



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSIONS AND CEMETERY PRESERVATION STUDY PROJECT

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Carson	Hardin	Matagorda	Tyler
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Historical Commission's Cemetery Preservation Program undertook this project in order to determine how effectively County Historical Commissions (CHCs) are preserving cemeteries, and how the Texas Historical Commission (THC) can best support these activities.

The project began with an analysis of CHC annual reports, which provided a basis for developing a two-phase qualitative/quantitative research effort to determine CHCs' perceptions of cemetery preservation, opportunities, and challenges. Working closely with THC staff, McDoux developed an interview questionnaire and conducted telephone interviews with 43 CHCs about cemetery preservation.

The interviews revealed that most cemetery maintenance or care is being performed by local government agencies, private cemetery associations or family groups associated with a particular cemetery, or interested individuals. CHCs are more likely to focus on locating previously unknown cemeteries, protecting threatened burial sites, and keeping burial records up-to-date. CHCs reported challenges to cemetery preservation including a lack of interest among citizens, lack of volunteers to do on-site work, lack of funding for physical improvements, and (in some counties) ensuring access to cemeteries on private property.

This anecdotal data served as the basis for a statewide survey to determine the extent to which the opinions expressed by interviewees were representative of CHCs overall. A total of 126 Texas CHCs responded to the survey, yielding a sufficiently high response rate (60% of the 209 active CHCs) that THC can reliably apply these results statewide.

Following the analysis of survey results, McDoux provided the following conclusions:

- CHCs' cemetery preservation activities are limited by the capacity of individual appointees and available volunteers and funding. However, cemetery associations, county genealogy societies, local governments, or individual families are also documenting and maintaining cemeteries. As a result, many CHCs can focus on activities that they can easily accomplish within their limited resources.
- Public awareness of the importance of cemetery preservation and related laws, tools, and programs presents an opportunity for THC to support CHCs' role as the public's first point of contact for cemetery information, especially when the CHC has no online presence.
- Establishing an annual cemetery-related goal or focus area could benefit both THC and CHCs. It could support greater peer-to-peer interaction among CHCs, while providing a focus for THC to collect and publish best-practice information, develop new educational resources, and conduct workshops and webinars. CHCs who are already doing great work in the focus area could serve as peer advisors or lead workshops; CHCs who are limited by the capacity of their individual members might be able to use the focus area as a way to recruit new people to the team. In addition, regular focus-area-related communications that keep cemeteries top-of-mind with CHCs, as well as providing them with useful information resources, might result in increased CHC or county-level cemetery preservation activity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
METHODOLOGY	2
SURVEY RESULTS	6
CONCLUSIONS	31
POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS	33

APPENDICES

A. SURVEY FORM

B. TELEPHONE INTERVIEW SCRIPT

C. OTHER CEMETERY ORGANIZATIONS BY COUNTY

D. EXCERPTS FROM TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

E. SUCCESS STORIES SHARED

INTRODUCTION

This project seeks to determine how effectively County Historical Commissions (CHCs) are preserving cemeteries, and how the Texas Historical Commission (THC) can best support these activities.

Our initial analysis of CHC annual reports led us to conclude that THC needs to:

- Establish its own internal expectations for CHC “effectiveness” in the area of cemetery preservation.
- Capture the CHCs’ perspective on what it means to be “effective” in this area and identify any discrepancies between CHC expectations and those of THC.
- Determine a method of reporting most CHCs can realistically complete.
- Solicit information about not only the activities which the CHC itself undertakes, but also cemetery preservation being conducted in the county by other organizations or individuals.
- Develop a complete picture of the state of cemetery preservation in each county.

In service of the second and third goals on that list, McDoux contacted 76 CHCs and ultimately conducted telephone interviews to gather anecdotal data from 43 CHCs about cemetery preservation.

We then used the information gathered through the interview process to develop a survey to determine the extent to which the opinions expressed by interviewees were representative of CHCs overall. A total of 126 Texas counties responded to the survey.

The overall project methodology, results, conclusions, and options for next steps are presented in this report. Appendices contain the data collection tools used and additional comments received from survey respondents.

METHODOLOGY

This project began with a kick-off meeting with McDoux, THC Cemetery Preservation Program staff, and THC County Historic Commission (CHC) coordinator to establish the goals of the project and refine the project plan and schedule.

Step 1: Initial Data Analysis

To develop a baseline understanding of the data currently available, THC staff provided the following information:

- Summary of CHC respondents who included cemetery-related activities in their annual reports for 2015–2017
- For the years 2015, 2016, and 2017, raw cemetery-related data and text excerpts submitted as part of CHC annual reports
- List of grants made by the Certified Local Government program for cemetery-related projects in 2012–2013
- List of cemetery-related presentations and webinars presented by THC staff in 2017–2018

The CHC annual report is designed to determine how well CHCs are meeting their statutory responsibilities, how well their work is aligned with the Texas Statewide Preservation Plan, and what additional resources THC might provide to support their activities; and to demonstrate the importance of their work to elected officials and others. THC Cemetery Preservation Program staff wanted to know if or how they might use the information in CHC annual reports to understand the cemetery-related activities and needs of CHCs.

Analysis of this information explored THC's cemetery-related goals for CHCs versus the data currently available in CHC annual reports, summarized preliminary findings, and proposed research questions to be pursued during the remainder of this project.

This phase of the project concluded that the cemetery-related information provided in CHC annual reports does not necessarily reflect the full scope of cemetery preservation activities being undertaken in a county, including CHCs' direct and indirect influence and accomplishments. This does not reflect a deficiency in the CHC annual report, which captures a wide variety of information and does not have a cemetery focus, but instead recognizes a potential opportunity for other data collection and/or reporting by CHCs regarding cemetery preservation activities at the county level.

Step 2: Qualitative Telephone Interviews

Based on this initial analysis, McDoux worked with THC Cemetery Preservation staff to establish goals for the next two phases of the project: telephone interviews and a follow-on survey to test the qualitative results from the interviews using quantitative research. We also developed a telephone interview questionnaire (see Appendix B).

