



Archaeology is in Danger, but the Public Can Save It

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If you grew up in Sarasota like me, you likely spent school field trips visiting [Historic Spanish Point](#), a botanical garden and archaeological site, with over 30 acres of sprawling native plants and buzzing insects. The large property features over 4,500 years of human history, and [recently](#) celebrated its 50th year on the National Register of Historic Places.

As a kid, I recall being awestruck at its [Window to the Past](#) exhibit, which featured an ancient trash shell heap, a place where people thousands of years ago discarded everything from bones to pottery to shell tools. Its overwhelming size towered over visitors, holding secrets of the past and Florida's earliest peoples. As I'd come to learn later, when I returned to Historic Spanish Point for a different kind of field trip—volunteering my time as a then undergraduate archaeology student to conduct survey work on the property and identify artifacts—these secrets only emerge if archeologists can study and share them.

But archaeology, and the social sciences more generally, are in danger.