

Thumb up: Smithsonian scientists taking seriously the discovery of a fossilized bone found in Vero Beach

editorial board

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BONING UP ON HISTORY: Scientists from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., recently visited Vero Beach to take DNA samples from a fossilized bone found by Vero Beach amateur fossil hunter James Kennedy.

"We're trying to get a little DNA to see if we can identify what kind of large mammal it is from," said scientist Rob Fleischer. "We also want to try some radio carbon dating to get a better idea of the time it came from."

The bone, which includes an etching of a mammoth, has been estimated to be about 13,000 years old, which could mean that man and the now-extinct mammoth were present at the same time in Vero Beach.

"If they find any DNA that's viable, I hop it's from a mammoth," Kennedy said. "And I hope they find out everything they can about it."

Kennedy reportedly found the bone about four years ago within walking distance of Vero Beach's "Vero Man" archeological site discovered in 1915, which is considered one of two sites in the Western Hemisphere where human remains have been found with those of Ice Age animals.

At first skeptical of the potential link between the etched bone discovered by Kennedy and Ice Age evidence, Fleischer said, "We came down here thinking that it's not likely, but possible. But, we're leaving thinking that it's probably a little more likely."



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