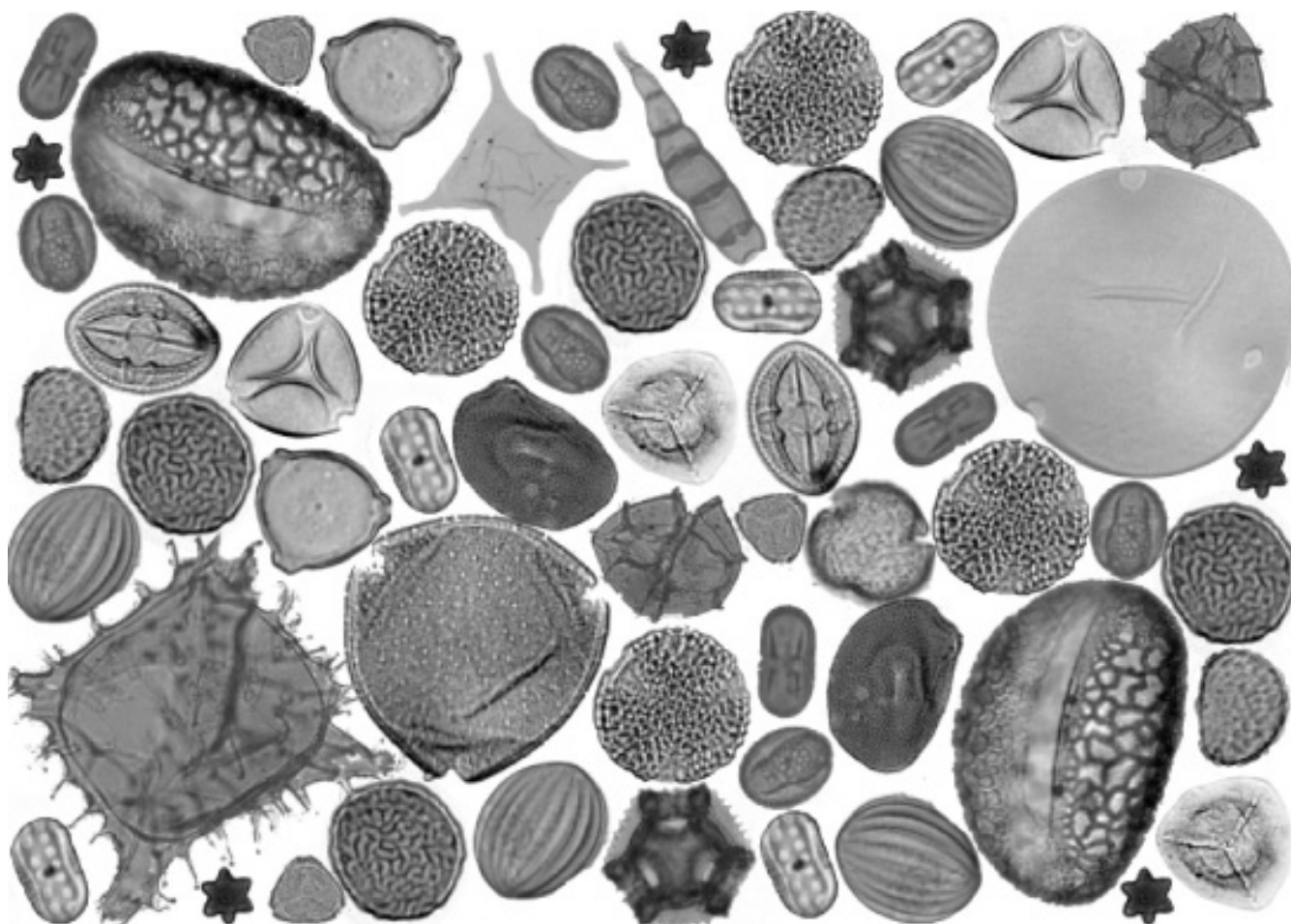




AASP – The Palynological Society

Promoting the Scientific Understanding of Palynology since 1967



NEWSLETTER

June 2026

Volume 59, Number 2

Published Quarterly



AASP – TPS NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly by AASP – The Palynological Society

June 2026, Volume 59, Number 2

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AASP

The Palynological Society

The American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists, Inc. - AASP - The Palynological Society - was established in 1967 by a group of 31 founding members to promote the science of palynology. Today AASP has a world-wide membership of about 200 and is run by an executive comprising an elected Board of Directors and subsidiary boards and committees. AASP welcomes new members. The AASP Foundation publishes the journal *Palynology* (quarterly), the *AASP Newsletter* (quarterly), and the *AASP Contributions Series* (mostly monographs, issued irregularly), as well as several books and miscellaneous items. AASP organises an Annual Meeting which usually includes a field trip, a business luncheon, social events, and technical sessions where research results are presented on all aspects of palynology.

AASP-TPS Scientific Medal recipients

Professor William R. Evitt (awarded 1982)
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Professor Vaughn M. Bryant (awarded 2016)
Professor David Batten (awarded 2018)
Dr. Robert Fensome (awarded 2024)
Dr. James Riding (awarded 2024)

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Professor Dr. Alfred Eisenack (elected 1975)
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Professor Bernard Owens (awarded 2011)
Dr. John E. Williams (awarded 2013)
Mr. Paul W. Nygreen (awarded 2013)
Professor Norman Norton (awarded 2016)
Professor George F. Hart (awarded 2020)

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Dr. Robert T. Clarke (awarded 1994)
Dr. Thomas D. Demchuk (awarded 2014)

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Professor Sophie Wary (awarded 2021)
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Dr. Robert T. Clarke (awarded 1978)
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Dr. Richard W. Hedlund (awarded 1982)
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Dr. Kenneth M. Piel (awarded 1990)
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Dr. Jan Jansonius (awarded 1995)
Dr. D. Colin McGregor (awarded 1995)
Professor John H. Wrenn (awarded 1998)
Professor Vaughn M. Bryant (awarded 1999)
Dr. Donald W. Engelhardt (awarded 2000)
Dr. David T. Pocknall (awarded 2005)
Dr. David K. Goodman (awarded 2005)
Professor Owen K. Davis (awarded 2005)
Dr. Thomas Demchuk (awarded 2009)
Professor Reed Wicander (awarded 2014)
Professor Fredrick Rich (awarded 2016)
Dr. James B. Riding (awarded 2016)
Professor Martin B. Farley (awarded 2019)
Professor Jennifer O'Keefe (awarded 2023)



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AASP NEWSLETTER GRAPHIC DESIGN (From December 2021 Issue)

Filipe Barreira, Laboratório Nacional de Energia e Geologia (LNEG), S. Mamede Infesta, Portugal

The AASP – TPS Newsletter is published four times annually. Members are encouraged to submit articles, “letters to the editor,” technical notes, meetings reports, information about “members in the news,” new websites and information about job openings. Every effort will be made to publish all information received from our membership. Contributions which include photographs should be submitted two weeks before the deadline. **Deadline for submission for the next issue of the newsletter is June 1, 2026.** All information should be sent by email. If possible, please illustrate your contribution with art, line drawings, eye-catching logos, black & white photos, colour photos, etc. **We DO look forward to contributions from our members.**

A Message From Our President

Hi everyone!