We used the CHC annual reporting data to categorize CHCs based on volunteer hours and types of cemetery activities reported, and then develop a list of CHCs in each category. Using that list, with the goal of completing 50 interviews, McDoux attempted to contact 76 CHCs, interviewed 40, and also talked to three who said that no one in the county was doing any type of cemetery preservation. In many cases, it was difficult to reach the right people to interview; about half the CHCs we tried to contact did not respond to email or phone messages, and even when the CHC chair contacted the person in advance of a call or email message, we were often unsuccessful in reaching them, despite multiple attempts.

It was clear that a member of the public might also have trouble reaching their CHC with questions or information about a cemetery. Many CHCs do not have webpages or any contact information online. Some *counties* do not even have a website. CHC offices and local museums often do not answer the phone, even during hours when they are ostensibly open; many have no voicemail or answering machine. This is probably one reason why many members of the public contact THC's Cemetery Preservation staff directly rather than looking to CHCs as the primary resource for cemetery information.

The interviews, once conducted, revealed that while CHCs consider maintenance or care of a burial site to be the core of cemetery preservation work, they do not perform that work themselves — it is already being done by local government agencies, private cemetery associations or family groups associated with a particular cemetery, or interested individuals. CHCs are more likely to focus on locating previously unknown cemeteries, protecting threatened burial sites, and keeping burial records up-to-date.

Interviewees reported that major challenges to cemetery preservation included a lack of interest among citizens, lack of volunteers to do on-site work, lack of funding for physical improvements, and (in some counties) ensuring access to cemeteries on private property. A number of other obstacles were noted as well, including damage to grave markers and burial sites as a result of vandalism, development, overzealous clean-up, and livestock.

Other questions helped to determine the various methods and vehicles used to collect cemetery and burial information, and to determine how the CHCs are organized around cemetery preservation; for example, whether they have a cemetery committee or chair.

Step 3: Quantitative Surveys

Based on the results of the telephone interviews, McDoux and the THC Cemetery Preservation staff developed a survey (see Appendix A) to test the extent to which the opinions and preferences expressed through the anecdotal interview answers represents the larger population of CHCs statewide. In some cases, survey questions replicated interview questions exactly, but the survey also built on the information gathered through interviews to pursue more specific lines of inquiry.

All County Historical Commissions were invited and encouraged to participate in the survey, which was deployed using the SurveyMonkey online tool, as well as mailed in hard copy to CHCs upon request. We mailed hard copies of the survey to those CHC chairs who do not have an email address, as well as to who requested them; 19 surveys were returned through the mail and those responses entered manually into the SurveyMonkey collector.

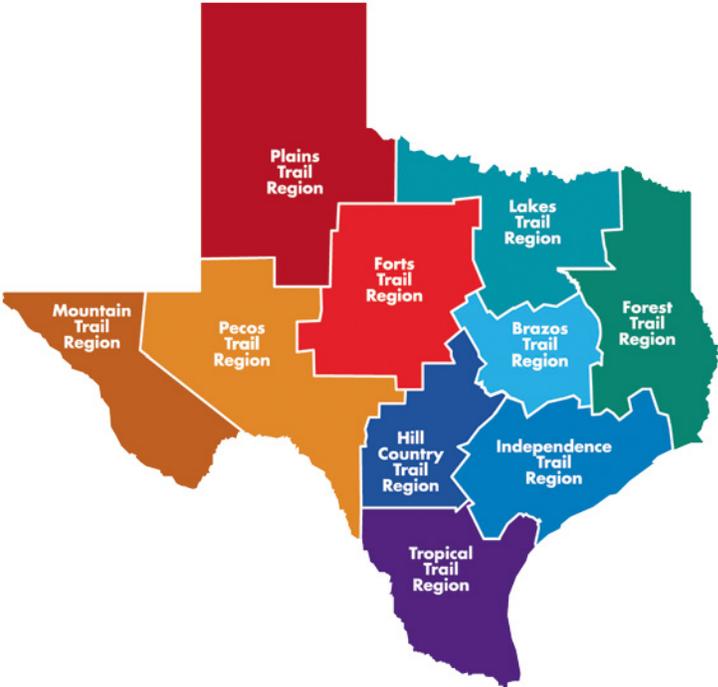
Communications about the survey were emailed through the CHC list serv, emailed or mailed directly to CHC Chairs, and forwarded to all of the previous interviewees via either email or postal mail. McDoux followed up with phone calls to interviewees. THC continued to send email reminders through the CHC list serv and by direct emails to Chairs on a regular basis. The survey opened on November 14 and was intended to close on December 21, 2018, but responses continued to be submitted until January 2, 2019.

In all, 120 CHC members completed most or all of the survey, and another 10 CHC members began the survey but did not substantially complete it. In four cases, one person from a county began but did not finish the survey, and another person submitted a separate complete response. After adjusting for the four duplicate responses from individual counties, a total of 126 counties were represented.

The State of Texas is divided into 254 counties, 245 of which maintain County Historical Commissions; during the past three years, 209 CHCs submitted at least one annual report to THC. For the purposes of this activity, we therefore considered 209 as the number of active CHCs in the state, and therefore the “population size” for this survey. The 126 counties represented by completed survey responses achieved a 95% confidence level with a 6% margin of error;¹ in other words, the number of survey respondents is high enough for THC to be confident that the results are representative of CHCs across the state.

¹ For more information about sample sizes, confidence level, and margin of error, visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/>

Finally, at THC’s request, we looked at regional variations for Questions 5, 17, and 19, using the Texas Heritage Trail Regions.



SURVEY RESULTS

This section discusses the individual survey questions and presents the answers. Where possible, we have included charts, graphs, and other visual aids to illustrate the results.

