

PACIFIC ISLANDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Islandexplorer.org Program

Research Mission:

Discovering when the island was settled, its relationships with the other Austral Islands trading networks and provide a culture history of the development of the culture of Raivavae.

Raivavae, French Polynesia

The furthestmost south high island of French Polynesia was once settled by Polynesians who carved large stone statues and impressive altars with upright slab walled courts. These are the largest statues in Polynesia after those of Easter Island, and represent goddesses and deified ancestors of the different clans. Oral traditions mention that this flourishing culture formed part of an extensive trade network with its neighboring island of Tubuai, and double outrigger canoes traveled regularly with offerings to be presented upon Marae Taputapuatea in Raiatea, Society Islands over 500 miles away. In 1985-1989 archaeologist **Edmundo Edwards**, (*Research Associate Easter Island Research Institute and Vice President in charge of field Operations of EPRF*) then working for the Department of Archaeology of the Territory of French Polynesia, carried out the archaeological survey of Raivavae, recording in detail 610 archaeological structures and restored two *marae* or altars.

This work which constitutes the most comprehensive archaeological work carried out in Raivavae has been recently published (the Archaeological Survey of Raivavae,), but as practically no archaeological excavations have been carried out upon the island its culture history still remains a mystery. In late 2005, in the company of archaeologists (*Easter Island Research Institute of the University of Chile*) excavations were carried out at several sites and some rich coastal middens where located that will be excavated during our expedition. We also intend to relocate precisely all the archaeological sites previously recorded during the survey with an advanced GPS system, photograph these structures and produce a video documentary of this expedition.

On the Expedition

With Edwards and his colleagues, your further surveys and excavations will help establish when the island was settled and reveal its culture history. In the island's caldera of Vaiuru and Rairua, you'll conduct surface surveys of house sites and dig

test-pits to document settlement distribution over the ages. Expect a few rainy days to process your finds in our lab in this warm, breezy climate.

Meals and Accommodations

You'll stay in cozy double rooms with conventional bath facilities in a rented house in Vaiuru, You will enjoy creative island cuisine, including fresh fruits and seafood. This project is only for volunteers 18+ please.

If interested; please contact the Expedition coordinator
Capt. Lynn Danaher at Lynn@islandexplorer.org

Schedule:

Team Summaries:

	Dates	Contribution	Days	Notes
Email	May 31 – June 14, 2010	\$9,600	14	Restricted to 10 participants
Email	June 14 – June 28, 2010	\$9,600	14	Restricted to 10 participants
Email	June 28 – July 12, 2010	\$9,600	14	Restricted to 10 participants