

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL
SURVEY OF POE SPRINGS
ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Prepared for:

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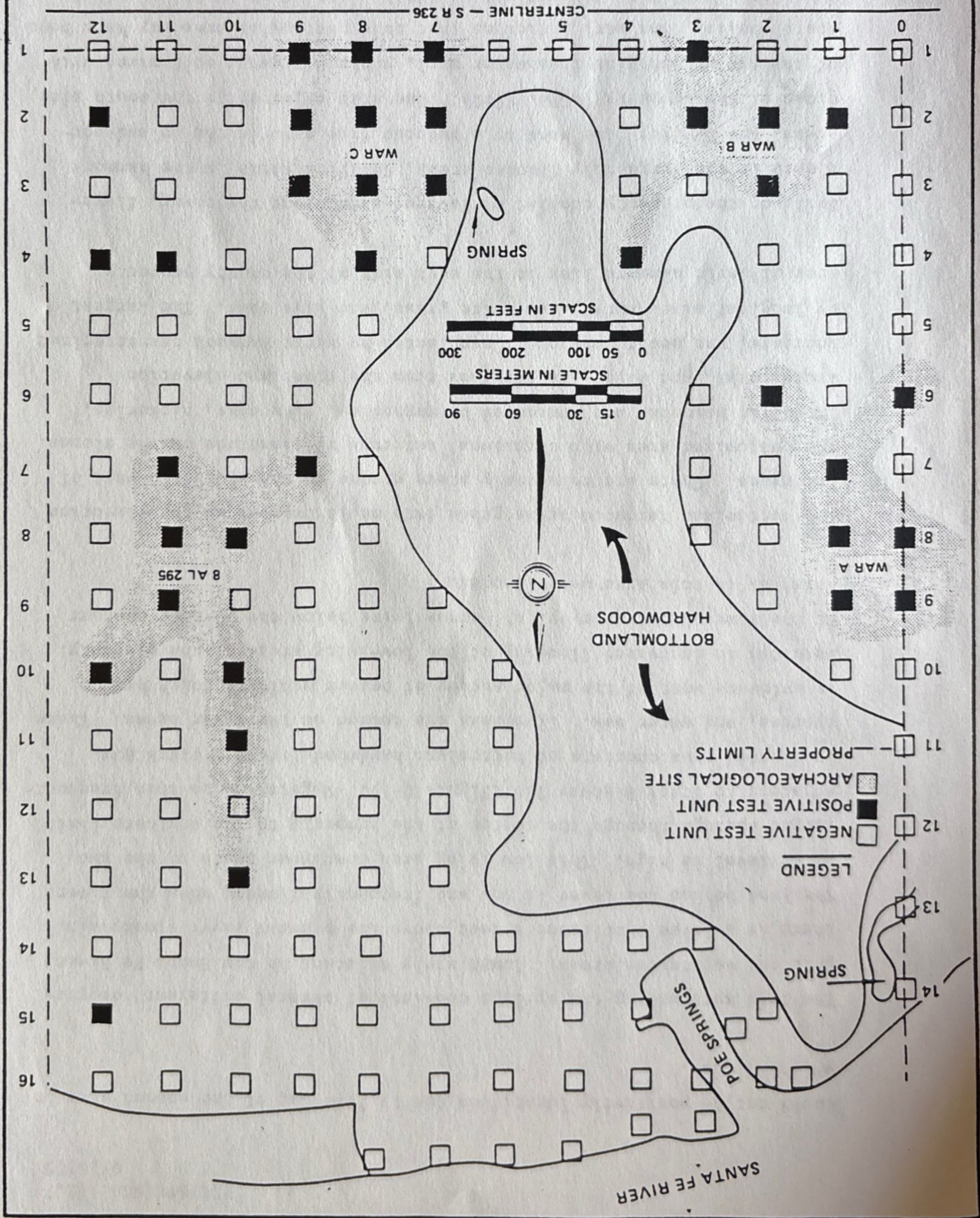
2.0 PROJECT SETTING

The evaluation of cultural resources requires an understanding of both the environmental setting and the cultural history of a project area. The environmental characteristics of an area influence its occupation patterns and utilization by humans. At the same time, the type of activities and the subsistence system of the human population dictate their choices of occupation or utilization areas. The following sections present a description of the environment of the Poe Springs property and a cultural history of north-central Florida.