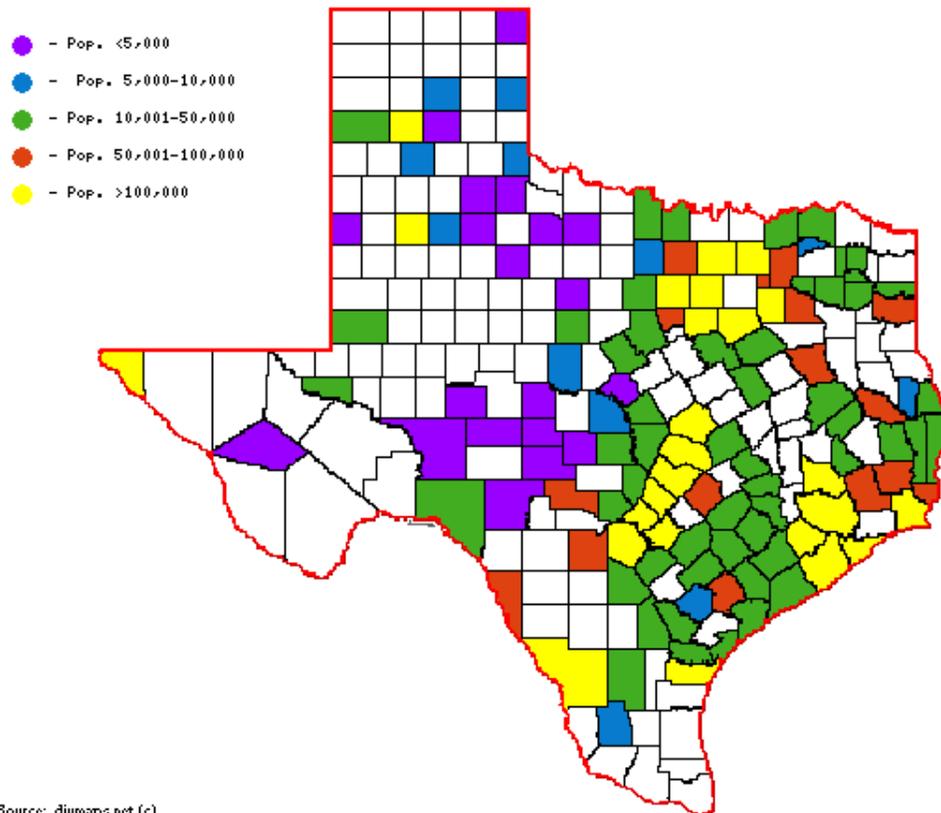
QUESTIONS 1 AND 2

The survey began by collecting the name of the respondent and the name of the county.

We wanted to know whether the respondents were generally representative of CHCs on the basis of county size and geographic distribution, and the results suggest that is the case.

County Population	# Responses	% Responses	Vs. # Statewide	Vs. % Statewide
Group 1: Under 5,000	20	16%	50	20%
Group 2: 5,000-10,000	12	10%	36	14%
Group 3: 10,001-50,000	53	42%	103	41%
Group 4: 50,001-100,000	16	13%	26	10%
Group 5: Over 100,000	25	20%	39	15%

County Historical Commissions – Cemetery Survey Participation



We also looked at the distribution of survey respondents by Texas Heritage Trail Region. At least 29% of the counties in each region participated in the survey, with the highest rate of participation (75%) in the Independence Trail region; the average participation rate was 47%.

As shown in the table below, the total number of counties in each region does not appear to have been a factor in survey participation.

Heritage Trail Region	# Respondent Counties per Region	Total # Counties per Region	% Respondent Counties/Region
Plains	15	52	29%
Forest	21	35	60%
Lakes	21	31	68%
Forts	15	29	52%
Independence	21	28	75%
Pecos	7	22	32%
Tropical	6	20	30%
Hill	12	19	63%
Brazos	6	18	33%
Mountain	2	6	33%

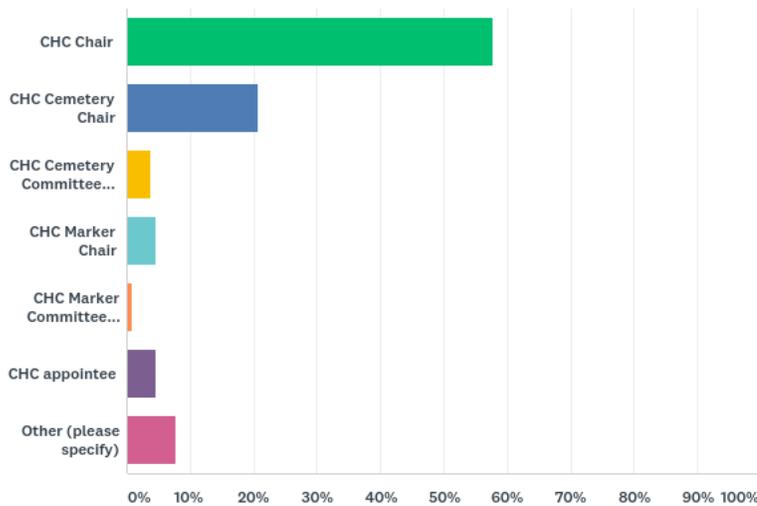
The population of the region, however, may have affected the rate of survey participation; the four most populous regions had the highest response rates, as shown below.

Heritage Trail Region	Total Population per Region	% Total Counties in Survey/Region	Population Rank
Plains	507,018	29%	8
Forest	1,489,535	60%	4
Lakes	5,047,038	68%	2
Forts	144,496	52%	9
Independence	6,828,002	75%	1
Pecos	128,820	32%	10
Tropical	690,236	30%	7
Hill	3,836,230	63%	3
Brazos	1,046,730	33%	5
Mountain	842,690	33%	6

QUESTION 3

Next, we asked respondents to identify their position with the CHC. Just over half (58%) were CHC chairpersons. Another 21% were cemetery chairs, while the rest of the respondents were fairly equally divided between cemetery committee members, marker chairs, and general CHC appointees, with each of those categories represented by about 4–5% of respondents.

