ates

Discussion

Pleistocene-to-Anthropocene Oysters. This study of a long-term record of oyster size changes, comparing archaeological, Pleistocene fossil, and modern oysters, provides to our knowledge the first bay-wide, millennial-scale window into human harvest of Chesapeake oysters, serving as a model for future research elsewhere around the world. These data do not fully support our predictions about the effects of Native American harvest on oysters. Prehistoric archaeological oyster sizes do vary through time but are generally smaller than Pleistocene oysters, and there is no evidence for a systematic size reduction during prehistoric human occupation (~3,500–400 y ago). At the bay-wide scale, oysters actually demonstrate an increase in size through time. No single environmental or cultural variable explains this increase, it does not occur within individual watersheds or at single sites, and we caution that our Early Woodland sample comes primarily from the lower salinity waters of Rhode River, and oyster sizes may be smaller as a result.

The size data from the Pleistocene reefs compared with later archaeological and modern samples demonstrate differences in population structure between cultu

was similar to a pattern identified in the St. Mary's and Patuxent

Materials and Methods

We reconstructed the size of *C. virginica* using measurements of whole left oyster valve height from archaeological and fossil contexts and modern reef