

Topics for Today's Discussion

- Archaeology as a “lens” for viewing the past
- What do we think we know and why?
- Who's past is it and who gets to write its history?

Archaeology as a “Lens” for Viewing the Past



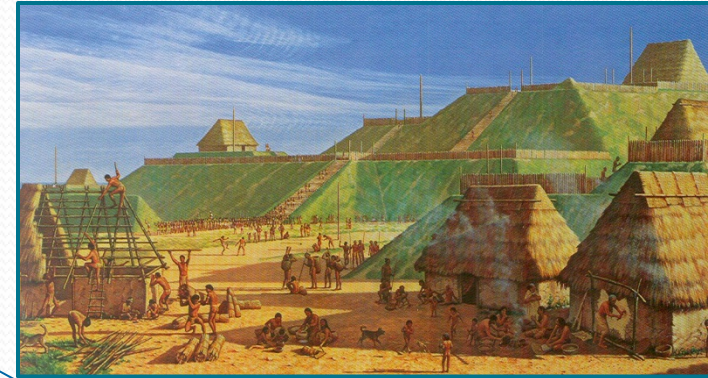
- Primary source of information for 99% of our human history (writing 5KYBP of >2.5MY)
- Unique among western sciences – able to study human history & culture change over “deep time” (entirety of human history)
- Provides uniquely powerful human experience – physical contact with the past (closest we can come to time-travel)
- Primary goals: preservation/stewardship and increasing our knowledge about the past
- Provides an “unvarnished” record of the past (very different from historic accounts)

Archaeology's Downsides: inherently destructive; western-culture bias; accessibility bias (land v. underwater); preservation bias (inorganic v. organic); de-emphasis on humanity; difficult to integrate with Tribal oral history; provides a limited record from which to interpret the totality of human activity

What is Archaeology?

Archaeology or Archeology (*archaeo* = “ancient” and *logy* = “the study of”)

Study of past human society through the examination of *artifacts*, *features*, *ecofacts*, and *environmental data*. Archaeology is empirically based and is often the only way to learn about peoples who left no written record.



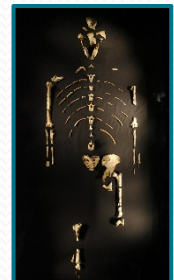
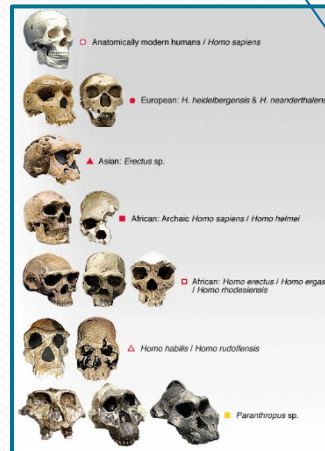
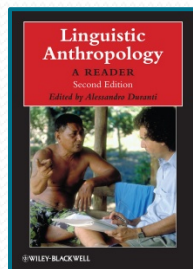
Anthropology
(Anthro=man)

Cultural

Archaeology

Linguistic

Biological

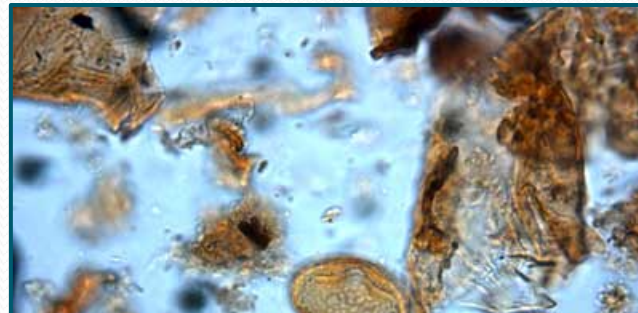
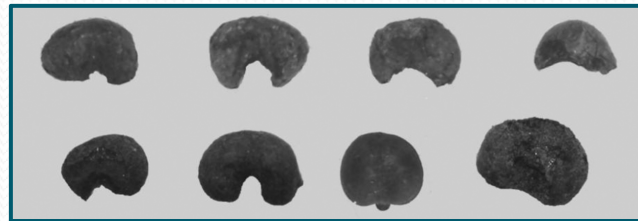


Archaeological Terms (continued)

