

The **NORTH TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (NTAS)** meeting for **March** will be **in person and on Zoom**.

NTAS meetings are **free** and visitors are always welcome.

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Benchmark

Volume 40, Issue 3

March 2026

President's Message

Greetings, NTAS!

With winter nearly behind us, the spring field season is quickly approaching, and our calendar is filling up with opportunities to get involved in archaeology across North Texas and beyond. March is shaping up to be a busy month for NTAS members, with fieldwork, training opportunities, and outreach events.

Excavations at the Joe Reed Site will take place on **March 14**. This site represents one of Parker County's earliest settlements and was recently highlighted in [Weatherford NOW Magazine](#). Anyone interested in participating in the excavation or learning more about the project is encouraged to reach out to [Dana Ritchie](#). Opportunities like this are a great way to get some dirt under your boots before the heat of summer arrives.

We will also be returning to the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge for a site recording tutorial on **March 21**. Volunteers will assist in documenting one pre-historic site and one historic site while learning how to complete a Texas archaeological site form, record map data, and collect other necessary documentation. This opportunity is open to the first ten NTAS members who volunteer. Those interested should contact [Jimmy Barrera](#).

Later in the month, NTAS will have a presence at the Southwest Cattle Raisers Convention, held **March 27-29** at the Fort Worth Convention Center. This event provides an excellent opportunity for public outreach and landowner engagement. NTAS will host a booth in the exhibit hall where members can speak with landowners about preserving archae-



ological sites and protecting cultural resources. Members interested in helping with the NTAS booth should contact [Kelton Sheridan](#).

March 28 will be a particularly busy day. SMU's Open Laboratory Day will be held from **9am to 5pm**, offering another chance to see the lab in action and learn more about ongoing projects. If you would like more information about SMU laboratory work days or other volunteer opportunities, please contact [Brian Lutchford](#). That same day, NTAS will also participate in [Nature Con](#) at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, a regional festival featuring educational exhibits, demonstrations, and activities. NTAS is currently looking for volunteers to help staff the table and talk with visitors about archaeology in North Texas. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact info@ntxas.org.

Looking ahead to April, the TAS Archaeology 101 Academy in San Angelo

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For general inquiries, please contact info@ntxas.org

North Texas Archeological Society

(April 10–12) still has a few seats available. [NTAS scholarships](#) remain available to help members attend TAS Academies, Field School, or the Annual Meeting. These programs are a fantastic way to deepen your archaeological training while connecting with colleagues across the state.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our February meeting, both in person and online. We had an excellent turnout for Dr. Charles Frederick's presentation. His discussion of the challenges involved in identifying ephemeral occupation surfaces and interpreting site formation processes provided valuable insights for both professional and avocational archaeologists alike. We appreciate all of the members who attended and contributed to a lively and engaging evening. Our March monthly meeting will be held Thursday, March 12 at 7pm and will again be offered as a hybrid meeting. Members may attend in person at Room 114 in the Research & Education Building on the UNTHSC campus or join via Zoom. We are excited to welcome Leslie Bush, who will present her program "Farming and Foraging, Architecture and Textiles on the Texas Southern Plains." I look forward to seeing many of you at the March meeting and at upcoming field and outreach events.

Alexandra Younger

March Speaker: Leslie Bush

Farming and Foraging, Architecture and Textiles on the Texas Southern Plains

Harrison Greenbelt, Isaac Windmill, Jack Allen, and other sites have provided recent information about plant subsistence and associated craft and construction practices in the Texas Panhandle. Corn is ubiquitous, but other crops (beans, squash, and tobacco) are less commonly found. Wild seeds and berries and potential textile plants vary by site. Ongoing analysis of samples from the Erickson Ranch, Roberts County, is providing new insights into variation in crops, wild plant use, and architectural woods in the Texas Panhandle.

Leslie L. Bush is a paleoethnobotanist, an archaeologist who specializes in identifying bits of plants preserved on archaeological sites, usually in the form of charcoal but occasionally as water-logged, mineralized, or desiccated plant parts. Through her consulting practice, Macrobotanical Analysis, she is currently involved with investigations associated with the Erickson Ranch in the Texas Panhandle, a Fort Ancient site outside Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Sixty Islands ridged fields in Michigan.



Playa with successional plants.



