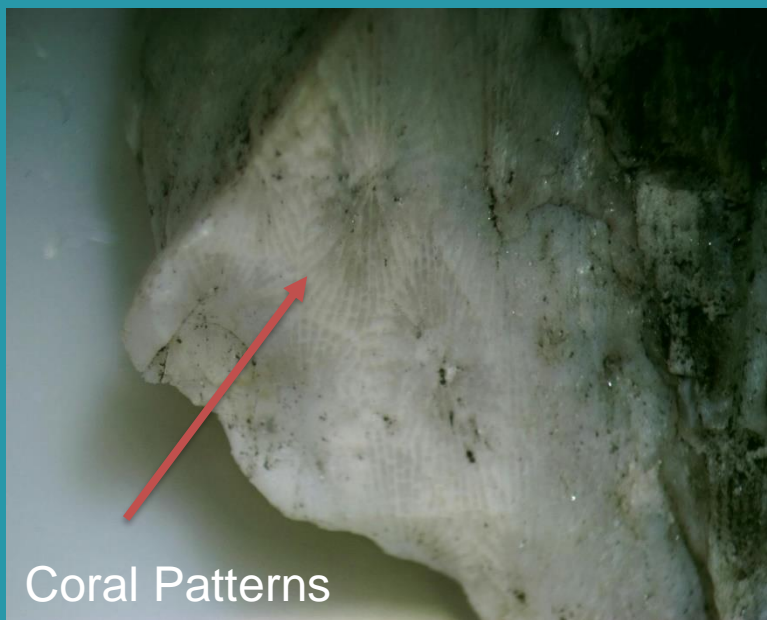


ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

February 2024

Sometimes things are not what they seem. There have been many artifacts found by the THPO's Tribal Archeology Section (TAS) that may look like nothing at first glance. This month, the THPO's Collections department is choosing to highlight one such example with this piece of lithic shatter.

First, let's break down the name of the artifact. Lithic means "relating to or made of stone" (dictionary.cambridge.org). The definition of shatter is "to (cause something to) break suddenly into very small pieces" (dictionary.cambridge.org). When we put those two together, we essentially get a broken piece of rock. What makes this an artifact? This piece of stone was possibly the byproduct of stone tool production, also called flintknapping. It could then mean that this stone was altered by humans.



Lithic shatter like this is not uncommon in many parts of Florida. However, it becomes less frequent the further south in the state you go. This lithic shatter was found in Lakeland Florida and is actually a piece of fossilized coral. It makes sense because Lakeland is relatively close to Tampa, where fossilized coral is known to have been a possible resource for past populations (Goodyear et al., 1983). If you look closely at the picture to the left, you can see some of the coral-like patterns on the surface. In the lab, sometimes we call it silicified coral. When we do this, we are simply specifying what kind of fossilization took place.

Goodyear, A. C., Upchurch, S. B., Book, M.J., & Goodyear, N. N. (1983). Paleo-Indian Manifestations In The Tampa Bay Region, Florida. *The Florida Anthropologist*, 36(1-2), 55-56
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