

# REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND TESTING FOR THE PIGEON KEY SOLAR ARRAY PROJECT IN MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA

## Introduction

The Pigeon Key Foundation applied for a Special Certificate of Appropriateness from the Monroe County Historic Preservation Commission to install a solar array on Pigeon Key. As Pigeon Key is a highly significant National Register District the Historic Preservation Commission approved the proposed project with the condition that ground disturbing activities be subject to archaeological monitoring. (Please see National Register Nomination (3/16/1990) for site setting, history and significance of the island).

SALT Technologies, the contractor for the array submitted a monitoring plan which was submitted to the Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historic Preservation for a courtesy review. The Bureau found the plan adequate for the proposed project.

## Methodology

Archaeological monitoring and limited testing where conducted between the period of July 4-27, 2012. Work was conducted by Jim Clupper, Diane Silvia, Robert Carr, Ray Skinner, and Matt Fanno. Robert Carr, of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc. donated the labor and tools to complete the work. Aerial photographs, Figure O show the project area.

A ditch witch was used to excavate a trench 487' long to house the electrical cables to run from the solar array to the small building which will house the batteries used to store the generated power. The trench was marked off in 10' intervals so that artifacts uncovered during the trenching could be collected according to their location within each ten foot segment of the trench. Due to the abundance of broken glass, collection was generally limited to diagnostic pieces. The first segment of the trench was 259' long. At that point the ditch witch broke an existing water pipe and work stopped there to allow for emergency repairs. The second trench segment was 228' terminating at the battery building (Figures 1 and 2).

Sixteen areas were marked with paint on the surface where the pilings to support the solar array where to be installed (Figures 3 and 4). These areas where investigated by shovel testing. Excavated fill was screened. Some of these areas where in rock and could not be tested.

## Artifact Summary

The artifact assemblage was typical of what would be expected at this early 20<sup>th</sup> century railroad related site. Artifact materials included ceramics, glass, and iron. There was also animal bone and shell. A sample of the artifacts recovered are shown in Figures 5-12. Dylan Kibler, at the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, did the artifact photography.



Figure O. 2012 Aerial photograph of Pigeon Key depicting utility trench

Location of trench



Area of possible prehistoric activity



0 50 100 feet approx.