



***The Gault School of
Archaeological
Research***



Volunteer Guide

Welcome!



Dr. Michael Collins
Chairman



Dr. Clark Wernecke
Executive Director

More than 3,000 volunteers just like you have worked on Gault and other GSAR projects since 1999. Educating the public about archaeology and allowing them to experience what archaeology is all about is one of our non-profit's primary missions. We're happy that you would like to join us.

The information in this guide is designed to give you an idea of what volunteering for the GSAR is like – what to expect in the field and lab. Our staff is here to help you so please feel free to ask questions before, during and after your archaeological experience. We hope that you will return to work with us again and again.

Archaeology can be grueling work but we also feel it can be a lot of fun (and educational) as we try to reconstruct the lives of the earliest peoples in the Americas. On behalf of the Gault School of Archaeological Research we would like to welcome you and thank you for your support.

How Can I Get Involved? Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities for volunteering with the GSAR. Some are:

- **Archaeological Fieldwork:** primarily excavation and screening though we do occasionally have need for volunteers to help in surveying or testing. There often is a great deal of physical labor involved such as digging, carrying and lifting. You are likely to get dirty and/or wet and there are long periods of standing or kneeling. No experience is required – we will train you in procedures and paperwork. We are no longer working at the Gault Site but we have numerous other opportunities in central Texas.
- **Other work in the Field:** we also need people to help us with campus maintenance, construction and conservation work. This has included lawn mowing, juniper and deadfall removal, remodeling, trail building, and

plumbing. There have also been quarterly surveys of the bird and plant communities at the site.

- Lab work: once artifacts are excavated, they come to the lab to be washed, sorted, analyzed and curated. Volunteer positions in the lab are a lot easier physically and can be more time flexible. Lab work is done on weekdays and we do request that you commit to a schedule even if it is only two hours a week.
- Other ways you can help! GSAR: our non-profit is in need of and always looking for those who are willing to share their unique skills by lending their time and expertise over a wide variety of opportunities. We are looking for docents to help out during on-site tours. In order to achieve and maintain our mission objective and goals, education and public outreach programs are a vital part of our success. We need volunteers who enjoy and are willing to demonstrate their expertise in flintknapping or atlatl skills. Other opportunities include serving on our financial or education committees; by taking charge of a special event or coordinating speaker presentations. Do you or someone you know have a special skill or talent that you are willing to share or put to work for the Gault School?

How Do I Get Started?

How to volunteer: Contact our Lab Manager, Jennifer Gandy, or the Executive Director, Clark Wernecke and let us know what you are interested in. If you are interested in specific fieldwork dates you must reserve a spot with our volunteer coordinator – the number we can take on any one day is limited. Field volunteers must be members of the GSAR – you can bring a membership form with you or sign up online.

Jennifer Gandy volunteers@gaultschool.org
D. Clark Wernecke cwernecke@gaultschool.org

Other ways to help: Contact us for more information regarding GSAR educational and public outreach programs or if you are interested in helping the GSAR.

D. Clark Wernecke cwernecke@gaultschool.org

If you decide to volunteer it is important that you follow through, especially with field and lab work. Many of these opportunities are limited as to the number of volunteers we can take for any day and no-shows effectively bar others from participating.

What to expect in the field

The work: Fieldwork can vary from survey (basically walking a property looking for signs of previous inhabitants) to testing which involves everything from small shovel holes to large meter-plus excavations. Should we find a site we are interested in more extensive fieldwork will be required.

Temperatures and Clothing: if you're not familiar with the weather in Texas you'll find if anything its variable. Temperatures on our Central Texas projects have ranged from 8 degrees to 114 degrees depending on day and season. In the winter we suggest layering while in the summer tee shirts with either long pants or shorts are just fine. Sturdy shoes – preferably boots, hikers or sneakers are fine but no sandals or bare feet. A good hat, gloves, bandanna, sun block and insect repellent are also good ideas.

Equipment: we have equipment for first time volunteers. You should bring a lunch, snacks and a water bottle. If you decide to join us regularly, we suggest: knee pads or a kneeling pad, a 5” pointing trowel, a 3 meter (must be metric) retractable tape, a plumb bob, mechanical pencils, and fine and regular point black Sharpie markers. If you do bring your own equipment, please make sure it's clearly labeled.

Legal mumbo jumbo: before you are allowed to excavate, we must have a signed waiver for you – there is one attached to this introductory package.

What to expect in the lab

Air conditioning and chairs set this distinctly apart from work in the field. Lab work varies from washing the incoming artifacts and doing the initial sort to long term projects undertaken with our analysts. Work assigned to volunteers primarily differs according to schedules and commitment. One-time volunteers generally work at processing incoming artifacts while long-term volunteers get integrated into more complex projects.

Our lab is located at the Pickle Research Campus at the University of Texas at Austin (<https://maps.utexas.edu/#/prc>) in lab T5C located on the east side of the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory (TARL). Parking here, as in most universities, is heavily regulated so we have temporary parking permits that you can use while in the lab.

How to get there

If you express an interest in fieldwork, we will put you on an email list. Our field director sends out emails to that list specifying when and where he needs volunteers. If you can make that date reply to the message and you will be given directions to the site in question.