Q3 What is your position on the County Historical Commission?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
CHC Chair	57.69% 75
CHC Cemetery Chair	20.77% 27
CHC Cemetery Committee member	3.85% 5
CHC Marker Chair	4.62% 6
CHC Marker Committee member	0.77% 1
CHC appointee	4.62% 6
Other (please specify) Responses	7.69% 10
TOTAL	130

QUESTION 4

When asked if we should speak to someone else about cemetery activities in the county, 96% of respondents said No. For the most part, even those who answered Yes went ahead and answered the survey questions.

QUESTION 5

In the interviews, we asked CHCs to identify activities that, in their opinion, embodied or resulted in successful cemetery preservation. We used that information to create a list of 15 activities, and in the survey, asked respondents to rank them in order of importance, where 1 is the most important and 15 is the least important. The activities were presented in this order:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county
- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries
- Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries
- Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries
- Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries
- Working with land owners to ensure access to cemeteries
- Working with city officials, county officials, and/or law enforcement to enforce cemetery laws
- Locating or marking unmarked graves
- Obtaining HTC designations
- Obtaining HTC markers
- Keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed, and trimmed (at least once or twice a year)
- Cleaning or repairing grave markers
- Placing fences around cemeteries
- Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county

To visualize the relative ranking of these activities, we counted the number of CHCs that ranked each question 1, 2, 3, etc. We consolidated the rankings into groups of three (1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, and 13–15) and then totaled the number of CHCs in each group for each answer (see the table below). That data is also presented in a stacked column chart to show how the activities compare to one another. The letter designations in the table are reflected in the stacked column chart.

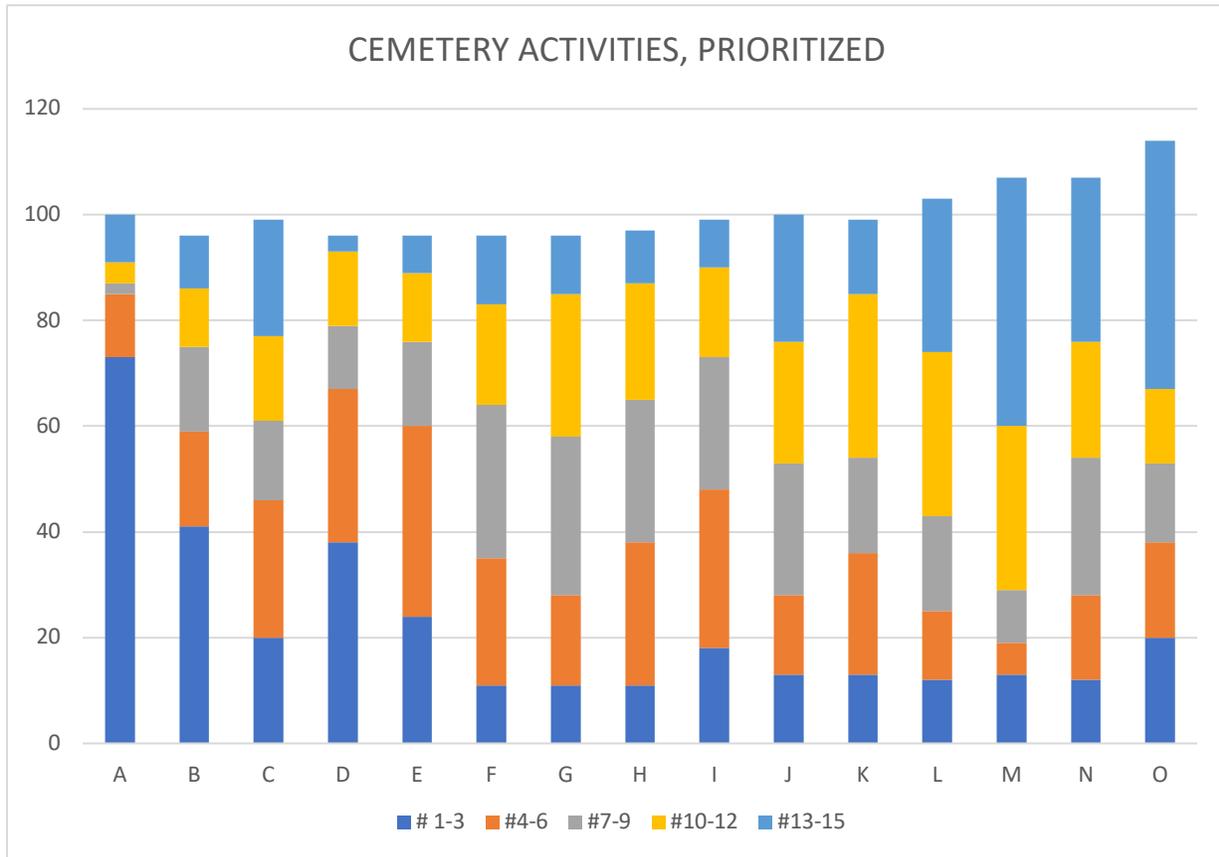
In some cases, the anecdotal data collected during the interviews was very different from the survey results. For example, when asked what how they would define “successful cemetery preservation,” 82.5% of interviewees named “care and maintenance of the site.” In contrast, survey results indicate that “cleaning or repairing grave markers” and “keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed and trimmed (at least once a year)” were two of the lower-ranking activities.

Similarly, “maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county” was ranked most important by 38% of interviewees, but ranked either first, second, or third in importance by 58% of survey respondents.

This chart shows the number of CHCs for each ranking level, by activity

Activity	# 1-3	#4-6	#7-9	#10-12	#13-15
A. Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county	73	12	2	4	9
B. Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries	41	18	16	11	10
C. Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries	20	26	15	16	22
D. Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries	38	29	12	14	3
E. Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries	24	36	16	13	7
F. Working with land owners to ensure access to cemeteries	11	24	29	19	13
G. Working with city officials, county officials, and/or law enforcement to enforce cemetery laws	11	17	30	27	11
H. Locating or marking unmarked graves	11	27	27	22	10
I. Obtaining HTC designations	18	30	25	17	9
J. Obtaining HTC markers	13	15	25	23	24
K. Keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed, and trimmed (at least once or twice a year)	13	23	18	31	14
L. Cleaning or repairing grave markers	12	13	18	31	29
M. Placing fences around cemeteries	13	6	10	31	47
N. Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries	12	16	26	22	31
O. Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county	20	18	15	14	47

Please note that, in this chart, the highest-ranking group (1–3) is on the bottom and the lowest (13–15) tops the stacked column. The columns are different heights because individual respondents did not necessarily answer this question or rank all of the activities.



