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## *SDAMP News - July 2007*

South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology--University of South Carolina

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# SDAMP News

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*Newsletter for the Sport Diver Archaeology Management Program  
South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina*

## SURVEY FOR THE 1526 WRECK OF LUCAS VASQUEZ DE AYLLON'S *CAPITANA*

This summer, archaeologists with SCIAA's Maritime Archaeology Division have been conducting a magnetometer survey in the vicinity of Winyah Bay, South Carolina. The purpose of the survey is to locate a Spanish vessel thought to have sunk there in 1526. This is the second summer the search has been conducted by archaeologists from the Institute, which is part of the University of South Carolina

In 1525-26, Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon, a lawyer and resident of Havana, mounted the first attempt by any European to establish a permanent colony in the present-day United States of America. Departing from Hispanola with five ships and a smaller vessel, Ayllon's squadron made landfall at the River Jordan, believed to be the Santee River near Winyah Bay, South Carolina. Their primary supply vessel, a *Capitana* (or flagship) that was carrying most of the items needed to start the new settlement, ran aground and was lost while

attempting to navigate the shoals of the bay. Ayllon's attempt to establish a colony at Winyah Bay eventually failed due to the poor cropland in the area, native attacks, and subsequent poor morale amongst the colonists. Thus the decision was made to move the colony south. The sunken supply ship remained on the bottom of the bay, its whereabouts unknown to this day.

While most shorelines in South Carolina have migrated from tens to hundreds of meters landward over the centuries, the position of the Winyah Bay entrance has migrated several kilometers to the south since the sixteenth century. A large cooperative program, including South Carolina Sea Grant, the U.S. Geological Survey, and Coastal Carolina University, has resulted in a study of the historical coastal positions from the Winyah Bay entrance northward. The research found that in A.D. 1500, the position of the coastline on the northern side of the entrance was

three kilometers north of its present location.



**Carl Naylor deploys magnetometer**

According to Chris Amer, State Underwater Archaeologist and Principal Investigator of the project, "If we locate de Ayllon's *Capitana*, it will be one of the most important underwater archaeological finds to date. Not only will it be the earliest historically documented shipwreck (1526) to be located and verified in North America, but the site may still contain an unprecedented array of items to start a new settlement, a settlement kit, if you will."

## Survey Continued



Jim Spirek records magnetometer data

A secondary research interest of the project is to locate the remains of other shipwrecks, including several Confederate blockade runners that ran ground or were otherwise lost in the project area. These include *Sir Robert Peel*, possibly located this year, and the *Queen of the Waves*, which burned and sank near the mouth of the Santee River. The remains of Union vessels

that may lie in the project area include the steamers *Osceola*, *Union*, and *Peerless*.

The archaeologists are working with an array of electronic marine remote sensing equipment including a magnetometer for detecting iron or steel objects, and a side-scan sonar for imaging the sea floor. After analyzing the data from the four-week survey, researchers will

return to Winyah Bay in early August to dive on selected “targets” and access their historical significance.



Joe Beatty on the C-Hawk

## Letter from the SDAMP Office

Greetings Divers,

Welcome to the Sport Diver Archaeological Management Program (SDAMP) e-newsletter! SDAMP is a unique program that provides the public and professionals a way to work together to preserve South Carolina's rich maritime history. The best part of my job is having the opportunity to talk with members of the community, both divers and non-divers about the goals and benefits of archaeology. I would like to continue this forum by inviting you to contribute to the SDAMP newsletter. This is a great way to share your interests with others. If you would like to submit an article, book review, announcement, pictures, or anything else of interest contact Lora Holland email: [hollanlk@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:hollanlk@gwm.sc.edu) or phone: (843)762-6105 or Carl Naylor email: [canaylor@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:canaylor@gwm.sc.edu). This newsletter is for you the passionate public so get involved! We will be sending periodic e-newsletters, program information, and project updates so please keep your e-mail address current with the SDAMP office.



Lora Holland  
Archaeologist/ SDAMP Manager

## Web Resources for Hobby Divers

The following is a list of websites to assist in filling out a hobby diver quarterly report and can provide information for various types of artifacts likely encountered in the waterways of South Carolina. These sites are a great resource for identifying artifacts and mapping the location of your dive. If you have any questions about an artifact please contact the SDAMP office for assistance and remember a picture really is worth a thousand words. Additionally, if you have found other websites with information on artifacts or general archaeological resources useful to preparing your quarterly reports please inform us so that we may share the link with fellow hobby divers.

### Maps

Topozone allows the user to position a location on a USGS topographical map which is useful for preparing a map of a dive site. You can plug in your GPS coordinates or search by place name. These maps can either be printed or e-mail with the quarterly report.

<http://www.topozone.com>

The Archaeological Society of South Carolina website provides a number of links to modern and historical maps and charts of South Carolina, along with other helpful links to archaeological resources.

<http://www.assc.net>

### Bottles

The Bureau of Land Management/Society for Historical Archaeology's Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information website provides information to assist in dating and identifying utilitarian bottles from the 1800s and 1950s in the US and Canada

<http://www.sha.org/bottle/index.htm>

### Ceramics

The Florida Museum of Natural History's Historical Archaeology Digital Type Collection is an on-line type collections of historic period archaeological ceramics (1492-1850) predominately found in Florida, but also applicable to the southeastern region.

[http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/histarch/gallery\\_types](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/histarch/gallery_types)



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