

Doing Things!

**Partner Presentation
AWIARE**

John Arthur, Ph.D., President





AWIARE

Alliance for Weedon Island Archaeological Research and Education, Inc.

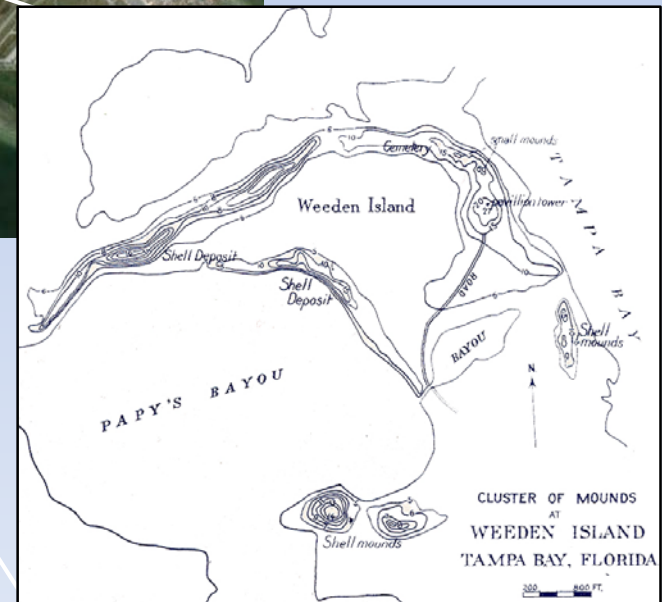
Public Archaeology in Action

Pinellas County Commission Meeting, March 7th, 2017

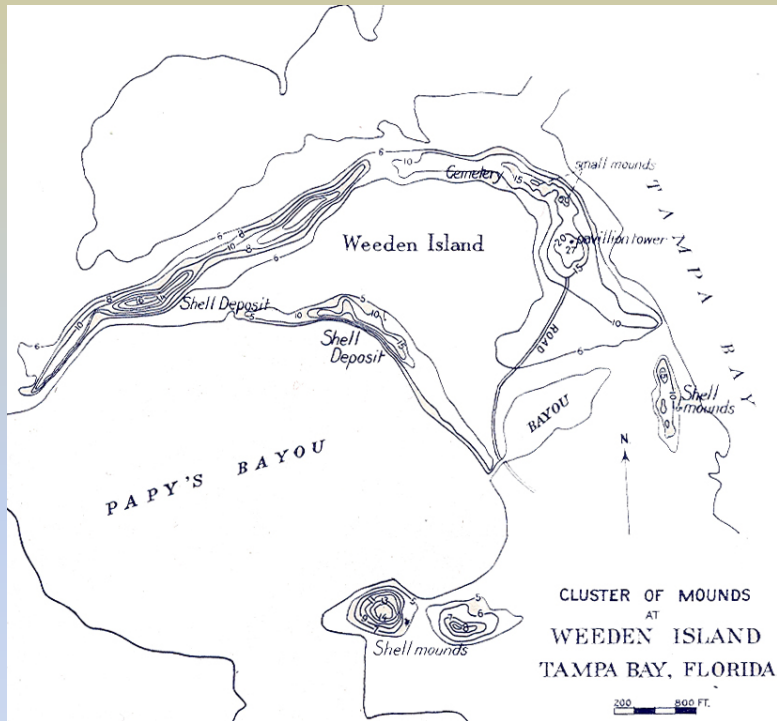
Weedo(e)n Island



- Located on Tampa Bay in Pinellas County
- Weedon Island Preserve, 3000+ acres
- State, County, Private ownership, county management



Weedo(e)n Island Site



- Type site of the Weeden Island Culture
- Burial mound excavated by Smithsonian, 1923-1924
- Salvage excavation by Sears, 1962
- Listed on National Register of Historic Places, 1972
- Comprehensive survey of Weeden Island by USF, 2004-2005
- Survey of Gateway Tract by SEARCH, 2007



AWIARE

To promote and facilitate archaeological research, scientific exploration and education at the Weedon Island Preserve and adjacent Gulf Coast region.