With early-bird registration for our annual meeting in Trelew extended until 30th June 2026, there is still time to join us in Patagonia.

The thematic sessions have been announced (<https://palynology.org/58th-aasp-tps-and-19th-sapp/>) and the conference is going to be wonderfully diverse.

From forensics to dinoflagellates, vegetation change to fungal revolution, there is hopefully something for everyone! I look forward to seeing many of you in Patagonia on 8th September 2026 for the ice-breaker at the Egidio Feruglio Paleontological Museum.

Thank you to everyone who voted in our board election. We look forward to welcoming our new president-elect, director-at-large and student director-at-large onto the board in Trelew.

We also welcome two fantastic members (Jessica and Brayon) who are going to test-out running the social media accounts for our secretary.

We have also had fantastic interest in our Student Travel Awards and Student Research Awards. Our ability to make these awards is made possible by your continued membership, thank you! They also show the breadth of our student members and that there is a healthy next generation of palynologists.



Managing Editor's Report

by Jim Riding

Palynology Volume 50, Part 2 was published online during early May 2026 and includes 14 items over 193 pages. T

These papers comprise three Obituaries and 11 Research Articles; the full contents are listed below.

There is a very good mix of topics from the Cambrian cryptospores of China to two papers on the melissopalynology of India

Those members who opt for the print version should receive Parts 1 and 2 very soon indeed.

We are now 'filling up' Part 3, which will be issued online during August 2026.

Thank you all for your continued support of our journal.

James B. Riding

Managing Editor, AASP – The Palynological Society

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United Kingdom
E-mail: jbri@bgs.ac.uk

22nd May 2026

The contents of *Palynology* Volume 50, Part 2 (May 2026)

Obituary

1. Hooghiemstra, H., van Geel, B. and van Driel-Murray, C. Studies on pollen and leather in ice, salt and peat; a tribute to Willy Groenman-van Waateringe (1933–2025). Article number 2617365, 10 p.

2. Pocknall, D.T., Hower, J.C., Booth, R.K. and

O'Keefe, J.M.K. Fredrick J. Rich (1951–2025): palynologist, coal geologist, naturalist, and teacher. Article number 2629797, 7 p.

3. Riding, J.B. and Pound, M.J. Michael Charles Boulter (1942–2025). Article number 2634553, 7 p.

Research Articles

4. Öztekin, M., Özmen Baysal, E. and Doğru-Koca, A. Pollen morphology of *Satureja* L. (Nepetoideae, Lamiaceae) taxa in Türkiye. Article number 2565613, 18 p.

5. Wang, K., Xu, H.-H. and Yin, L.-M. Cryptospores from the Shipai Formation (Cambrian Series 2, Stage 4) of Yichang, southern China. Article number 2589185, 12 p.

6. Priyadarshini, S., Sahu, S.C. and Dhal, N.K. Pollen morphology and taxonomic implications of Zingiberaceae in Eastern India. Article number 2602753, 14 p.

7. Sharma, R., Thakur, M., Devi, S. and Rana, K. Assessing melissopalynological diversity and geographical origin indicators of *Apis mellifera* L. honey from Himachal Pradesh, India. Article number 2601526, 20 p.

8. Medeiros, A.M.L., Mezzonato-Pires, A.C., Gonçalves-Esteves, V. and Mendonça, C.B.F. Palynotaxonomy of *Passiflora* supersections *Coccinea* and *Distephana* (Passifloraceae) in Brazil. Article number 2610001, 14 p.

9. Pocknall, D.T. and Wicander, R. The palynology of the Bakken Formation (Upper Devonian–Lower Mississippian) in North Dakota, USA. Article number 2612720, 18 p.

10. Nepomuceno, Á., Miguel, L.M., Laurenti, C.S., Gonçalves-Esteves, V., Dutra, V.F. and Alves-Araújo, A. Pollen and androecium mor-

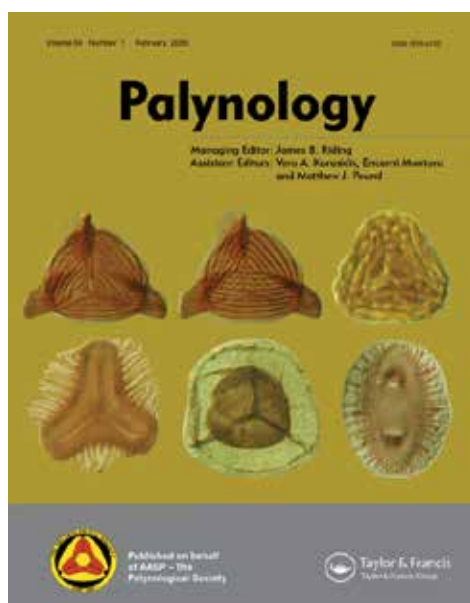
phology of the neotropical genus *Abatia* Ruiz & Pavon (Salicaceae) and their systematic implications. Article number 2615632, 14 p.

11. Ornelas, M.M., Kulkamp, J., dos Santos, M., dos Santos, F.D.A.R. and Carneiro Torres, D.S. Pollen morphology and ancestral reconstruction provide new characters and evolutionary insights supporting the systematics of the tribes Adelieae, Caperonieae and Ditaxaeae in Euphorbiaceae. Article number 2601530, 15 p.

12. Vieira, M. and Mahdi, S. The biostratigraphy and palaeoecology of the dinoflagellate cyst *Eatonicysta magna* sp. nov. from the Middle Eocene (Lutetian) of the North Sea. Article number 2630387, 15 p.

13. Sedek, A.S., Mohamad, S. and Yen Yen, S. Pollen as a powerful tool for taxonomic classification in the genus *Zingiber* (Zingiberaceae). Article number 2620540, 15 p.

14. Layek, U., De, S.K., Das, N. and Karmakar, P. Nectar sources of stingless bees (*Tetragonula pagdeni* Schwarz) in southern West Bengal, India assessed through pollen analysis of honey and field surveys. Article number 2633176, 14 p.





