

Northwest and North Central Region Quarterly Report

July/August/September 2025

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The first quarter of the year has been a busy one for both the Northwest and North Central regions, with active programming and the start of the fall semester.

Bria Brooks, Northwest Regional Public Archaeology Coordinator, was accepted into a PhD program at Stanford University and officially left FPAN in September. While we are sad to see her go, we are excited about the opportunities ahead for her and look forward to her continued research in the Apalachicola area. We are currently finalizing the hiring process for her replacement. Virtual interviews were held in September, and we are now wrapping up the final stages. We had several outstanding applicants and are eager to welcome a new team member soon.

We kicked off the semester with our Graduate Assistant (GA) meeting in Pensacola, where we set the fall calendar and brainstormed ideas brought by the GAs. Their initiative in planning and participating in a wide range of programs is impressive. Ethan Dorris has taken the lead on HMS programming and is collaborating with Barbara to schedule events for UWF graduate students and the public. Elizabeth White is organizing an archaeology-themed book club, inspired in part by the *Archaeology Books for Fun* podcast. The club plans to hold its first meeting at the DARC on October 25th, featuring *Artifacts* by Mary Anna Evans—a podcast favorite that included an interview with the author.

The *Archaeology Books for Fun* podcast continues to grow. Barbara and Tristan have studied marketing strategies through webinars and books and are using the podcast as a platform to refine these skills. They've transitioned from a monthly to a biweekly episode format to better engage listeners and have launched dedicated Instagram, Threads, and Goodreads accounts. As part of cross-promotion efforts, they recently featured *Luna the Cat*, a children's chapter book co-written by Mike Thomin and Nicole Grinnan. The next episode will include an interview with the authors, releasing in mid-October.

Additionally, Tristan led the design and construction of a new permanent podcast recording booth at the North Central Regional Center. This quarter, the podcast released five videos on the FPAN YouTube channel, earning 412 views (3.6k total) and 44 hours watched (420 total). On podcast platforms, it received 227 listens this quarter (3k total).

Jess Sanders and Ethan Dorris have resumed work with the Milton High School program, and we anticipate another successful year. Barbara visited the Sheriff's Boys Ranch in Live Oak to present to students and met with the program's curriculum administrator—opening the door for future programming and a potential partnership. Tristan and Barbara were also invited back to Swift Creek Middle School for the fourth consecutive year. The school, named after an archaeological site on the property, features a display created in partnership with FPAN and DHR collections staff. These classroom presentations provide valuable context for the display and engage students with local archaeology.

One of this year's regional goals has been reconnecting with REDI communities across the Panhandle. During the 2025 legislative session, Barbara visited numerous REDI county booths during "Rural Counties Day" at the state capitol. Tristan has followed up by arranging meetings and site visits with communities including Union and Baker counties. He is currently working to build relationships with local organizations and governments in those areas.

Tristan has also developed a 3D printing program designed to support small museums. Since many do not have the capacity to borrow original artifacts, this program provides affordable, touchable replicas—enhancing accessibility and interpretation for visitors.

As summer ends and cooler fall weather approaches, we've revisited our nature journaling partnership with the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. We are planning a session for the 2026 CRPT Conference and exploring the creation of a local nature journaling club. This club would focus on the connection between the Red Hills environmental area and the region's unique historic sites. To help fund the initiative, the Florida Trust and North Central Region submitted a grant application to the [Wild Wonder Foundation](#).

Both regions have continued regular programming, including public lectures, summer reading events, Archaeology Storytime sessions, and assisting the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) with cemetery documentation. This quarter, we updated FMSF records for two cemeteries in Leon County. The GAs have been instrumental in supporting social media outreach, especially during the transition period as we work to fill Bria's position. We anticipate hiring by the end of October. The GAs will continue to assist with North Central's digital outreach alongside Tristan as well as continue their efforts in the Northwest.

Planning for the 2026 CRPT Conference in Monticello is ongoing, with support from Jennifer D'Aquin at the Coordinating Center regarding contracts and logistics. Barbara is coordinating with local organizations on programming, while Tristan handles promotion and FPAN staff

involvement. As part of the marketing strategy, the team plans to attend the ARI Conference in Monticello in October. Additionally, Barbara is working with Jefferson County TDC to apply for a grant of \$1500 to help fund the conference.

This quarter, Barbara was nominated to serve as an Advisor for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Her virtual orientation is scheduled for November. She continues to serve as Chairperson of the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation, which is gaining momentum post-pandemic with new board members and the creation of an Endangered Sites Committee—an initiative Barbara is also volunteering for. Meanwhile, Tristan remains active as President of the Trail of Florida's Indian Heritage, focusing on board development, marketing, and programming. Most recently, he recruited fellow FPAN staff member Natalie de la Torre Salas to join the board. Tristan also attended the second Conference on Public Archaeology, which was held in Washington D.C. and hosted by Archaeology in the Community. It provided a great opportunity for networking, and he also took the opportunity to report on the conference via social media.



Tristan takes a moment at the Conference on Public Archaeology to snap a selfie for social media and let our followers know what he was up to in Washington D.C.



Over the summer both regions were kept busy with Archaeology Storytime programs. Here you see an attendee busy with their “Ancient Graffiti” project.