



Dear AABA Attendees,

Thank you for taking a moment to read this short update from The Leakey Foundation. We are delighted to be here at the 95th Annual AABA Meeting and to have Education Director Arielle Johnson and Program Officer H. Gregory in Denver this year.

Please stop by booth #12 if you have any questions about this report or any of our funding programs or education and outreach activities. If you are not attending the meeting but would like to connect, please email grants@leakeyfoundation.org for funding questions or arielle@leakeyfoundation.org for information on our education and outreach programs.

Program Highlight: Joan Cogswell Donner Field School Scholarship

Applications are open for our newest funding initiative, the [Joan Cogswell Donner Field School Scholarship](#). This program provides up to \$2,000 toward field school tuition for students from countries with limited resources for training in fieldwork related to human origins research.

We've recently expanded this program to support field sites where principal investigators have committed to providing one-on-one field training for students attending their field season. This is part of our ongoing effort to make fieldwork training in human origins more accessible and inclusive.

New Members of Our Scientific Executive Committee

We are thrilled to announce that Jacinta Beehner, Kieran McNulty, and Peter Ungar have officially joined The Leakey Foundation's Scientific Executive Committee (SEC). Their expertise will be an invaluable contribution to the committee's funding decisions. We are grateful for their strong commitment to supporting The Leakey Foundation's efforts to increase scientific research, education, and public knowledge of human origins, evolution, behavior, and survival.

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The AABA and Leakey Foundation Communication & Outreach Award in Honor of Camilla Smith

The AABA and Leakey Foundation Communication & Outreach Award in Honor of Camilla Smith is awarded annually in recognition of outstanding public communication and educational outreach efforts in the field of biological anthropology.

The 2026 AABA and Leakey Foundation Communication & Outreach Award winner is Himani Nautiyal, Howard University.

Gordon P. Getty Award

The Gordon P. Getty Award is presented to an individual who shows extraordinary originality and dedication in their intellectual and professional pursuits while exemplifying a multidisciplinary approach to human origins research.

Our 2026 Gordon P. Getty Award Laureate is Colin Chapman, Vancouver Island University.

Lunch Break Science Returns Summer 2026

The Leakey Foundation's Lunch Break Science live interview and lecture series returns this summer. This online series features informal conversations with researchers about new discoveries in human origins, evolution, and related fields, giving audiences the opportunity to hear directly from scientists about their latest work and ask questions in real time.

If you have a research paper coming out soon or recently published work you'd like to share, we would love to feature you in the series. Lunch Break Science is a great way to highlight new research, connect with a broad public audience, and discuss the story behind your findings.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Arielle Johnson at arielle@leakeyfoundation.org

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Education Outreach with AABA Education Committee

The Leakey Foundation is proud to collaborate with the AABA Education Committee and support their important outreach efforts. Through this partnership, we are sponsoring outreach activities at the AABA meeting as well as the Art, Culture, and Science Expo. Under the wonderful leadership of Kate McGrath and Rob O'Malley, the committee continues to create meaningful opportunities to engage the public with evolutionary science. We are also collaborating on workshops and additional outreach efforts beyond the conference.

If you are interested in getting involved in science outreach, please reach out to the Education Committee to learn more about upcoming opportunities.

Our Climate Initiative: Leading by Example

The Leakey Foundation is committed to being a climate-action leader in the nonprofit sector. For the past seven years, we have worked diligently to understand, reduce, and offset our carbon footprint in a meaningful way. Since 2023, we've been certified as a carbon-neutral nonprofit, offsetting emissions not only for our operations, but also for all of our grantees, fellows, and leadership.

Why does this matter?

A 2022 article by the National Council of Nonprofits urged all organizations to recognize their role in addressing climate change:

“Our collective response to climate change must be on a scale commensurate with the threat; it's an all-hands-on-deck, all-sectors-step-up moment. If nonprofits don't involve themselves in practicing and demanding solutions, none of us will be able to deal with the consequences.”

However, despite this urgency, very few non-climate-focused foundations are engaging with this issue. A 2022 survey by the Center for Effective Philanthropy found that:

- Less than 15% of foundation leaders had board discussions on how climate change affects their ability to achieve their mission.
- Less than 10% had discussed climate impacts with their grantees.

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Want to learn more about our climate initiative or explore ways to help us expand our impact? Email our Executive Director Sharal Camisa Smith at sharal@leakeyfoundation.org.

Thank you for doing the work, teaching the public, reviewing our grants, and standing up for science. You make a difference.

Sincerely,

The Leakey Foundation Team

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