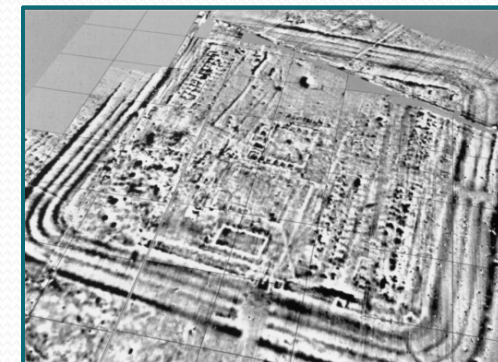
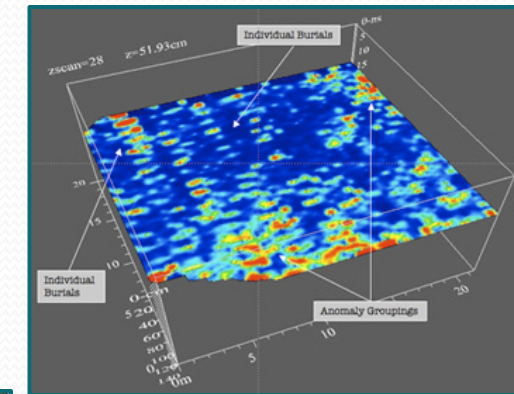
Artifact: Any “thing” made or modified by humans.



Ecofacts: Non-artifactual remains found in archaeological sites that are part of the cultural record - such as bones, seeds, and plant pollen.

