



## Southwest Region – Annual Report July 2021 to June 2022

Sara Ayers-Rigsby, MA, RPA, Director  
Rachael Kangas, MA, RPA, Public Archaeology Coordinator (Q1)  
Natalie De La Torre Salas, Public Archaeology Coordinator (Q3-Q4)

### Highlight Viability: SW Coordinator Rachael Kangas Moves to Tampa Office

In August of 2021, Rachael Kangas, Public Archaeology Coordinator for FPAN SW announced she would be leaving FPAN SW to take on new challenges as the Public Archaeology Coordinator with FPAN's West Central Region based out of USF. In her six years at FPAN SW, Rachael successfully completed hundreds of in person and virtual programs, in addition to assisting partners like the National Park Service, Pineland at the University of Florida's Randell Research Center, Collier County Museums, the Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves, state parks within the region and countless others. Rachael brings considerable expertise to the Tampa Office.



**Photo 1: Collage of Kangas during her time at FPAN SW**



**Photo 2: Conducting Site Assessments in CHPSP**

## **First Quarter July 2021-September 2021:**

### **Address Impact of Climate Change on Archaeological Resources: Kangas presents at Tidally United Summit**

As part of FPAN's Tidally United Conference, Rachael Kangas co-authored a paper on her work with John Aspiolea, Park Manager for Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park. The paper detailed the pair's efforts over the past two years to visit all 41 archaeological sites within the Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park. The extensive archaeological record of Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park is unique in the region and Kangas' efforts have not only furthered the goals of the HMS program but will also provide valuable insight for park management into prioritizing efforts in the future.

Additionally, during this quarter FPAN SW staff including Sara Ayers-Rigsby coordinated site visits to vulnerable archaeological sites during September's King Tides with FGCU professor, Dr. Michael Savarese. Read more about their visits [here](#).

## **Second Quarter October 2021-December 2021:**

### **Address impact of Climate Change on Archaeological Resources: Monitoring at Calusa Island**

FPAN staff continued the monitoring program at Calusa Island. Initially begun by Jennifer Haney and University of Florida staff including Karen Walker, the program relies on volunteers from Pineland at the University of Florida's Randell Research Center to document ongoing erosion on this Archaic coastal site. In 2020, FPAN staff assisted UF staff led by Michelle LeFebvre in limited excavations at the site to attempt to ascertain the size and timeframe the midden was occupied.



**Photo 3: View of erosion at Calusa Island**

## **Third Quarter January 2022-March 2022:**

**Viability: Welcome Natalie A. De La Torre Salas!**



**Photo 4: Instagram post introducing De La Torre Salas**

In January, FPAN SW welcomed Natalie A. De La Torre Salas, MA, RPA, as Public Archaeology Coordinator for the region. Natalie is a Puerto Rican native hailing from Cabo Rojo. She received her BA in Anthropology from the University of Puerto Rico and her MA in Public Archaeology from the University College London. There, inspired by her prior experience of living through the impacts of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017, she studied how heritage professionals re-engaged with communities after the hurricane and which lessons learned from this experience could be used to develop community-based disaster risk management. De La Torre Salas also served as a research affiliate for the Santo Domingo Center of Excellence for Latin American Research at the British Museum. Prior to coming to FPAN, De La Torre Salas was working in Fort Myers as an archaeological monitor on a restoration project in the Everglades.

De La Torre Salas is excited to help project the region's archaeological heritage and cultural sites, and develop programming both in English and Spanish. Welcome, Natalie!

**Fourth Quarter April 2022-June 2022  
FPAN in the Media**

In April, FPAN staff was interviewed for NOAA's Restore Science Program Page about their work with the ACUNE project; which is a NOAA funded program to create a decision support tool to assess the various risks of climate change in Collier County. The tool was developed by a team based out of the University of Florida and Florida Gulf Coast University. FPAN SW staff had been involved in an end user test team, and created a team of stakeholders to prioritize impacts to cultural sites in the region. Read more about the project [here](#).



**Photo 5: Conducting site assessments after Hurricane Irma as discussed in NOAA RESTORE piece**