Archaeological excavations at White Pond near Elgin, South Carolina, continued in the spring of 2018 as part of ongoing research by the Savannah River Archaeological Research Program (SRARP) and the White Pond Human Paleoecology Project (https://www.facebook.com/WPHEP/) (Figure 1). In 2017, excavations at White Pond revealed the presence of a Late Paleoindian Dalton occupation (ca. 12,500 years ago) buried beneath one meter of sand along the slopes overlooking the pond. In 2018, fieldwork at White Pond consisted of the opening of a larger excavation block in the area where the Dalton was found in order to evaluate the archaeological stratigraphy of the site and to determine if earlier Paleoindian components were present (Figure 2).

Excavations at White Pond are part of a long-term research effort by the White Pond Human Paleoecology Project (WPHPP) to better understand the paleoenvironmental and archaeological record of the region. In addition to archaeological excavations, this work includes analysis of sediment cores taken from the lake. Building on the early pollen study by Watts (1980), the goals of the WPHPP are multiple and include efforts to:

1) derive the broader geologic context of the age and origin of White Pond and its fringing sediments containing the archaeological record;

2) delineate and correlate the lacustrine paleoenvironmental and terrestrial archaeological records through integrated studies of litho- and biostratigraphy, geochronology (OSL and AMS radiocarbon dating), and archaeostratigraphy; and

3) conjoin the correlated paleoenvironmental and archaeological records in systemic, human behavioral terms (human paleoecology).

In the spring of 2018, the focus of archaeological excavations was to begin to link up the archaeological record of early human occupation preserved in the fringing sediments around the lake with the paleoenvironmental record obtained from the core. In brief, analysis of core sediments have included high resolution radiocarbon dating of aquatic seeds and peat, analysis of dung spores (e.g., Sporomica) that have been linked to the presence of large megaherbivores such as mammoth and mastodon, geochemical analysis to test for the presence of a platinum (Pt) anomaly possibly associated with the onset of the Younger Dryas climate event at ca. 12,800 years ago (Moore et al. 2017), environmental DNA (eDNA) to determine the presence/absence of particular megafauna species and the possible timing of extinction, black carbon or soot as a proxy for regional fire frequency, magnetic susceptibility as a proxy for human occupation and fire, and isotopic analysis as another indicator of climate change. This work is ongoing and involves a large interdisciplinary team of scientists. The importance of linking the archaeological record with the high-resolution core data is that it will allow us to understand the human response to dramatic environmental change on both short and long time scales. In this regard, White Pond has provided and continues to provide significant scientific data on paleoenvironmental change.
climate change and human adaptations in South Carolina and beyond.

Results of recent archaeological fieldwork have shown that in addition to a Late Paleoindian Dalton component (ca. 12,500 years ago), an Early Archaic occupation (ca. 11,500 to 8,900 years ago) is present at virtually the same depth (Figures 3 and 4). Later occupations are found at more shallow depths. For example, Late Archaic (ca. 5,200 to 3,200 years ago) and Woodland (3,200 to 1,000 years ago) occupations are found stratigraphically higher than the more deeply buried Early Archaic and Late Paleoindian occupations. Analysis of sediments show that artifacts have been buried by episodic periods of slopewash of dune sands from higher upslope. Testing of sediments is underway to determine if the Pt anomaly present at so many other sites across North America is present at White Pond. If so, the Pt anomaly may provide a chronostratigraphic marker ca. 12,800 years ago—a time at the very end of the Clovis period and the beginning of major climatic and environmental changes.

Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) is another method being applied at White Pond in order to date the last exposure of buried sand grains to sunlight. This dating method is useful in sandy Coastal Plain sites lacking material for radiocarbon dating. Peer review publication of this research is planned for late 2018.

Work at White Pond would not have been possible without the large number of volunteers that have assisted in unit excavations (Figures 5 and 6). We were also pleased to host the Archaeological Research Trust (ART) Board members and guests of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA), who visited the site in mid-March 2018 (Figure 7).

Additional excavations at White Pond are planned for the spring of 2019. For those interested in volunteering on this project, please contact Christopher Moore at MOORECR@mailbox.sc.edu or call 803-725-5227. You can also follow updates...
on the White Pond Human Paleoecology Project Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/WPHEP/. Tax deductible donations to support this research are accepted through the University of South Carolina (USC) Educational Foundation.

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Phillip IV Painting Part of South Carolina Colonial History

By Chester DePratter

On January 24, 2018, SCIAA Archaeological Research Trust (ART) board member, Sam McCuen, hosted an important meeting at the Palmetto Club in Columbia. In an effort to bring together organizations interested in South Carolina’s Spanish colonial history, Sam hosted representatives from SCIAA, Santa Elena Foundation, Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina Humanities Council, and South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The focus of the meeting was a painting of Spanish King, Philip IV (reign 1621-1665), that is currently in the collection of the Columbia Museum of Art. This painting was the work of Juan Pareja, apprentice and slave of well-known artist, Diego Velazquez.

Philip IV was the grandson of Philip II (reign 1556-1598) who ruled Spain at the time when Pedro Menéndez de Avilés was dispatched to La Florida to terminate French intrusion into territory long claimed by Spain. Menéndez was successful in eradicating the French colony; he established St. Augustine in 1565 and Santa Elena, his capital, on Parris Island, SC, in 1566. Occupation at Santa Elena ended in 1587, but St. Augustine survived through the reigns of Kings Philip III (reign 1598-1621) and Philip IV and on to the present day.

Discussion at the Palmetto Club meeting centered on the history of Santa Elena, the Columbia Museum of Art’s Philip IV painting, and the way that connections could be made that would enhance knowledge of Spain’s important contribution to South Carolina’s early history. Plans are being considered for events celebrating the painting and its connections to Santa Elena.

Attendees at the meeting included Sam McCuen, Host, Archaeological Research Trust (ART), Steven Smith, Director, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Chester DePratter, Research Professor, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, USC, Della Watkins, Executive Director, Columbia Museum of Art, Angi Wildt, Chief Development Officer, Columbia Museum of Art, Randy Akers, Executive Director, Humanities Council SC, Eric Emerson, Director, SC Department of Archives and History, Andy Beall, Chairman, Santa Elena Foundation, Megan Meyer, Executive Director, Santa Elena Foundation, and Chris Allen, Santa Elena Foundation Board.