Little soapweed yucca at Palo Duro Canyon



Leslie Bush at the Neolithic site of Skara Brae, Orkney in 2025.

Update Your Calendar - NTAS Monthly Meeting Speakers

**April 9: Kate Lesciotto
(Biological Profiles of Skeletal Remains)**

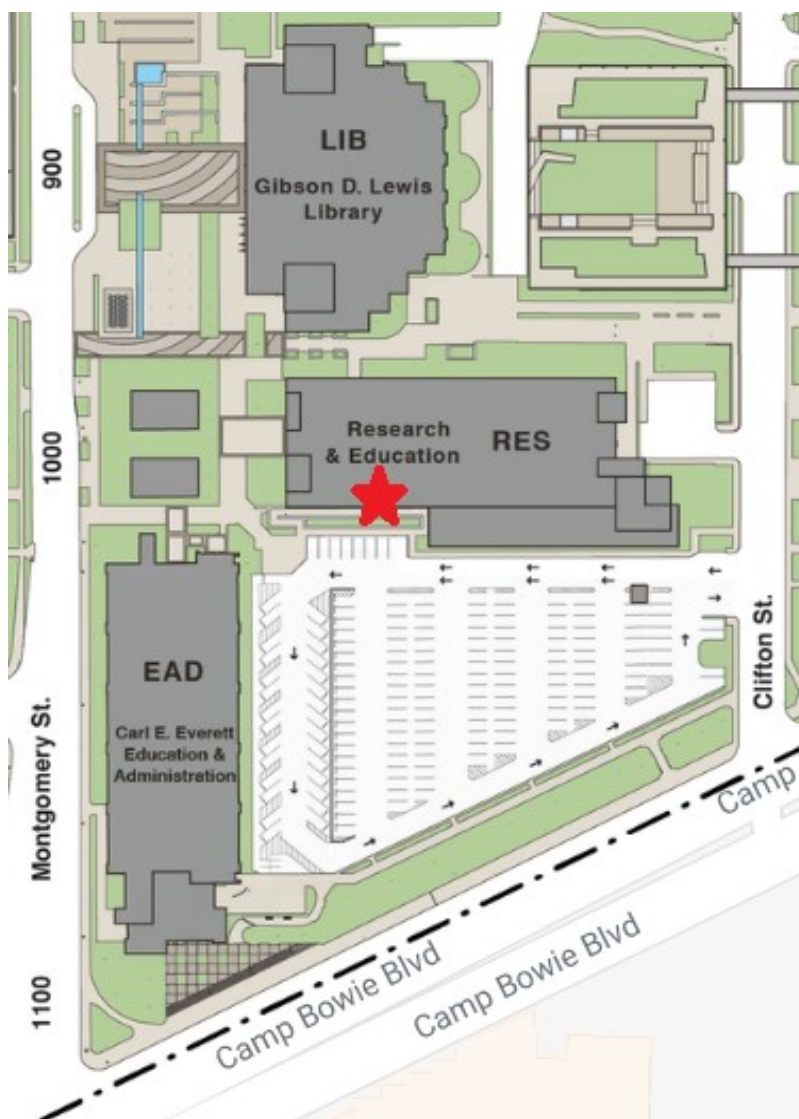
**May 14: Kelton Sheridan
(Indigenous Ceramics in Spanish Missions)**

**June: No Meeting
(TAS Field School!)**

NTAS Monthly Meeting Location & Directions

NTAS meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month (except June and December) at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, 3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard, Fort Worth (in the **Research and Education Building, Room 114**), near the intersection of Camp Bowie and Montgomery Street.

Traveling west on I-30 from downtown, take the Montgomery Street exit. Turn right on Montgomery and continue to the five-way intersection at Camp Bowie. Turn right onto Camp Bowie, followed by an immediate left onto Clifton Street. **Turn into the first parking lot on the left (Administrator and Visitor Parking).** You will drive past an information booth as you enter the parking lot. Park on the far (north/west) end of the parking lot and enter the Research and Education building. Once you enter the building, turn right and proceed down the hallway to Room 114.



