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PHOTO RELEASE: FDOT Crews Discover Shipwreck in St. Augustine

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. – During recent construction activities Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) crews unearthed a nearly intact shipwreck on State Road A1A near the Bridge of Lions in St. Augustine. FDOT archeologists and experts working with FDOT believe the vessel dates to the mid-to-late 1800s.

High-Resolution Photos www.NFLRoads.com/Shipwreck

Prior to the start of construction, FDOT contracted with SEARCH, Inc. (SEARCH) as a part of the project due to the historic nature of the area. SEARCH is a global leader in terrestrial and maritime archaeology that provided the full spectrum of cultural heritage services to assist with this specific excavation.

“With every project we undertake, the Florida Department of Transportation is sensitive to the unique needs of the communities we serve, including the potential presence of historical sites and artifacts within construction sites,” said District 2 Secretary Greg Evans. “We are grateful to our partners at SEARCH for their careful efforts to preserve this vessel, and we look forward to learning more about its significance to the region.”

“We believe the vessel may have sunk unexpectedly and, over time, was silted in. That is why it was preserved so well - it was encapsulated in soil and mud, so there was no air contact for it to decay. It’s truly an incredible find,” Evans continued.

“FDOT has a robust program to identify and preserve historical elements throughout the state. FDOT’s Cultural Resources component of the Environmental Management Office will continue to oversee the work related to the vessel. FDOT officials will ultimately look to preserve the vessel and work with the local community to preserve it for years to come,” concluded District 2 Secretary Greg Evans.

Dr. James Delgado, Senior Vice President at SEARCH who led the excavation and recovery, said “We believe the vessel to be a small single-masted, shallow-draft sailing craft of the 19th century that was likely used to extract fish and shellfish from coastal waterways and directly offshore.”

“With a dedicated team, including support from the local community and the on-site construction team, we were able to extract the vessel in order to allow the important work on the community’s infrastructure to continue. We greatly appreciate FDOT’s commitment to cultural resources and in retaining SEARCH for this project,” Delgado concluded.

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