AASP FOUNDATION CENTURY CLUB

The Century Club of the AASP Foundation is an organization founded by the Trustees of the Foundation in order to provide persons with the opportunity to support activities of the AASP Foundation.

The goals of the Century Club are:

- To **develop an established level of giving** that will continue to provide a solid financial base to the Foundation.
- To **provide unrestricted funds to support various publishing activities** of the Foundation.
- To **provide a meaningful organization and method of recognition** of dedicated “friends” of the AASP Foundation.
- To provide funds to the Foundation in its efforts to **support students** in the study of palynology.

Your tax deductible contribution to the Foundation entitles you to belong to the Century Club. The membership drive is ongoing. Your contribution may be made by personal check, or you may also pay with credit card through the PayPal website (contact Thomas for that information).

Please complete the Contribution/Pledge form below and mail it to the address below:

Thomas D. Demchuk, AASP Foundation Trustee and Chair
14419 Lotusbriar Ln, Houston, TX 77077

The AASP Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public organization registered in the United States. This means that contributions to the AASP Foundation are fully deductible as a U.S. Citizen on your U.S. Federal Income Tax return. Also, many employers have a matching gift program whereby they will match your personal gift to a non-profit organization. It is well worth the effort to explore the possibility of supporting the AASP Foundation.

2026 AASP Foundation Century Club Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address (to send receipt): _____

Contribution Enclosed: \$ _____ I wish to pledge: \$ _____

AASP – TPS 50th Anniversary Jewelry Collection

Exclusive, Custom-made 50th Anniversary Jewelry

Limited Edition and availability



Special thanks to John Firth and Ingrid Romero for palynomorph images.

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of AASP – The Palynological Society with a beautiful, sterling silver palynomorph necklace. The Society board worked with jeweler and designer, 'Science-inspired jewelry', to create these one-of-a-kind, unique necklaces in honor of our golden anniversary. There are a limited number available of two designs, a pollen grain ***Macrolobium multijugum*** (a) and a dinoflagellate cyst of ***Diphyes recurvatum*** (b).

Each necklace comes with a commemorative information card that includes a picture and description of the palynomorph. **The society is selling them now for \$60.00 OR one *M. multijugum* + one *D. recurvatum* for \$100.00.** This is a wonderful way to support AASP-TPS and is a great conversation starter!

All jewelry can now be purchased at palynologyshop.org which is a tab on the AASP-TPS website (palynology.org).

Awards Committee News

by Marie McNeill, Jan Hennissen & Sonia Camina

We're pleased to announce the winners of the AASP–The Palynological Society student research and travel awards. This year we received an impressively large number of applications in both categories, highlighting the breadth and quality of work being carried out by students in palynology.

With such a strong pool of candidates, selecting the winners was no easy task. We thank all applicants for the time and effort they put into their submissions, and warmly congratulate this year's awardees—we look forward to seeing your continued contributions to the field.

Below are the biographies and research summaries of this year's AASP-TPS Student Research and Travel Award winners.

2026 Student Research Awards

Elizabeth Barnes

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Project Title: Environmental History and the Megafauna Extinction in Costa Rica

Supervisor: Sally Horn

Biography: I was introduced to general aspects of palynology and paleoenvironmental research during my undergraduate studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and a minor in Climate Change. My introduction was in a course on the vegetation of North America, taught by my present advisor. Under her supervision, I completed a Master of Science in Geography in August 2025. My thesis research used soil charcoal

to reconstruct the fire and forest history of an oak barren in southern Indiana, USA. In courses and other projects during my MS program, I gained experience collecting sediment cores from wetlands, characterizing sediments, and identifying pollen grains.

Following completion of my M.S. degree, I began PhD studies in Geography at the University of Tennessee, continuing in Sally Horn's lab. My research will focus on environmental conditions surrounding the time of the Megafauna Extinction in Costa Rica. I will study samples from wetland cores and exposures using a variety of palynological and palaeoecological methods, including analyses of pollen, coprophilous fungi and other non-pollen palynomorphs, and charcoal.



Research: Few studies analyzing coprophilous fungi spores have been conducted in the Neotropics, including at sites in the Peruvian Andes, Ecuador, and Mexico. Results from Peru show functional extinction of megafau-

na in the region by ca. 15,800 cal yr BP, prior to human arrival, while in Ecuador, evidence of human activity precedes the megafauna extinction by ca. 1800 years. However, very few records of non-pollen palynomorphs, including coprophilous fungi spores, exist for Costa Rica.

My dissertation research will examine megafauna-environment interactions in Costa Rica, where to date there is no archaeological evidence of human-megafauna interactions. Study of environmental proxies including pollen and non-pollen palynomorphs, paired with charcoal, will shed light on environmental conditions in Costa Rica during the late Quaternary, including during the Pleistocene megafauna extinction. Paired with existing fossil data, this study can provide valuable insights into environmental conditions during the world's last major extinction event, which will be useful in understanding future climate conditions and our own current biodiversity crisis.

Eleonora Inés Cavagna

Argentine Institute of Nivology, Glaciology and Environmental Sciences (IANIGLA, CONICET), Mendoza, Argentina

Project Title: Paleoenvironmental and Paleoclimatic Dynamics of the Subtropical Andes (36°S) During the Last 21,000 years

Supervisors: Dr. María Eugenia de Porras and Dr. Antonio Maldonado

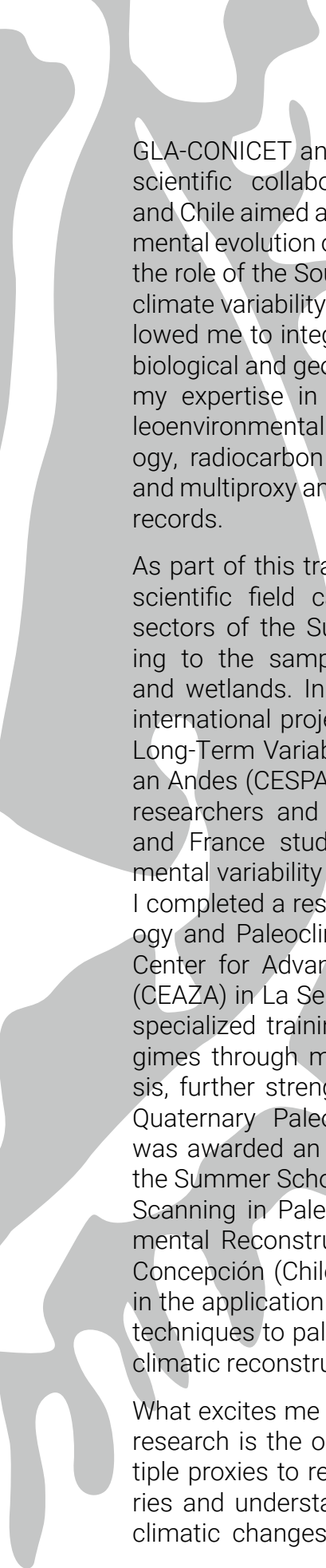
Biography: My interest in palynology began during my undergraduate studies at the National University of Cuyo, after taking courses in Earth Sciences and Palynology. What initially sparked my curiosity soon became a fascination with the possibility of reconstructing past environments and climates using proxies preserved in fossil sediments. In 2021, I joined the Quaternary Paleoecology Laboratory at the Argentine Institute of Nivology, Glaciology and Environmental Sciences (IANIGLA, CONI-

