

# Texas State University|SAN

## MARCOS

News from University News Service  
601 University Drive  
San Marcos, TX 78666  
(512) 245-2180

Jayne Blaschke  
jb71@txstate.edu  
09/26/08

### **Facts about the Forensic Research Facility at Texas State**

The new Forensic Research Facility at Texas State University-San Marcos's Freeman Ranch will serve as a resource for students of forensic anthropology as well as state and national law enforcement agencies. Forensic anthropology is the recovery and analysis of human skeletal remains for modern legal inquiry, ultimately for presentation in courts of law.

### **The Forensic Research Facility at Texas State University-San Marcos**

- The Freeman Ranch encompasses approximately 4000 acres. The Forensic Research Facility (FRF) is located on a 10-plus acre site at the Freeman Ranch.
- FRF is located at the edge of Texas Hill Country.
- The FRF site is in an isolated but well-protected area.
- The FRF is located approximately 5 miles from campus.

### **Security Features of the FRF**

- High security electric fencing
- Multiple swipe card access points to enter all areas of the FRF
- 24 hour security cameras (infrared/motion sensing)
- Freeman Ranch manager and/or ranch hand on property 24 hours a day

### **Projected Research at FRF**

- Skeletonization rates
- Processes and timetable of postmortem decay
- Time since death estimations (see below)
- New forensic technology
- Search and Recovery Training
- Cadaver dog testing
- Mechanical detection testing

*Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be provided upon request. Requests for accommodations should be made to the sponsoring office a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours in advance.  
Texas State University is a member of the Texas State University System*

### **Time Since Death Variables to Observe**

- Stages of skeletonization
- Temperature
- Humidity
- Insect activity
- Sunshine versus shade
- Cool weather versus hot weather
- Surface, shallow or deep
- Water
- Inside enclosed spaces
- Clothing
- Body weight

### **Select Professional Consultancies Served by FRF Faculty**

- Medical examiners throughout Texas
- District and county attorneys throughout Texas
- Police and sheriff's agencies throughout Texas
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Rangers
- DMORT Region VI (U.S. Public Health Service, National Disaster Mortuary Response Team - Melbye)

### **Cases Involving Forensic Anthropologists**

- Suspicious Deaths
- Mass Disasters
- Political Atrocities

### **Forensic Anthropology Crime Scene Protocol**

- Determine: Is it human?
- Determine: Number of individuals at scene
- Determine: Time since death
- Determine: Postmortem disturbances (Taphonomy)

### **Forensic Anthropology Laboratory Analysis Protocol**

- Determine: Age at Death
- Determine: Sex
- Determine: Ancestry
- Determine: Stature
- Determine: Antemortem, Perimortem, Postmortem Trauma. If Perimortem, establish whether trauma is:
  1. Sharp Force
  2. Blunt Force
  3. Ballistic
  4. Fire

### **Assist Medicolegal Authorities to Establish Manner of Death**

*Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be provided upon request. Requests for accommodations should be made to the sponsoring office a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours in advance.  
Texas State University is a member of the Texas State University System*

“Manner of death” is the legal classification of the set of circumstances or events which result in death. This determination is made by the Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner, often with the aid of a Forensic Anthropologist in skeletal or decomposing remains. The five classifications are:

- Natural
- Suicide
- Accident
- Homicide
- Undetermined

### **Body Donation Program**

The gift of one's body is an invaluable contribution to the education of future forensic scientists and ultimately, the advancement of science. The Forensic Research Facility at Texas State accepts body donations for scientific research purposes under the Universal Anatomical Gift Act. The areas of research conducted with donated bodies will include reconstructing the postmortem interval to determine time since death, and related studies in human skeletonization rates. The overall aim of this type of research is to assist law enforcement agents and the medicolegal community in their investigations.

### **Documents Required for Donation of Body to the Program:**

- Body donation document
- Donation questionnaire
- Willed body program document
- Willed body program FAQ
- Willed body donor form
- Donor card (wallet size)

### **Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State**

For more information regarding the Forensic Research Facility at Texas State, contact Jerry Melbye at (512) 245-2472 or via email at [dr4n6@txstate.edu](mailto:dr4n6@txstate.edu).