

Presentation 17: Jonathan Benjamin

Submerged Landscape Archaeology: Progress, Prospects and Lessons from Overseas

Submerged landscape archaeology is well known as a sub-discipline in the various 'hot spots' of Europe and the Mediterranean Basin, which can be studied in detail to better understand and explain site formation and preservation. The North American situation is one of various environmental regimes of seas, lakes and oceans and in some ways this is similar to the European context. Both have established practices, though mainly through independent research centers in well-researched areas. However, new sites from regions previously believed to be void of cultural material below the intertidal zone are on the rise in Europe and elsewhere. This is in part due to a change in research priorities, and a re-consideration of existing research — and management — bias, highlighted by the recent COST Action SPLASHCOS (2009-2013). SPLASHCOS brought together the interdisciplinary fields concerned with palaeoenvironmental change, sea-level rise, and underwater archaeology. The North American situation can learn from such an international experience; however, it can also inform international scholarship and management abroad. The situation in the Gulf of Mexico makes for a good case study in and knowledge can be both imported and exported to and from the US. This presentation will discuss some of the emerging sites and new international projects and will review the benefits of concerted capacity building practices established by SPLASHCOS in Europe and the Middle East. It will also seek to show how the American experience might also inform emerging areas worldwide, such as in Australia and the Southern Hemisphere generally.