

Northwest and North Central Region Quarterly Report

April/May/June 2025

Barbara Clark, RPA, Director
Bria Brooks, Public Archaeologist
Tristan Harrenstein, RPA, Public Archaeologist
Ellie Minette, Public Archaeology Assistant
Kate Schreiber, Public Archaeology Assistant
Elizabeth White, Public Archaeology Assistant
Jess Saunders, Milton High School Archaeology Program
Ethan Dorris, Milton High School Archaeology Program

This last quarter was packed with programming and projects for both the Northwest and North Central Regions. This quarter always tends to be busy as the weather gets nice and children are out for the summer. Every year we participate in the summer reading programs with various public libraries and this summer has been no exception. We have also been booked with summer camp programs, lectures, tours, and a variety of other activities as well. In May, North Central staff once again judged the Florida History Fair state competition at Tallahassee State College, a personal favorite event for the staff! Barbara had the opportunity to attend the DHR sponsored CRM Summit in Tallahassee and reported back to all of FPAN during one of our staff meetings.

We also received news that Bria Brooks, our Public Archaeologist at the Northwest Regional Center will be leaving for Stanford University in the fall to pursue her PhD. While we are sad to lose her, we are very proud of her and excited that she is going to continue her work in our coastal communities as part of her studies. This quarter she has been extremely busy, including presenting at the Annual Meeting of the Florida Anthropological Society, participating in the Kinfolkology x Community Conference in New Orleans, and participating in the recent HADS program down in the Florida Keys. Additionally, she also supported scuba certification and presented on underwater archaeology in Florida during a program with Diving With a Purpose in Mobile, Alabama as part of the Swim to Scuba Program.

We have all been busy giving a variety of lectures across the Florida Panhandle and into North Florida. Barbara gave a well attended lunch and learn about the turpentine industry in Florida at the Riley House Museum, a ceramics lecture at the Branford Public Library, and more. Bria gave a presentation at a senior center in Gulf Breeze on sport diving and heritage tourism. She also presented both an ArchaeoCafe and Virtual Cafecito lecture, "Salted Roots", which was a huge hit with the public and fellow FPAN staffers. Tristan kept busy with numerous library programs as well, organizing "Archaeology Storytime" programs in Apalachicola, Carrabelle, East Point, and Chattahoochee, with more to come in the following months. Both regions, along with our Executive Director, Dr. Mary Fulong Minkoff, had the pleasure of meeting with Dr. Jason Wenzel and his anthropology students at Gulf Coast State College. While there, Jason and his students gave FPAN staff a tour of the project they have been working on in St. Andrews.

In 2026, the North Central Region will be hosting the CRPT Conference. Barbara and Tristan have secured the venue, which will be the Monticello Opera House. The conference will take place on February 26-27, 2026. North Central staff has been steadily working on plans and have tentatively booked the keynote speaker, caterer, and have started working on other logistics. They have also met with the Aucilla Research Institute, and have agreed to support each other's conferences (they host a conference in Monticello in October). In addition to highlighting the Florida Division of Historic Resource's Historic Cemeteries Program, as previously mentioned in a prior report, we are hoping to highlight some of the work the high school students in Jefferson County have been doing as part of the Aucilla Research Institute educational outreach.

Both regions have continued their work to reach out to new potential partners, as well as rekindle partnerships that may have dwindled during the pandemic. Bria in the Northwest Region worked with various new partners to participate in a variety of Emancipation Day and Juneteenth programs in the Northwest Region and North Central Region. Barbara and Tristan were able to join Bria at Prospect Bluff for one Emancipation Day event. Barbara and Tristan also were invited to attend the Emancipation Conference that was hosted by the Riley House and the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN). Tristan, likewise, has been hard at work reaching out to numerous partners in an effort to schedule meetings with them. He was able to plan several meetings with local historical museums in the eastern part of the North Central Region, which has a history of being a geographical area we have been less present in. We are excited at the prospect of doing more programming in that area!

The [“Archaeology Books for Fun” podcast](#) continues. Tristan and Barbara, the podcast hosts, have seen steady growth and interest. The latest book, “Ancient Brews”, written by Patrick McGovern has provided them with lots of opportunities to discuss concepts relating to the multidisciplinary approach in archaeology, importance of cultural context, and much more. The next book they will be discussing is “Finders Keepers: A Tale of Archaeological Plunder and Obsession”, by Craig Childs. The podcast has been on GoodReads, but Barbara has taken over the management of that platform to relieve Tristan of some of the podcast work, allowing him to focus more on the editing. Although both Barbara and Tristan are working to learn more about marketing in an effort to expand listenership. Recently they have put out a survey to get a better understanding of how best to organize the podcast and how to market it. You can find and respond to the survey [here](#). Listeners and non-listeners are both encouraged to participate in the survey.

Born out of a casual conversation Barbara had with Florida Trust's Executive Director, Melissa Wyllie, she embarked on a nature journaling journey that has since morphed into a partnership with the Florida Trust. Melissa and Barbara then made plans to jointly host a nature journaling program at the Tallahassee Old City Cemetery, focusing on getting people to look at historic landscapes in a new and engaging way. This program was a huge success and received rave reviews. Since then they have hatched a plan to establish a nature journaling club in the Red Hills area that focuses on the intersection between the unique natural and historic landscapes. They are currently working on a micro grant application with the intention to use these funds as seed money for the club. In the meantime, their intent is to have future programs at other historic landscapes throughout the region, viewing it as a way to give people that always feel the need to do something in these spaces the opportunity to sit and enjoy them in a unique way, while providing an opportunity for reflection and relaxation.

Overall, this quarter has been extremely productive and we are looking forward to the upcoming quarter. Several things we have in the works include HMS meetups for current and prospective Scouts, CRPT workshops, cemetery visits to assist with FMSF forms, library summer reading programs, and more. Staff also continue to be active in various organizations. Barbara still maintains her role as Chairperson of the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation. Tristan recently was elected President of the Florida's Trail of Indian Heritage. Our Graduate Assistants also continue to be a huge asset to our program's success. Between filling it at events, managing the volunteer lab, working at the museum, running the Milton High School program, and managing social media (including content creation), they are key to our ability to accomplish as much as we do. The North Central and Northwest Regions have made it a priority to communicate regularly and work more closely to improve outreach and programs in the two regions.



Bria Brooks was one of the presenters during this community-centered informal discussion on coastal foodways as acts of resistance during an ArchaeoCafe in Pensacola.



During a lecture at the Branford Public Library, Barbara had the opportunity to meet with students and their history teacher from the Florida Youth Ranch.



Milton High School students were busy working and meeting with members of the media and elected officials during the Milton High School Archaeology Program Media Day.

