Plant remains found in archaeological sites can tell us a great deal about the people who once lived there and the environments they lived in. Traditional ethnobotanical knowledge is important to this research, helping us to formulate questions by inferring plant use in the distant past. It is, however, important to consider that environments and behaviors may have been different in the past. In this talk, I will examine the role of interpretative inference in a study of charcoal from a prehistoric site in the Marquesas Islands.

Jennifer Huebert (IARI, International Archaeological Research Institute, Inc., Archaeobotanist) is an archaeobotanist specializing in the identification and interpretation of charred plant materials. She primarily studies prehistoric human-forest relationships, and her current research interests are focused on human palaeoecology and the development of arboriculture in the archipelagos of Polynesia.

For further information, please contact anthprog@hawaii.edu.