Dr. Michael Collins (TAS Fellow, 10/25/1996) and the Gault Site

Charlene Erwin

On March 14, NTAS members will once again visit the Gault site in central Texas. The archives of NTAS, formerly TCAS, provide a sense of the continued importance of the site and the work being done there to preserve our Texas history. TCAS traveled the 150 miles to, and participated in, the 2001 TAS Field School ([TCAS Benchmark, Vol. 15, No. 7, 2001](#)), with Dr. Michael Collins serving as the principal investigator. It was just the first of many trips, with the most recent on February 8, 2020 ([NTAS Benchmark, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2020](#)).



Reading about the latest happenings at the Gault site has been akin to catching up on the latest family news. We celebrated the opening of the exciting new exhibit at the Bell County Museum in 2009 with this blurb: "New permanent interactive exhibit, opening Saturday, June 6, 2009...will showcase the information that is being generated from work on the internationally recognized Gault site in southwestern Bell County. Dr. Michael Collins, principal investigator at the Gault site, will speak at 2:30pm, flint knapping and atlatl demonstrations will be held, and the museum's archeology pits will be open for youngsters to conduct mock excavations." See the complete article at [TCAS Benchmark, Vol. 23, No. 5, 2009](#).

There is no Gault site, however, without the courage of Dr. Collins and the team of dedicated archeologists who joined him as he pursued the dream of rescuing and interpreting the scientific evidence this site provides. One of the most uplifting archived articles is an interview with Dr. Collins wherein he discusses the early days as he challenged the Clovis First Theory. David Oppen, who served as the 2008 editor of the *TCAS Benchmark*, selected this article, entitled "Can You Dig It", written by Tim Green with the Office of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, for inclusion in the [TCAS Benchmark, Vol. 22, No. 8, 2008](#).

My favorite part of the article is this affirmation:

After most of a century comfortable with the Clovis First Theory, archeology has more and more questions to answer and, so far, a new theory hasn't been formulated. Until then, and probably after, archeologists will ask questions.

"That's what makes this subfield of archeology so exciting right now," Collins said. "It's constantly changing. Every time something's published we have to step back and say 'My goodness what are the ramifications of that for what we're doing and thinking right now.'"

The questions are about how and when. Collins thinks he knows why they came. **"Human beings are curious," he said. "Human curiosity has driven development since as far back in time as you can imagine."**

Collins said he agrees with the observation of the late French pre-historian Francois Bordes that the Americas were peopled because somebody wanted to know what was over that next horizon.

Suggestion for March 14: Do your part for the future NTAS historians and archivists. Impress the 2036 NTAS members with your brilliant photographic skills. Take lots of photos on this trip and send them to [Molly Hall](#) so she can include them in the *NTAS Benchmark*!

Archeological Events & Opportunities

Please see the [calendar](#) on the NTAS website for the latest updates to archaeological events!

SMU Lab Days

9am-5pm, Mar 28, Apr 18, May 30, June 27, July 25, 2026

Dallas, TX

Assist in organizing, cataloging, and re-bagging artifacts from the 1971/1972 TAS Field Schools. For more information or to sign up, contact [Brian Luetchford](#). See page 5 of the [March 2025 newsletter](#) for some highlights from a recent SMU Lab Day and the NTAS YouTube channel for Dr. Boulanger's [October NTAS presentation](#) on the good work being done at these lab days.

NTAS Gault Site Tour**10 am, March 14, 2026**

Florence, TX

The North Texas Archeological Society will be touring the Gault Site on March 14, 2026 starting at 10am. The cost for admission is \$20 per adult, \$10 for kids under 13. If you're interested in joining the tour please contact [Tommy Standefer](#). See Page 4 of the February NTAS newsletter for more information.

Joe Reed Site Excavation Day**March 14, 2026**

Parker County, TX

See pages 8-9 of the February 2024 Newsletter for details on this excavation opportunity. Contact [Dana Ritchie](#) if you are interested in participating.

Fort Worth Westerners Zoom Programs**Third Tuesday of the Month**

Zoom

If you are not a FW Westerner member, click [here](#) to request guest access to the zoom meetings.

March 17 - *The Whole Story of Texas* by Donald Frazier

April 21 - *Petticoat Rangers and Women in Law Enforcement* by Jan Devereaux

Nature Con - Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge**March 28, 2026**

Fort Worth, TX

A family event with fun outdoor activities, exploration, and learning about conservation. NTAS is looking for a coordinator and volunteers; if interested, please email info@ntxas.org.

Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Convention and Expo **March 27-28, 2026**

Fort Worth, TX

Last year we had an amazing NTAS turn out and it really made a difference when talking to landowners. The goal of this event is to provide private landowners with educational information on how to preserve and appropriately investigate cultural resources that may be on their property. With such a high percentage of private land in Texas, outreach events like these are crucial to preserving the future of archaeology in the state. Please contact [Kelton Sheridan](#) if you would like to participate.

UT Arlington Termini Lecture**6pm, April 2, 2026**

Arlington, TX

Come join Dr. Kathryn Brown as she speaks about "The Dawn of Maya Civilization: Insights from 35 Years of Research in Western Belize." Auditorium - College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA) 601 West Nedderman Drive, Arlington.

Archeology 101 Academy**April 10-12, 2026**

San Angelo, TX

This three-day TAS Academy teaches participants about site identification, recording and proper excavation techniques in the field of archeology. Classroom lectures address the larger field of archeology to help orient new learners with respect to goals, methods, and concepts. Field sessions are also included.

59th SWFAS Symposium**8am-5pm, April 25, 2026**

Amarillo, TX

The biannual Symposium of the Southwestern Federation of Archaeological Societies will include a program of 10 papers focusing on the cultural and natural history of SE NM, West TX, and the TX Panhandle. The Symposium is hosted by the Panhandle Archaeological Society of Texas (PAST). **Registration:** \$10 (\$5 for students). **Hotel:** Springhill Suites, 2301 Cinema Drive, Amarillo. **Social Activities:** dinners on Friday and Saturday nights and a field trip or fieldwork on Sunday morning. **Transactions:** Full papers or abstracts will be available on the Portal to Texas History within one year. For more information or a copy of the program, contact prkat44@gmail.com.

2026 NTAS Action

Jimmy Barrera

If you have been wondering about NTAS activities, it has been fast action since the new year. Here is a summary of recent NTAS action with some upcoming opportunities.

41TRI30

In January Ken Lawrence and Jimmy Barrera revisited site 41TRI30 to recon in advance of an NTAS field opportunity and to collect radiocarbon samples from a precontact feature. The NTAS Executive Committee approved an expense to partially fund two radiocarbon samples from 41TRI30. The goal is to perform a site revisit recording to update the site boundary for 41TRI30 (currently inaccurate), update the site conditions, add chronometric data, add geoarcheology data, and provide a site recording tutorial for NTAS members. During the NTAS site recording tutorial, the NTAS volunteers will learn how to complete an official State of Texas archeological site form, map the site boundary, add detailed geomorphology about the site and setting, and collect other important information for the site revisit form. The site recording tutorial will be held on Saturday April 25, 2026, and will be in west Fort Worth at Marion Sansom Park. Volunteers will need to be able to traverse steep hills with loose gravel on trails. This opportunity is open to the first ten (10) NTAS members who volunteer for the site recording tutorial (which will include geomorphology training), please contact [Jimmy Barrera](#) to volunteer for this opportunity.



Ken Lawrence collecting samples at 41TRI30.

Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge (FWNC&R)

In February, NTAS members Brett Williamson, Tommy Standefer, and Jimmy Barrera performed reconnaissance inside FWNC&R to identify unrecorded archeological sites and visit known sites that have yet to be recorded. Two unrecorded sites were visited, and a couple of areas were reconned for sites. This will result in another NTAS site recording tutorial at the FWNC&R where volunteers will have the opportunity to record one precontact site and one historic site. Volunteers will learn how to complete a Texas archeological site form, map sites, and collect other data as part of archeological site recording. The site recording tutorial will be held on Saturday March 21, 2026, at the FWNC&R. This opportunity is open to the first ten (10) NTAS members who volunteer for the site recording tutorial (which will include being able to visit the FWNC&R), please contact [Jimmy Barrera](#) to volunteer for this opportunity.



Bret Williamson and Tommy Standefer performing recon for archeological sites at FWNC&R.

Another opportunity at FWNC&R is March 28, 2026, when NTAS will have a booth at the FWNC&R Nature Con event to discuss archeology with the public. The Nature Con event will be held from 10 am – 3pm and about 1,000 visitors are expected. If interested to volunteer at the NTAS booth, please contact [Jimmy Barrera](#) or just stop by and say hello!