As we can see in the graph, activities A, B, and D received the highest rankings:

- A. Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county
- B. Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries
- D. Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries

The lowest-rated activities were L, M, N and O (not in that order).

- L. Cleaning or repairing grave markers
- M. Placing fences around cemeteries
- N. Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries
- O. Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county

It is possible that the first items in the list received a higher ranking, to some extent, as a result of their place order, which also could be reflected in the later activities' lower scores.

We believe that it is also possible they answered these questions in the way they believe THC wanted them to; many people we talked to during the interviews said that they prioritized collecting current obituaries and obtain HTC markers.

With that said, we should note that the survey produced different results than the interviews. In some cases, the results might seem contradictory, but we cannot compare interview responses to the survey results. Because interviews are time-consuming, they are necessarily limited to a small sample of the larger population. While we can analyze these individuals' responses, to identify possible topics or ideas that are out there in the world, that data is *anecdotal*. We cannot assume that it represents the larger population. For this project, we spoke to 43 out of 209 CHCs — only one-fifth of them — and while 130 CHCs responded to the survey, not all of the interviewees did.

Surveys, on the other hand, produce *quantitative* data that allows us to see the extent to which those ideas represent the larger population. When interview responses are different from survey responses, we can conclude that the larger population of CHCs might have simply had a different opinion on that topic than our interviewees did.

Some of our interview questions and survey questions were essentially the same, but that was not the case for Question 5. The interview prompt used as a basis for Question 5 asked people to define “successful cemetery preservation,” without providing examples of what that might mean. The survey used the interviewees' responses to create the list of cemetery activities and then asked people to rank those activities, using a list that includes things they may not have immediately thought of during the interviews.

QUESTION 5 – REGIONAL ANALYSIS

In the Brazos Region, the top priorities were:

- Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries (1,1,2,2,3)
- Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries (1,2,2,3)
- Placing fences around cemeteries (1,2)
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county (1)
- Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries (1)
- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (2,3)

In the Forest Region, top priorities included:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2,2,3,3)
- Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries (1,1,2,2,3,3,3)
- Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries (1,2,2,3,3)
- Obtaining HTC designations (1,1,2,3)
- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,2,2,3)
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county (1,2,2,3)
- Placing fences around cemeteries (1,2,3)

The Forts Region overwhelmingly prioritized

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,2)
- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,2,2,2,3,3)
- Obtaining HTC designations (1,2,2)

In the Hill region, the top priorities were:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1,1,1,1,2,2,2,3)
- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,1,2,2,3,3)
- Locating or marking unmarked graves (1,2)

The Independence region prioritized:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,3,3,3)
- Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries (1,1,2,2,3,3,3,3,3,3,3,3)
- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,2,2,2,2,2,3)
- Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries (1,2,2,2,2,3)
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the count (1,1,1,2,3)

Lakes Region priorities included:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1,1,1,1,2,3,3,3)
- Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries (1,2,2,3,3)
- Working with land owners to ensure access to cemeteries (1,2,2,3)
- Keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed, and trimmed (1,1,1,1,2)
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county (1,2,2,3)

The three Mountain Region counties listed as their priorities:

- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,1)
- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,2)

In the Pecos Region, the highest priorities were:

- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,1)
- Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries (1,1)
- Working with city officials, county officials, and/or law enforcement to enforce cemetery laws (1,1)

The Plains Region's top priorities included:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1,1,1,2,2,2)
- Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (1,1,1,2,2,2)
- Obtaining HTC markers (1,2,2,3)
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county (1,1)

The six Tropical Region CHCs listed as their top priorities:

- Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county (1,1)
- Obtaining HTC designations (1,2,3)
- Obtaining HTC markers (1,2)

“Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county” was listed as the top priority in seven regions and a top priority in all but one (Pecos, which more highly prioritized “Maintaining accurate burial records,” the #2 priority at a regional level. Other activities highly prioritized by at least two regions include:

- Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries (4)
- Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county (4)
- Obtaining HTC designations (3)
- Obtaining HTC markers (2)
- Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries (2)
- Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries (2)
- Placing fences around cemeteries (2)

