

WEEDON ISLAND ADULT ARCHAEOLOGY CAMP FALL SESSION

NOVEMBER 10-14, 2025

DISCOVERING WEEDON ISLAND'S ANCIENT PAST

Experience hands-on archaeology at Weedon Island Preserve, one of Florida's preeminent archaeological sites. Work with professional archaeologists and researchers to uncover clues about the culture and lifeways of the early people who inhabited the Tampa Bay region. You will contribute by:

- Assisting AWIARE researchers in excavation, recording data, screening sediment, and collecting artifacts, bone, and samples.
- Helping to analyze artifacts and process findings in the lab.

You will be part of a small group limited to six participants. Participants will rotate daily between field work and lab analysis.

Introductory lectures will be given by archaeologists, Dr. Robert Austin and Dr. John Arthur.

This camp is an active participant level with walks to and from the site of almost one mile over some uneven terrain.

Expedition cost: \$550 per week, includes daily lunch at the AWIARE Research Station and field trip to a local archaeological site.



AWIARE

1500 WEEDON DRIVE NE, ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33702 • WWW.AWIARE.ORG

FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

March was Archaeology Month in Florida and AWIARE participated in several events sponsored by the Weedon Island Cultural and Natural History Center. On March 15, John Arthur and Liz Southard led a tour of the USF excavation area at Weedon Island. The 15 participants viewed the area where a Safety Harbor-period house floor is being excavated. Discussions focused on the amazing range of artifacts uncovered from the house floor, their possible interpretations, and how the Indigenous people used Tampa Bay and the surrounding region for their subsistence and everyday needs.



On the following Saturday, March 22, the Weedon Island Cultural and Natural History Center held an open house with representatives from AWIARE, Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society (CGCAS), and the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) present. Also participating was Ben Mercadante, a botanist whose display focused on Indigenous plant use. Bob Austin and Dave Burns manned the AWIARE table which displayed artifacts from Weedon island and other sites in the Tampa Bay area. Bob and Dave answered questions about AWIARE activities



as well as identifying artifacts and fossils brought to the event by visitors.

Finally, on March 29, Kendal Jackson led a kayak tour out to Ross Island where he and Jaime Rogers from CGCAS explained the island's geomorphology and archaeological history to 14 kayakers.

JACKSON'S NEW APPOINTMENT

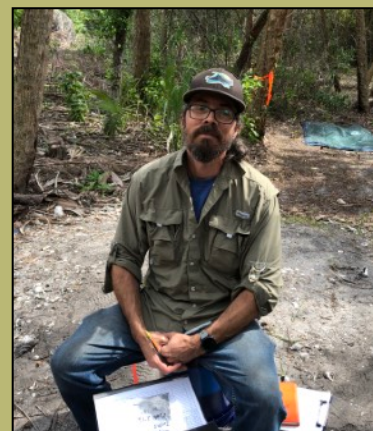
Board member Dr. Kendal Jackson has eagerly accepted a new appointment as Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Tampa, where he will lead a program of teaching and research focused on past, present, and future wetland ecosystems of the greater Tampa Bay area. Kendal's new appointment signals the long-awaited return of archaeology to the University of Tampa--which hosted the region's first professional archaeological research programs under the WPA in the late-1930s. Kendal's appointment brings UT Department of Environmental Studies into the Alliance, and strengthens our capacity for applied research, education, and conservation.



Kendal Jackson

MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

We are pleased to introduce the newest member of our Board of directors, Richard McDaniel. Richard is a St. Pete native and developed an interest in archaeology by visiting the sites at Jungle Prada and Maximo Beach parks. Richard received a B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology with a concentration in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from Florida International University. His archaeological field school was at the Presidio of Santa Barbara in California. Richard was employed as a field archaeologist for the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy in south Florida and worked on significant sites at Brickell Point, Granada, Stranahan House, and Big Mound Key. He has worked as an archaeological technician for cultural resource management firms throughout Florida, the Southeast, California, and Nevada. Richard has been volunteering at AWIARE since 2023 and is interested in the 19th and early 20th century historical sites at Weedon Island. He is a former vice president of his neighborhood association and is currently on an advisory committee with the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority.



Richard McDaniel

SPRING ADULT ARCHAEOLOGY CAMP

This year's Adult Archaeology Camp at Weedon Island Preserve was held during the week of February 24-28. Four campers attended and assisted AWIARE archaeologists Bob Austin, Richard McDaniel, and Phyllis Kolianos as they continued to work in an area of the Weedon Island site where shell beads and numerous pit features have been discovered. Campers carefully excavated, documented, and mapped their finds which included Safety Harbor-period pottery, lithics, animal bones, and shell. Time also was spent in the lab, washing and sorting the excavated materials. Dr. John Arthur and Dr. Kendal Jackson led a tour of the nearby USF excavations which are focusing on a Safety Harbor-period house floor.



