

ABSTRACT

Liquid Landscapes: What Submerged Prehistoric Archaeological Sites Tell Us About the Settlement of a New Continent and Human Response to Climate Change during the last Ice Age

My dissertation concerns the adaptations of Ice Age groups to the rapidly changing climate following the close of the last Ice Age, understanding how regional specialization occurred following the initial occupation of the Americas, and building a more robust radiocarbon record for the peopling of the Americas. To this end, I have directed hypothesis-driven excavations at two underwater archaeological sites in the state of Florida. The first site is a campsite that contains an assemblage of Ice Age artifacts of a type never before excavated from a discrete context in a single component site. I aim to obtain the first date on the assemblage, reconstruct paleo-diet and environment from a midden of animal bone at the site, and examine the lithic toolkit from a technological organization perspective. The second site is a mammoth butcher site. I am re-examining the site to test the validity of the association between the lithic material recovered and the mammoth bones and to obtain radiocarbon dates from the site. If verified, the mammoth site will become one of few examples of Ice Age megafauna exploitation east of the Mississippi River. The results from my work at these sites will shed more light on how the First Americans adapted to prehistoric climate change.