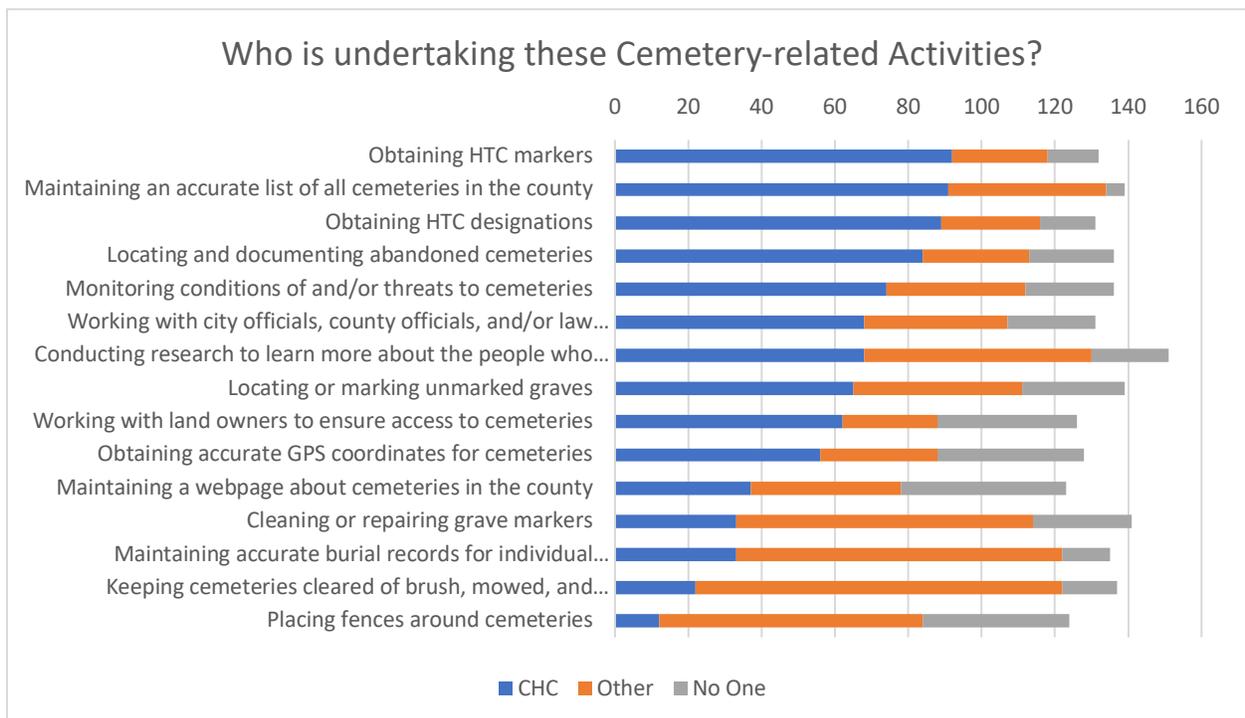
Although “Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries” scored low statewide, it is highly prioritized in several regions. We expect that is because “Maintaining a webpage” is an activity that those CHCs are already performing and which takes a great deal of their time, rather than an activity that they feel is important but is not currently being done.

We hesitate to use this regional analysis as a directional tool to drive THC’s ongoing work, since Question 5 seems to reflect the work already being done by CHCs, rather than the work that is needed (as identified by either the CHC or THC). Question 17, which identifies top challenges faced in cemetery preservation at the county level, provides a better snapshot of need and would be a more valuable source of information for future planning.

QUESTION 6

We wanted to understand whether the CHCs were undertaking these activities, if another group was doing so, or if the activities were not being undertaken by anyone. For example, in many counties, cemetery associations are responsible for upkeep, and genealogical societies have historically maintained burial records.

As this chart shows, most of these activities are being handled by either the CHC or another entity (a cemetery association, family group, individual, genealogical society, etc.) The length of the bars is different because, in some cases, both the CHC and another group are undertaking the same activity in their county.



Interestingly, some activities (such as “conducting research”) were ranked as a relatively low priority in Question 5, but Question 6 shows that a substantial number of CHCs are, nonetheless, participating in that activity. In another example, CHCs ranked “maintaining accurate burial records” as one of the most important activities in Question 5, yet in Question 6 they indicate that the activity is being done by someone else other than CHC. This supports the premise that CHCs do not need to handle every cemetery-related activity themselves, as long as it is being undertaken by someone in the county.

It may be useful to explore this data in greater detail. On the following pages, we’ve presented the list of activities sorted by each answer (CHC, other group, or no one) with additional commentary.

Number of counties in which CHCs are performing these activities:

Activity	CHC
Obtaining HTC markers	92
Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county	91
Obtaining HTC designations	89
Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries	84
Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries	74
Working with city officials, county officials, and/or law enforcement to enforce cemetery laws	68
Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries	68
Locating or marking unmarked graves	65
Working with land owners to ensure access to cemeteries	62
Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries	56
Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county	37
Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries	33
Cleaning or repairing grave markers	33
Keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed, and trimmed (at least once or twice a year)	22
Placing fences around cemeteries	12

This makes sense: CHCs are required to participate in the HTC marker process, so if that is being done, the CHC would necessarily be involved.

Note that the last three activities on this list are the top three activities on the next list. This tells us that, because others are taking care of maintenance, the CHCs do not need to be involved in these activities.

Number of counties in which entities other than the CHC are performing these activities:

Activity	Other
Keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed, and trimmed (at least once or twice a year)	100
Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries	89
Cleaning or repairing grave markers	81
Placing fences around cemeteries	72
Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries	62
Locating or marking unmarked graves	46
Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county	43
Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county	41
Working with city officials, county officials, and/or law enforcement to enforce cemetery laws	39
Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries	38
Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries	32
Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries	29
Obtaining HTC designations	27
Obtaining HTC markers	26
Working with land owners to ensure access to cemeteries	26

The activities that CHCs report are least likely to be done at all are shown below. Based on our interactions with CHC members and their expressed lack of experience working with computers, we believe it is likely that maintaining a webpage is outside the skillset of many CHCs. As previously noted, many CHCs do not have webpages, and some counties do not even have a website.

While GPS coordinates can be obtained using Google Maps, that also requires Internet connectivity (which may be an issue in rural communities) and a level of technological savvy that may be unrealistic to expect of some CHC members.

Finally, our conversations with CHC members during the interview process leads us to conclude that the placement of fences around cemeteries seems to be more of a priority in rural counties where small family cemeteries are located on private property and fences are needed to keep out livestock. Fences may already be present in more populated areas.

Number of counties in which entities other than the CHC are performing these activities:

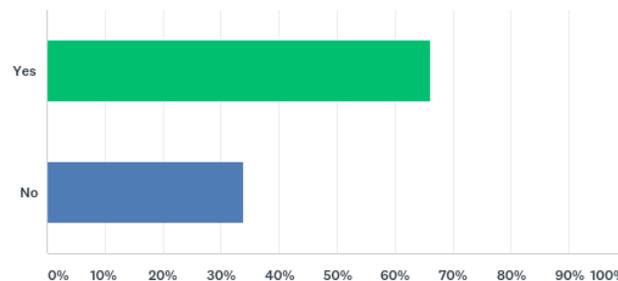
Activity	No One
Maintaining a webpage about cemeteries in the county	45
Placing fences around cemeteries	40
Obtaining accurate GPS coordinates for cemeteries	40
Working with land owners to ensure access to cemeteries	38
Locating or marking unmarked graves	28
Cleaning or repairing grave markers	27
Working with city officials, county officials, and/or law enforcement to enforce cemetery laws	24
Monitoring conditions of and/or threats to cemeteries	24
Locating and documenting abandoned cemeteries	23
Conducting research to learn more about the people who are buried in cemeteries	21
Keeping cemeteries cleared of brush, mowed, and trimmed (at least once or twice a year)	15
Obtaining HTC designations	15
Obtaining HTC markers	14
Maintaining accurate burial records for individual cemeteries	13
Maintaining an accurate list of all cemeteries in the county	5

QUESTION 7

Of course, we also wanted to know who those “other groups” are in each county. This question began by asking a question that is a bit duplicative with the previous one, and then asked respondents to elaborate on the type of groups involved.