ARTHUR'S PRESTIGIOUS HONOR

AWIARE would like to congratulate our president, Dr. John W. Arthur, on his election as a Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science. John was among 11 University of South Florida faculty members to join this distinguished lifetime honor within the scientific community. <https://www.usf.edu/research-innovation/news/2025/eleven-usf-faculty-among-2024-class-of-aas-fellows.aspx>

AWIARE/LEVETT STUDENT GRANT RECIPIENTS 2025

AWIARE, in cooperation with the Levett Foundation, awarded grants to two University of South Florida students conducting research in Tampa Bay.

Ph.D. candidate, Jaime Rogers, received \$4500 to support his project “Investigating the Potential of Florida Fighting Conch (*Strombus alatus*) in Paleoenvironmental Reconstruction in Tampa Bay.” The funds will be used to conduct stable isotope analysis on three modern and six archaeological fighting conch shells. The goal is to 1) verify that *Strombus alatus* grow year-round in or near isotopic equilibrium in Tampa Bay; 2) assess the potential for ^{18}O from *Strombus alatus* shells as a “paleothermometer”; and, 3) determine whether the fluctuations in $^{18}O/^{13}C$ in the isotope profile are useful for estimating the season and environment of shell harvests. The ability to determine prehistoric water temperatures would be of particular interest to archaeologists working along the Central Gulf Coast of Florida where climatic episodes during the first millennium CE are hypothesized as significant impetuses of ecological and social change.



Jaime Rogers

Stephanie Sanders, a 1st year Ph.D. student, received \$5500 to support her study “Reconstructing Past Molluscan Communities to Guide Seagrass Ecosystem Recovery in Tampa Bay.” The funds will be used to obtain radiocarbon dates from hard clam (*Mercenaria* sp.) shells collected in cores from Tampa Bay. Hard clams are bio-indicators of seagrass environments. By analyzing sediment cores and radiocarbon dating mollusk assemblages, Stephanie’s project will explore changes in seagrass communities over time, including periods of sea-level variation, climate shift, and human activity.



Stephanie Sanders

INTRODUCING OUR WINTER-SPRING INTERN

Atarah Duff joined AWIARE in January as our winter-spring intern and has been hard at work in the field and lab. Atarah is in her junior year at the University of South Florida, majoring in anthropology and minoring in history. Originally a business major, Atarah found her passion in anthropology. “I have always had an interest in other cultures and decided to change majors to focus on something I am more interested in. My goal when going to college was to do something that would change people’s perspectives regardless of what field I’m in. When I decided to change to anthropology, I realized that this was a major I could use to make that change.” Of the four subfields of anthropology, archaeology holds the most interest for Atarah and she wants to mix her interest in history with that of archaeology. In addition to getting excavation experience at Weedon Island, she also is cataloging a large collection of artifacts from a mound and midden complex in St. Petersburg. An industrious worker and quick learner, we are glad to have Atarah on our team.



Atarah Duff

TREASURES OF TAMPA BAY: WEEDON ISLAND

When you’re strolling along peaceful boardwalks or paddling serene canoe trails at Weedon Island Preserve, it’s difficult to imagine its tumultuous past – and how lucky we are to have preserved this small slice of paradise.

At 3,700 acres preserved within the bustling Gandy corridor, Weedon Island’s strategic location has made it a mecca for Indigenous peoples, land developers, even airlines and speakeasies through a somewhat chaotic past where grand plans often disintegrated.

Its earliest recorded settlers were the Indigenous people who probably arrived in about 10,000 BCE, as shown by stone artifacts including knives and drills. Thriving upon abundant food sources, they became part of one of the most advanced communities in the southeast, with distinctive ornate Weedon Island pottery first uncovered by Smithsonian archeologists in the 1920s. They also built what has become the longest prehistoric canoe ever found in Florida, a 40-foot pine dugout with a raised bow that indicates it was used to navigate open waters.

Over the last two decades, archaeologists have found more pre-Columbian artifacts. Researchers from the University of South Florida (USF) and AWIARE, have uncovered a house floor, intensive craft areas where people were producing shell beads, as well as a number of other living areas. “Innovative and exciting archaeological research is ongoing with a new generation of archaeologists exploring the Weedon Island preserve and the larger Tampa Bay region,” said Dr. John W. Arthur, president of AWIARE and an anthropology professor at USF St. Petersburg. “This will tell new stories about the earliest inhabitants of the region.”

Article contributed by Alana Todd at Bay Soundings. Full article available at: <https://baysoundings.com/treasures-of-tampa-bay-weedon-island/>

BE AN ADVOCATE FOR AWIARE

Be an advocate of AWIARE and become part of a living time capsule.

From an individual donation to a corporate endowment, each gift connects people to nature, to history, and to Weedon Island's legacy.

There are many ways to contribute. Cash donations made directly to AWIARE go into our operating account and fund day-to-day activities and events. Contributions to The AWIARE Endowment Fund underwrite large-scale projects, fund student grants and internships, and help ensure our long-term success. Endowment gifts are made through The Pinellas Community Foundation and can include cash, estate plans, stocks, life insurance, or retirement account distributions. As a 501c3 corporation, all gifts to AWIARE or to the AWIARE Endowment Fund are fully tax deductible. Visit our website, www.awiare.org for more information on how to become an AWIARE Advocate.

