



Issue  
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*Your Monthly Insight Into the Parris Island Environmental Division*

# Cultural Resources



Crucifix found at Santa Elena

Environmental Division >>>

## Cultural Resource Management

### Preserving our Past for the Future

*The long history of Parris Island has left a rich cultural legacy. Along with more than 100 archaeological sites, the island, affectionately called the “Cradle of the Corps”, contains a diverse historic military landscape chronicling the development of the Marine Corps from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to today’s modern Marine warrior.*

**Compliance Manager**  
EMS  
843-228-3102

Hazardous Waste  
843-228-4698

**Air Quality**  
Asbestos/Toxics  
843-228-3400

Stormwater/Water Quality  
843-228-4293

Tank Program/Training  
843-228-2611

**Natural Resources Manager**  
843-228-3066

Conservation Law Enforcement  
(Game Warden)  
843-228-3799

Wildlife Biologist  
843-228-2663

Recycle Manager  
843-228-3430

Env. Restoration  
843-228-3615

Depot Archaeologist  
843-228-2834

Parris Island’s premier cultural resource, located at The Legends Golf Course, is the Charlesfort-Santa Elena archaeological site. This site is the original location of two 16<sup>th</sup>-Century European settlements, the property was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 2001. Fewer than 2,500 historic places have been recognized with this national distinction; of those, only a small fraction are purely archaeological in nature, such as the Charlesfort-Santa Elena NHL. According to the National Park Service, the 35-acre site is nationally significant because it illustrates the competition for New World resources between two European colonial powers, France and Spain.

Charlesfort was built in 1562 by Jean Ribaut as a refuge for Huguenots and for the glory of France. Ribaut’s men abandoned the isolated outpost in 1563. Spain solidified its claim to the area in 1566 and with it established the colony of Santa Elena over the ruins of the deserted French outpost. In 1587, after 21 years of occupation, the Spanish abandoned the colony.

Archaeologists from the Univ. of South Carolina began excavation at Santa Elena in 1979. Over three decades they uncovered archaeological remains, preserved largely intact, including at least five forts, a town site with wells, trash pits and residential lots, and what is believed to be the oldest European-style pottery kiln. This field research has resulted in more than 100,000 artifacts being recovered that reflect the lives of soldiers at Charlesfort, Santa Elena.



This Santa Elena Monument (Aqui Estuvo Espana), is located near the Charlesfort Monument and adjacent to two half-mile trails with interpretive signage highlighting the history, archaeology and natural resources of the site.

**\*\*Federal regulations state it is unlawful to excavate, remove, damage, alter, or deface archaeological sites and further forbids any purchase, or exchange of artifacts from public lands. This is enforced by our Conservation Law Enforcement Officer. To learn more, stop by the Parris Island Museum or call our Depot Archaeologist at 843 - 228 - 2834.**