- **Established 2007, incorporated as non-profit, 2008**
- **Board of Directors, professionals & non-professionals**
- **Acquired Research Station, 2010**
- **Remodeled house for lab, offices, dormitory**
- **Upgraded bathrooms for ADA**
- **Visioning Meeting & 5-Year Strategic Plan, 2013**





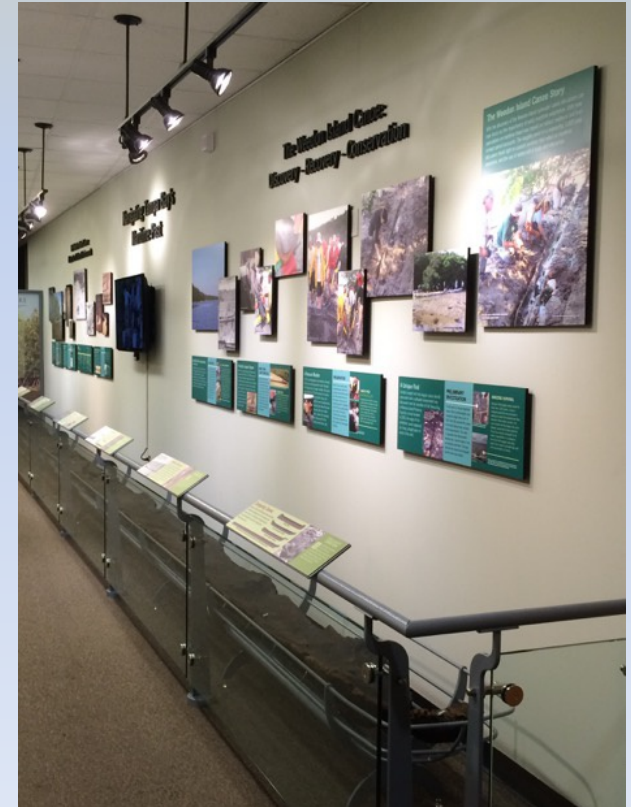
Research Station



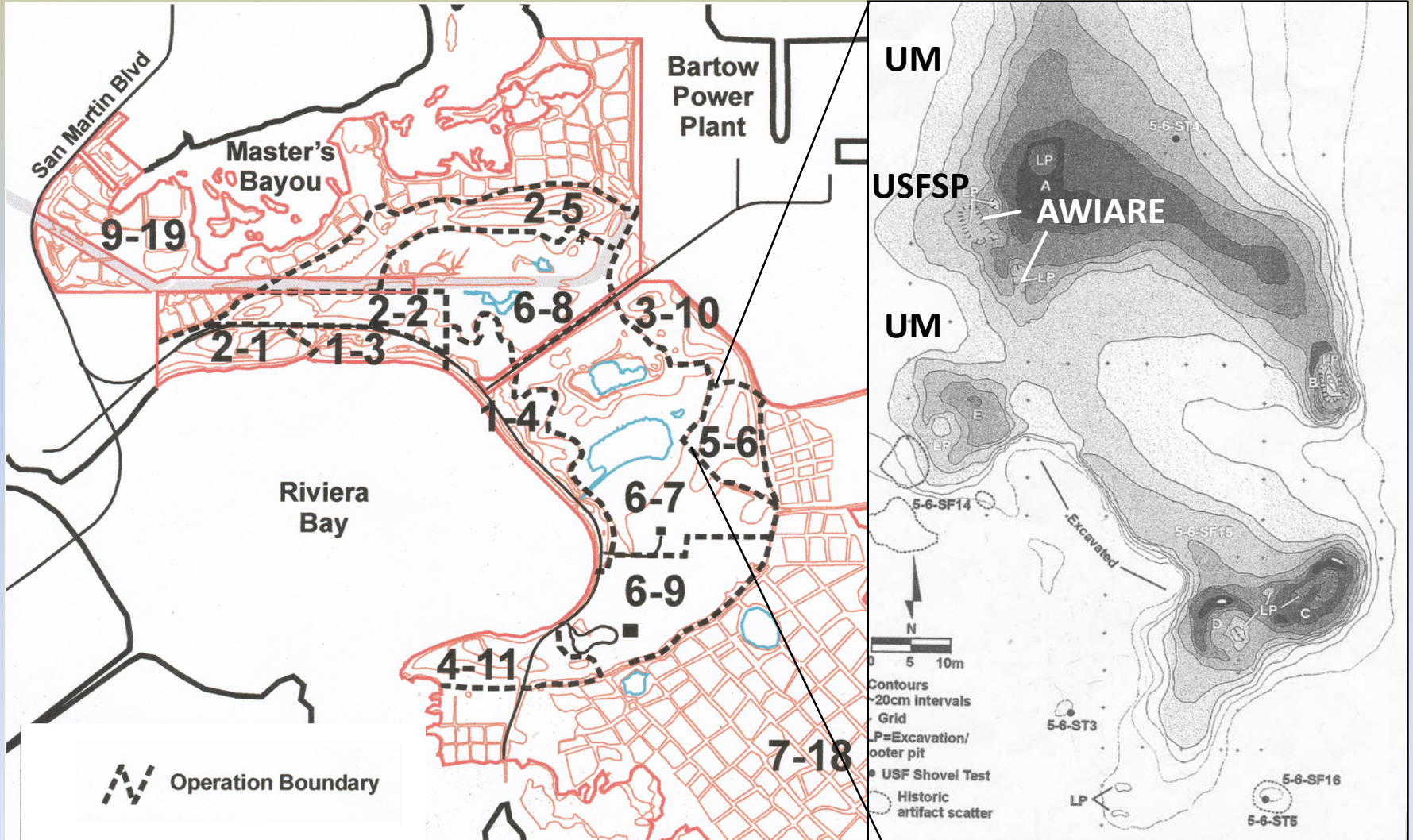
Weedon Island Canoe



- Discovered in 2001
- Exposed, mapped, and sampled in 2007
- Excavated in 2011
- Preserved in PEG for 3 years
- Slow drying for 1 year
- Grand opening of display, October 2015
- 2 C14 dates, cal. AD 777-1013



Excavations



USF St. Petersburg Excavations 2007-Present



- USF-St. Pete archaeological field school begins in 2007
- Research focusing on domestic area
- Subsistence data, possible residence
- Experimental archaeology
- 4 C14 dates, cal. AD 894-1256

University of Michigan Excavations 2013-2015



- Magnetometer survey identified features, shell deposits
- Focused testing followed by block excavations
- 6 C14 dates, cal. AD 994-1397

AWIARE Looters' Trench Excavation 2014-2016



- Hands On Weedon project
- Volunteers & students
- Over 4000 volunteer hours
- Cleaned trenches, 9 1x1 m tests
- Documented strata in midden ridge
- Pit features, post holes
- Ceramics 75% Pinellas Plain



What Have We Learned?

- **Aeolian sand deposition began at least 5000 years ago.**
- **Sea level rose to near its current level by ~3400 BP.**
- **Sea level may have retreated below current levels several times.**
- **The site was occupied as early as the Middle Archaic (~5400 BP).**
- **The Weedon Island site contains a significant Safety Harbor component.**
