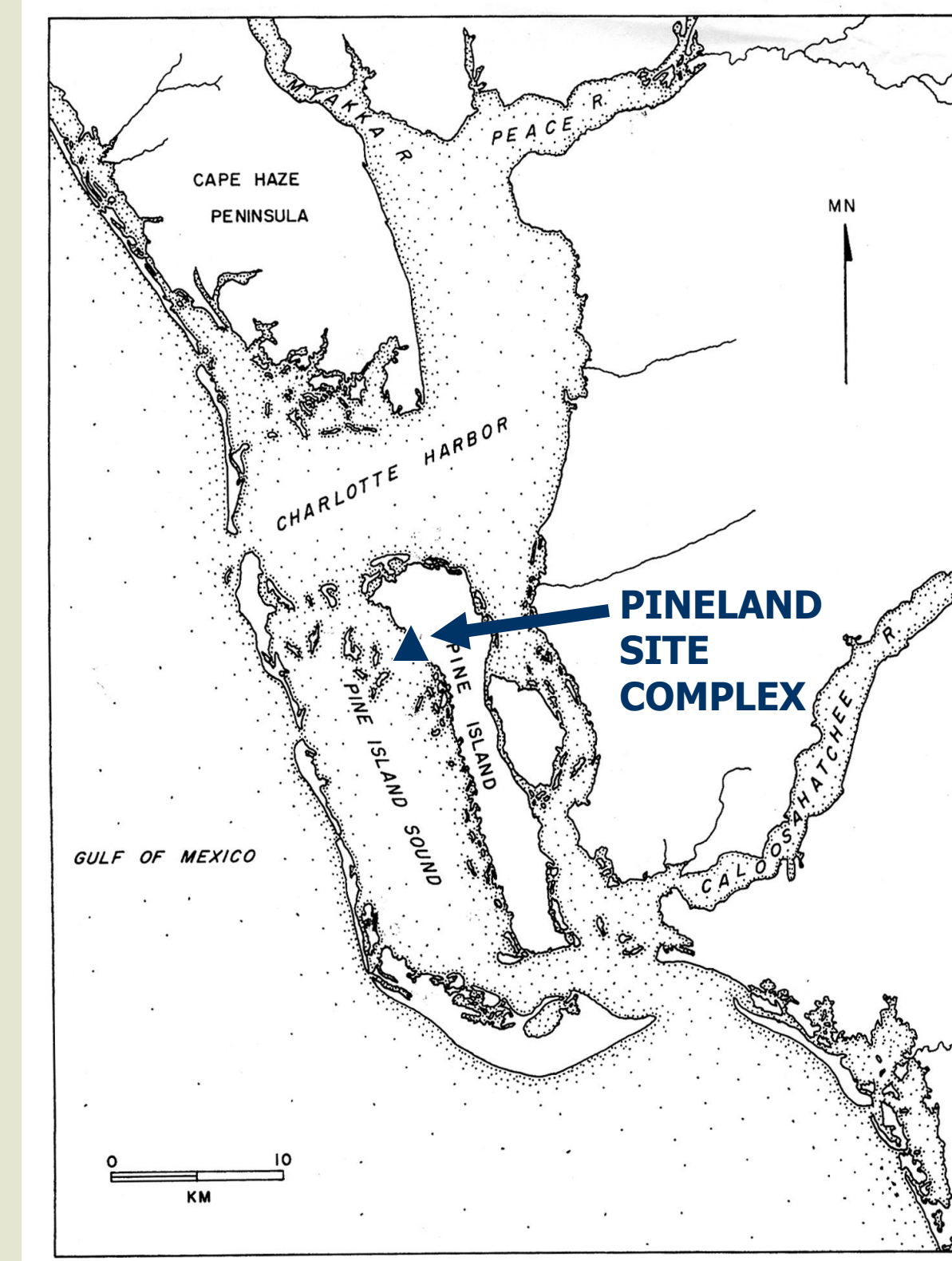


Rehabilitation of the Florida Museum of Natural History's Pineland Collections: A National Endowment for the Humanities Project to Curate Collections from a Major Coastal Archaeological Site Complex in Southwest Florida

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THE COLLECTIONS

The Pineland collections result from a series of public-oriented excavation projects that took place at southwest Florida's Pineland Site Complex from 1988 to 1995. Those projects focused on the A.D. 50 to 1710 cultural and environmental histories of the complex. The collections consist of an estimated 126,500 artifacts, 4,158 human-skeletal specimens, 10,785 bags of human-environmental specimens and samples, and 18 linear shelf feet of associated records and documents.



THE SOLUTION

A three-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded in 2007 to the Florida Museum of Natural History supported comprehensive curation of the collections. Our methods and results follow national standards; these may be applicable to other projects. The project has greatly improved the long-term stability and accessibility of Pineland's collections.