SMU Lab Days

2026 has seen NTAS volunteers continue to visit and work on collections at the SMU Archaeology Research Collections lab. In January the volunteers totaled about 30 people with the good Drs. Matt Boulanger and Kelton Sheridan managing the operation like real pros. The January crowd was about half NTAS volunteers, including new members, with the other half being students, parents, and teachers from two different FIRST LEGO League (FLL) groups. The NTAS volunteers worked with some spectacular collections from Texas and northern Mexico that have been housed in the SMU lab for decades. The FLL groups performed project presentations, asked excellent questions and had great discussion on archeology topics, and enjoyed touring the SMU collections.

The February SMU lab day was also a large crowd (ca. 20 people) with about a dozen NTAS volunteers and the remainder representing one FLL team. NTAS folks worked on collections from the 1971-72 TAS field schools and the FLL team presented on archeology and toured the collections.



NTAS members volunteering at the SMU lab.



NTAS member Vinney Ramos enjoying the SMU lab.

Have you been to the SMU lab? It is a special place, and you will be surprised what you learn, who you meet, and the interest and directions that the archeological work take you during one day in the lab. Track upcoming SMU lab days via NTAS announcements, the NTAS newsletter, and also by using the NTAS calendar. The next SMU lab days are scheduled for March 28, April 18, May 30, June 27, and July 25.

The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA)

The first annual Department of Sociology and Anthropology Alumni Mixer was held at UTA on February 26. NTAS had a booth and engaged with UTA students, alumni, and faculty about archeology. Numerous students expressed interest to become members, apply for scholarships, and to work in the field of archeology. A lot of enthusiasm for archeology bubbled through students and professors with discussions on NTAS opportunities, careers, and much more. NTAS also donated food for this event and given the great interaction NTAS hopes to continue to participate in this event.

More NTAS'ing

Over the last couple of months numerous members of NTAS have been involved in the ongoing excavations at the Joe Reed site overseen by Dana Ritchie (see related publication in [Weatherford NOW Magazine](#)). Stay tuned to NTAS announcements and the newsletter for upcoming opportunities to volunteer at the Joe Reed site. NTAS members are working with the Arlington Historical Society and their archeological collections housed at the Fielder House Museum to help develop displays for this museum. The NTAS Nominating Committee has informally developed and has been working with current officers and prospective officers to serve during the 2027-2028 term. If anyone has interest to serve as an NTAS officer or participate in the NTAS Executive Committee meetings, please contact [Jimmy Barrera](#). How about your archeology activities over the last month or so? There is so much more NTAS activity occurring across the membership. Please consider submitting archeology articles and updates to [NTAS](#) so your fellow members can support and learn about your activities.

Children's Book Reviews

Molly Hall

In each of the 2026 NTAS Newsletters I will highlight a children's book about archeology. As a professional archeologist, daughter of a passionate elementary science educator, and mother, I've long held an interest in reading and spreading the fascinating world of archeology to younger generations. Over time, I've found a few books that I love, and I hope to add to my collection this year while sharing these finds with you. If you have a children's book about archaeology that you love, [please let me know](#) and maybe I'll include it in a future issue.

Little Archaeologist (A Science Tots Book) by Dan Taylor

Reading age: Baby-3 years

Professional Archeologist

A simple board book with two young archeologists. Bright and simple pictures featuring a single tool of the trade such as "map" and "wheelbarrow" may seem simplistic, but they are eye-catching for the youngest of all the budding archeologists. The final image compiles all the tools and archeologists within a dig site, where little ones can try to find each of the tools that was mentioned earlier in the book.



8 year-old

I liked the end where it says, "Let's get digging!" and you can look for the items from the rest of the book.



5 year-old

I can't wait to read it to my little brother. The best part is where they get digging!



What Can You Do with NTAS? What Can NTAS Do for You?

Involve NTAS in Your Field, Lab, or Reporting Project

Contact the [Vice President of Projects](#) if you know of a field, lab, data collection, or reporting project that could use the skilled labor of experienced and knowledgeable NTAS members.