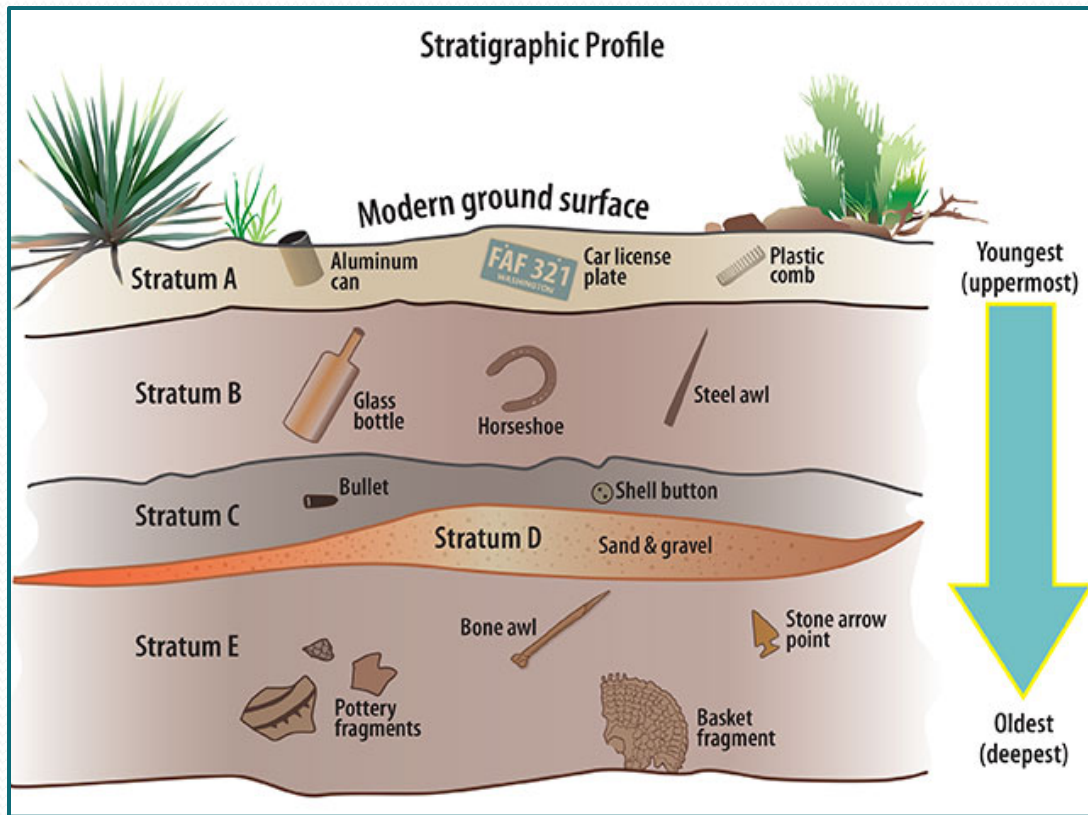


Modern Tools: Remote Sensing

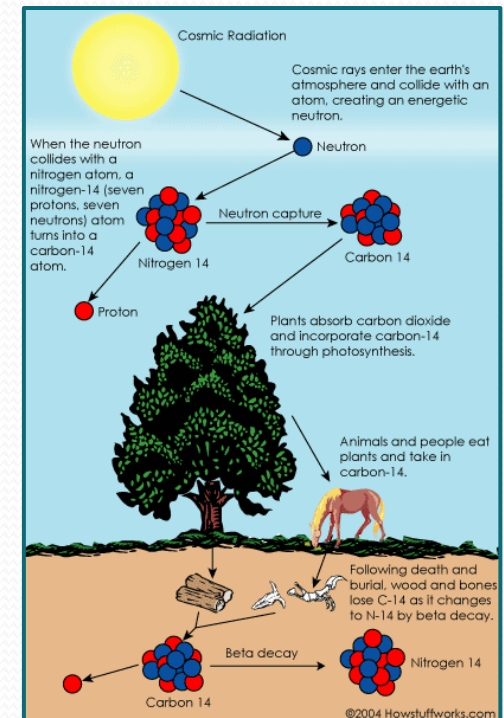


Keys to Archaeological Investigation: Temporal Context

Relative Dating



Absolute Dating (radiocarbon)



- Willard Libby and colleagues Univ. of Chicago 1949
- Half-life of C-14= 5730 years

