

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee

BILL: SB 868

INTRODUCER: Senator Hays

SUBJECT: Archaeological Sites and Specimens

DATE: February 2, 2012 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jenkins	Roberts	GO	Pre-meeting
2.			BC	
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

This bill provides that specified activities relating to archaeological sites and specimens located upon land owned or controlled by a political subdivision or a special district created by the Legislature are prohibited and subject to penalties. It authorizes the Division of Historical Resources of the Department of State to impose an administrative fine on and seek injunctive relief against certain entities.

This bill substantially amends subsections (1) and (2) of section 267.13 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

State Policy Relative to Historic Properties

Section 267.061, F.S., provides the “State Policy Relative to Historic Properties.” This policy acknowledges that the rich and unique heritage of historic properties in this state, representing more than 10,000 years of human presence, is an important legacy to be valued and conserved for present and future generations, and that the destruction of these nonrenewable historical resources will engender a significant loss to the state’s quality of life, economy, and cultural environment. It is the policy of the state to:

- Provide leadership in the preservation of the state’s historic resources;
- Administer state-owned or state-controlled historic resources in a spirit of stewardship and trusteeship;
- Contribute to the preservation of non-state-owned historic resources and to give encouragement to organizations and individuals undertaking preservation by private means;

- Foster conditions, using measures that include financial and technical assistance, for a harmonious coexistence of society and state historic resources;
- Encourage the public and private preservation and utilization of elements of the state's historically built environment; and
- Assist local governments to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.¹

This policy also provides that all treasure troves, artifacts, and objects having intrinsic or historical and archaeological value, which have been abandoned on state-owned lands or state-owned sovereignty submerged lands, belong to the state with the title thereto vested in the Division of Historical Resources of the Department of State for the purposes of administration and protection.²

State Archaeological Landmarks and Landmark Zones

The Division of Historical Resources (Division) may designate an archaeological site of significance to the scientific study or public representation of the state's historical, prehistoric, or aboriginal past as a "state archaeological landmark."³ In addition, the Division may designate an interrelated grouping of significant archaeological sites as a "state archaeological landmark zone."⁴ No site or grouping of sites can be designated without the express written consent of a private owner.⁵ Upon designation of an archaeological site, the owners and occupants are given written notification by the Division.⁶ Once so designated, no person may conduct field investigation activities on the site without first securing a permit from the Division.⁷

Archaeological Research Permits

The Division may issue permits for excavation and surface reconnaissance on state lands or lands within the boundaries of designated state archaeological landmarks or landmark zones to institutions which the Division deems to be properly qualified to conduct such activity, subject to Division rules and regulations, provided such activity is undertaken by reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other historical, scientific, or educational institutions or societies that possess or will secure the archaeological expertise for the performance of systematic archaeological field research, comprehensive analysis, and interpretation in the form of publishable reports and monographs.⁸

Those state institutions considered by the Division to permanently possess the required archaeological expertise to conduct the archaeological activities permissible under the provisions of a permit may be designated as accredited institutions.⁹ These institutions are allowed to

¹ Section 267.061(1)(a), F.S.

² Section 267.061(1)(b), F.S.

³ Section 267.11, F.S.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Section 267.12., F.S.

⁹ *Id.*

conduct archaeological field activities on state-owned or controlled lands or within the boundaries of any designated state archaeological landmark or any landmark zone without obtaining an individual permit for each project.¹⁰ The institutions are required to give prior written notice of all anticipated archaeological field activities, together with such information as may reasonably be required by the Division to ensure the proper preservation, protection, and excavation of archaeological resources.¹¹ However, no archaeological activity can be commenced by the accredited institution until the Division determines that the planned project is in conformity with guidelines, regulations, and criteria.¹² Such determination is made by the Division within 15 days from the date of notification.¹³

Prohibited Archaeological Practices and Penalties

Any person who by means other than excavation conducts archaeological field investigations on, or removes or attempts to remove, or defaces, destroys, or otherwise alters any archaeological site or specimen located upon land owned or controlled by the state or within the boundaries of a designated state archaeological landmark or landmark zone, except in the course of activities pursued under the authority of a permit granted by the Division or under procedures relating to accredited institutions, commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, F.S., and, in addition, forfeits to the state all specimens, objects, and materials collected, together with all photographs and records relating to such material.¹⁴

A person who engages in the same conduct by means of excavation commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084, F.S., and any vehicle or equipment used in connection with the violation is subject to forfeiture to the state. Such person may be ordered by the court to make restitution to the state for the archaeological or commercial value and cost of restoration and repair.¹⁵ Individuals also are prohibited, and subject to criminal penalties, for selling or procuring archaeological objects which have been collected in violation of state law.¹⁶

The Division additionally has authority to institute administrative proceedings to impose administrative fines of not more than \$500 a day on, and apply to a court of competent jurisdiction for injunctive relief against, any person or business organization that, without written permission of the Division, explores for, salvages, or excavates treasure troves, artifacts, sunken or abandoned ships, or other objects having historical or archaeological value located on state-owned or state-controlled lands, including state sovereignty submerged lands.¹⁷

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 868 expands the provisions contained in s. 267.13, F.S., related to prohibited archaeological practices and penalties to include state sovereignty submerged land, political subdivisions, and

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Section 267.13(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 267.13(1)(b), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 267.13(1)(c), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 267.13(2), F.S.

special districts created by the Legislature. Currently, this language applies only to any land owned or controlled by the state, or within the boundaries of a designated state archaeological landmark or landmark zone. Thus, the bill affords other public landowners, who are not covered by the present statute and limited to the other remedies such as trespass after warning,¹⁸ greater ability to deter persons from searching for archeological finds on their property.

Any specimens, objects, and materials collected in violation of the law are forfeited to the state.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2012.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Revenues: Expanding the prohibition of specified activities relating to archaeological sites and resources could result in the collection of additional fines. Between 2004 and 2006, a total of \$6,493.13 was collected pursuant to s. 267.13, F.S. No fines have been collected since 2006.¹⁹

Expenditures: Expanding the prohibition of specified activities relating to archaeological sites and resources could result in the need for additional staff time and resources.

¹⁸ See, s. 810.09, F.S.

¹⁹ Department of State analysis of SB 868, dated December 8, 2011.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

The language of the bill should be clarified. As currently written, the prohibitions and penalties could be interpreted to apply to “any land.” Also, there is no need for the inclusion of “a special district created by the Legislature” as that term is included in the definition of “political subdivision.”²⁰ Additionally, s. 267.12, F.S., should be amended to allow for permitting and designation of accredited institutions with regard to political subdivisions.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.

²⁰ See s. 1.01(8), F.S., which defines “political subdivisions” to include counties, cities, towns, villages, special tax school districts, special road and bridge districts, bridge districts, and all other districts in this state.