Florida Museum. Her field work has focused on small mammals, including kangaroo rats, pocket gophers, and bats, in particular, research on how bat populations have been affected by climate change. In the lab, her work helps insure the vast biodiversity represented by over 34,000 mammal specimens is available to scientists working to understand and preserve mammals, be they large or small, near or far.



**Verity Mathis,**  
*Ph.D., Mammalogy  
Collection Manager*

#### Uplands FMNP Module

Do you know why saw palmettos are important to frogs? Do you know the names and habits of South Florida's forest birds? Do you wonder why the Florida scrub has so many unique species of plants? All these topics and more will be covered in the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) Uplands Systems course being offered at the Calusa Heritage Trail beginning Wednesday, October 31.



This adult education course, designed by the University of Florida IFAS, provides instruction on the ecology, habitats, and conservation of Florida's pine flatwoods, scrub, hammocks, prairies, and rangelands. It also teaches interpretive skills and environmental ethics. Classes include lectures, hands-on activities, and field trips.

Classes will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays, October 31, November 2, November 7, November 9, November 14, and November 16, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The cost is \$275 which includes all field trips, a student workbook, and, on completion, a FMNP Uplands patch, lapel pin, and registration in the FMNP Graduate Database. To register visit the website at: <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/>. For more information, visit the website or call instructor Cindy Bear at 239-283-6168.

### UF Hosts World's Largest Occupied Bat Houses

Every evening the 400,000 bats of the University of Florida's Bat Barns eat about 2.5 billion insects including moths, beetles, mosquitoes, flies, gnats, and winged insects. The most common species living in the houses is the Brazilian free-tailed bat, *Tadarida brasiliensis*. The Southeastern bat, *Myotis austroriparius*, and the Evening bat, *Nycticeius humeralis*, also live in the barns. You can learn more about bats, see live and pre-recorded video, and learn about visiting to watch an evening emergence on the website of the Florida Museum at <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/bats/>.

### New and Renewing Friends of the RRC

May 15, 2018 to August 1, 2018

Please let us know of any errors or omissions. Thank you for your support.

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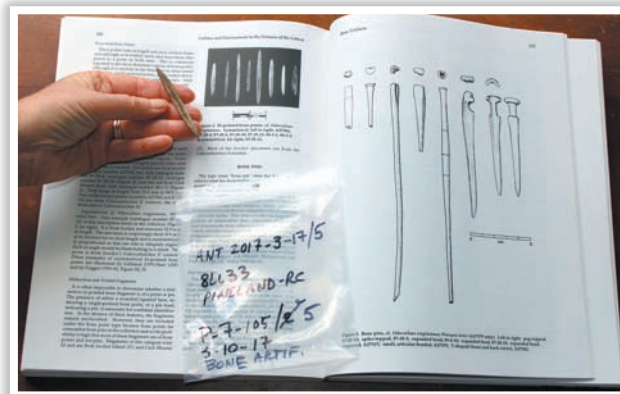


## Free Books via Digital Access

**I**n our work, we often consult *Culture and Environment in the Domain of the Calusa, Monograph 1*, edited by William H. Marquardt with assistance by Claudine Payne. Published in 1992, it serves as a reference for artifact types, details how zooarchaeology uncovers clues about past environments, establishes a research framework, and more. Print versions are scarce but anyone with internet access can read or download the monograph through the University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries.

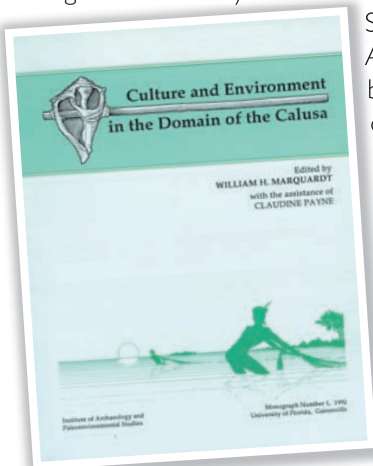
Search for <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00006131/00001> in a browser or open the main page of the Smathers Libraries and type the title into the OneSearch task bar.

Also, the Smathers Libraries, in collaboration with the LibraryPress@UF with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has made available 39 books considered



*Bone artifact types are described in Chapter 6 of Monograph 1.*  
(Photo by Charles O'Connor.)

"classics" in topics related to Florida's pre- and more recent history. Of particular interest are *Archaeology of Precolonial Florida* by Jerald T. Milanich, *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492 – 1570* edited by Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, and *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe* by Jerald T. Milanich. You can read or download the books in the series at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/openbooks>.



*Monograph 1 is available free by digital access.*

### We need your e-mail address!

Be among the first to know about upcoming programs and events at the RRC. If you haven't provided an e-mail address, please do so by sending it to Linda Heffner, our program assistant, at [lheffner@flmnh.ufl.edu](mailto:lheffner@flmnh.ufl.edu). We promise not to bombard you with messages – we'll use it only to keep you informed, and to give you advance knowledge of planned events and opportunities. Thank you.

### RRC News

Editor: Cindy Bear  
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# Friends of the Randell Research Center

Pineland, Florida • September 2018

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*Dear Friend,*

You are cordially invited to join, or renew your membership in, the RRC's support society, *Friends of the Randell Research Center*. All Friends of the RRC receive a quarterly newsletter and free admission to the Calusa Heritage Trail at Pineland. Supporters at higher levels are entitled to discounts on our books and merchandise, advance notice of programs, and special recognition. Your continuing support is vital to our mission. It means more research, more education, and continued site improvements at the Randell Research Center. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Cindy Bear*

Cindy Bear  
Coordinator  
Randell Research Center



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Photo by A. Bell.

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The Randell Research Center is a program of the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida.

Thank you for your support.