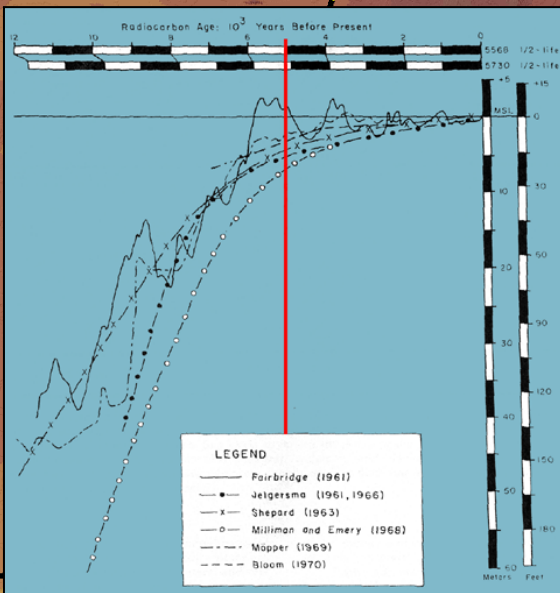
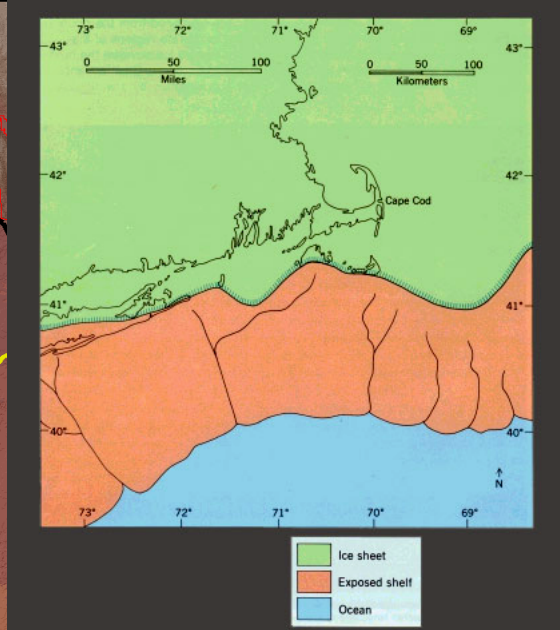
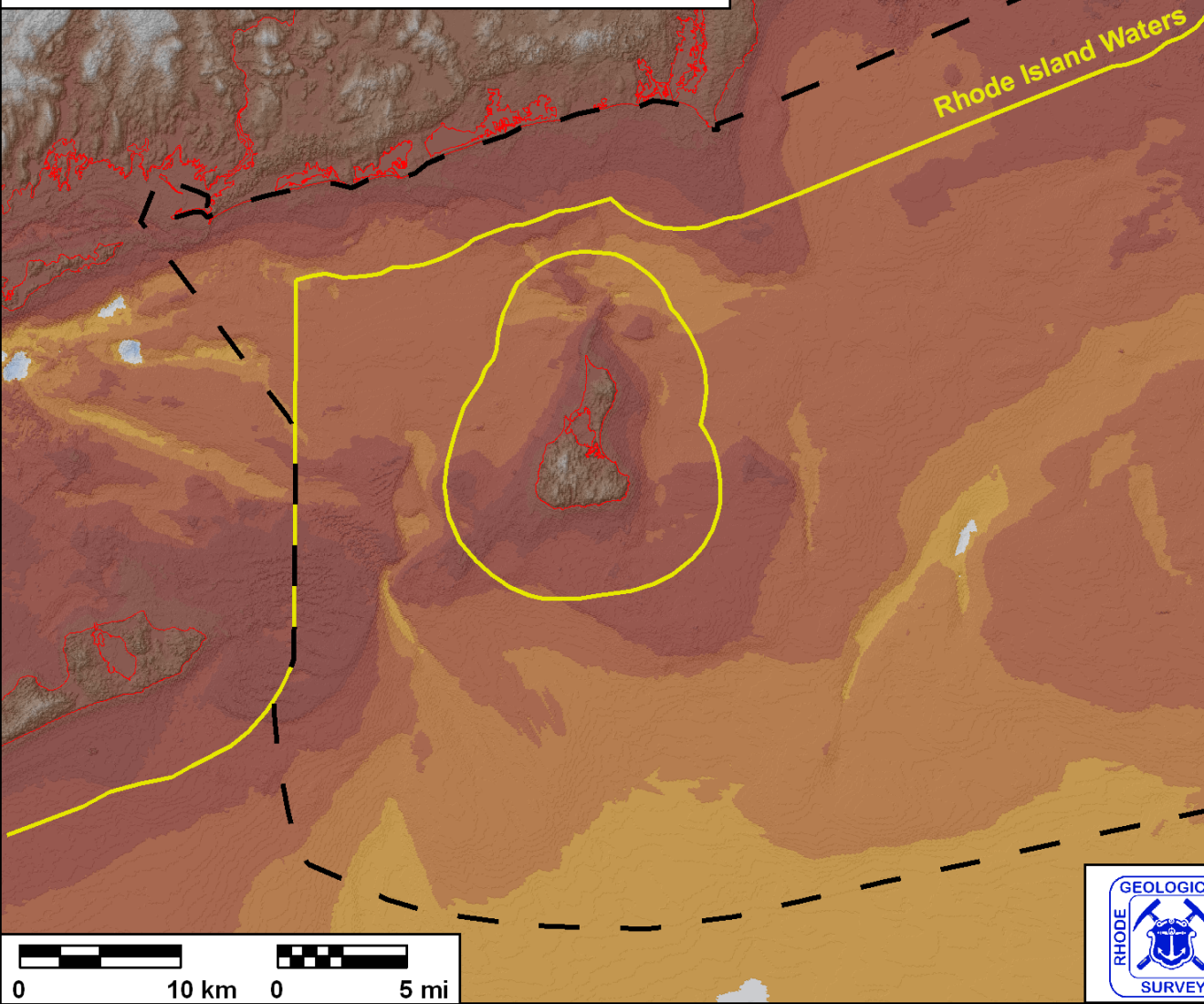
What about the Submerged Environment?



SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA

- 60 m below present
11,650 yBP

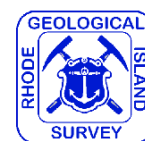
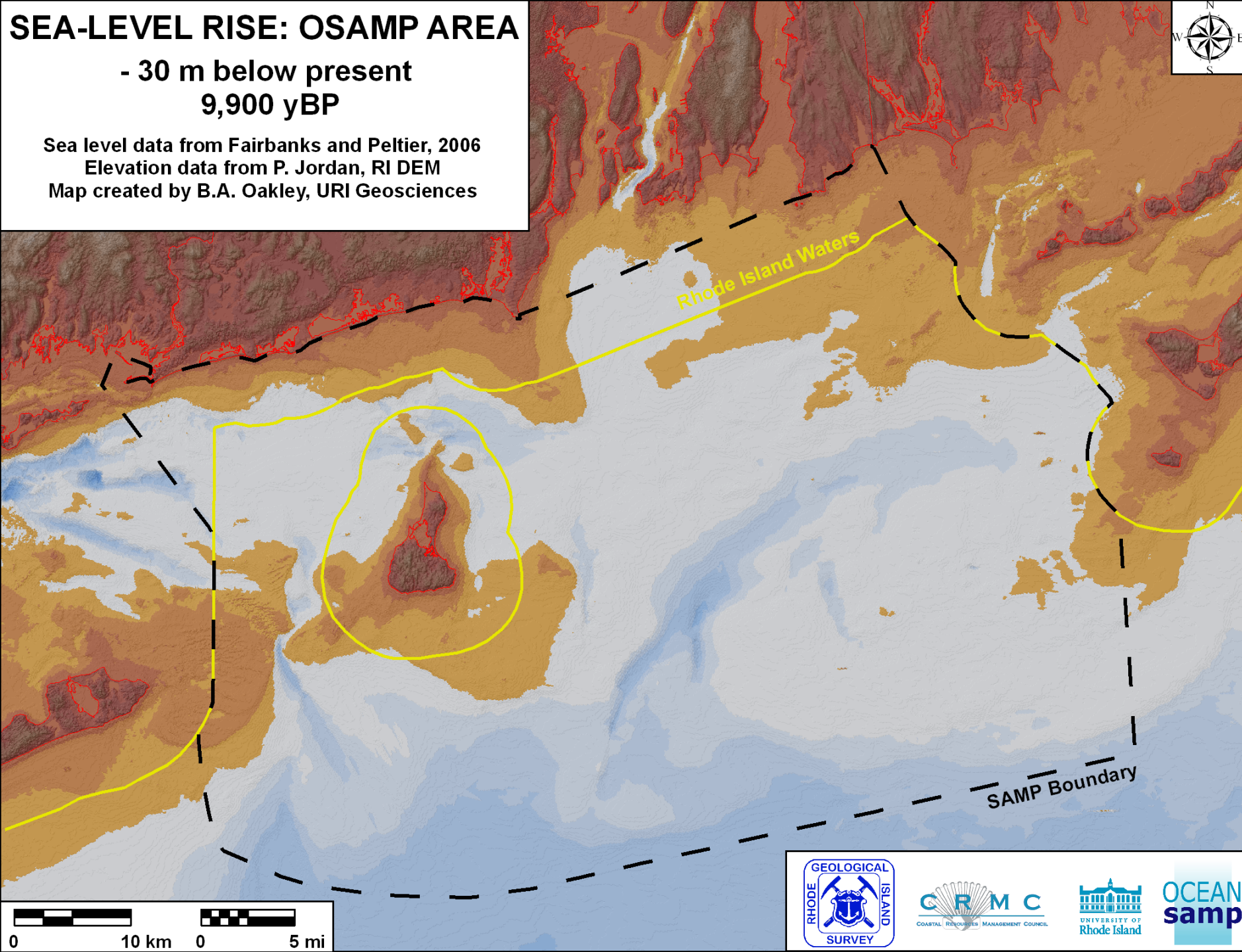
Sea level data from Fairbanks and Peltier, 2006
Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM
Map created by B.A. Oakley, URI Geosciences



SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA

- 30 m below present
9,900 yBP

Sea level data from Fairbanks and Peltier, 2006
Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM
Map created by B.A. Oakley, URI Geosciences



