

# ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

April 2026

Stone tools are some of the most recognizable artifacts in southeastern archaeology. However, South Florida is not home to a lot of stone tools or materials for their production— so much so that the region is sometimes called the land without stone (Austin, ed.), making this stone tool a rare find.

This point is called a Stanfield point, which is from a period referred to as the Paleoindian period (12,000 to 8,000 BC). It refers to the time in North America where big game hunting was the norm. Animals like mammoths and mastodons were hunted regularly. This stone tool was most likely in use between 8500 and 7000 BC (Dowdy & Rainey 2015). It is probably the oldest man-made object in the THPO's Collections. On top of being found in South Florida, it is also a rare type to find in general, even compared to other Paleoindian points. It gets its name from the Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter site in Alabama, which was a Paleoindian rock shelter site. This site was helpful in figuring out stone tool ordering through time (Meredith 2025).

Despite this point being very distinctive, little is known about its function. This is the case with many other kinds of points as well. It is possible that this type of point, or at least some of them, were actually preforms. Preforms are a stage in chipped stone tool production that happens right before the final stage (Figure 2). However, it could also be a distinctive tool, like a large blade, that would have been tied to an antler or wood handle.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Austin, R. J. (2018). Southeastern Archaeological Conference annual meeting. In *No Stone Unturned: Lithic Resource Use in South Florida*. Augusta; AWIARE.

Dowdy, K., & Rainey, I. (2015). Stanfield. In *Legends In Stone Paleo Edition: A Florida Collection* (p. 127). essay.

Meredith, S. M. (2025, August 8). Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter. *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. <https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/stanfield-worley-bluff-shelter/>