CET), where I completed a research internship under the supervision of Dr. María Eugenia de Porras. There, I gained my first fieldwork experience in the Andes, learned techniques for processing modern and fossil pollen samples, and discovered the remarkable potential of palynology for understanding the environmental history of South America.

As my training as a biologist progressed, my interests increasingly focused on the relationships among climate, vegetation, and environmental change in mountain ecosystems. This research path led me to develop my undergraduate thesis on the paleoenvironmental evolution of the Subtropical Andes and ultimately consolidated my vocation for Quaternary Paleoecology.



I am currently a CONICET doctoral fellow and a PhD student in Science and Technology at the National University of Cuyo, within the disciplinary area of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences. My research is conducted at the Quaternary Paleoecology Laboratory of IANI-



GLA-CONICET and is part of an international scientific collaboration between Argentina and Chile aimed at understanding the environmental evolution of the Subtropical Andes and the role of the Southern Westerly Wind Belt in climate variability. My doctoral training has allowed me to integrate approaches from both biological and geological sciences, expanding my expertise in palynological analysis, paleoenvironmental reconstruction, sedimentology, radiocarbon chronology, fire dynamics, and multiproxy analyses of fossil sedimentary records.

As part of this training, I have participated in scientific field campaigns across different sectors of the Subtropical Andes, contributing to the sampling of high-Andean lakes and wetlands. In 2023, I participated in the international project Climate Emergence and Long-Term Variability in the Southern Peruvian Andes (CESPA), where I worked alongside researchers and students from Peru, Chile, and France studying climatic and environmental variability in the Andes. Subsequently, I completed a research stay at the Paleoecology and Paleoclimatology Laboratory of the Center for Advanced Studies in Arid Zones (CEAZA) in La Serena, Chile, where I received specialized training in reconstructing fire regimes through macroscopic charcoal analysis, further strengthening my background in Quaternary Paleoecology. More recently, I was awarded an INQUA fellowship to attend the Summer School Applications of XRF Core Scanning in Paleoclimate and Paleoenvironmental Reconstructions at the University of Concepción (Chile), where I received training in the application of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) techniques to paleoenvironmental and paleoclimatic reconstructions.

What excites me most about paleoecological research is the opportunity to integrate multiple proxies to reconstruct ecosystem histories and understand how they responded to climatic changes operating across different

temporal scales. This interdisciplinary perspective continues to motivate my development as a researcher and guides the progress of my doctoral project.

Research: The Subtropical Andes constitute one of the principal freshwater reserves for both human populations and ecosystems in Argentina. Current climate projections indicate a progressive trend toward aridification in the region, primarily associated with declining snowfall in high-mountain environments. Despite their strategic importance, our understanding of long-term natural hydroclimatic variability remains limited, making it difficult to anticipate how these systems may respond to future climate change.

My doctoral research aims to reconstruct the paleoenvironmental and paleoclimatic dynamics of the Subtropical Andes between 33° and 36°S from the Last Glacial Maximum to the present, with particular emphasis on hydroclimatic variability and the role of the Southern Westerly Wind Belt as one of the primary climate drivers in southern South America. To achieve this, I work with fossil sedimentary records obtained from high-Andean lakes and wetlands that preserve evidence of past changes in vegetation, fire activity, and environmental conditions.

The project employs a multiproxy approach that integrates fossil pollen analysis, macroscopic charcoal, sedimentology, geochemistry, and volcanic tephra studies. Fossil pollen provides information on changes in vegetation composition and distribution, while charcoal records offer insights into past fire dynamics. Complementary sedimentological and geochemical analyses allow the evaluation of changes in lake productivity, sediment input, and hydrological conditions through time.

One of the most innovative aspects of the project is the integration of high-resolution geochemical records obtained through XRF Core Scanning with the study of volcanic ash layers

as independent chronological markers. The combination of these approaches will significantly strengthen chronological models and generate high-resolution paleoenvironmental reconstructions for the Subtropical Andes.

Support provided by the AASP–TPS Student Research Grant will contribute to chronological, palynological, and geochemical analyses. The results will improve our understanding of natural climate variability in the Subtropical Andes and provide valuable information for interpreting current and future environmental changes in one of South America's regions most sensitive to climate change.

Receiving this award is a great motivation to continue developing my scientific career. I am deeply grateful to my supervisors, collaborators, colleagues, and institutions who have supported my training and trusted my work throughout these years. Beyond their academic and professional guidance, they have been fundamental pillars in the development of this research and in my growth as a scientist. This recognition also reflects the value of collective effort, knowledge exchange, and interdisciplinary collaboration, which enrich our perspectives, strengthen our research, and make it possible to advance our understanding of complex environmental systems.

Danielle Fitzgerald

Virginia Tech, United States

Project title: Survivors of Snowball Earth (Cryogenian-to-early Ediacaran, Northern Mongolia): Insights into the ancestors of all living organisms

Supervisor: Dr. Shuhai Xiao

Biography: I have always had a passion for the outdoors and history. In 2016, I took a course in the history of life, and I was hooked. In 2021, I earned a BScH with a major in geological sciences and a minor in life sciences from Queen's University (Kingston, Canada).

My summer research and honours thesis projects looked at Phanerozoic iron-coated grains from a sedimentary geochemistry perspective, and I developed an aptitude for research.

In 2023, I earned an MSc in geological sciences from Queen's University (Kingston, Canada), where I studied Ediacaran glacial deposits in Newfoundland (Canada) under the supervision of Drs. Guy Narbonne and Peir Pufahl. I am now pursuing my PhD at Virginia Tech under the supervision of Dr. Shuhai Xiao, studying the co-evolution of life and the environment in the Proterozoic, and I have had the privilege of completing fieldwork in Canada, China, and Mongolia to investigate these successions globally.



