

DESIGNATION REPORT

REFUGEE ISLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONE



Prepared by Jeff B. Ransom, County Archaeologist

**Office of Historic Preservation
Regulatory and Economic Resources
Miami-Dade County**

May 2018

CONTENTS

I.	General Information	Page 3
II.	Physical Description/Setting	Page 4
III.	Archaeological Significance	Page 6
IV.	Current Condition and Preservation Quality	Page 6
V.	Criteria for Designation	Page 6
VI.	Proposed Improvements/Development	Page 7
VII.	Standards for Certificate to Dig	Page 7
VIII.	Staff Evaluation and Recommendation	Page 7
IX.	References Cited	Page 8

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

NAME: **Refugee Island (8DA2102) Archaeological Zone**

LOCATION: Miami, Florida (Unincorporated)
Township: 54 South
Range: 38 East
Section: 24

PROPERTY OWNER: Kendall Properties & Investments American Marketing and Management Inc.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: A parcel of land lying in Section 24, Township 54 South, Range 38 East in Miami-Dade County, Florida, being more particularly described as follows: Commence at the Northeast Corner of said Section 24; thence run South, as a basis for bearings, on the East line of Section 24 for a distance of 1246.0 feet; thence West 575.0 feet to the Point of Beginning; thence South 400.0 feet; thence West 350.0 feet; thence North 400.0 feet; thence East 350.0 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 3.21 Acres, more or less.

TAX FOLIO NUMBER: 30-4824-000-0010

SIGNIFICANCE: Archaeological investigations at the Refugee Island Site (8DA2102) have yielded significant, well-preserved data on regional aboriginal chronology, cultural patterns, and environmental conditions under which eastern Everglades tree island sites developed and evolved. The site is associated with the Tequesta Tribe and the Glades Culture, dating from the Glades I Late Period (AD500) through the Glades IIIA (AD1200). The Refugee Island Site (8DA2102) is one of the few tree island sites in Miami-Dade County that remain outside of Everglades National Park and it is likely to yield important information on the cultural and environmental history of the Everglades, as well as information on burial practices and the health and mortality of prehistoric populations.

Refugee Island Archaeological Zone fulfills Criterion Sec. 16A-10(1)(a)(d),

(a) *Associated with distinctive elements of the cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, religious, prehistoric, paleontological and architectural history that have contributed to the pattern of history in the community, Miami-Dade County, south Florida, the State or the nation.*

(d) *Have yielded, or are likely to yield information in history or prehistory.*

IMPACTS: Ground-disturbing activities are unlikely, as the site contains unmarked human remains.

II. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION / SETTING

The Refugee Island Site (8DA2102) is located on the northeast corner of a previously excavated limestone quarry, approximately 500 feet west of Krome Ave (SR 997) and 4500 feet east of the L-31 Canal. The site is characterized a black dirt midden deposit on a north end of a remnant tree island, covering an area of approximately 300 feet (N-S) by 200 feet (E-W). Between 2002 and 2007, limestone rock mining occurred along the north, south, and west periphery of the site, creating a square preservation area of 350 feet by 400 feet. Vegetation on the main portion of the site is dominated by Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthefolius*) and the surrounding lowland area is dominated by *Melaleuca quinquenervia*.



Contemporary Refugee Island Archaeological Zone aerial map.



1999 Refugee Island Archaeological Zone aerial map.



Refugee Island Archaeological Zone facing northwest.



Refugee Island Archaeological Zone facing southwest.

III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Archaeologist Robert Taylor first recorded the Refugee Island Site (DA2102) in 1980. He described the site as an elongated island measuring 20 meters long by 15 meters wide and classified it as a Glades Period site. In 1997, archaeologist Gary Beiter (1998) conducted a Phase I archaeological survey to confirm the site's location and delineate its boundaries. A Phase III archaeological survey of the site began in February 2000, but was suspended a few months later when excavations yielded unmarked human remains (Beiter 2003).

Archaeological investigations at the Refugee Island Site yielded significant, well-preserved data on regional aboriginal chronology, cultural patterns, and environmental conditions under which eastern Everglades tree island sites developed and evolved. The site is associated with the Tequesta Tribe and the Glades Culture, dating from the Glades I Late Period (AD500) through the Glades IIIA Period (AD1200) (Beiter 1998, 2003).

The Refugee Island Site (8DA2102) is one of the few tree island sites in Miami-Dade County that remain outside of Everglades National Park and is likely to yield important information on the cultural and environmental history of the Everglades, as well as information on burial practices and the health and mortality of prehistoric populations.

IV. CURRENT CONDITION AND PRESERVATION QUALITY

The Refugee Island Archaeological Zone is currently in a good state of preservation. The preservation quality and significance of the site make it eligible for local designation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

V. CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

The Refugee Island Archaeological Zone is significant under the following criteria, as set forth in Section 16A-10 of the Miami-Dade Historic Preservation Ordinance:

(a) **Criteria Sec. 16A-10(1)(c)**, Is associated with distinctive elements of the cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, religious, prehistoric, paleontological and architectural history that have contributed to the pattern of history in the community, Miami-Dade County, south Florida, the State or the nation.

(d) **Criteria Sec. 16A-10(1)(d)**, Have yielded, or are likely to yield information in history or prehistory.

The Refugee Island Archaeological Zone meets the requirements of criteria “a” and “d” of Section 16A-10 of the Miami-Dade County Historic Preservation Code and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

VI. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS/DEVELOPMENT

As required Section 16A-10(4) designations shall address proposed development plans. There are no projected, proposed, or existing public improvements and developmental or renewal plans; any private plans for development or redevelopment of the property or area under consideration, including any new architecture or features proposed for the same location; any applicable neighborhood or community revitalization goals, plans, or objectives, including any existing policies in the local government's comprehensive plan or other planning initiatives pertaining to, among other things, economic development, transportation, and housing; any impacts on the availability of affordable or workforce housing in the community due to historic designation or proposed redevelopment of the property or area under consideration; and the possible adaptive use of the property after designation, based on applicable local government zoning regulations and other building code requirements. Although the Refugee Island Site (DA2102) is located within the Lake Belt Mining Area, designation as a Miami-Dade County Archaeological Zone will have no impact on the Lake Belt Mining Plan. Ground-disturbing activities are also unlikely, as the site contains unmarked human remains.

VII. STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATE TO DIG

The Refugee Island Archaeological Zone would be subject to preservation requirements as determined by the Miami-Dade County Office of Historic Preservation. These would be concurrent with, or in addition to, cultural resource protection requirements currently imposed by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Archaeological Research. Due to the high probability for locating additional unmarked prehistoric human burials in the zone, *Florida Statute Section 872.05* (Florida's Unmarked Human Burial Act) and *Florida Administrative Code Chapter 1A-44* (Procedures for Reporting and Determining Jurisdiction over Unmarked Human Burials) shall apply.

VIII. STAFF EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff has performed several site visits to the Refugee Island Site (8DA2102) and researched the archaeological significance of the site. Staff has determined that the Refugee Island Archaeological Zone meets the objective criteria for designation and recommends that procedures be initiated to consider Refugee Island for designation as a Miami-Dade County Archaeological Zone.

IX. REFERENCES CITED

Beiter, Gary

1998 An Archaeological Survey of the Portland Plant Property Section 24, 25, Township 54S, Range 38E, Dade County, Florida. On file, Miami-Dade County Office of Historic Preservation.

Beiter, Gary

2003 Excavations at Refugee Island (8DA2102), Miami Dade County, Florida. *Florida Anthropologist* 56:277-292.