Swains Island: Lost Tale from the South
NOAA Heritage Survey August 24 – September 2, 2013

Multiple Goals:

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

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Sonar Survey: Descent into the Lagoon

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

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

Geomorphology: Transitions Over Time

Rhonda Suka: Geomorphology Survey

Locating the traces of the former marine channel
Digging into the Past: Land Archaeology

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

Chris Filimoehala, David Herdrich
American Samoa Historic Preservation Office

Shrine?
Burial?
Navigation stone?
(some similarities to Eastern Polynesian traditions perhaps via Pukapuka voyaging connections)

Enigmatic Tupua site

Cut beachrock paths
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