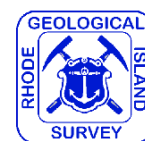
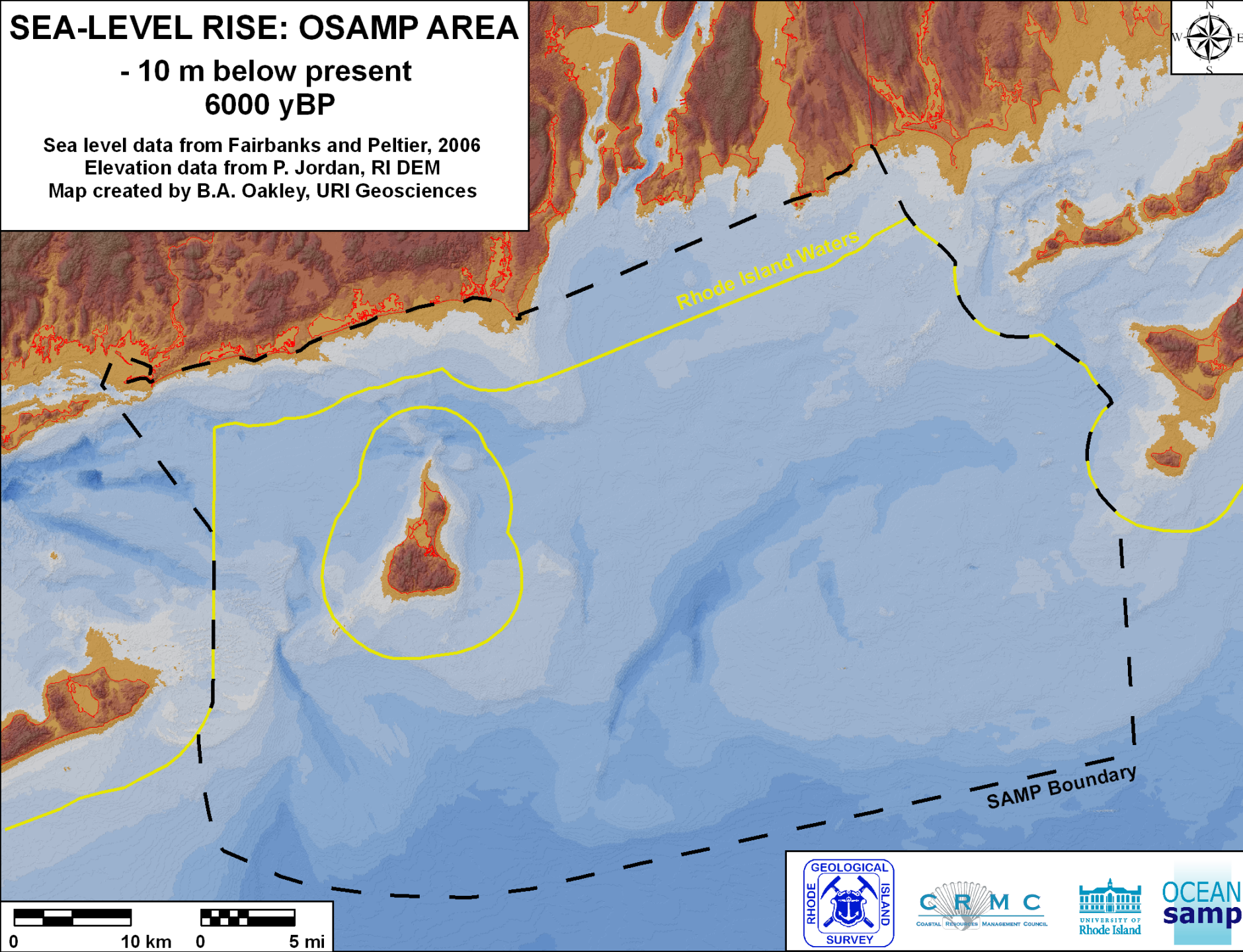
SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA

