While two field seasons have been completed, we are hoping for a third to follow up with some of the fins that were made in the summer of 2016. More importantly, however, we this project has been ongoing and will continue on with laboratory work and analysis of the materials from the site.

Current work has already situated the Topper Site within the important conversations about intensive maize agriculture, and we are planning on adding to this AMS radiocarbon dates of the maize and more detailed analyses and seriation of the pottery to better understand the role the Topper Village.

Key to this progress will be the invaluable efforts and continued support of both students and volunteers.
Topper Woodland at SEAC 2016!

The Atlantic Slope Late Precontact Research Project was well represented at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC) that was recently held in Athens, GA. Three posters, that were the results of undergraduate research and were guided by Dr. David Anderson and Martin Walker, were presented during the Friday morning poster session.

This project is not just about uncovering the data from the Topper Site, but is also concerned with the training of budding professionals in the field of archaeology. As such, concerted efforts have been made to include undergraduate researchers in both the ongoing field and laboratory work. Last year this resulted in a total of one poster and two papers being presented at regional and national meetings. This year, we have been able to expand to three posters and two papers!

To view the posters that our undergraduates presented, please visit our website at: anthropology.utk.edu/topper

A open access database has been constructed to assist with our ongoing analyses of the Late Prehistoric occupations at the Topper Site. One of the strengths of this database was the ability to build graphic user interface (GUI) forms that allow for easy and accurate data entry. This is especially necessary for any ongoing, multi-year project that includes users of all training levels. Due to high interest levels at SEAC, a blank version of this database is being released online for anyone who interested in modifying and/or using this archaeological data tool. anthropology.utk.edu/topper
Maize (*Zea mays*) Found in Woodland Deposits at the Topper Site

During the fall of 2016 samples from nine features excavated from Woodland Block East were selected for paleoethnobotanical analysis. All samples were processed via flotation and then, using a low powered stereoscopic microscope all samples underwent identification analysis under the guidance of Dr. Kandace Hollenbach, of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Nearly two thirds of the samples contained maize (*Zea mays*). Multiple components of maize were identified, including the glume, cupules, and kernels. Evidence of fruit was also found among the assemblages, including maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*) and blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*). Hickory (*Carya sp.*) and acorn (*Quercus sp.*) nutshell were also identified in the majority of features.

Based upon the ceramic assemblage recovered, the features that were examined, and thus the identified maize, are associated with the Woodland Period, yet intensive maize agriculture is usually associated with the Mississippian Period. In 2013, Sarah Walters identified and dated a maize cupule from the Topper site that dated to the Late Woodland, which is considered to be one of the earliest dated maize remains in the region. There is potential, however, for the recently excavated maize to be of similar age or possibly older.

Thus, this project represents the first steps towards understanding how the Topper Site fits into the story of the spread of intensive maize agriculture in the southeast. Maize is present at the Topper Site, which once dated can help better explain the timeline of its arrival into the region. Obtaining such dates will allow for the examination of the chronologies both ceramic technology and use and the spread maize within the Southeastern United States.
societies local, may have been emerging at the site, or was present later in time. Without the accuracy of AMS dating, however, we are limited to using relative dating of the site via ceramic typologies and sequences, which are unable to resolve the temporal placement of local developments during the critical transitional centuries under investigation. AMS radiocarbon dating will provide far better dating of when maize appeared locally, and how the community changed as a result. The ability to more accurately place in time the site occupations, and the excavated features, would allow for a much more accurate discussion of changes occurring locally and over the region.

A dense feature and artifact assemblage dating to the Late Woodland (A.D. 500 - 1000) and Early Mississippian (A.D. 1000-1200) periods has been found at the Topper Site, characterized by large quantities of cross-cord marked pottery and arrow points. When considered with the numerous features suggests a small village may have been present, one where the inhabitants were concerned with both growing maize and either hunting or warfare. Additionally, there are traces of sherds with complicated stamp designs indicating a Mississippian occupation, characterized by complex chiefdom level

To date this project has benefited greatly from the hard work of the students and the staff from the various universities that have participated in the excavations at the Topper Site, as well as the support and expert assistance of the volunteers of the Southeastern Paleoamerican Survey (SEPAS). However, there is still more ground to cover and we ask that you consider supporting this ongoing project.

We are seeking funds to accomplish two main goals: 1) obtain radiocarbon dates; and 2) host excavations at Topper in May of 2017. All donations are fully tax deductible and will immediately assist us with achieving our goals!