



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Glenda E. Hood
Secretary of State
DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

May 25, 2005

James J. Miller, President
Florida Archaeological Council
1544 Cristobal Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32302

Dear Dr. Miller:

The Florida Historical Commission, at its May 21, 2005 meeting, considered three options regarding the Isolated Finds Program currently operated by the Division of Historical Resources. The Commission reviewed input received since its last meeting on April 7, 2005 and heard testimony from interested parties. The options considered were identified by the Bureau of Archaeological Research, namely: 1) discontinue the Isolated Finds Program, with no substitute program to take its place; 2) formalize the existing Isolated Finds Program guidelines as an agency rule with little or no modification; 3) develop a new permit-based program for river collecting formalized by the rule making process. The Commission, acting in its statutorily constituted role to provide assistance, advice, and recommendations to the Division in establishing priorities for the identification, acquisition, protection, and preservation of historic and archaeological sites and properties (§ 267.0612, *Florida Statutes*), unanimously supported Option 1, and recommended that the Division discontinue the Isolated Finds Program.

The Division and Bureau of Archaeological Research have reviewed and accepted the recommendation of the Florida Historical Commission. Beginning June 1, 2005, the Division will discontinue the Isolated Finds Program (see § 267.115(9), *Florida Statutes*, which states that “the division *may* implement a program to administer finds of isolated historic artifacts from state-owned river bottoms whereby the division may transfer ownership of such artifacts to the finder in exchange for information about the artifacts and the circumstances and location of their discovery”). Removal of artifacts from sovereign submerged lands will no longer be allowed after that date; removal of artifacts from river bottoms and other sovereign submerged lands will be a first degree misdemeanor under § 267.13(1)(a), *Florida Statutes*. The Division will accept Isolated Finds reporting forms through July 1, 2005. For additional information visit the Isolated Finds Program website at: <http://www.flheritage.com/archaeology/underwater/finds/>.

Please note that all data reported through the Isolated Finds Program since 1996 is open to scholars and other interested individuals for public inspection. Further, the Division encourages

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artifact collectors to work with interested scholars to record their collections in lieu of the Isolated Finds Program.

Please feel free to submit any comments or questions in writing or by e-mail.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Wheeler, Ph.D.
State Archaeologist and Chief,
Bureau of Archaeological Research

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