



# Archaeological Subsurface Survey of Lighthouse Point, South Eleuthera, Bahamas

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## Introduction

The Lucayans were a group of people who migrated from Venezuela to the Bahamas from the years of 2100 BCE to 500 CE. (see Figure 1) They maintained residence there for about 1000 years, until they came into contact with Columbus and his men in 1492. Their population peaked at 40,000 died out within 20 years. Since the Lucayans had no written records, there is very little known about their culture. There has been some archaeological work done in the Bahamas which has been focused mainly in the islands New Providence, San Salvador, and Turks and Caicos; yet, there is still much to learn.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the nature of the Pre-Colombian usage at Lighthouse Point. This site has offshore cays and caves, which are closely associated with Lucayan religious and ceremonial traditions. In addition, there are reefs nearby to provide food, and sandy beaches which would have made a good area to land canoes. This information led the archaeology team to hypothesize that the Lucayans used Lighthouse Point for religious and ceremonial purposes.



Figure 1

**Literature Cited**  
Carr, Robert et al. *An Archaeological and Historical Assessment of Preacher's Cave, Eleuthera, Bahamas*. *Bahamas Technical Report #4*. Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc. 2006.  
Keegan, William F. *The People Who Discovered Columbus: The Prehistory of The Bahamas*. University Press of Florida, 1992, Gainesville, Florida.  
Newsom, Lee A. and Wing, Elizabeth S. *On Land and Sea: Native American Uses of Biological Resources in the West Indies*. The University of Alabama Press. 2006, Tuscaloosa and London.  
Sullivan, Shaun D. *Archaeological Reconnaissance of Eleuthera, Bahamas*. Master's Thesis, Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL. 1974.  
Island School Fall 2008 Archaeology Team. *How did the Lucayans Utilize Lighthouse Point?* Research Poster. Cape Eleuthera Institute. 2008, Cape Eleuthera, Bahamas.

## Artifacts by Areas

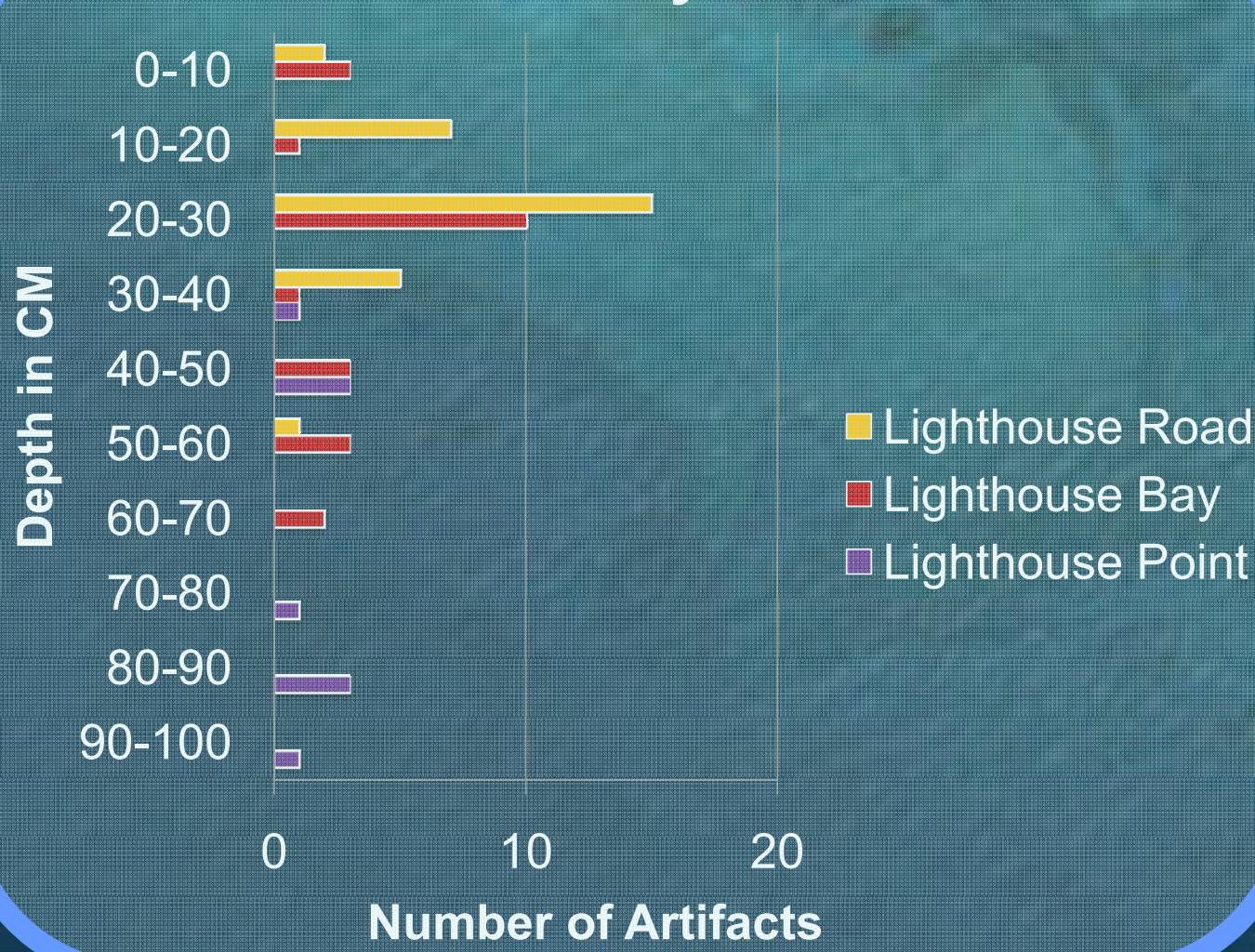


Figure 3

## Soil Profile from Lighthouse Road

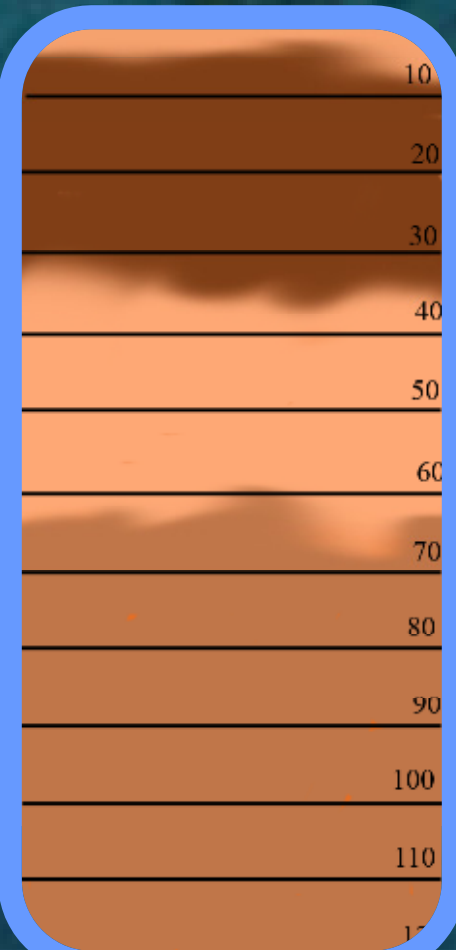


Figure 4

## Soil Profile from Lighthouse Point

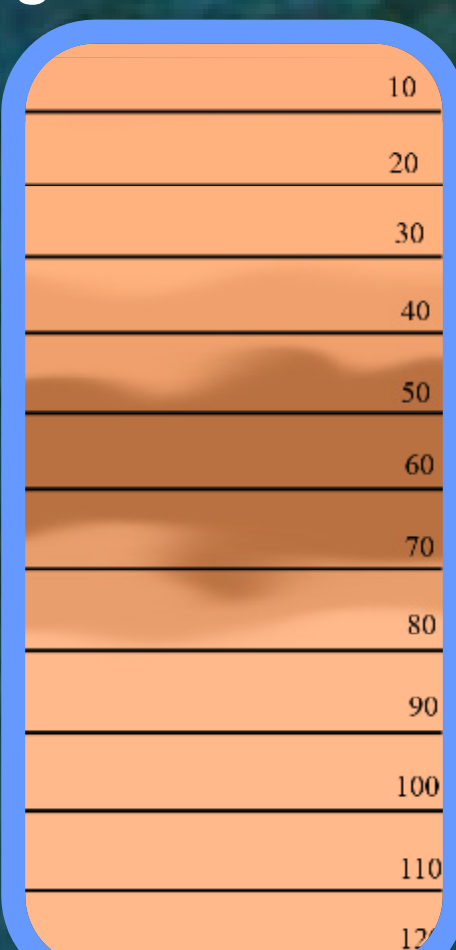


Figure 5



Figure 6

## Results

The majority of the materials found at Lighthouse Point were ecofacts and fire-affected materials. This evidence is inconclusive because the archaeology team did not have the resources to identify the time period in which the fire occurred. Palmetto Ware is evidence of Lucayan activity; there were no pieces of Palmetto ware found in this survey. There has been Palmetto found at Lighthouse Point in the past, but not enough to prove Lucayan activity. The majority of the materials were found between 20 and 60 cm of depth, and some pits displayed a clear cultural layer (see figures 5&6).



Fire Affected Artifacts (Charcoal)



Ecofacts (Fish Vertebrae)

## Discussion

We found no conclusive evidence of Lucayan habitation or activity at Lighthouse Point. However, the presence of ecofacts, combined with the results of the surface survey conducted in 2008, are highly suggestive that a limited amount of Lucayan activity occurred at Lighthouse Point. In order to prove the hypothesis, a Lucayan tool or Palmetto Ware would have to have been found, since they are associated with Lucayans. None of these artifacts were uncovered in the survey and findings were inconclusive.

Due to lack of experience, areas near caves were intentionally avoided, because these are likely burial sites. Future research and investigation of cave areas might reveal conclusive evidence of Lucayan activity.

## Methods

An X and Y axis was created (see figure 2) in order to establish waypoints where test pits would be dug for a sub-surface survey.

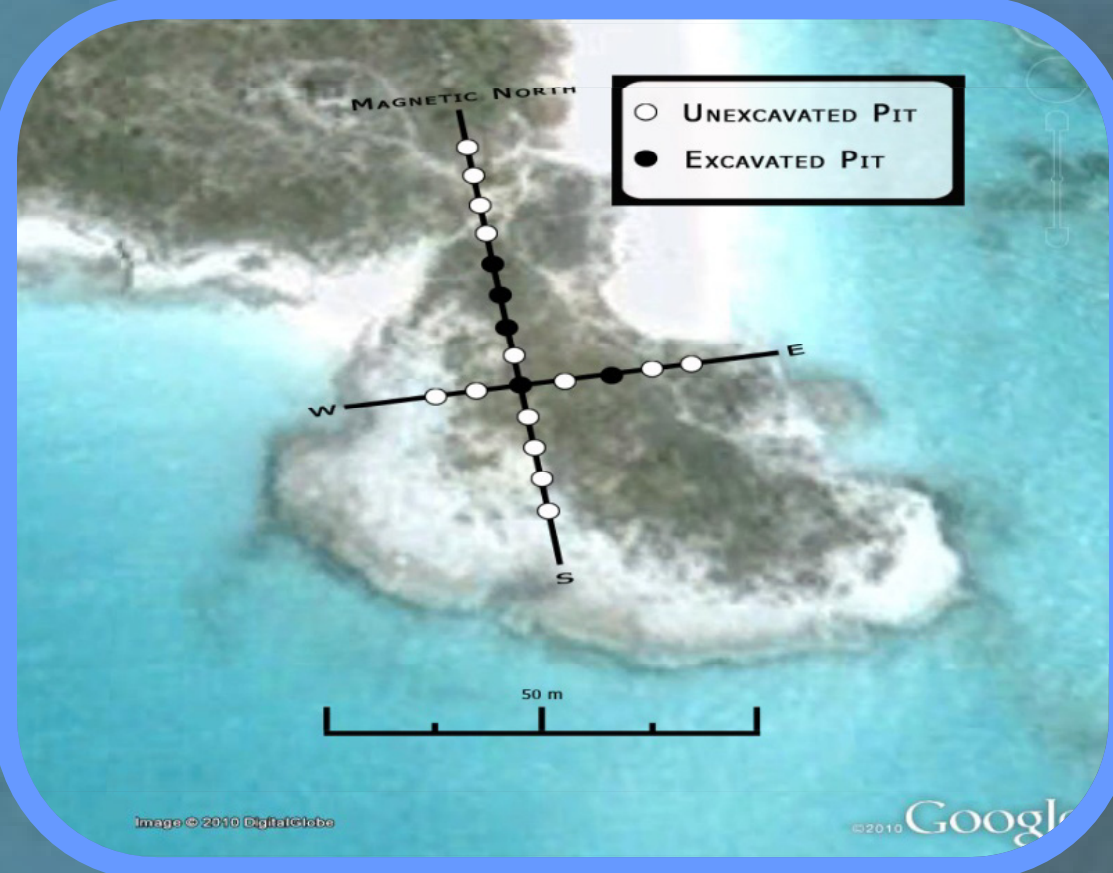


Figure 2

## Steps to a Sub-Surface Survey



**Excavate:**  
Each test pit was a circle with a 50 centimeter diameter and averaged 80 centimeters deep. Every 10 centimeters, dirt is removed from the pit.



**Sift:**  
The dirt and materials were sifted through a one quarter inch screen.



**Record:**  
Finally, our findings were recorded. Once pits were completely dug, soil profiles were drawn to display the change in soil coloration (see figures 4-6), and the pit was refilled.