- **Different parts of the site date to different time periods.**

What Have We Learned?

- **Data support in-situ development of Safety Harbor from Manasota and Weeden Island-related cultures.**
- **Safety Harbor subsistence as marine oriented, with an emphasis on oysters, marine gastropods, and fish obtained from Tampa Bay.**
- **Subsurface features, including post molds, are common.**
- **Canoes, possibly catamarans, were used to exploit the resources of Tampa Bay and interact with neighboring communities.**
- **The famous burial mound reflects a specific slice of time in the site's history; where were people who occupied the site during other periods buried?**

Events & Programs

- Pottery Potlatch, 2009
- Meeting of the Working Group on Florida Lithic Resources, 2013
- Monthly Archaeology Lectures (co-sponsor with CGCAS)
- Boy Scout Merit Badge Program (in cooperation with CGCAS)



Junior Archaeology Camp



- **Two one-week camps for kids 7-11 years of age**
- **In cooperation with FPAN and CGCAS**
- **Teaches basics of archaeological excavation, lab work, Florida prehistory, ecology, site preservation**



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1500 WEEDON DRIVE NE



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THE WEEDON ISLAND CANOE PROJECT

It waited for centuries... Now its time
For over 1,000 years the pine dugout canoe submerged in the mud of Tampa Bay, and its crew who have long vanished from the land.

In 2001, the canoe was found by a local farmer. Plans were made to excavate, preserve, and display the canoe through a cooperative effort for Weedon Island Archaeological Research Education, Friends of Weedon Island and a County Government.