Research: I am passionate about the co-evolution of early life and the environment. Major eukaryotic evolution occurred in the Neoproterozoic, and these changes are contemporaneous with major shifts in Earth's climate. The

Cryogenian Period (~720-635 Ma) is book-ended by Snowball Earth episodes, during which Earth's entire surface was covered by snow and ice, and very little light reached the ocean. Yet life did not go completely extinct during these episodes. Instead, life persisted and then diversified, and all living organisms can be considered descendants of Snowball Earth survivors.

It has been hypothesized that the advent of Ediacaran animals was seeded in the Cryogenian because multicellularity may have been stimulated by Snowball Earth conditions.

In this project, I propose to investigate microfossils preserved in Cryogenian-to-early Ediacaran carbonate facies in the Khuvsgul area of northern Mongolia to test the hypothesis that Cryogenian sediments preserve ancestral forms of Ediacaran life.

In the summer of 2025, my colleagues and I collected a suite of Cryogenian-to-early Ediacaran samples (carbonates, cherts, and mudstones) from Khuvsgul. The investigation of multiple lithologies will yield a dataset that can be integrated with the global record and used to test hypotheses about the evolutionary history of life forms.

The proposed research is significant because it will advance our understanding of life after each Snowball Earth episode and, in turn, aid in understanding the enigmatic glaciations themselves.

2026 Student Travel Awards

Brayon M. Fernandes

Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Project title: Vegetation Dynamics and Fire Regimes in the Serra da Canastra National Park (Minas Gerais, Brazil) during the Last Glacial Maximum (~23,000-20,000 cal yr BP)

Supervisor: Raquel Franco Cassino

Biography: My name is Brayon M. Fernandes, and I am a Brazilian M.Sc. student in the Graduate Program in Crustal Evolution and Natural Resources at the Department of Geology, Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto (UFOP), Brazil. My research is supervised by Dr. Raquel Franco Cassino and Dr. Hermínio Arias Nalini Junior.

My interest in palynology began during my undergraduate studies in Geological Engineering at UFOP, where I was introduced to micropaleontology, paleoecology, and palynology through courses taught by Dr. Raquel Franco Cassino. This early exposure motivated me to work as a teaching assistant in Micropaleontology and to conduct undergraduate research focused on paleoenvironmental reconstruction. My undergraduate thesis investigated environmental changes and fire-regime dynamics recorded in a high-altitude lake sediment sequence from Serra do Gandarela, an ecotonal region located between the Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes in southeastern Brazil.



During my undergraduate studies, I also completed a five-month academic exchange program at Montanuniversität Leoben, Austria. There, I attended advanced geoscience courses and participated in an English-language scientific communication program. The exchange included field excursions to historic mining districts and the Erzberg Mine, one of Central Europe's largest iron ore deposits, broadening my international academic perspective.

Beyond research, I am actively involved in scientific communication and outreach. I currently serve as Social Media Editor for AASP—The Palynological Society, working alongside Stephen Stukins and Jessica O'Connor to manage the Society's presence across digital platforms. I am also a member of the Communication Committee of UFOP's Graduate Program in Crustal Evolution and Natural Resources, contributing to science outreach initiatives and the dissemination of geoscientific knowledge.

Research: My M.Sc. research aims to reconstruct the paleoecological and paleoclimatic history of Serra da Canastra National Park, southeastern Brazil, over the last ~23,000 calibrated years BP. This time interval encompasses the Last Glacial Maximum and the Pleistocene–Holocene transition, two periods of major climatic reorganization that strongly influenced vegetation dynamics throughout tropical South America.

Serra da Canastra National Park is one of Brazil's most important conservation areas, protecting the headwaters of the São Francisco River and preserving a diverse mosaic of Cerrado grasslands, rocky outcrop vegetation (campos rupestres), gallery forests, and Atlantic Forest-influenced woodlands.

Despite its ecological significance and exceptional biodiversity, high-resolution paleoenvironmental records from this region remain scarce, limiting our understanding of long-

term ecosystem responses to past climate change.

To address this knowledge gap, I am studying a 1-meter peat core collected in October 2024 from a high-altitude peatland (~1,398 m a.s.l.) within the park. The core was retrieved using a Russian Peat Corer as part of a collaborative project between Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto and Universidade Federal de Uberlândia (UFU).

My study adopts a multi-proxy approach that integrates palynological analyses of pollen grains, spores, and non-pollen palynomorphs (including algae), macroscopic charcoal analysis, stable isotope geochemistry ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$), C/N ratios, radiocarbon dating, and major, minor, and trace element geochemistry.

Radiocarbon dating has already been completed and is being used to establish the chronological framework, estimate sedimentation rates, and build a robust age-depth model. Fossil pollen assemblages will also be compared with modern pollen surface datasets using multivariate statistical analyses and the modern analog technique.

Peatlands are exceptional paleoenvironmental archives because they preserve biological and geochemical proxies under waterlogged and anoxic conditions, while also being highly sensitive to climatic and hydrological changes. By integrating these multiple lines of evidence within regional and global

paleoclimatic frameworks, this study seeks to understand how vegetation composition and fire regimes in the southeastern Cerrado responded to past environmental changes.

The results are expected to improve our understanding of long-term ecosystem dynamics under changing climate conditions and provide valuable baseline information for the conservation and management of one of Brazil's most biodiverse and environmentally important protected areas.

Mihir Gupta

University of Wisconsin Madison, United States

Project title: A Machine Learning Approach to the Classification of Wisconsin Taxa Charcoal

Supervisor: Sara Hotchkiss

Biography: I recently completed my B.A. in Data Science and Economics at the University of Wisconsin - Madison (May 2026) and aim to begin a PhD in ecology in 2027. My path into paleoecology runs through quantitative methods where I came to the field by finding ecological applications for the machine learning I had learned in data science.

I am drawn to questions about how the plant record is preserved, biased, and read. I am currently a restoration ecology intern at Faville Grove Sanctuary in Wisconsin, and hope to focus my doctoral research on the automated classification of pollen, charcoal, and potentially other microfossils. Outside research, I love to travel, speak four languages (Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, and English), and enjoy being outdoors.



Research: My research asks: when a plant burns, how much taxonomic information survives in the charcoal it leaves behind? Charcoal is a proxy in fire history and is routinely counted alongside pollen in lake-sediment cores, yet it is usually treated as a single undifferentiated signal, present or absent, rather than read for what taxa actually burned.

For my undergraduate thesis, "A Machine Learning Approach to the Classification of Wisconsin Taxa Charcoal", I built a classification pipeline on 2,629 charcoal fragments produced from 18 Wisconsin species, spanning three plant tissue types and three burn temperatures.

