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Newsletter

July-August 2022

Dialogues With Dirt

HCAA's July General Meeting Features Discussion on Native Trade Items Recovered from CWR Site on Guadalupe River



HCAA's July General Meeting took place at the Union Church in Kerrville; the featured speaker was our organization's Vice President, Terry Farley. Terry shared information about the variety of artifacts recovered from the CWR site in western Kerr County that had not been locally sourced. Included in those artifacts are numerous samples of

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research, as well as numerous personal consultations with experts in the fields of her research, confirmed the sources of those artifacts: locations now known as Idaho, Arkansas, and East Texas, *inter alia*. These items are among those that strongly support the theory that CWR had, in days gone by, been a trade site.

Another subject of discussion was the various historical items recovered at the site, both as surface finds as well as *in situ*. These include several .44 Henry cartridges and other munitions, horse and mule tack, glass shards, and a hand forged hinge and square nails. Terry also spoke of having learned, through additional research, about an early—if not *the* earliest—property owner, who, records show, paid \$5.00 for several hundred acres in the mid-19th century.



An Introduction to the Crying Woman Ranch (CWR) Project: 41KR754

~Mike McBride



Since July 2018, the Hill Country Archeological Association (HCAA) has been investigating a rich, multi-component site (41KR754) in western Kerr County, Texas. The site is located on private land and rests on a terrace of the North Fork of the Guadalupe River.

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Monday (weather permitting), as well as monthly Saturday work sessions. Members interested in participating can let us know through our email address, contact@hcarcheology.org.

The site has produced a rich assemblage of lithic artifacts, faunal material (including bison remains), and trade items. These trade items include Caddo pottery, obsidian from Idaho, hematite spheres, and quartz crystal, possibly from Arkansas. Diagnostic point types recovered *in situ* suggest recurring occupations at the site from the late Paleoindian period, approximately 10,665 cal. years B.P., to the Late Prehistoric Toyah phase, 650-250 years B.P.



After the discovery of a St. Mary's Hall (SMH) Paleoindian point in July 2019, we added an excavation program to focus on site areas where more Paleoindian material may be recovered. So far, over 20 SMH lithics, five Angostura points, and a Golondrina point have been recovered from a relatively small portion of the site. A radiocarbon date on a *Bison antiquus* bone fragment associated with one of the SMH points has yielded a two-sigma calibrated age range of 10,665-10,370 B.P. This date significantly adds to the knowledge of the temporal span of the SMH type.

Recent excavations in the Paleo Period block of units have uncovered several rock hearths, likely used for cooking plants as well as meat. These cooking features are all within depth layers where SMH, Golondrina, and Angostura points have been found. This gives us evidence that the cooking events and construction of the cooking features took place in the middle to Late Paleoindian period. Texas Archeology has reported very few examples of such cooking hearths in the Paleo Period, so our work of carefully documenting and analyzing these features will add a great deal to our understanding of some of the first humans to inhabit Central Texas.

In future Newsletters, we will continue to report on the latest news from the CWR Project.



Behind the Scene with the Field Recorder ~Susan Clark

The Field Recorder can be scene as the glue that holds together the excavation of a site. As any artifact even debitage, is removed from the site, the Field Recorder is responsible for tracking it from the field to the final catalog. First, a field sack number is assigned to anything recovered from a unit and pertinent information is filled in on the field sack log, including the field sack number, the date, the unit, level, provenience, and particulars about the item or items, along with notes. Then that same information is recorded onto the Unit/Level Form, along with notes about the soil, elevations, and any other pertinent comments regarding the excavation that day (more on that in upcoming Newsletters). Then the items go to the lab to be curated and given final catalog numbers. At home, the Field Recorder compiles the information of the day and types up the Field Notes to be sent to all involved.

Any member interested in learning how to record in the field is invited to contact HCAA at contact@hcarcheology.org.



A partial list of acceptable “dirty words”

- **Anvil trowel:** a tool essential to successful excavation. Its edges need to be kept sharp to slice cleanly through soil; its frontal point can be used to break through hard-packed soil, although it's preferable to use the two lateral points, and to do so with care.
- **Bamboo chopsticks:** when sharpened to a point these are useful to pick through delicate items, such as embedded artifacts, and free them from their setting with minimal, if any, damage to the artifact.
- **Soil:** dirt. Also known as sediment (preferred term, because, after all, that's what soil is).
- **Tape measure:** archeologists take measurements all the time; historical sites measure in inches & feet, prehistoric in metric. It is a good idea to have a tape measure that has both.



2022 TAS FIELD SCHOOL WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

During the week of June 11-18, 2022, HCAA, and our Kerr County neighbors, hosted Texas Archeological Society's (TAS) 2022 Field School (FS). As with last year's FS

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label artifact bags, record, etc. Among the more notable recoveries was a cache of late-stage bifaces/knives, a number of Archaic projectile points, and several cooking hearth features. Members of the Youth group managed to take time from their excavations to bring relief to many a parched worker with an assortment of fruity ice pops. Kemosabe was also the site for the Lab. The courtyard in front of the old ranch house that serves as the Lab is comfortably shady with beautiful Live Oaks; the Lab workers may have had the “best seats in the house!”

Survey School was conducted at the Don Priour Ranch new Mt. Home. Crews went to various locations on the ranch to perform the various activities related to archeological survey. Participants learned how to use a USGS topographic map and a compass, how to look for artifacts, draw a site map, and complete a site form. There were also some metal detecting crews, at least one of which managed to meet up with—and successfully back away from—a rattler. This writer’s crew surveyed four sites: Don Priour’s grandparents’ homestead, a wooden windmill, a former school house, and a Rattlesnake Cave. Additionally, Tivydale Cemetery in Gillespie County was surveyed.

Each summer, TAS sponsors a week-long archeological FS. The program provides training in archeological techniques to Society members and contributes important new data to the state’s archeological and historical heritage. No prior archeological experience is necessary. Activities and learning opportunities are offered for all ages, including excavation.

The TAS FS spans seven days and is led by professional archeologists and trained avocationalists. Participants may register for a minimum of three days or for the full week and choose excavation, survey, cemetery, or the laboratory. Volunteers may also participate in the afternoon and evening workshops, educational programs, and social activities that are spread throughout the week. Several FS Scholarships are also available.

Mark your calendars for next year’s TAS Field School—check the TAS website <https://www.txarch.org> for next year’s location.



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*Please note that our website is currently being remodeled and the dust is flying.
Construction should be completed by September.
Please bear with us!*

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