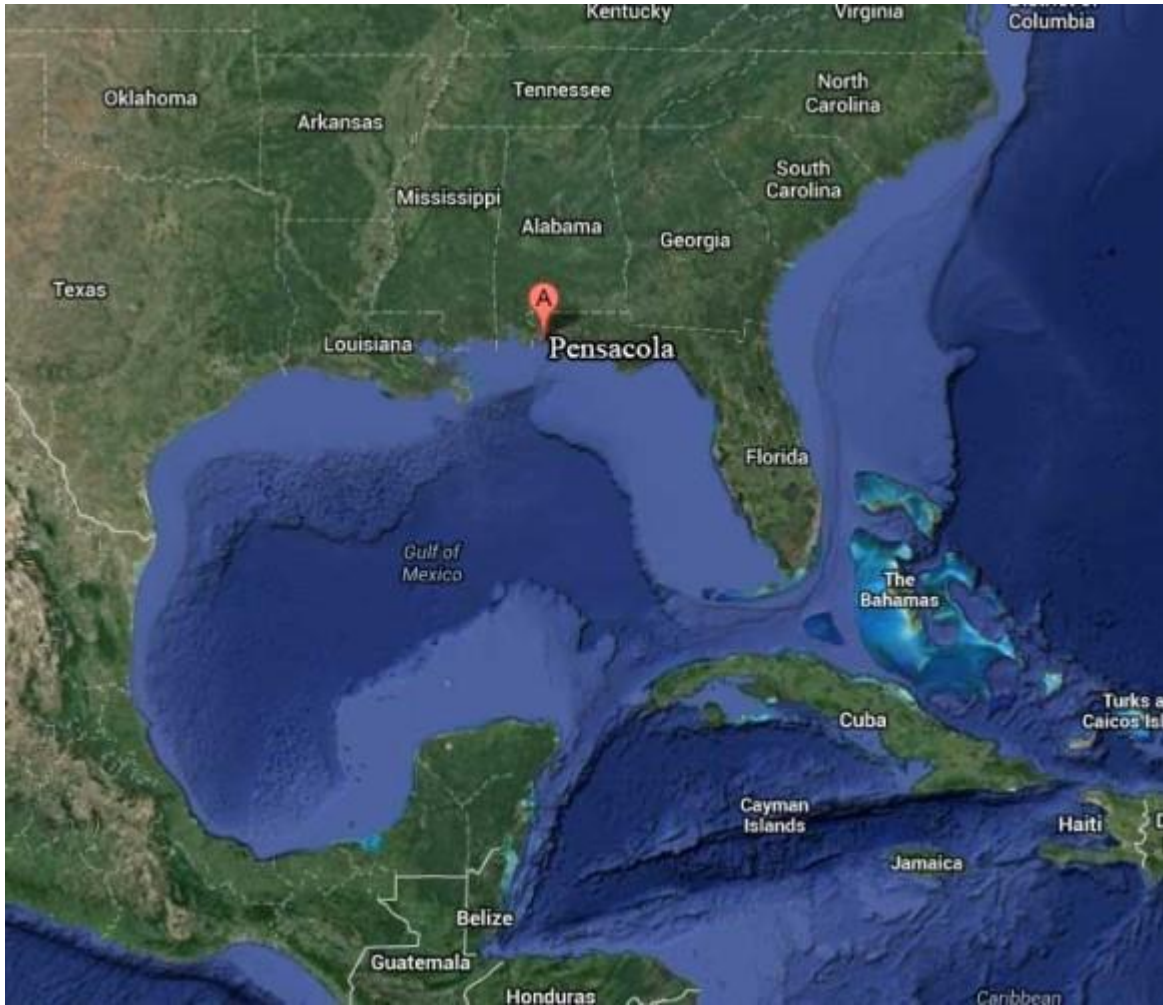


# A DIFFERENT KIND OF FIELDWORK: A DAY IN PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

July 26, 2013 Nicole Grinnan Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2013, Education Archaeology, community, Day of Archaeology, FPAN, History, Public archaeology, UWF

As one of the Outreach Coordinators for the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), a not-for-profit program of the University of West Florida dedicated to outreach and education related to Florida's amazing historical and archaeological resources, I see this year's Day of Archaeology as an opportunity to extend my influence far beyond the Florida Panhandle region in which I typically work. The Day of Archaeology, in my opinion, is a wonderful international component of the every-day job of the public archaeologist.