THANKS TO THESE GENEROUS DONORS WHO CONTRIBUTED DURING 2024

Canoe Circle \$100-\$199

John Arthur
David Burns
Kim Dudley
Al Hine
Phyllis Kolianos
Thomas Pluckhahn
Patricia Rose
Beau Stripe-Suthard
Brent Weisman
Jay Youngdahl

Four Winds Family \$200-\$499

Robert Austin
Elizabeth Southard

Gorget Society \$500-\$999

Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society
Michael Francis
Cynthia Martin

Friends Council \$1000-\$4999

Perry Everett
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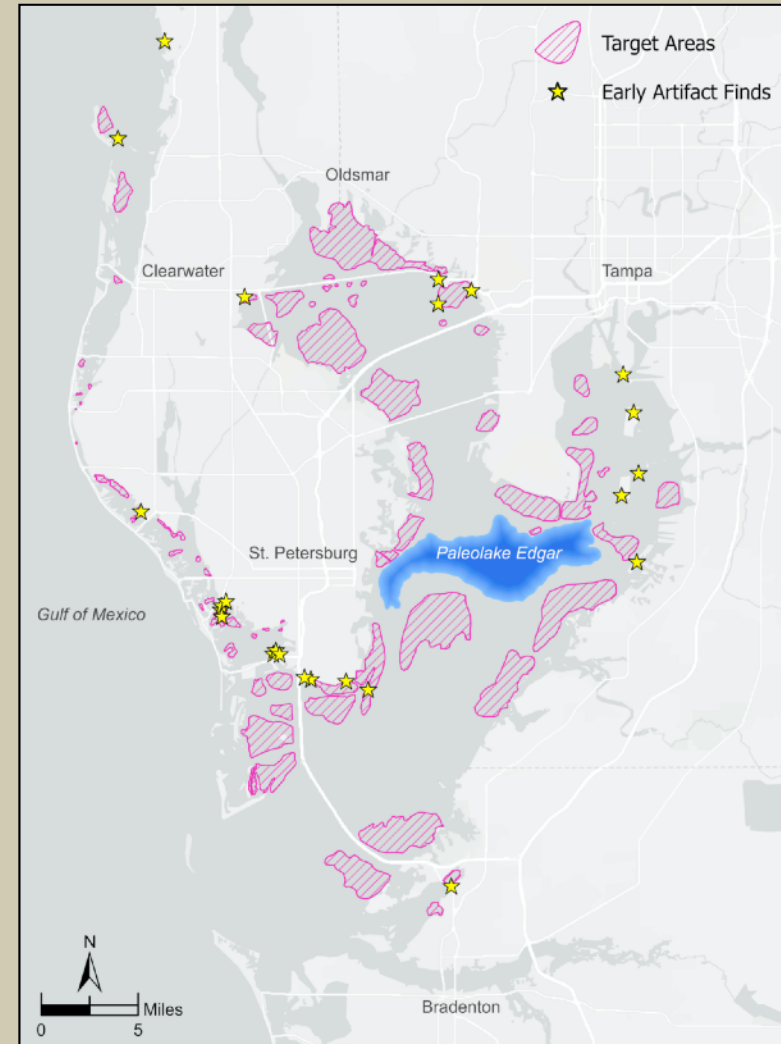
Legacy Gift Kinship >\$5000

Barbara Taylor and Mark Brooks

Your generous support ensures AWIARE's mission to explore, study, and educate about Tampa Bay's past continues into the future.

THE SEARCH FOR TAMPA BAY'S EARLIEST PEOPLE PROJECT UPDATE

Kendal Jackson and Bob Austin have been pulling together archaeological and geological data on Tampa Bay in an effort to develop a predictive model for submerged Indigenous sites in Tampa Bay. The project is being funded by a grant the Felburn foundation and several private donations. The accompanying map is a preliminary predictive model showing where early artifacts (Paleoindian and Early Archaic, i.e., pre-9000 BP) have been recovered on land adjacent to Tampa Bay. These are primarily spoil deposits from dredging in Tampa Bay during the 1960s. The artifacts from these dredged deposits provide evidence for submerged sites in the bay. Target areas (cross-hatched areas on the map) include submerged landforms offshore of headlands where two drainages converge, submerged peat deposits, shell midden deposits, and areas where chert for tool-making occur. Kendal is currently taking cores from some of these target areas and we hope to incorporate these data into the final model. The model, map and report will provide the basis for subsequent deep coring and dive-team investigations.



BECOMING AWIARE

The Alliance for Weedon Island Archaeological Research and Education is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has as its goals to promote and facilitate long-term archaeological research, scientific exploration and public education at the Weedon Island Preserve and the adjacent gulf coast regions. Our Officers and Advisory Board include professional archaeologists and interested lay persons.

If you are interested in making a donation, please visit us at: www.awiare.org or click [HERE](#).

Email: awiare1@gmail.com

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