In 2011, a team of archaeologists and conservators excavated the saltwater canoe and freed it from the mud that had hidden it for so long. It is 40 feet, 11 inches long with an estimated weight of 1,000 pounds. Extremely fragile, it had to be cut into sections for removal. Since its excavation, it has been in a preservative solution of polyethylene glycol water out and stabilizing the wood. It was removed from the tank and is dry!

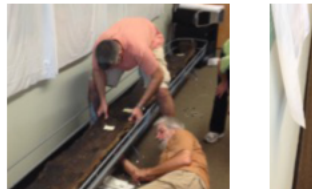
The final voyage... Archaeologists are ready for the next step – re-assembly,

AWIARE, USF ST. PETE AND UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FIELD WORK SUMMARIES FOR 2014

2014 marked the official beginning of AWIARE On Weedon Project designed to bring archaeology to the public. The primary task accomplishing this is our excavation of an old trench using volunteers and students. The excavation which actually began in late 2013, has progressed steadily through 2014 and will continue in 2015. Large trenches where looters dug into the site deposits were cleaned out and a series of 1-x2 foot excavation units were excavated into the trench to obtain an east-west cross-section. The excavation has shown that the midden is quite variable between the two adjacent trenches. Trench 1 consists of a spoil overlying abundant shell deposits that require refuse disposal. Under the shell deposits is an organic midden containing shell, bone, ceramic beads, and features, including at least one shell pit. In Trench 2, to the east, there was minimal local spoil and no shell refuse. Instead, dark organic soil with pottery sherds, faunal remains, shell

WEEDON ISLAND CANOE NEARS END OF ITS JOURNEY

In September, Phoenix Rising began installing the Weedon Island canoe in a permanent exhibit at the History Center. The exhibit, titled "Navigating the Past" on October 17 (please refer to accompanying article for more details), the Weedon Island canoe from the AWIARE Research Station, was carefully placed in its final resting place, and the canoe may have looked like complete. The exhibit is adjusted to ensure alignment of the various preservation and planning), the Weedon Island



WEEDON ISLAND CANOE EXHIBIT OPENS TO RAVE REVIEWS

After being buried in the muck for 1,000 years, soaking in a PEG-filled conservation tank for three years, and air-drying on the back porch of the AWIARE Research Station for one year, the Weedon Island canoe completed its final journey, opening to great public attention at the Weedon Island Cultural and Natural History Center on October 17, 2015. Resting on an anodized aluminum cradle specially designed by the Phoenix Rising firm in Orlando, the canoe was revealed in its full recovered length of 40 feet looking remarkably intact given its rough treatment in the salt waters of Tampa Bay since it was abandoned by its users sometime around A.D. 1000. The ribbon cutting for the new exhibit drew a foyer-filling crowd, many of whom had been attending the special lecture series focused on the canoe and maritime cultures of Tampa Bay funded by the Florida Humanities Council. Scissors in hand, Pinellas County commissioner Charlie Justice, AWIARE President Brent Weisman, and representatives from the Florida Humanities Council and the Friends of Weedon Island, briefly reflected on the cultural significance of this ancient wooden treasure before cutting the ribbon to let hundreds of visitors view the canoe and exhibit. Said AWIARE's Phyllis Kolianos, "it really was a huge learning experience because no one had ever dealt with a saltwater canoe before." "We sweated over it, we worried about it," says AWIARE's Bob Austin of the conservation and exhibit project, "but it came out fine."



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SPEAKER SERIES 2017

Thursday, January 19, 2017, 7-8 PM

Anna M. Prentiss, Ph.D., University of Montana
Complex Hunter-Gatherers of Interior British Columbia: Archaeology of the Middle Fraser Canyon

Thursday, February 16, 2017, 7-8 PM

Vickie Roland, MA, University of North Florida
What's Cookin': Identifying the Food Preferences of Prehistoric People in Coastal Northeast Florida

Thursday, March 16, 2017, 7-8 PM

WINNERS, Mac Perry Public Archaeology Student Paper Competition

Thursday, April 20, 2017, 7-8 PM

Nathan Lawres, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Florida
Materializing Ontology in Monumental Form: The Belle Glade Monumental Landscape

ANCIENT CANOE ON DISPLAY

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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