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May 20, 2005

Florida Historical Commission
Chairperson Dr. Judith A. Bense
via fax 305-913-3159

Dear Dr. Bense,

On May 13th, at its 25th annual meeting, the Florida Archaeological Council (FAC) voted to rescind its previous support of a permitted Isolated Finds Program. This majority decision came after a year-long consideration of the issues and concerns at stake in the matter. An informal vote on the three options offered by the Florida Division of Historical Resources on the future of the Isolated Finds Program (1- discontinue the program; 2- formalize the program in its current form by rulemaking; 3- develop a permit based program), resulted in no majority support for any of the options.

The Council adopted a motion expressing the following four points:

1. The Isolated Finds Program in its current form is not working
2. Professional archaeologists want to continue to work closely with collectors
3. None of the three options are supported by a majority of the members of the Council
4. If any program is developed in the future, the Division should work with law enforcement agencies to ensure that the program is legally and practically enforceable

The lack of consensus reflects the complexities inherent in the program and a broad divergence of professional opinion. Although the FAC, at present, is unable to render a decisive opinion on the matter, we would like to continue to be participants in the discussion.

Sincerely,

James J. Miller, President
Florida Archaeological Council