- 10 m below present
6000 yBP

Sea level data from Fairbanks and Peltier, 2006

Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM

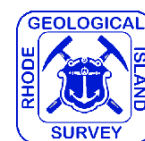
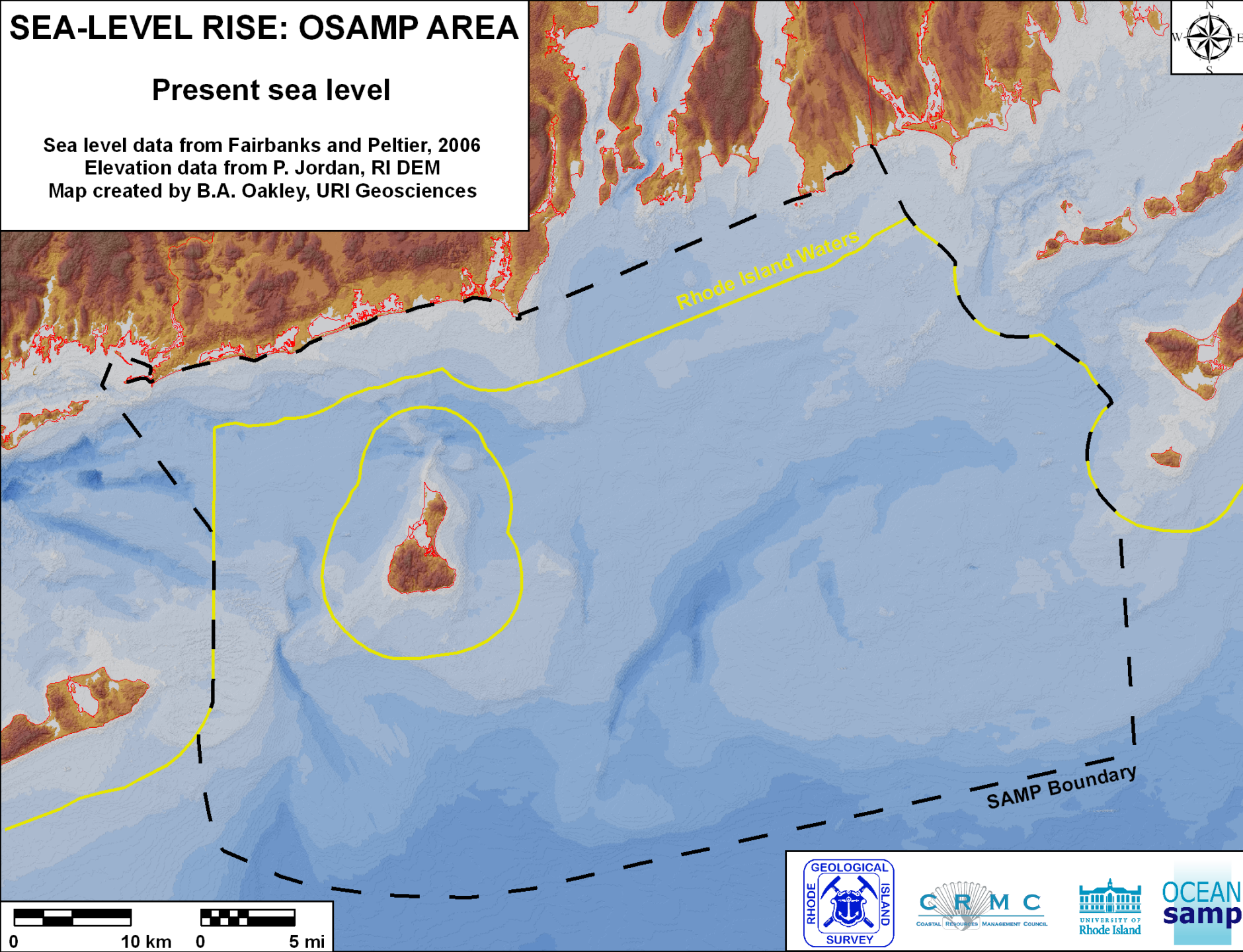
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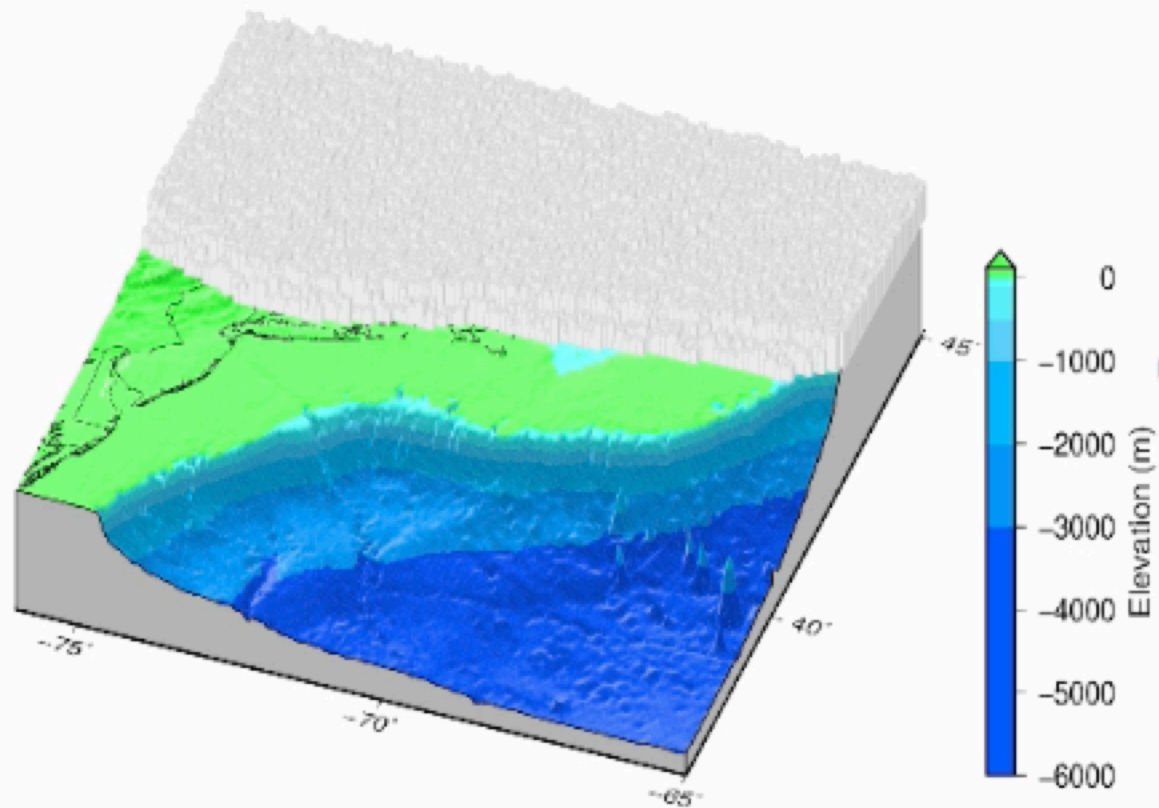
