

WEEDON ISLAND ADULT ARCHAEOLOGY CAMP SPRING SESSION



AWIARE

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

MARCH 23 - 27, 2026

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.



Registration is available on our website or by visiting this link, [ADULT ARCHAEOLOGY CAMP](#)

6000-YEAR-OLD ARTIFACT IN ST. PETERSBURG

Recently two St. Petersburg residents, Andres and Siarra Allwood, brought us an artifact they found on their property in the Bahama Shores neighborhood of south St. Petersburg. The Allwood's found the stone artifact about 2 feet below the surface while doing yard work. Archaeologist Bob Austin identified it as a Marion projectile point that dates to the Middle Archaic period, or about 6000-4000 years ago. The point was probably used to tip a spear or dart and could also have been used as a knife. After examining the artifact under a microscope, Austin concluded that it's made of locally available chert, a siliceous stone similar to flint. The Allwood's also got a chance to examine their find under the scope. A next-door neighbor, Erica Al-Dhahi, has found chert on her property too. Whether the artifacts are from an archaeological site or were redeposited in fill during house construction remains unclear, but the lower Pinellas peninsula was once home to Indigenous people, with documented archaeological sites dating back at least 10,000 years ago up to the time of European contact in the 16th century. This exciting find now has all three amateur archaeologists on the lookout for more evidence of ancient habitation of their lots.



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If you find something you think is old and would like an archaeologist to tell you what it is and how old it is, feel free to contact us via email at awiare1@gmail.com. Please include a photograph of your find with your email.

DR. ROBERT AUSTIN'S RETIREMENT

Last fall, Dr. Austin, a founding board member and treasurer of AWIARE, decided it was time to retire and begin enjoying the Appalachian mountain air. Bob's career as a Florida archaeologist cannot be overstated; he is a leading scholar in Florida archaeology and lithic technology. The strength of AWIARE lies in the dedication Bob brought

every day. AWIARE's board members are forever grateful for Bob's commitment to the growth of AWIARE as a leading non-profit in the pursuit of preserving Florida's unique history. We wish Bob a wonderful retirement, filled with plenty of adventure. We are fortunate that Bob will continue on as a member of AWIARE's Advisory Board.



Dr. Robert Austin



RESEARCH STATION TOUR

Recently, AWIARE was fortunate to host the Pinellas Community Foundation staff, board members, and have community donors take a tour of AWIARE's Research Station. We shared AWIARE's vision, impact, and challenges related to our mission to continue educating the public and promoting and facilitating long-term archaeological research and scientific exploration. We had a wonderful question-and-answer session, and then we gave a tour of the AWIARE lab.



UPDATE "THE SEARCH FOR TAMPA BAY'S EARLIEST PEOPLE"

AWIARE recently completed the initial phase of a multi-phase project to identify and study submerged archaeological sites in Tampa Bay. A report documenting the first systematic effort to identify terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene sites beneath Tampa Bay was submitted to the Felburn Foundation, which provide a \$12,000 grant to help underwrite the project. This was matched with an additional \$8,000 in private donations. Decades of archaeological finds from dredge-and-fill activities, geological research, bathymetric mapping, sediment cores, and paleoenvironmental data were synthesized by archaeologists Kendal Jackson and Robert Austin. The report demonstrates that Tampa Bay was a focal landscape for early human occupation for at least the past 12,000 years, when lower sea levels exposed a mosaic of freshwater lakes, rivers, wetlands, and chert outcrops that attracted Paleoindian and Archaic peoples. Artifacts recovered from dredged shell deposits and spoil—ranging from possible pre-Clovis through Early Woodland periods—provide strong evidence that intact archaeological sites once existed on terrestrial landscapes that became flooded by sea-level rise and sedimentation during the Middle to Late Holocene.

Building on this evidence, a preliminary predictive model was developed to guide future underwater archaeological research. By integrating reconstructed pre-dredge bathymetry, geomorphology, sediment distributions and subsurface stratigraphy with the locations of known artifact recoveries, the model identifies priority target areas with high potential for preserved paleo-landscapes and intact sites. These include areas adjacent to previously disturbed sites, depositional karst basins such as the former Paleolake Edgar, and undisturbed shoals and inshore sub-basins likely to have sheltered archaeological deposits. The report concludes that a long, continuous record of human occupation lies beneath the waters of Tampa Bay. Jackson and Austin outline goals for a second phase of research that include focused geophysical survey and coring to identify intact landscapes and potential in-situ archaeological deposits, radiocarbon dating of organic material, and sediment analysis to identify geochemical markers (namely platinum) that have been associated with the Younger Dryas climatic anomaly (ca. 12,000 years ago.) If identified in buried sediments, platinum may serve as a reliable chronological marker for the Clovis timeframe in sediment deposits that lack well-preserved biological materials for radiocarbon dating.

The full report is available on our website: www.awiare.org . Please consider supporting future research on The Search for Tampa Bay's Earliest People, by donating to the project [HERE](#).



USF ST. PETERSBURG ARCHAEOLOGY CLASS EXCAVATES AT THE WEEDON ISLAND SITE

Every two years, AWIARE President and USF Professor John W. Arthur takes his undergraduate students to Weedon Island to continue the excavations he began in 2007. This season, they are expanding excavations where Dr. Arthur and his students have located an intact floor dating to 900 CE. The floor contains a myriad of artifacts, including shell tools, stone implements, pottery vessels, a hearth, bead blanks, and beads. Based on the variety of artifacts, Dr. Arthur believes this floor feature once served as a bead



production site, and Dr. Arthur and his team are in the process of understanding the production sequences of a technology that does not exist in our contemporary world.

MEET OUR NEWEST INTERN

Declan Meadows is an undergraduate student at the University of South Florida pursuing a degree in Anthropology. He joined AWIARE in January as our winter-spring intern. Although born and raised in Tampa, Declan says he never knew the full history of Florida's central Gulf coast. Initially discovering the field through YouTube, he became fascinated with archaeology. After participating in our Fall 2025 Adult Archaeology Camp he became hooked. "Digging up the past and reconstructing the lives of humans before us compels me to be involved. I want to learn all about the archaeology of where I grew up. Currently interning at AWIARE, I have learned so much and I plan to apply this knowledge in my pursuit of a graduate degree and a job in cultural resource management." As part of Declan's internship, he is analyzing lithic collections from two small excavations in Pasco and Highlands counties, as well as learning the ins and outs of lab work. He's also taking Dr. John Arthur's field methods class at USF giving him additional excavation experience. Declan's enthusiasm and desire to learn make him a most valuable addition to AWIARE.



Declan Meadows

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](#).

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