

SEFAS NEWSLETTER

A chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

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February 2026



PLANTS AND THE PAST

We are thrilled to be partnering this month with the local Native Plant Society for a special lecture. Dr. Nydia I. Pontón-Nigaglioni will discuss the vital connections between native plants and archaeological sites, highlighting how ecology and human history are deeply intertwined. Dr. Nydia I. Pontón-Nigaglioni is an archaeologist working with the Historic Preservation Officer of Palm Beach County.

Our monthly meeting also features an engaging presentation by Theresa Schober, sure to pique interest. A Florida archaeologist and museum consultant, she has led excavations at Mount Elizabeth and conducted numerous archaeological projects throughout South Florida. Her presentation will illustrate what life was like for early peoples in South Florida, drawing on the 4,500-year history of this remarkable site.

FEBRUARY 7TH - NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SPEAKER: NYDIA IVELISSE PONTÓN-NIGAGLIONI, PHD

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PREHISTORIC PEOPLE AND PLANTS IN THE SWAMP

Lecture will discuss the connection between native plants and archaeological site identification in the Loxahatchee Slough, as well the ethnohistorical uses of plants by Native Peoples of the American Southwest.



Dr. Nydia I. Pontón-Nigaglioni is an archaeologist working with the Historic Preservation Officer of Palm Beach County. She received her bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Puerto Rico in 2005 and her Doctorate degree in Anthropology in 2018 from Temple University. With 20 years of experience in archaeological research, she has conducted work in South America, North America and the Caribbean. Dr. Pontón-Nigaglioni's research interests focus on historic ceramics, prehistoric lithics, and ethnobotany. Her current research focuses on prehistoric tree island sites in the Loxahatchee Slough Natural Area.

Social at 6:30 pm presentation at 7:00 pm
Chastain Campus, Indian River State College

FEBRUARY 21ST SPEAKER: THERESA SCHOBER 10:30-12:30

A Window to the Past – 4,500 years of history at Mount Elizabeth, Martin County



Mount Elizabeth is a large, 31-foot tall shell mound bordering the Indian River estuary at Indian RiverSide Park in Martin County. Extensive excavations at the site in 2008 and 2009 were funded, in part, with a state grant to determine if a "viewing window" into the mound was viable as part of the rehabilitation of Tuckahoe, the over 14,000 square foot Mediterranean Revival mansion built on top of the site in 1938. The mansion's restoration provided an opportunity to sample all 16-feet of archaeological layers in the mound, including excavation under the mansion itself. Field excavations and laboratory work were supported by dozens of volunteers from the Southeast Florida Archeological Society and the Friends of Mount Elizabeth. This presentation will illustrate what life was like for early peoples in south Florida through the 4,500 hundred year history of this fascinating site. Specialized analyses on artifacts, carbonized plant remains and animal bone recovered from the mound will reveal how archaeologists learn about people in deep time, including results of a recent study by John Furey of the nearly 500 shark's teeth recovered, dozens of which were used as tools.

Theresa Schober is a Florida archaeologist and museum consultant who led excavations of Mt Elizabeth and has conducted multiple excavations in south Florida. She serves as the chapter representative for the SWFL Archaeological Society (SWFAS) to the Florida Anthropological Society, where she is also a board member. President of SWFAS and avocational archaeologist John Furey will join the presentation by Zoom!

Monthly Meetings are held at
the Hobe Sound Public Library
10595 SE Federal Highway
Hobe Sound, Florida 33455

Reminder to pay your dues- its
only through your generosity we
can keep going.

Save the Date
Chris Davenport - March 14th
Jim Pepe- April 18th
Archaeology Day- May 16th