

Update on Excavations at the Cotton Field Site, Tait-Huffmeyer Ranch, Columbus, Texas
December 5 – 6, 2015

As most of you know, we are continuing work at the Cotton Field site at the Tait Huffmeyer Ranch in Columbus, Texas, that we began during TAS Field Schools in 2014 and 2015. Rumor has it that we are returning to Cotton Field for TAS Field School 2016, too! More news to follow! The Cotton Field site, located in Colorado County, offers the ideal conditions for studying the Late Prehistoric period, spanning both the Austin phase (ca. 700AD - 1200AD) and the subsequent Toyah phase (1150AD - 1500AD) 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. Our latest field work took place December 5 and 6. Thanks to the awesome crew shown in the photos below for two days of hard work!!! The exciting news this week revolved around the impressive number of features being revealed in each of the four units that are currently being excavated. Our next field work weekend at Cotton Field will be **JANUARY 23 AND 24**. Hope to see you there! If you want to receive regular bulletins and emails about future work dates for the Cotton Field site please email me at lindagorski@cs.com and I will put you on my special Cotton Field email list. (You must be a member of TAS, HAS, BAS, FBAS or another regional society to participate.) In the meantime, please enjoy these five pages of photos highlighting our work on December 5 and 6 – and HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!!



The work kicked off at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning with Dr. Jason assigning everyone to specific units. Crew chiefs have evolved over the past several weeks to include Bob Sewell, Tom Williams and John Rich.



SNAKES! Each week when we remove the tarps from the units we find these little critters. This week we recovered three – plus a cool skink and a green iridescent frog! It's like Wild Kingdom out at the Tait Ranch!



.. but why is the whole crew gathered around this blue bucket first thing in the morning instead of busily digging in their units?????



John Rich (a Marine-of course) is our champion snake catcher. Here he shows off not just one of the snakes he caught, but the skin, too!!!!



As most of you know, the Cotton Field site was completely covered with plastic tarps after the rained-out June 2015 field school. Since July we have been working on the west half of the site, leaving the east side covered. You can see by this photo how rainwater, dirt and leaves have filled the tarps.



Here you can see the tarps have all been removed and landscaping fabric has been laid over the entire site. We have used landscaping fabric on the west half of the site to cover our work since July and it has worked remarkably well to maintain the integrity of features while allowing the area to drain more efficiently.



Dr. Jason decided that to maintain the integrity of the site we had to get rid of the tarps and cover the entire site with landscaping fabric. So he put together a crew to bucket out all the water, rake the leaves and clean the muck. Then we removed all the plastic tarps. Here Dr. Jason and Sue Gross are cleaning the area.



The entire site on Sunday, clean as a whistle and covered with landscaping fabric, ready for the January work weekend.



Dr. Jason, Sue Gross, and Rita Tait Jackson pulling muddied tarps off the site.



After cleaning the site Dr. Jason got back to "PI Paperwork".



Tom Williams and Lori Maloy excavated a terrific feature Saturday and Sunday in Unit C.



Landowners Rita Tait Jackson and Ed Jackson observe Dr. Gus Costa working on a feature.



Tom Williams working on the feature that has emerged in the corner of Unit C about 250 cm below ground surface. Any ideas anyone??



Dr. Gus carefully removing bone and fire cracked rock from a feature in Unit M.



Linda Gorski and Lori Maloy taking elevations in the unit adjoining the one that Tom is excavating. In January we will take this unit down to see if the feature in Tom's unit C continues to this one.



Dr. Gus wraps bone fragments in aluminum foil for future examination.



Dr. Jason and Bob Sewell go over the paperwork for Bob's Unit H while Debbie Eller waits to start digging.



Dr. Liz Coon-Nguyen doing paperwork for Unit H. We've named Unit H "Bob's Angels" since he always chooses the best looking, hardest working women to assist him 😊



Dr. Jason and Bob Sewell examine an artifact recovered in Unit H.



Debbie Eller travelled all the way from Nederland, near Beaumont, to spend the weekend digging with Bob's Angels.



Artifact or Notifact???? Interestingly shaped stone recovered in Bob's unit.



Crew chief Bob Sewell takes a turn at screening.



Brazosport Archeological Society
President Clint Lacy excavates Unit F.



Tom Williams cooks up hot dogs every Saturday for the crew.



John Rich excavating Unit M



And of course he can't resist a posed shot!



BAS member James Smith and Dr. Jason examine a hammerstone that just came out of Unit M where John Rich is excavating.



And then everyone lines up for a buffet lunch eaten off the back of Tom's truck! Love being in the field with this crew!!!

Hope you can join us for our next work weekend at Cotton Field January 23 – 24, 2016!

Dr. Jason Barrett has designed the following festive card just for you. Well done Jason! We hope everyone has a Happy Holiday season. See you in the New Year!!!



