

Subject: Call to Artists: Create a Historic Display for the "Hurricanes & History: Fort King's Hidden Bottles"

Dear Marion Cultural Alliance Artists,

Please see the below call for artists to assist a local nonprofit in telling an important part of Marion County's history. Submissions are due December 7<sup>th</sup> and comes with a \$500 stipend. Winner will be notified December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Project Summary:

Gulf Archaeology Research Institute (GARI), is excited to announce an opportunity for local Marion County artists to contribute to a unique and historically significant project. We are seeking a talented artist to design and create a display for an upcoming traveling exhibit that tells the story of how a hurricane kicked off a community-led effort to preserve and interpret what is now The Fort King National Historic Landmark. This project is using oral histories of residents who were here in 1968 as well as current archaeological excavations to create a museum display that can travel Ocala telling this important piece of our shared history.

Project Background and Building History:

The "Hurricanes & History: Fort King's Hidden Bottles" project is an initiative aimed at uncovering, preserving, and sharing a crucial moment in Ocala's preservation history. In 1968, Hurricane Gladys swept through Florida and left a significant impact in Marion County. The hurricane brought down a tree on the McCall property that unearthed a hidden cache of historic bottles near the site of Fort King, revealing artifacts that connected the community directly to its early 19th-century past. Understanding the mystery of these bottles and why they were left behind by Seminole War era soldiers is part of a current ongoing research effort by GARI. Additionally, histories of residents who were here at the time are being recorded and captured before those memories are lost to time.

The discovery of the bottle cache in 1968 captivated local residents, many of whom still recall the event or own one or more of the bottles. This project aims to harness those memories and oral histories, along with contemporary artistic rendering and historical context, to connect the community with its heritage.

Artistic Goals:

By combining archaeological research, oral history interviews, and artistic collaboration, the project will provide a glimpse into this important discovery. The resulting traveling display, enriched by historical context and community stories, will engage and educate the public, ensuring that this unique part of Ocala's past continues to inspire future generations for years to come on the importance of preserving local history. The finished artwork should connect the events through time and create relevance for current residents.

Compensation and Support:

- Selected artist(s) will receive a stipend of \$500, plus reasonable reimbursement for necessary supplies to be discussed and agreed upon prior to contract award.

- GARI has access to some display cases that could be used for this exhibit if the artist chooses.
- Artist's work will be presented as a part of a traveling display and a long-term exhibit at the Fort King Archaeological Resource Center. Once installed at the museum, there will be an opening night event where the artist will be recognized.
- GARI will also acknowledge the artist's work on social media and in any published material.
- Your work will be part of a professional, community-centered exhibit that is sure to leave a lasting impact.

#### Practical Considerations:

- The artist may choose to create a background piece which can be displayed along with the bottles, or the artist may choose a more immersive experience and treatment of this display. Either approach is appropriate, however GARI will need to assist with meeting curatorial standards required for artifacts.
- The display should include five to six 750ml bottles secured in the artwork/display and in a closed display case. See included photos for examples of bottles in collection.
- This is an indoor piece and due to the fragile nature of the bottles will be displayed in a safe and secure location at each stop on the display schedule
- The entire piece should be no larger than 3 ft x 4 ft in a freestanding or tabletop display.
- At the end of the exhibit period, the art piece will be part of the permanent collection at Fort King and may be used in future exhibits or interpretations.
- If you'd like to familiarize yourself with the history of Fort King, please refer to the City of Ocala Fort King website at <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/876319994/>.
- Display should have no plug-in power requirements. No wall-hanging artwork.
- There are also photographs from 1968, archival materials, and audio recordings of the oral history interviews should you wish to incorporate them in a mixed media installation.
- GARI will work with the artist to incorporate historical background, text, photographs, and other information into the final traveling display alongside the artist's creation.

We're looking for artists who are passionate about Ocala's history and eager to help the community connect with our shared heritage in an engaging, creative format. The chosen display will be designed to highlight artifacts from Fort King and educate the public on this important archaeological find and how Fort King is truly the birthplace of Ocala. Please reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information about this project and the display.

#### How to Apply:

If you're interested in being part of this meaningful project, please email Stephanie Bauman at [stephanie@gulfarchaeology.org](mailto:stephanie@gulfarchaeology.org) with a brief statement about your interest, any relevant experience, and samples of your past work (or links to your portfolio). Applications are due by December 1, 2024.

#### Artists should provide:

- Initial budget outline for additional supplies, if needed.

- A brief statement on how the finished product will look and how the design reflects the historical importance of the bottles and Fort King. A Thumbnail sketch is appreciated but not required.
- Examples of any past works or installations, especially those with historical or interpretive elements.
- Email address, phone number, and mailing address for notification purposes

This is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to Ocala's legacy. We look forward to seeing how you can help bring our history to life!

Timeline:

- Submissions Due December 7, 2024
- Submission Review Period December 7-15, 2024
- Notification of award by December 15, 2024
- Artwork Due by March 20, 2025
- Reception Date between Late May and Early June 2025

