

The Weir Site on the Bliss Islands, Charlotte County, New Brunswick

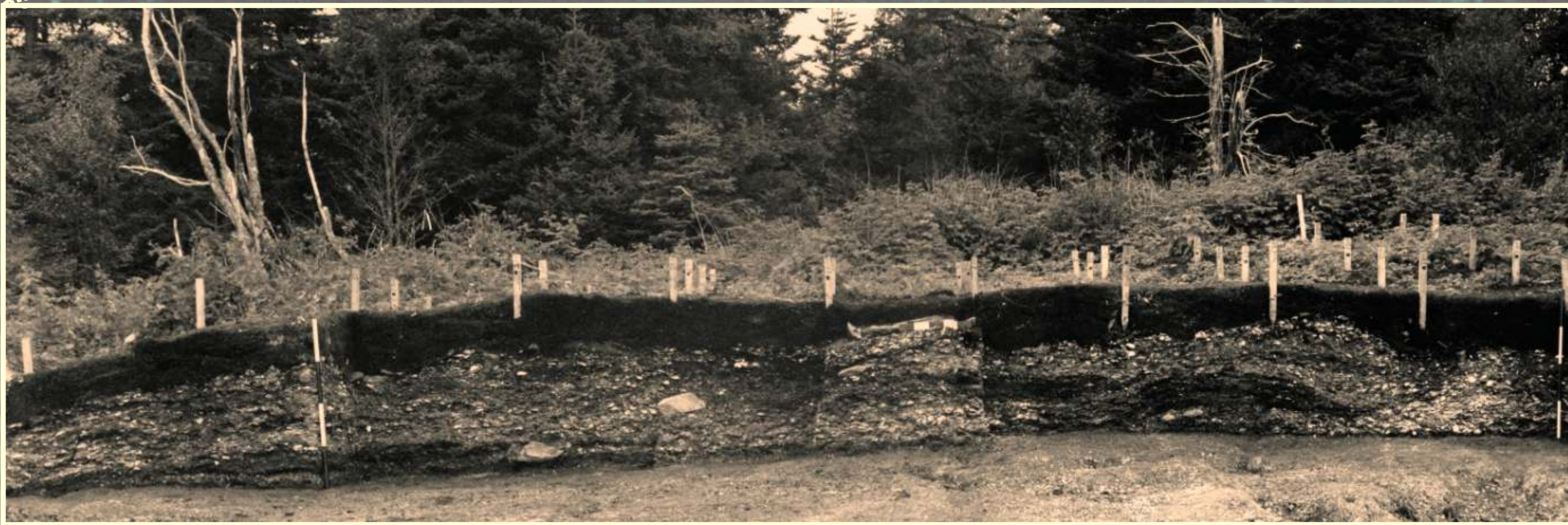
Bliss Islands Archaeology Project Archaeological Fieldschools

The Weir Site (BgDq6): A Multi-Component Maritime Woodland Habitation

The Weir Site is the largest, deepest, best-preserved prehistoric shell-bearing archaeological site remaining on the Quoddy coast. Located on a series of bedrock outcrops, it covers at least 500 meters of area, and is up to one meter in depth. The surface of the site is covered by a layer of peat soil that has developed since the last time Native people camped there. Unlike most prehistoric archaeological sites in the area, the Weir site is virtually undisturbed by historic period activities. Unfortunately, it is now being destroyed gradually by rising sea levels and shoreline erosion.

The archaeological deposits at the Weir site were created by ancestral Peskotomukhtiyik (Passamaquoddy people) who camped there on several occasions from about 2500 years ago to about 1000 years ago (during a time that archaeologists call the Maritime Woodland period). Deposits include gravel layers that represent the floors of ancient dwellings, layers of shells (clams, mussels, sea urchins, etc.) and bones (of mammals, birds and fish) that represent food eaten by people who lived in the dwellings, and black soil layers that developed on surfaces when vegetation covered the site. Mixed into these deposits are the tools—projectile points, scrapers, axe blades, pottery sherds, awls and needles—of the people who camped there.

During the summer of 1986, students from Saint Mary's University in Halifax excavated 25 m² of the site. During the summer of 1993, students from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton excavated an additional 25 m² from areas that are most threatened by the sea. In the years since, the artifacts and other materials from these excavations have been studied by students at the University of New Brunswick.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Archaeological Services New Brunswick, the University of New Brunswick, Saint Mary's and McMaster University. It was conducted with the co-operation of Bliss Islands landowners, in particular, the Mitchell and Leslie families of Back Bay.



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