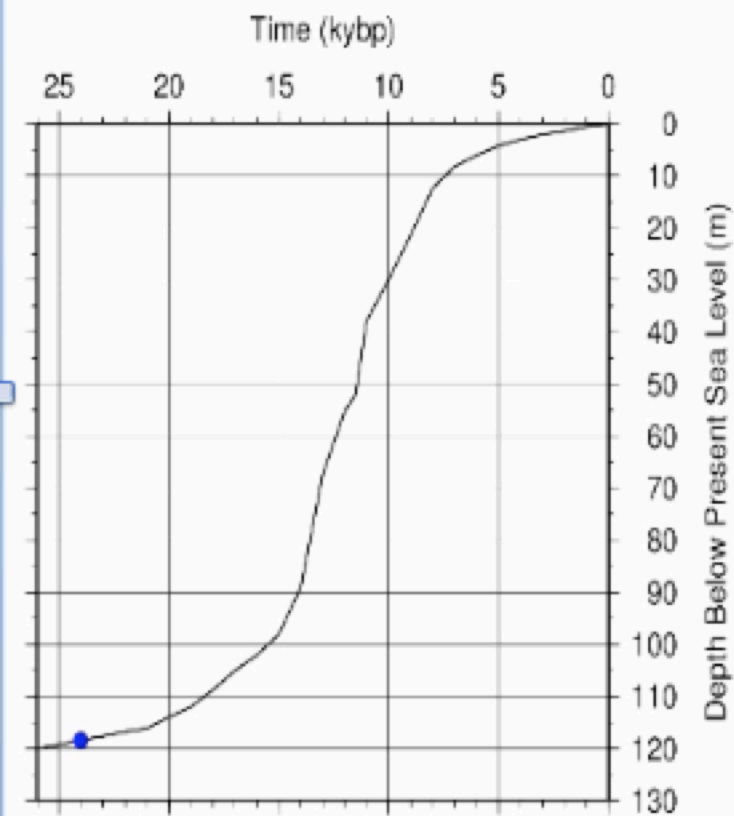
SEA-LEVEL RISE: OSAMP AREA

Present sea level

Sea level data from Fairbanks and Peltier, 2006
Elevation data from P. Jordan, RI DEM
Map created by B.A. Oakley, URI Geosciences



24 kybp



0 kybp