Using morphometric measurements and morphotype scoring, I trained models to predict species, tissue, and burn temperature from fragment morphology alone.

The headline result is counterintuitive: for conifers, the morphological distinguishability of leaf and twig charcoal increases at higher burn temperatures which is a preservation bias with implications for how high-temperature fire signals should be interpreted in paleorecords.

A second finding, that logistic regression outperformed Random Forest on temperature prediction, pointed to a largely linear geometric structure underlying the charcoal morphospace.

The work is being prepared for submission to a paleoecology journal, and the AASP-TPS travel award supports my talk of it at the 58th Annual Meeting in Trelew.

The methodological thread of using machine learning to bring more taxonomic resolution out of a microfossil proxy is the basis from where I aim to develop an automated pollen classifier in a future PhD program

Martha Patricia Albarrán Hernández

Colegio de Postgraduados, Estado de México, México

Poster title: Catálogo polínico de plantas visitadas por *Apis mellifera* en Atlalpíxco, Estado de México, México

Supervisor: Iris Grisel Galván Escobedo

Biography: My interest in palynology began with my appreciation for the color, aroma, and taste of honey. Differences among honeys sparked my curiosity about their botanical origins and led me to recognize the value of pollen in identifying the plants bees use. Through melissopalynology, I learned that pollen grains link floral resources, honey production, and colony maintenance.

I am a doctoral student in the Botany Graduate Program at Colegio de Postgraduados. My training has focused on applied palynology, bee flora, plant–pollinator interactions, and pollen reference catalogs. My work integrates field observations in apiaries, botanical collecting, taxonomic identification, and palynological analysis of plant species visited by *Apis mellifera*. In the laboratory, I have worked with pollen extraction and processing techniques and with the morphological characterization of pollen grains to build reference collections.



Through this research, I aim to generate information that helps identify the botanical origin of honey, supports beekeeping management, and contributes to the conservation of floral resources used by pollinators. Participating in the 58th Annual Meeting of AASP – The Palynological Society, jointly with the 19th Simposio Argentino de Paleobotánica y Palinología, offers an opportunity to share my research progress, receive specialized feedback, and strengthen my involvement in the international palynological community.

Research: My research focuses on characterizing bee flora and developing pollen reference catalogs to support melissopalynological studies in Mexico. In particular, this work is situated in the Altiplano beekeeping region, an important honey-producing area that includes the Estado de México, Morelos, and other states, where systematic knowledge of the plants used by *Apis mellifera* remains limited.

This study aims to document the plant species visited by bees in apiaries in Atlalpíxco, Estado de México, and to describe their pollen morphology to improve identification of the botanical origin of honey. The study integrates field observations, records of bee foraging activity, botanical collecting, taxonomic identification, and acetolysis-based pollen processing. The material is incorporated into a pollen reference collection and morphologically characterized to identify diagnostic features useful for melissopalynological studies.

To date, 150 plant specimens have been collected, representing 69 species and 21 botanical families. Of these, the pollen morphology of 19 taxa with extended flowering periods has been described, including nectariferous, polliniferous, and nectar-polliniferous species. Preliminary results indicate that some families, such as Asteraceae, Brassicaceae, and Rosaceae, have highly similar pollen grains, necessitating the identification of diagnostic characters to distinguish them.

This catalog will improve the interpretation of pollen content in honey, strengthen product traceability, and provide useful information for the sustainable management of apiaries and the conservation of floral resources used by pollinators.

Victor Enrique Neyra

Louisiana State University, United States

Project Title: A dinoflagellate cyst record of transition, disruption, and recovery across the Tortonian–Zanclean at IODP Site U1609A, western Portuguese margin

Supervisor: Sophie Warny

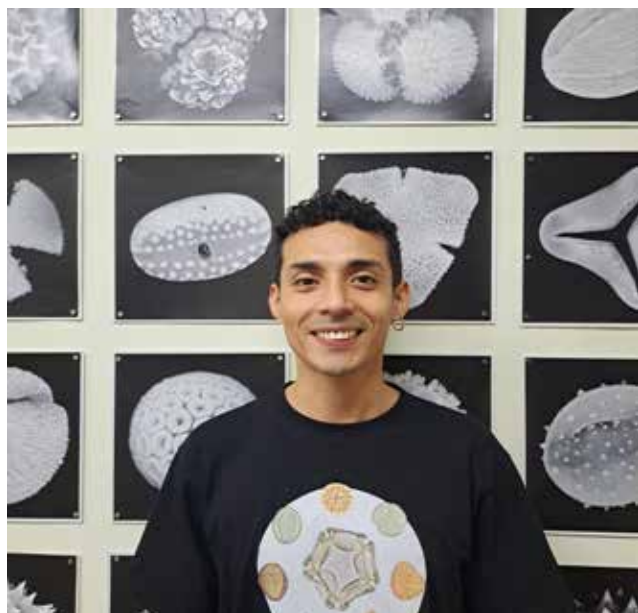
Biography: I am a Ph.D. student in Geology at Louisiana State University (LSU), USA, under the supervision of Dr. Sophie Warny. I earned a B.Sc. in Biological Sciences (Fishery Biology) from Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Peru, where my undergraduate research focused on dinoflagellates associated with harmful algal blooms.

During my M.Sc. in Marine Sciences at Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, I discovered the fields of paleoceanography and palynology and became fascinated by the fossil record of dinoflagellates preserved through their resting cysts. Having dreamed of becoming a paleontologist since childhood because of my fascination with dinosaurs, I often describe palynology as an opportunity to work with “microscopic dinos.”

Following my master's degree, I joined the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) in Panama, where I first completed an internship and later a fellowship under the supervision of Dr. Carlos Jaramillo as part of the PollenGeo Project.

In 2025, I began my Ph.D. at LSU while hired as a Curatorial Assistant at the Center for Excellence in Palynology (CENEX). My current research focuses on dinoflagellate cyst and

pollen records from the Iberian margins to reconstruct oceanographic and climatic changes associated with the Messinian Salinity Crisis and the Late Miocene–Pliocene transition.



Research: I investigate how marine ecosystems responded to one of the most dramatic oceanographic events of the Neogene: the Messinian Salinity Crisis (MSC; 5.94–5.41 Ma). Using dinoflagellate cysts preserved in sediments recovered during IODP Expedition 401 at Site U1609A on the western Portuguese margin, I reconstruct changes in sea-surface conditions before, during, and after the MSC.