As the chart above shows, just over 2/3 of CHCs report that other groups or organizations are doing some or all of the cemetery-related activities in their county.

Q7 Some counties have one or more groups of people, in addition to or other than the CHC, who are doing some or all of these activities. Is there a group like this in your county?



According to respondents, those “other groups” include the following, with the number of counties reporting each type:

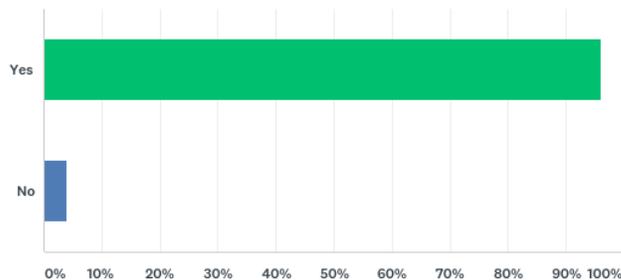
- Cemetery associations (44)
- Genealogical societies, including RootsWeb, TxGenWeb, etc. (22)
- Historical societies or community preservation groups (12)
- County commissioners or agencies (8)
- Museums or libraries (7)
- Interested individuals, cemetery volunteers, FindAGrave volunteers, etc. (6)
- One specific individual (6)
- City governments (5)
- “Friends of the cemetery” groups (4)
- Families of those buried in the cemeteries (4)
- Student groups, high school, Boy/Girl Scouts, etc. (3)
- Churches (3)
- Adult probationers or other work-release “volunteers” (3)
- Sons of Confederate Veterans (2)
- Private landowners (2)
- Other nonprofit organization – Lions Club (1)

A list of specific “other” organizations, by county, is provided in Appendix C.

QUESTION 8

Because a cemetery must be known to exist before it can be preserved, THC wanted to know how many CHCs maintained a list (or *inventory*) of cemeteries, how many cemeteries were included in that list, when it was originally developed, and when it was last updated. We also compared the information we received through the survey to the earlier anecdotal data provided by interviewees.

Q8 Does a list of cemeteries exist for your county?



While only 73% of interviewees reported having some type of inventory, 96% of survey respondents answered the same question in the affirmative. We might attribute that to a lack of information available to interviewees, and the delegation of the interviews to appointees other than the CHC chair. For the survey, which were mostly completed by chairpersons, it is possible that the respondents tracked down the information needed before completing the survey, which was evident in the many gaps between survey start and completion dates for individual respondents.

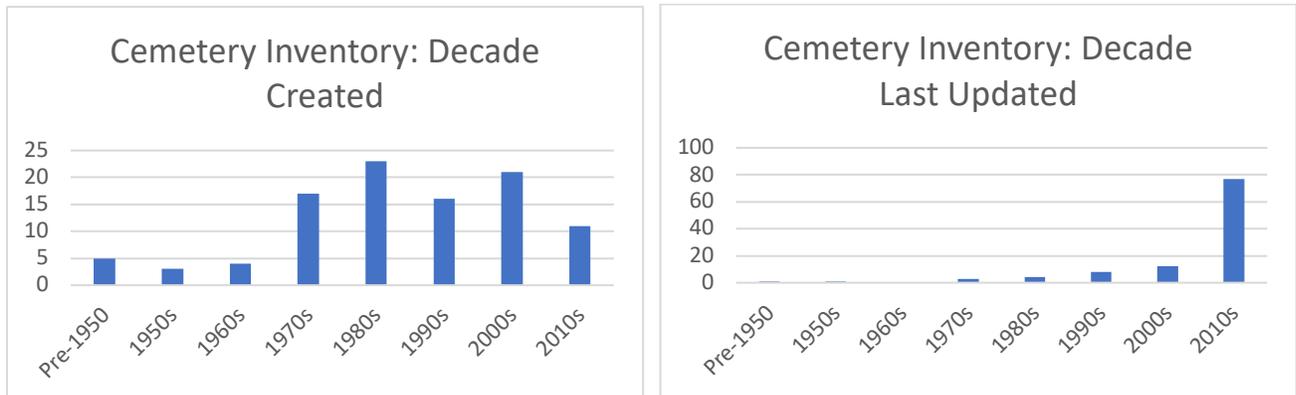
In addition, we purposefully conducted some telephone interviews with CHCs that are mostly inactive or do not engage in any cemetery-related activities. The self-selected respondents to this survey skew toward those who are actively involved with cemeteries in their counties.

It should be noted that, while a large number of CHCs reported “maintaining an inventory of cemeteries” in Question 6, we know from the interviews that not all of them are actively updating those lists. Quite a few CHCs told us that no new cemeteries have been established, so they have no reason to update it; in those counties, “maintaining an inventory” is more likely to refer to the passive act of preserving the records, rather than actively updating or adding to them.

QUESTIONS 9–10

When were these cemetery inventories created, and when were they last updated?

Twenty-three respondents did not answer these questions; for the three CHCs that had provided that information during an interview, we added their answers.



In some cases, CHCs reported these dates by decade, as in “the 1980s” or “the mid-1970s”. In those cases, we used the earliest year in the decade or partial decade (e.g., 1980 or 1975 in these examples) in order to be as conservative as possible.

