

Climate Change in Northern Finland



Abstract

Finland was covered by a glacier in the Ice Age, since then the glaciers have disappeared. The repercussions from glacial occupation are still occurring. Land that has been compressed by the glaciers has been rising slowly since their withdrawal. This change in geography is rapidly occurring today, and it was occurring 6,000 years ago. People who once made their homes by the shore, generations later would have to move miles to be by their main food supply once again. These changes in climate prompted generational changes, which were also influenced by technological advances. Findings on the archaeological site in Finland support this fact, and may be associated with people living in areas affected by glacial rebound on also the continent of Asia and North America.

Location

While in Finland, I worked with individuals from the University of Oulu as well as from UB. Our archaeological site was an hour trip from downtown Oulu to Kierikki Earthwork in Northern Ostrobothnia, Finland. A great deal of archaeological work has been done in that area, revealing information from prehistoric cultures such as semi-subterranean dwellings. Since then, the land has rebounded pushing the Baltic Sea further away. Another location we observed, but did not excavate, was the Giant's Church in Rovianemi. There are many of these structures throughout Scandinavia, all of which are elusive to anthropologists. There is not enough information at these sites to determine their functionality, but most have astrological significance. When they were built, Giant's Churches were built on high ridges overlooking the Baltic Sea; now only forest is visible.

Artifacts

From the two sites that were excavated, many artifacts were uncovered. There were two different kinds of sites with artifacts from different periods. The site we spent the most time on revealed an Iron Age site used for smelting iron objects. Along with an abundance of charcoal, slag, a byproduct of smelting, was found within it. About 200m east, another site was excavated. This one produced a hearth with crushed seal bones within., and was considerably older. This fire would have taken place on the beach of the Baltic Sea after the seal was killed. The bones were fragmentary and charred, preserving them in the acidic soil and showing that these individuals were extracting the maximum amount of nutrients as possible.

Conclusion

With multiple occupations of this area, it shows land re-usage. In order to adapt to the changing climate and an increased population, inland areas had to be utilized for living space. Alternately, multiple occupations could indicate a passing of ancestral lands. This issue is still much under debate in Scandinavia, but adding data for analysis will help provide a more accurate idea of life in the past.