The goal of this chapter is to evaluate how dinoflagellate cyst assemblages responded to environmental disruption associated with the MSC and to identify patterns of ecological transition and recovery across the Tortonian, Messinian, and Zanclean. Changes in species composition are used to infer variations in sea-surface temperature, salinity, productivity, and regional oceanographic dynamics. The results provide new insights into the resilience of marine plankton communities during major climatic and oceanographic perturbations, contributing to a better understanding of North Atlantic paleoenvironmental evolution

during the Late Miocene and Early Pliocene. More broadly, this work offers a valuable perspective on how marine ecosystems may respond to future climate change and large-scale oceanographic disruptions.

Felix Pym

University of Exeter, UK

Project title: Ecological consequences of Pleistocene megafaunal declines in the Neotropics

Supervisor: Dunia H. Urrego

Biography: I am a PhD researcher investigating the Late Pleistocene megafaunal extinctions in the Neotropics using a multiproxy palynological approach.

I studied Physical Geography for my undergraduate degree at the University of Exeter. I have always been fascinated by the natural world, but it was during the second year of my undergraduate studies, through a 'Reconstructing Past Environments' module, which led me to a palaeoecological dissertation where I became captivated by the ability of palynology to provide a window to study the past.

Building on this experience, I stayed at the University of Exeter to undertake a Master of Science by Research. This research was the first to reconstruct the timing and consequences of the Pleistocene megafaunal extinction in Colombia, utilising spores of coprophilous fungi, pollen, and charcoal, and was published in *Quaternary Research*. Both my undergraduate dissertation and Master's projects were conducted under the supervision of Dr Dunia H. Urrego and Dr Felipe Franco-Gaviria.

I was also fortunate to be hired as a palaeoecological research technician and to support sediment coring in the high Andes, Subandean forests, and mangroves of Colombia. I subsequently worked as a Geography laboratory

technician in Exeter. I supported postgraduates and academics across a wide range of research projects and provided supervision and microfossil identification training for undergraduates undertaking palynological dissertations. These roles provided valuable field and laboratory experience that further shaped my research direction.

I started my PhD in 2023, also at the University of Exeter, under the supervision of leading palaeoecological (Dunia Urrego, Felipe Franco-Gaviria and Marco Raczka), climate (Stephen Sitch) and biogeochemistry (Gbotemi Adediran) experts.

Research: At the end of the Late Quaternary, global extinctions occurred that disproportionately affected the largest living herbivores (megafauna). My research focuses on the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene megafaunal extinctions in South and Central America, with a particular emphasis on the ecological consequences, which I aim to use to support conservation and rewilding in modern-day ecosystems.



I use spores of coprophilous fungi (SCF) as a proxy for megafauna and to identify the timing of extinctions. One aspect of my research is methodological focused, aimed at enhancing our understanding of the use of SCF from sedimentary and dung records.

My research integrates multiproxy microfossil analysis, using pollen, charcoal, and elemental data to reconstruct vegetation, fire, and nutrient dynamics and investigate the ecological consequences of megafaunal extinctions in Colombia and Panama. This includes a novel approach to combine palynology with energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) elemental analysis.

By analysing microfossil records across the Late Pleistocene, Holocene, and Anthropocene, I am passionate about using the critical insights provided by palaeoecology as a baseline to inform conservation and support trophic rewilding. For example, this includes restoring the ecological functions lost with the extinction of Pleistocene megafauna in Panama, as detailed in a recent publication in Quaternary Science Reviews.

In case you were wondering, the giant ground sloth is one of my favourite extinct Pleistocene megafaunal species.

Carolina Pia Wraage

Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (UNMdP) & IIMyC (CONICET-UNMdP), Argentina

Project Title: Pollen-Vegetation Representation model in the Tandilia Rangeland System (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Supervisor: Gonzalo David Sottile

Research: Tandilia rangelands at Buenos Aires province, (Argentina) is a biodiversity hotspot, dominated by Poaceae and Asteraceae, currently facing severe fragmentation due to agricultural expansion, urbanization, and exotic species invasion.



The main goal of my PhD thesis is to characterize the modern pollen and silicophytolith representation of current vegetation in the southeastern Tandilia rangeland, in order to estimate crucial coefficients for quantitative vegetation reconstruction based on the paleobotanical record.

This new methodological framework will allow us to quantify and study long term vegetation changes since pre-european settlement and pre-exotic species expansion.

This is an opportunity to integrate two paleobotanical proxies to differentiate natural ecological shifts from anthropogenic disturbances, contributing to designing effective native plant communities conservation strategies. Efforts on pollen-vegetation quantitative models are scarce in the Southern Hemisphere. Sampling efforts were focused on evaluating the relevant pollen source area and calculations of pollen productivity estimates to achieve a potential pollen-vegetation model to apply in lake pollen records. Thus, I characterized 357 vegetation plots including most of the plant communities and landscape heterogeneity in southeastern Tandilia.

I applied for the AASP-TPS Student Travel Award to aid with travel costs for the 2026 AASP-TPS conference in Trelew, Argentina. With the help of the AASP award, I will be able

to attend the meeting, share my ongoing work calibrating modern flora with paleobotanical records, and connect with the international palynological community.

Raúl Yuca-Rivas

Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina

Project title: Drivers of vegetation diversity and composition in the forest-steppe ecotone of Northwest Patagonia, Argentina

Supervisor: Sonia Leonor Fontana

Biography: As a biologist from Cusco, the historical capital city of Perú, and a graduate of the Universidad Nacional de San Antonio Abad del Cusco, I pursued further studies in paleontology and anthropology at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina, where I am currently conducting my doctoral thesis project.



Research: My research focuses on the analysis of lacustrine sedimentary records and their paleoecological interpretation in Northwestern Andean Patagonia.

Through the exhaustive examination of fossil pollen grains and spores during the Late-

Glacial and the Holocene, my thesis project aims to contribute to the reconstruction of long-term vegetation dynamics, shifts in plant community structures, and environmental transformations within the forest-steppe ecotone.

Furthermore, it seeks to understand how Andean Patagonian ecosystems respond to exogenous driving forces (climatic, geological, and anthropogenic) over millennial time-scales.



Student Research Award 2025 - Research Update by Orin Lole Durbin

I received the AASP–TPS Research Award last year to study phytoplankton (acritarchs) during the Cambrian Explosion. Across the Ediacaran–Cambrian boundary, phytoplankton communities underwent a significant shift, much as animals did, with many species first appearing in the rock record. By examining early Cambrian chert deposits in South China, I aim to further investigate phytoplankton diversity during this transition and the potential interactions between phytoplankton and animals as both groups radiated.

Last summer, I travelled to China to conduct fieldwork for my project alongside my supervisor, Shuhai Xiao, and labmate, Danielle Fitzgerald.

