



November 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in strong support of the Maritime Archaeological Society of Finland (Suomen Meriarkeologinen Seura Ry, or MAS). I am a professor of maritime archaeology at East Carolina University (ECU). In September 2025, I co-directed a joint MAS/ ECU field school in Porkkala, Finland. I can categorically state that our fieldwork never would have happened without the support of MAS and its Chairman, Markku Luoto. Archaeological fieldwork always entails a great deal of preparation, and Mr. Luoto proved invaluable in arranging accommodations and securing permits long before anyone from ECU arrived in Finland. Given the size of our project – 14 graduate students, 3 faculty, and 1 dive safety officer – this was a herculean task. Once in Finland, MAS helped transport gear, facilitated communication, and performed all of the other small tasks that keep a field project running. They also provided their research vessel, *Stella*, as a platform for underwater work. MAS is the only organization in Finland with the capability to do all of these things. The support of MAS is therefore critical for any underwater archaeology projects that plan to include partnerships with foreign universities.

In addition to spearheading underwater fieldwork, MAS is facilitating research into Finland's maritime cultural landscape. During our recent project in Porkkala, we conducted an archaeological survey of the Pampskatan peninsula along with several of its offshore islands. This work will help link seafaring to terrestrial activities along Finland's southern coast, and thus has the potential to contribute to broader themes in Finnish history. The work we did would not have been possible without MAS, as they contributed the small boats that are required for transport to the offshore islands. MAS also loaned us metal detectors and other equipment. We plan to continue this project with another MAS/ECU field school in 2026; this work will entail archaeological survey of additional islands and will not be possible without MAS support.

To summarize, MAS is the leading Finnish maritime archaeology organization. Whether working under water or on land, MAS provides much-needed equipment, administrative support, and expertise. I plan to continue conducting joint field research projects with MAS for many years to come.

Sincerely,

David J. Stewart, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Maritime Archaeology  
Program in Maritime Studies/Department of History  
East Carolina University  
Greenville, NC 27858 USA  
Tel. +1 252.412.5493  
Email: [stewartda@ecu.edu](mailto:stewartda@ecu.edu)