Finding Submerged Paleoindian and Archaic Archaeological Sites: Experiences from Karstic NW Florida

Michael K. Faught, Panamerican Consultants

Abstract
This poster presents the results of several years of offshore research in Northwest Florida, tracking the PaleoAucilla drainage system and excavating artifacts and shell middens at several locations, including two large sites, J&J Hunt and Ontolo. Topics include: principles and methods for finding submerged prehistoric sites, stratigraphic details and radiocarbon dating, and artifact distributions, characteristics, and typologies.

Principles and Methods
There are several principles and methods that have been developed to predict, find, and manage submerged prehistoric sites.

One important factor is the presence of sites of appropriate ages at times locally, when sea levels were lower. This means locating sites and features at times and space, as well as local culture history in order to understand the meaning of the artifact types and diagnosis of found artifacts. In the Big Bluff of Florida, there is evidence for Clovis people by 10,000 B.P., and a substantial amount of evidence for the people around 9,000 B.P. Evidence seems to decline after 8,500 B.P., with no such remains found, but excavations penetrated beyond useful penetration.

Another important factor is the presence of sites of appropriate ages at times locally, within the channel system that may contain early artifacts with extinct faunal remains, as found in the PaleoAucilla system shown here in the Paleoindian period. Faunal remains have also been found in the PaleoAucilla system shown here, including remote sensing and diver surface collections. Excavations included remote sensing and diver surface collections, and artifacts were available for human activities.

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