When I first arrived, I had the opportunity to present work undertaken during the first year of my PhD on early Cambrian acritarchs from South China at the 5th International Conference of Geobiology held in Wuhan.

Meeting many Chinese scientists who had previously worked on early Cambrian acritarchs and discussing my research with them was an enriching experience that helped me prepare for collecting samples after the conference.

Over the following three weeks, we conducted fieldwork across the Yangtze Gorges and surrounding areas. For me, this was an amazing experience. Studying these successions



Xiao Lab (Shuhai, Danielle, and Orin from right to left) at Weng'an Mine

alongside scientists who had a wealth of knowledge either of the localities we visited or similar ones from other parts of the world was particularly valuable.

As an added benefit to the work I had presented at the conference, I was able to visit many of the sections I had examined material from and written about. This ultimately proved invaluable. The manuscript based on this project was recently accepted by the *Journal of Paleontology*, and many of the lithological insights, in particular, were greatly influenced by my visits to the sections.

As part of collecting for my new project, we visited eight sections in total, obtaining over 170 samples. Our colleagues shipped the samples from China to Virginia Tech, and they arrived in November. Preparation of thin sections began in December and was completed by March. I have begun analysing these, with the acritarchs *Heliosphaeridium ampliatus* and *Comasphaeridium annulare*, and microfossil *Megathrix longus* identified so far.

It would not have been possible to undertake the fieldwork necessary for this project without the support of AASP-TPS. The research award enabled me to take a great opportunity to conduct fieldwork and engage with the Ediacaran-Cambrian research community in South China. The support of the society has additionally been instrumental in preparing the samples collected last summer for thin section analysis. I am eager to continue examining the thin sections and look forward to finding whatever new information they undoubtedly hold, which will hopefully contribute to our broader understanding of the early Cambrian.



Microfossils Heliosphaeridium ampliatus (lower left) and Megathrix longus (right)



The 58th AASP-TPS Annual Meeting Update

by Paula Narvaez



Abstract Submission is Open – Deadline Extended!

Don't miss the opportunity to share your latest research at the joint SAPP–AASP 2026 Meeting in Trelew, Argentina. We are pleased to announce that **the abstract submission deadline has been extended to June 30, 2026**. In addition, the early bird registration deadline has also been extended, giving participants more time to benefit from reduced registration fees.

Each participant may submit a maximum of two abstracts. However, there is no limit to the number of abstracts on which an individual may appear as a co-author.

Abstracts must be submitted exclusively by email. Download the abstract template from our website <https://palynology.org/58th-aasp-tps-and-19th-sapp/> and follow the formatting instructions.

Please send your abstract to: trelew2026@gmail.com

Deadline: **June 30, 2026**

We encourage you to take advantage of the extended deadlines and join us in what promises to be an exciting and engaging scientific meeting. Participants may submit their work to thematic sessions or to general sessions covering broader areas within the discipline.

Discover Patagonia: Join Our Field Trips!

Enhance your conference experience by participating in our exciting field trips organized as part of the SAPP–AASP-TPS 2026 Meeting in Trelew, Argentina.

These excursions offer a unique opportunity to explore the remarkable geological and paleontological landscapes of Patagonia, one of the most iconic regions in the Southern Hemisphere. From fossil-rich formations to stunning natural scenery, each trip is designed to combine scientific insight, hands-on learning, and unforgettable experiences in the field.

Whether you are interested in stratigraphy, paleobotany, palynology, or simply want to immerse yourself in the natural beauty of the region, our field trips provide something for everyone.

Spots are limited, and we expect strong interest—we encourage you to plan ahead and secure your place early.

Learn more about the available field trips, itineraries, and registration details on our website:

<https://palynology.org/58th-aasp-tps-and-19th-sapp/>

Don't miss this opportunity to connect science with landscape and make the most of your time in Patagonia!

Scholarships and support for students

The Commission Internationale de Microflore du Paléozoïque (CIMP) will provide four small grants for student attendees each to the value of €100.00. The grants are intended to cover early-bird registration fees, but can be used towards travel, accommodation or subsistence costs, and will be available to students working on Palaeozoic palynology.

To apply please send the following to: Sonia Clara Camina, sonia.camina@port.ac.uk

- A short description of your research;
- Confirmation of your student status;
- Title of any oral (as speaker) or poster (as first author) presentations you intend to make at the conference, with a list of co-authors.

Preference will be given to members of CIMP (membership is free to students). Awardees will be expected to provide a short written account of their conference experience for inclusion in the CIMP Newsletter and social media.

Deadline for receipt of applications is June 15, 2026.

Scholarships for local undergraduate students in Trelew

1 - The International Organization of Palaeobotany (IOP) offers scholarships for undergraduate students of the National University of Patagonia San Juan Bosco.

2 - We are also pleased to announce the opening of the call for scholarships for undergraduate students of the University Technician Degree in Paleontology at the University of Chubut.

Both scholarships include full coverage of the registration fee and aim to promote continuous training, academic exchange, and scientific outreach by providing financial support to students from the local community of Trelew.

For eligibility criteria and application procedures for both scholarships, please visit <https://events.mef.org.ar/becas-y-apoyos-para-estudiantes/>

Pre-Meeting Courses – Expand Your Skills!

Take advantage of a unique opportunity to deepen your expertise by joining our pre-meeting courses:

- Paleobryology
- Patagonian flora in an evolutionary context
- Tools for science communication: a perspective from the natural sciences

These courses are designed to provide focused, high-quality training led by experienced specialists.

Find the courses' details here: <https://palynology.org/58th-aasp-tps-and-19th-sapp/>

Start your conference experience with new knowledge, new connections, and fresh inspiration!

For questions or further information please write to: trelew2026@gmail.com

Check our website <https://palynology.org/58th-aasp-tps-and-19th-sapp/> for the latest information regarding the event.

See you in Trelew!

Organizing Committee



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<https://alpaleobotanicapalinologia.blogspot.com/>



<https://www.apaleontologica.org.ar/>



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Other Meetings

SAVE THE DATE!



XVI IPC – XII IOPC 2028
CALGARY, CANADA
AUGUST 7 – 11, 2028



Join us for the **16th International Palynological Congress** and the **12th International Organization of Palaeobotany Congress**, the premier global gathering of palynologists and palaeobotanists.

Held every four years, this joint congress brings together an international community of researchers and professionals to share discoveries, foster collaboration, and advance our understanding of Earth's past, present, and future.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Canadian Rockies, Calgary offers an inspiring destination for five days of scientific exchange, networking, and field exploration.

We look forward to welcoming you to IPC–IOPC 2028!

Congress Venue: Telus Calgary
Convention Centre

Image via Tourism Calgary



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Congress: