

Swains Island: Lost Tale from the South

NOAA Heritage Survey August 24 – September 2, 2013



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Multiple Goals:

- Side scan sonar survey of the lagoon
- Geomorphology survey
- Terrestrial archaeology

M/V Sili



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Matt Lawrence NOAA
Zach Hileman NOAA
Rhonda Suka UH
Steph Gandulla NOAA
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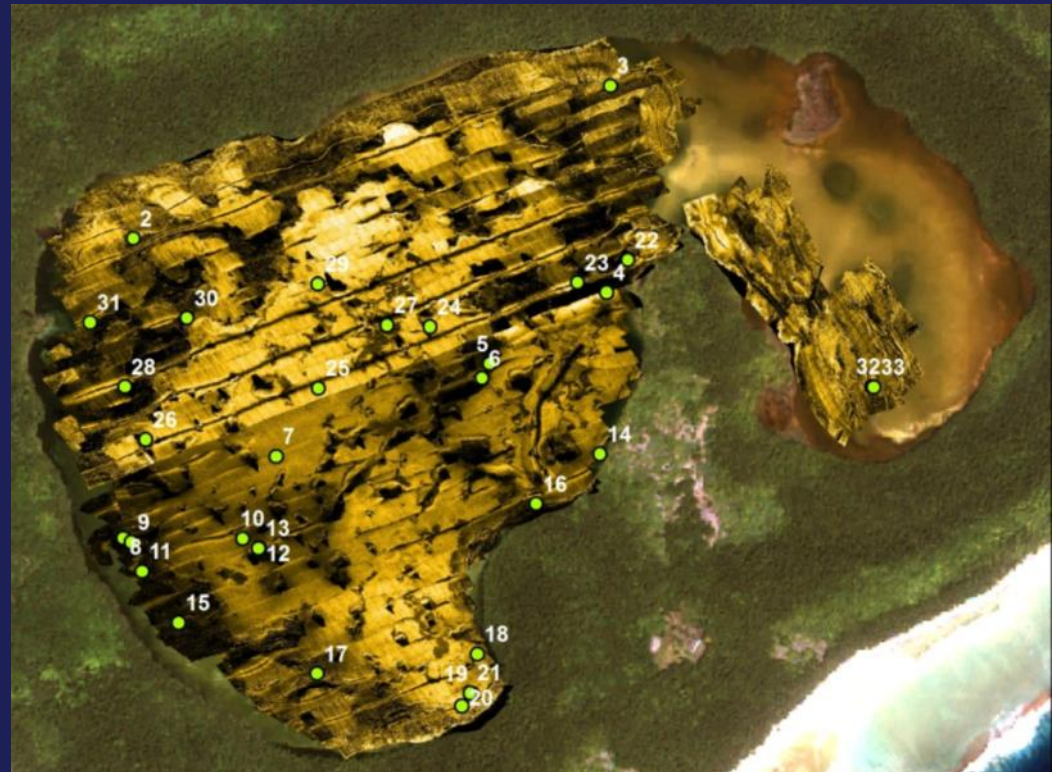
Sonar Survey: Descent into the Lagoon



Matt Lawrence and Stephanie Gandulla:
side scan operator/divers

Trimble DSM 232 GPS antenna
ODOM Echotrac CVM TPU with integrated Trimble GPS receiver
Panasonic Touchbook (VBES & GPS CPU)
Edgetech 4125 (search & recovery) 455/900 kHz SSS towfish

Objective:
Side scan sonar and diving assessment survey of the interior lagoon for features related to past contacts and habitation of Swains Island



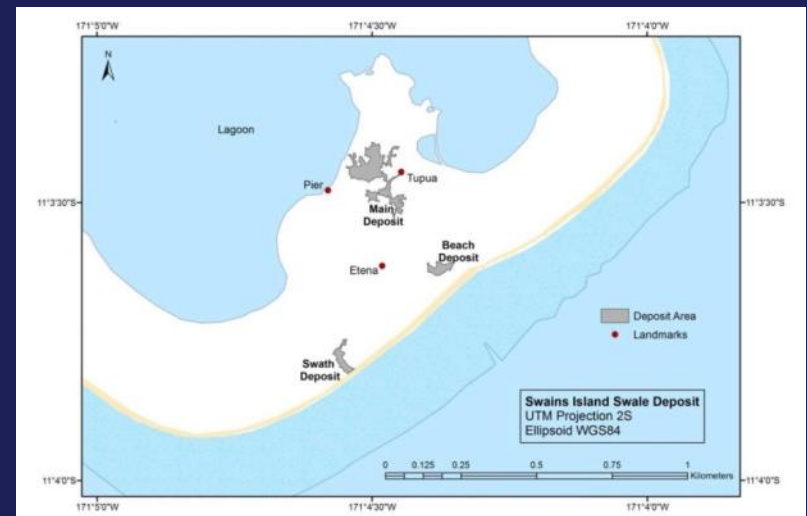
Geomorphology: Transitions Over Time



Objective:
Assessment of the lagoon, island, and shoreline geology and geomorphology for evidence of prior marine channel lagoon/ocean connection



Rhonda Suka: Geomorphology Survey



Locating the traces of the former marine channel

Digging into the Past: Land Archaeology



Chris Filimoehala, David Herdrich
American Samoa Historic Preservation Office

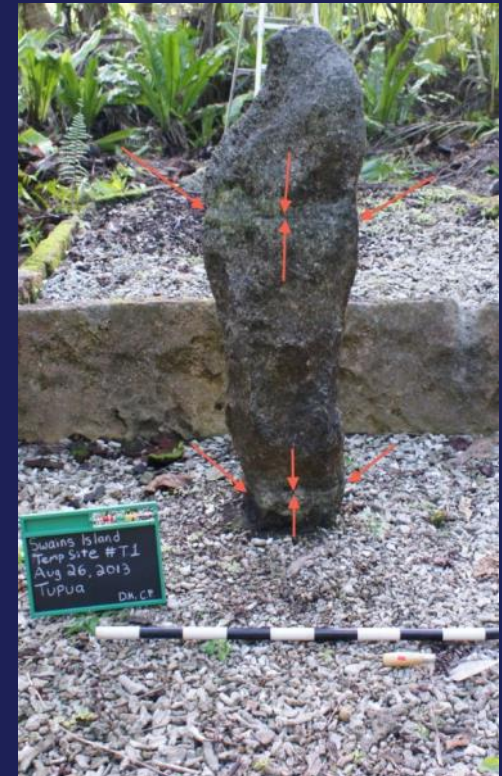
Objective:
Terrestrial reconnaissance and selected test excavations to identify and date pre-western contact features; documentation of historic period features



Cut beachrock paths

Shrine?
Burial?
Navigation stone?

(some similarities to Eastern Polynesian traditions perhaps via Pukapuka voyaging connections)



Enigmatic Tupua site

Understanding the cultural heritage of Swains Island

- boat landing
- anchors
- fale foundations
- church
- residency
- lagoon pilings
- cut rock island
- cut rock paths
- firebrick
- residency kitchen
- hearth
- concrete barrels
- beach rock quarries
- stone pier
- Solomon Island graves
- Tokelau graves
- Jennings graves
- ship tanks
- try pot
- anvil
- copra chimney
- tupua
- shipwreck flotsam
- backfill mounds
- drying platform
- copper life buoy
- wooden skiff
- island wells
- water tank
- grindstone
- hand-powered table saw
- posts
- belt road