On a daily basis, the staff of FPAN, like other public archaeologists throughout the world, take on the equally difficult and rewarding task of convincing the public, a public that is largely unaware of the actual role of archaeologists, that archaeological resources are something to be valued and protected. For those I often encounter, the archaeologist can be one of any number of popular media-influenced archetypes: the "Indiana Jones," the "treasure hunter," or the "dinosaur specialist." My job, and that of other public archaeologists, is to dispel these misleading images and to show how truly amazing archaeology actually is without out being any of the above. Most impressive to me is how quickly people are willing to give up those old stereotypes. When those with which we engage begin to better recognize the science, research, time, and dedication that goes into archaeological research, a deeper appreciation for the goals of the discipline, and for cultural resources in general, is often not far behind. For those who seek to understand, archaeology can provide a deep and lasting connection to the past that gives us a sense of where we are and just how far we have come!



*Pensacola, Florida*



*The Coordinating Center for the Florida Public Archaeology Network.*

Summer is a fairly busy time for us at FPAN. Working out of our Coordinating Center in Pensacola, Florida, we co-direct a summer camp, present talks on local history and archaeology in a variety of venues, and host a public archaeology lab. On top of these tasks, we are constantly generating new promotional and informational materials that aid us in our goals of raising awareness about local cultural resources.



*I work with one of our History & Archaeology summer camp students to use an atlatl and illustrate changes in hunting technologies throughout human history.*

For the first half of every day this week, I am co-directing the History and Archaeology Summer Camp that FPAN helps run through the University of West Florida in partnership with West Florida Historic Preservation, Inc. The camp offers us a chance to dedicate a week of our summer to truly engage campers in the daily life of the historian and archaeologist. The children who attend our camp are immersed in hands-on activities in history and archaeology. Campers visit our public archaeology lab, as well as local museums, historic sites, and archival collections. The camp curriculum and activities attempt to build a deep appreciation of Pensacola's rich past and to instill stewardship for local cultural resources. While this may sound overwhelming for children, all of our campers become incredibly dedicated and the camp has consistently received excellent feedback from both attendees and parents.



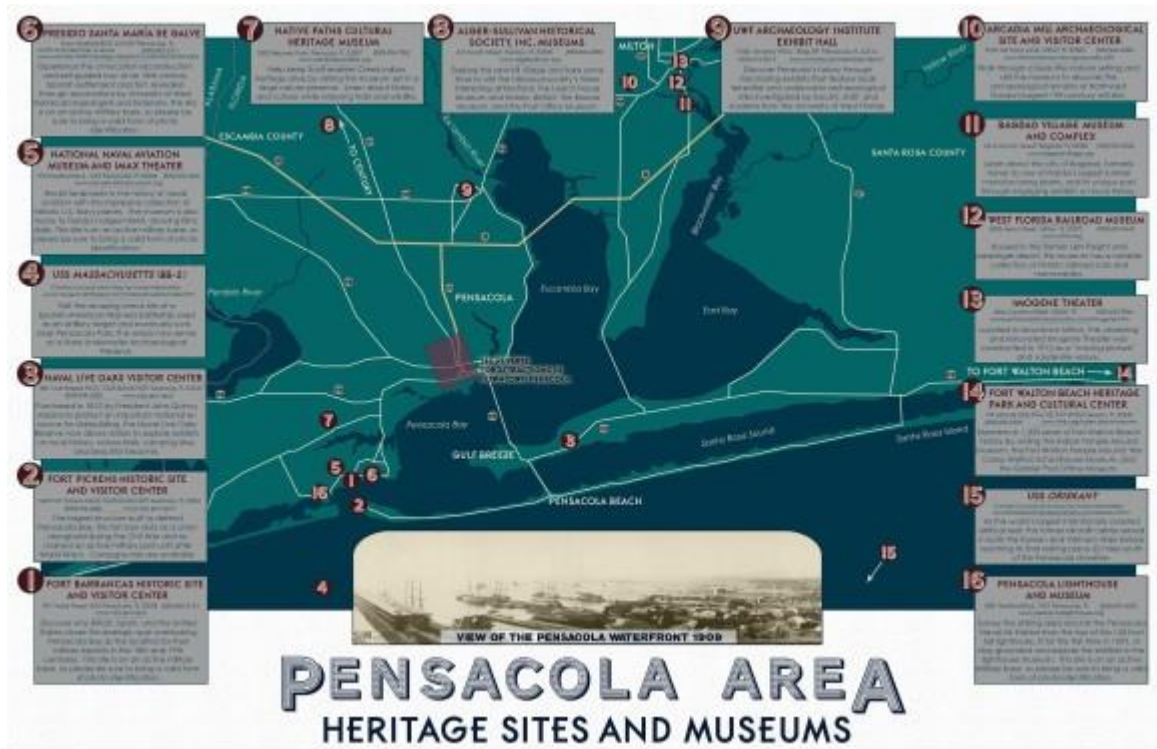
*I speak with an audience about Pensacola's fishing history at Fort Pickens, located in the Gulf Islands National Seashore.*

The demands of summer camp do not slow me down, however, and I head next to the Fort Pickens Auditorium on Gulf Islands National Seashore. In partnership with the National Park Service at Gulf Islands National Seashore, FPAN has helped put together a summer lecture series on local history and archaeology. On this particular day, the topic is my Master's thesis work on the Red Snapper fishing industry that dominated Pensacola's waterfront from 1860-1930. Utilizing historical documents and archaeological materials, I tell my audience the tale of the rapid boom and bust of the industry and how it continues to affect daily life in the local area (namely, the strict conservation measures on commercial fishing and the subsequent rise of recreational fishing tourism). I get a lot of great questions and some interesting insight from individuals who remember seeing commercial fishing vessels ply the waterfront in the sunset years of the industry.



*Working with one of our volunteers in the Public Archaeology Lab, I help identify and rough sort artifacts from University of West Florida excavations.*

After the talk at Fort Pickens, I put on my hat as Public Archaeology Lab supervisor and head back to our Coordinating Center. With the wonderful help of our senior intern, Tristan, FPAN invites the general public to come in a couple days a week to rough sort artifacts from actual excavations that the University of West Florida has undertaken in past years. The lab allows interested individuals to get hands-on with cultural material, the archaeological process, and, more abstractly, their past. While lab work is not for everyone, those who do come by always leave with a greater appreciation of the vigorous, but sometimes surprising, nature of archaeological analysis. Over the past few years, we have also retained a number of very dedicated volunteers who come every day that we are open.



*A new heritage sites and museums map that FPAN is putting together to promote heritage tourism in the Pensacola area.*

To wrap up a long day, I sit down to work on some of the new materials we will be releasing to promote heritage tourism in our area. By creating colorful, accessible handouts and making them available to visitor centers and popular tourism destinations, we hope to have a significant influence on visitation to the many spectacular museums and sites that feature local cultural resources.

Although we are not “field archaeologists” in the typical meaning of the phrase, public archaeologists are constantly working in their local and regional communities to spread knowledge and appreciation of the many historical and archaeological resources that piece together the puzzles of the past. This type of “fieldwork” provides similar gratification and, at times, frustration as does standard archaeological fieldwork, but I have never felt entirely unsuccessful in any of the programs or events in which I’ve played a role. Even if all I was able to get across to a group is that archaeologists do not, in fact, dig up dinosaurs, I have decidedly brought my community one step closer to appreciating the roles of the many individuals who work in academic, public, and private archaeology. More frequently, however, I feel that those groups with which I talk and engage actually learn a great deal about archaeology, the role of archaeologists, and the relevance of archaeology to our modern world. Thus, a day in the life of the public archaeologist may not be filled with excavations of 16th-century Spanish shipwrecks or laboratory analysis of cultural material from 18th-century British fortifications, but it is

certainly equally exciting to help the public navigate history in ways they never knew were possible.



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If you are interested in the Florida Public Archaeology Network, our mission, or what we do every day of the year, please visit our website ([flpublicarchaeology.org](http://flpublicarchaeology.org)) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!