

## Update on Excavations at the Cotton Field Site, Tait-Huffmeyer Ranch, Columbus, Texas, February 20 – 21, 2016

As most of you know, we are continuing archeological excavations at the Cotton Field site at the Tait Huffmeyer Ranch in Columbus, Texas that we began during Texas Archeological Society Field School in 2014 and continued in 2015. The Cotton Field site, located in Colorado County, offers ideal conditions for studying the Late Prehistoric period, spanning both the Austin phase (ca. 650AD - 1200AD) and the subsequent Toyah phase (1150 AD – 1500 AD) in Texas. Thanks to our landowners, Rita Tait Jackson and Ed Jackson, we are continuing our excavations under the direction of HAS member and Field School PI, Dr. Jason W. Barrett.

The site gets more and more interesting every single time we dig! We had a huge crew at our most recent fieldwork on February 20 and 21. According to Dr. Jason, "One of the truly interesting and unique aspects of the site is in the number and nature of features we are finding, as well as the artifacts associated with them. We're finding points, but not in great numbers because the prehistoric inhabitants were likely discarding those up on Pyramid while they quarried chert cobbles and knapped them into new tools. Instead, we are finding evidence from a wide range of food processing and related activities that seems to have included butchering, hide processing, plant processing, and meal preparation. The tool assemblage we are recovering goes well beyond points, and actually reflects the true variability observed among formal and informal artifact types in use during this part of prehistory. Better yet, as we are finding them in context with well-preserved features, we can assess the nature of their use with far greater certainty than is typically ever possible."

Dr. Jason, Rita and Ed have come up with a spring schedule for work at the site - **March 19 and 20, April 2-3 and 23-24, and May 21 and 22. The 2016 TAS Field School will be held at the Tait Ranch June 11 - 18.** Mark your calendars now!! If you plan to join us, please email me back at [lindagorski@cs.com](mailto:lindagorski@cs.com) so I can add you to our Cotton Field contact list and send you directions to the site as well as other important information including cancellation notices in case of severe weather. Remember, you must be a member of the Houston Archeological Society or one of the other regional archeological societies or the Texas Archeological Society to participate. If you are not yet a member of the Houston Archeological Society, please go to our website at [www.txhas.org](http://www.txhas.org) and click on "Membership".



The crew opens up the site and sets up on Saturday morning



Dr. Jason gives our morning briefing on Saturday



Bob Sewell and Dr. Liz Coon-Nguyen measuring



Dr. Jason goes over paperwork with crew



Debbie Eller drove from Beaumont to join us!



Tom Nuckols and Anneliese Sonntag (who drove all the way from Dallas to join us!) open up their unit.



Every screen was busy all weekend long!



Our #1 screeners – landowners Rita Tait and Ed Jackson who are out working with us every weekend!



Dr. Jason sorting artifacts and doing paperwork



Geoff Mills and John Rich digging in their unit.



Artifacts from just ONE 10cm level. This site is producing massive amounts of artifacts including fire cracked rock, shell, lithics including points, tools and debitage and pottery sherds.



The ground was hard as a rock after no rain for a month – digging was difficult! Geoff Mills and John Rich are up to the challenge!



Linda Gorski and Sandy Rogers in a deep hole!



Tom Williams carefully excavating a corner of his unit.



Artifact in floor of Bob Sewell's unit waiting to be lifted next time.



Sandy Rogers and Tom Williams take a break.



Pottery Sherds



A very interesting feature is being exposed in Tom's unit. Post hole stain???



Debbie Eller and Sue Gross put the finishing touches on covering up the site.

See you next time – March 19 and 20. Email me at [lindagorski@cs.com](mailto:lindagorski@cs.com) if you'd like to join us.