The Poe Springs property contains two features which have traditionally been attractive for human occupation: high ground in proximity to a good water source. The spring is located in Section 6, Township 8 south, Range 17 east, Florida (Figure 1-1). The major spring consists of a roughly circular pool about 100 feet in diameter on the south bank of the Santa Fe River, the northern border of Alachua County (Figures 1-1, 2-1). The spring is connected to the river by a northward flowing run about 175 feet long and 40 feet wide. The spring issues from three boils in a horizontal cavern in the center of the pool. It is presently estimated to be 16 to 17 feet deep although it reportedly used to be as much as 36 feet deep. Additional water issues from small springs and seeps in the area adjacent to the spring. The discharge rate of the spring was 93.1 cubic feet/second in 1972 (Rosenau et al., 1977). The spring is clear with a sandy to clay bottom. There are limestone outcrops at the cavern entrance and near the junction with the Santa Fe River.

Two smaller springs are also located on the county property. The larger of these lies west of the major spring on the western limit of the property (Figure 2-1). This spring is about 5 feet south of the Santa Fe River and is connected to the river by a run flowing westward and parallel to the river. The spring is approximately 40 by 50 feet in size and appears to be about 8 feet deep with clear water and a number of stumps in the bottom. The smallest spring lies near the southern limit of the county property (Figure 2-1). At the time of the survey, this spring

FIGURE 2-1. Location of Test Units and Sites, Poe Springs, Alachua County, Florida



could not be positively identified due to flooding of the wooded area in which it lies.

The land surrounding the springs consists of several different topographic and vegetative areas. Immediately adjacent to the Santa Fe River, there is a levee that rises 6 feet above the present river floodplain. The land behind the levee is low and frequently flooded when the river water level is high. This low lying area continues south of the two larger springs through the center of the property to the southern limit adjacent to State Highway 236 (Figure 2-1). Vegetation in this frequently flooded area consists of bottomland hardwood forest: black gum, cypress, and water oak. Live oaks are common on the river levee. There is evidence west of the major spring of beaver activity which has resulted in increased flooding of the low-lying areas of the property. At the time of this survey, all areas lying below the 30-foot contour interval in this area were flooded.

The bottomland hardwood areas grade into mesic hammock as the elevation increases. There are relatively steep grades to the south and west of the bottomland area with occasional outcrops of limestone on the slopes. The mesic hammocks are dominated by magnolias, live oaks, hickories, laurel oaks, and bays. As distance from the river and elevation increase, the mesic hammock is supplanted by xeric hammock characterized by longleaf pine, turkey oak, wire grass, and live oaks. The largest area of xeric hammock lies on the east side of the county property.

Soils on the property consist of Tavares sand along the river, fluvaquents in the frequently flooded areas, Kendrick sands in the hammock areas, and Candler fine sand or Arredondo fine sand in the upland portions of the property (USDA, 1980). One area adjacent to the south side of the spring contains freshwater marl, a black organic soil mixed with snail shells. The marl indicates that this particular area may have been marsh at one time (Polan and Allen, 1961). All of the soils except for the fluvaquents and marls are sandy, well-drained soils. The upland soils tend to be excessively well-drained.

The environments represented on the property would have provided an abundance of resources for a hunting-gathering based economy. Examples of these resources include: hickory nuts, acorns, other nut fruits, smilax roots, deer, turkey, gopher tortoises, opossums, raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, snakes, other birds, shellfish such as crawfish, mussels, and snails, a variety of fish, turtles, and other amphibians. The soils on the property are not particularly well-suited for agriculture. The upland soils are excessively drained and low in nutrient levels. The lower areas are poorly drained and frequently inundated. Those soils which are suitable for agriculture are limited in their representation on the site.