Contribute Photos and Memories of NTAS Events

Photos are a great way to showcase what NTAS is all about. We'd love to share your NTAS experiences with the world immediately following NTAS events! Please send your images and captions to the [Internet Chair](#). By providing these photos, they may be used on the NTAS website and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Newsletter and Journal Content

Contribute highlights from NTAS volunteer opportunities, summaries of archeological research and field projects, announcements and links to events, exhibits, media, and publications, etc. by sending them to the [Publications Editor](#).

NTAS is now looking for articles to fill future volumes of the Journal of the North Texas Archeological Society. Please consider submitting an article about your North Texas research, fieldwork, or other related topics. The lead author must be an NTAS member in good standing for the submission year. For submissions and inquiries regarding the journal, please contact the [Publications Editor](#). The current volume (2025) as well as all past volumes are available digitally to members and the public [here](#). Physical copies of all volumes are available for purchase on [Amazon](#).

North Texas Archeological Society (NTAS) Membership Application Form

(renew online by clicking above)

Name(s) _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City\State\Zip _____ Email _____

Membership Type and Fees (Membership Term: January to December*)

Choose One:

- ☐ Individual Membership - \$20
- ☐ Family Membership - \$25
Total Family Members _____
- ☐ Student Membership - \$10 (18 or older student with minimum half-time course load. Those under 18 must contact NTAS in advance of applying.)

Choose One:

☐ New*

*New memberships paid for in Oct-Dec include membership for the following year.

☐ Renewal

Communication Preferences: I/WE want to be added to the following lists:

- ☐ General Announcements - For Meetings, Events, Publications, Membership Dues and NTAS Updates
- ☐ Personal Updates - For personal updates on NTAS members such as illnesses, and obituaries

Digital copies of the newsletter are included with every membership. If you are interested in receiving paper copies, please contact the Publications Editor (publicationseeditor@ntxas.org) or Secretary (secretary@ntxas.org) for pricing.

Donation: Amount: \$ _____

Where should your donation go? ☐ General Fund ☐ Memorial Scholarship Fund ☐ BaahKu Project

Would you like to remain anonymous? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Media Release: I/We DO -or- DO NOT [circle as appropriate] give permission to NTAS to use my/our image (photographs and/or video) in any NTAS publications, website, or social media.

Code of Ethics (signature required): I/WE PLEDGE THAT I/WE WILL NOT INTENTIONALLY VIOLATE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ANY FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL ANTIQUITIES STATUTES CONCERNING CULTURAL RESOURCES OR ENGAGE IN THE PRACTICES OF BUYING OR SELLING ARTIFACTS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES OR ENGAGE IN THE WILLFUL DESTRUCTION OR DISTORTION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA OR DISREGARD PROPER ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD TECHNIQUES. I/WE UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES WILL PROVIDE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION FROM THE SOCIETY.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Mail your Membership Form with check or money order made payable to:
North Texas Archeological Society — P.O. Box 24679, Ft. Worth, TX 76124

Thank you for renewing or joining the North Texas Archeological Society!

Welcome, New Members!

Bailey Family
Citlali Concha
Dawn Ellison
Maria Hall
Patricia Mason
Segun Okegbile
John Wilt
Steve Wyatt

Donors

Jim Frisinger - *General Fund*
Chris Meis - *General Fund*
Shirley Green - *Memorial Scholarship Fund*
Jimmy Barrera - *Memorial Scholarship Fund*

NTAS Aims & Objectives

The purposes of the Society are

- (1) the promotion of scientific archeological exploration and research,
- (2) the preservation and conservation of archeological materials and sites,
- (3) the interpretation and publication of data pertaining thereto, and
- (4) education of the public to the aims of archeology.

NTAS scholarships are available to *ANYONE* who applies for TAS Events, NTAS Events, or accredited field schools in the United States.

Please visit the NTAS scholarships webpage to submit your application. [Apply now!](#)

NTAS - Preserving the Past for the Future

Executive Committee

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Gwen Durrant
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Charlene Erwin
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Brian Luetchford
Vice President of Projects

Allen Rutherford
Immediate Past President

Molly Hall
Publications Editor

Newsletter Submission Deadlines

The newsletter submission deadlines are two weeks prior to the monthly meetings. Upcoming deadlines are listed below.

April Newsletter: March 26
May Newsletter: April 30
July Newsletter: June 25

August Newsletter: July 30
September Newsletter: August 27
October Newsletter: September 24

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