

# 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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# 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



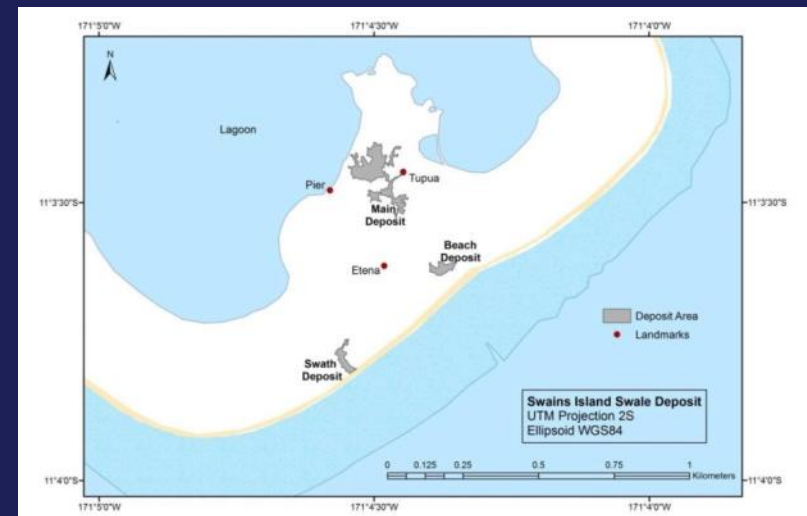
# Geomorphology: Transitions Over Time



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

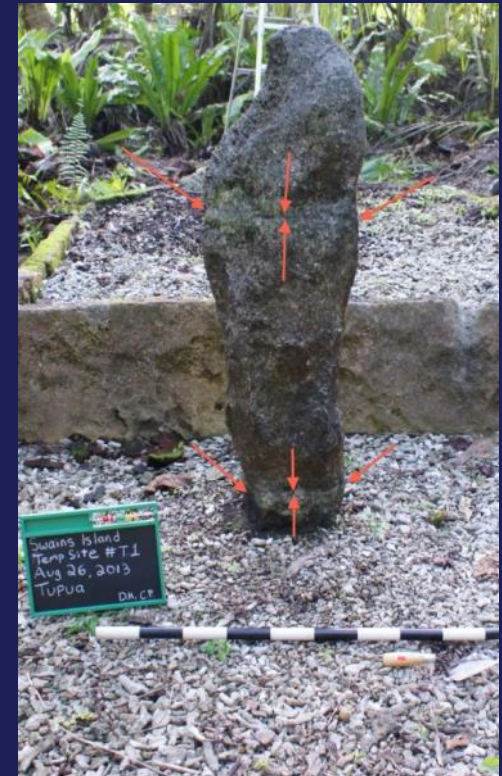
Objective:  
Terrestrial reconnaissance and selected test excavations to identify and date pre-western contact features; documentation of historic period features



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