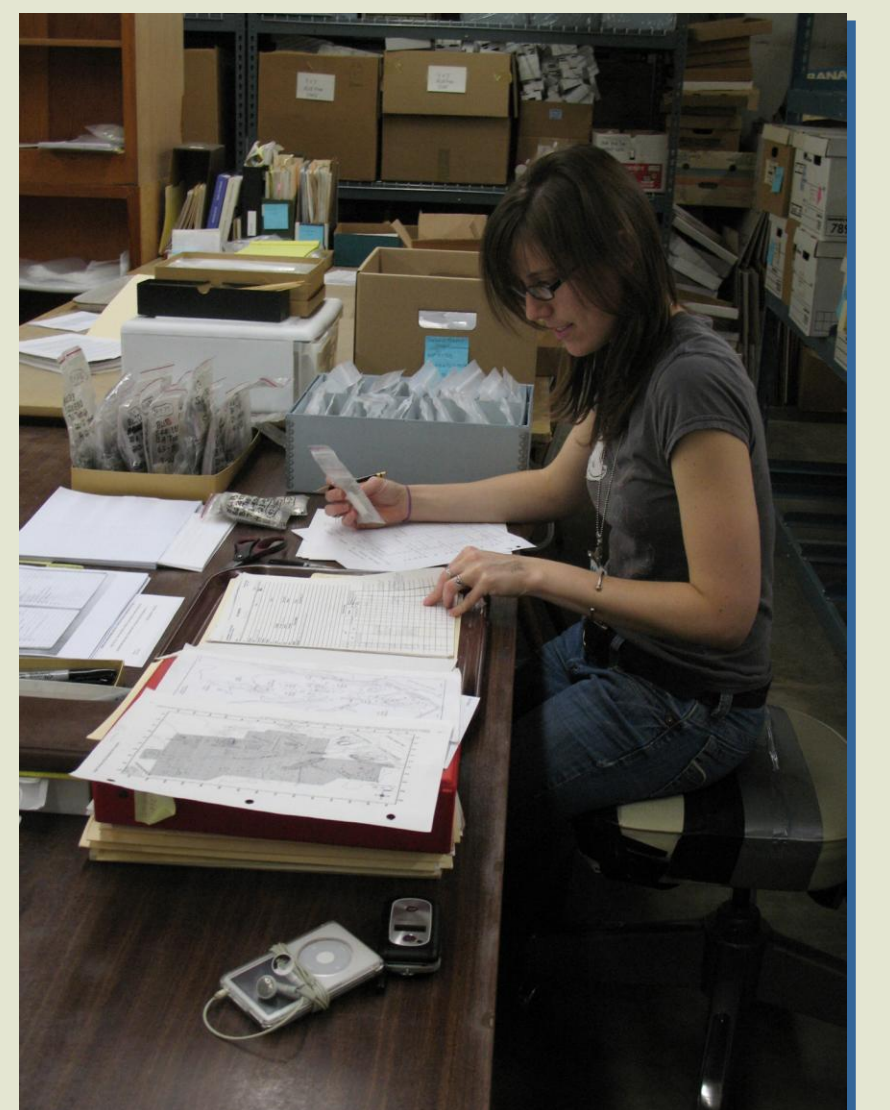
Karen Walker verifies provenience information in preparation for cataloguing and rebagging (after removal of aluminum foil) specimens collected for radiocarbon dating.



Melissa Ayvaz labels and re-bags Pineland artifacts.



Donna Ruhl rehabilitates bioarchaeological remains from Smith Mound, Pineland.



Gypsy Price catalogues sediment samples and specimens from Pineland's two site-wide auger surveys.

ORGANIZE → RESEARCH → REHABILITATE → DIGITIZE → CURATE

PROOF

PROOF

PROOF



Ryan VanDyke records information on zooarchaeological collections from Pineland.



Donna Ruhl reorganizes all dry archaeobotanical samples for final proofing.



Melissa Ayvaz demonstrates cleaning of waterlogged plant remains from Pineland's deepest levels.



Elise LeCompte and Karen Walker archive large-format maps, stratigraphic profiles, artwork, and other drawings related to Pineland.



Austin Bell enters information into Pineland database.



Ann Cordell inserts archival tag.



Similar to use of a filing cabinet, the repackaged collections are arranged in both catalogue-number and provenience order, then by material within catalogue number, and then placed in 4-mil zip-lock bags. Larger objects are incorporated into the sequence and accommodated within the archival cardboard trays. The result is accessible collections that are easily re-placed after study.

Microscope-based gross paste analysis had been conducted on almost 123,000 pieces of pottery. Each such grouping within each provenience was bagged separately. During rehabilitation, this sorting was maintained, but archival tags in protective 2-ply bags with site number and paste designation were inserted into the bags. Archival tags were also prepared for decorated sherds that were illustrated for publication (bagged separately) and for several Pineland sherds that had been thin-sectioned for petrographic analysis.



THE PROBLEM



Over the past two decades, the collections were heavily used for both research and exhibit purposes, causing damage and deterioration. It was not until 2005 that all components again existed under the same roof. The resulting disorganized state of the collections threatened their long-term integrity and accessibility for future research and educational purposes.