

Top Site FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q1. What tribe(s) built the Bayou Jasmine site?

It is impossible to tell which tribe(s) built the site. When Europeans came to Louisiana in the 1600s, Muskogean-speaking peoples occupied the land around Lake Pontchartrain. Most of these groups no longer exist. Because we do not know what Early Woodland period inhabitants of the Bayou Jasmine site called themselves, we call them the Tchefuncte culture, named after the Tchefuncte site in St. Tammany Parish, where members of the same group also lived.

Q2. How did archaeologists find the site?

Archaeologists first recorded the Bayou Jasmine site in 1957, but they did not excavate there until 1975. Archaeologists first noted the site when it was exposed during the construction of what is now Old Highway 51.

Q3. Why do archaeologists want to study coprolites?

Archaeologists study coprolites because coprolites can tell them a lot about what people ate. Sometimes, coprolites can also tell archaeologists if people had certain health problems, like parasites.

Q4. What did archaeologists do to try to keep water out of their excavations?

They had a metal cofferdam built around their excavation area and used pumps to remove water that seeped into the cofferdam.

Q5. With all those shells at Bayou Jasmine, were clams a major source of nutrition?

Studies have shown that the clams eaten there, *Rangia cuneata*, did not have much nutritional value. They were low in carbohydrates and low in protein. They probably were eaten because they were plentiful and readily available.

Q6. What caused subsidence at Bayou Jasmine?

Scientists have identified many processes that contribute to subsidence in this part of Louisiana. They include natural causes, like fault movement, and human ones, like surface water drainage.

Q7. What are the numbers on some of the artifacts?

Archaeologists label artifacts with a site number and a catalog number. The site number for Bayou Jasmine is 16SJB2. The 16 refers to Louisiana, the SJB stands for St. John the Baptist Parish, and the 2 means it was the second archaeological site recorded in that parish. The catalog number is also on a list that tells where the archaeologists found each artifact. All the artifacts have numbers, but most of the numbers do not show in the photographs.