Eleven CHCs reported that they did not know when the inventories were created, with five reporting that their county’s cemetery inventory had been updated at an unknown date. Only two counties did not know both the year created and the year last updated.

Of those CHCs which have updated their inventories, 29 report that inventories were updated prior to 2010, with 77 inventories (73%) updated within the past 10 years—48 (42%) in 2018 alone, and another 10 (9%) in 2017. In other words, in the last two years, more than half of the existing cemetery inventories have been updated or are in the process of being updated by those CHCs who responded to the survey.

Because some interviewees told us that they update their inventories (including burial records, or obituary files) “on an ongoing basis,” we believe that some of the CHCs reporting updates in 2018 are referring to those continuing efforts to capture death and burial data, and not necessarily a list of cemeteries per se.

In addition, several CHCs told us during the interview process that their (usually rural West Texas) county has only a single cemetery, or a small number of them, and that that number has not changed in many years, so they have no reason to create or maintain such a list.

QUESTION 11

Understanding that each CHC may define a “cemetery inventory” or “list of cemeteries” differently, THC wanted to know how they are using these inventories. The interview process led us to believe that many CHCs are primarily interested in the genealogical aspects of cemetery preservation, rather than the physical resources present in a cemetery, and indeed, that was borne out by the answers to this question.

In Question 6, a large number of CHCs indicated that another organization is responsible for maintaining the “inventories” (which many CHCs define as not just the list of cemeteries but also burial records). As shown below, more than 80% of respondents indicated that their primary use of an inventory was to help people locate graves.

In cases where an “inventory” is available online and maintained by others, CHC members would be able to access it without being responsible for it.

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
▼ Help people locate graves in a specific cemetery		81.20% 95
▼ Identify cemetery locations prior to development, road widening, or other construction		52.14% 61
▼ Help with annual cemetery condition assessments		29.06% 34
▼ Check or correct THC Atlas data		25.64% 30
▼ Organize volunteers for cleanup day		20.51% 24
▼ Assist the county GIS department with accurate mapping		16.24% 19
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	31.62% 37
Total Respondents: 117		

CHCs additionally reported that they use their cemetery inventory for:

- Responding to research requests of all types (9)
- “FindAGrave.com research,” including photo requests (3)
- Adding or correcting existing data, such as GPS coordinates, not necessarily in the THC Atlas (5)
- As a basis for seeking HTC designations (2)

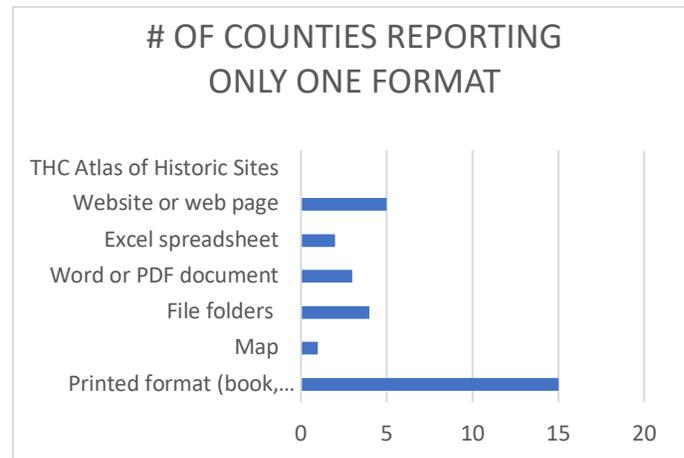
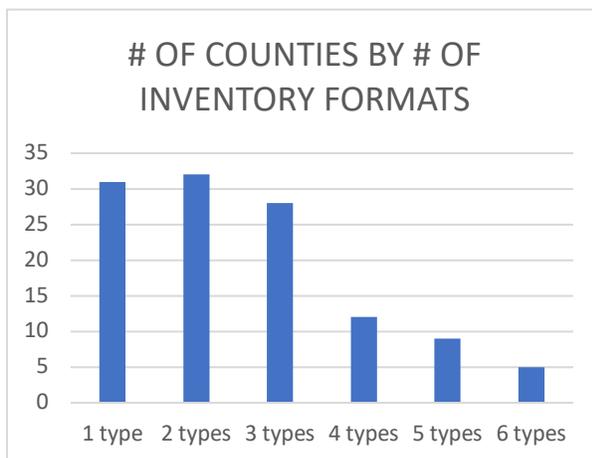
QUESTION 12

THC wanted to know how vulnerable this inventory data is; for example, is it all stored on paper, or is it digitized? Is it stored in more than one format? To learn the answers, the survey asked respondents to tell us what form their inventory takes. The 117 CHCs with inventories reported that they maintain them as:

- Printed format, such as a bound book or loose-leaf notebook (65%)
- Map (43%)
- File folders for each cemetery (33%)
- Word or PDF document (29%)
- Excel spreadsheet (26%)
- Website or web page on the Internet (37%)
- THC Atlas of Historic Sites (26%)

Please note that the survey did not ask whether all of the data is contained in multiple formats, or if instead each format contains different data. That would be helpful to know; based on our conversations with CHCs, we expect that it is more likely to be the latter. (It is also likely that they may not be regularly backing up digital data.)

As shown below, most CHCs maintain their inventories in just a few (an average of 2.3) formats. More than 25% of CHCs have only one format, and 75% use three formats or less.



For those CHCs reporting only one format, a bound book or loose-leaf notebook was by far the most common. Those reporting that their data is stored only online are likely to be using FindAGrave.com or one of the genealogy websites, such as TxGenWeb or RootsWeb, not their own CHC's website. (No CHCs with data in just one format are using the THC Atlas.)

QUESTION 13

The next question was designed to determine where the inventory information was located; with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, as in the previous question, the survey also should have asked if all of the data was located in multiple places or if it was distributed across locations. Again, to be as conservative as possible, we have to assume that different types of data are stored in different places, although we do not know for sure.

One of the more troubling findings is that nearly half of respondents reported keeping this information (in whole or in part) at an individual's home.

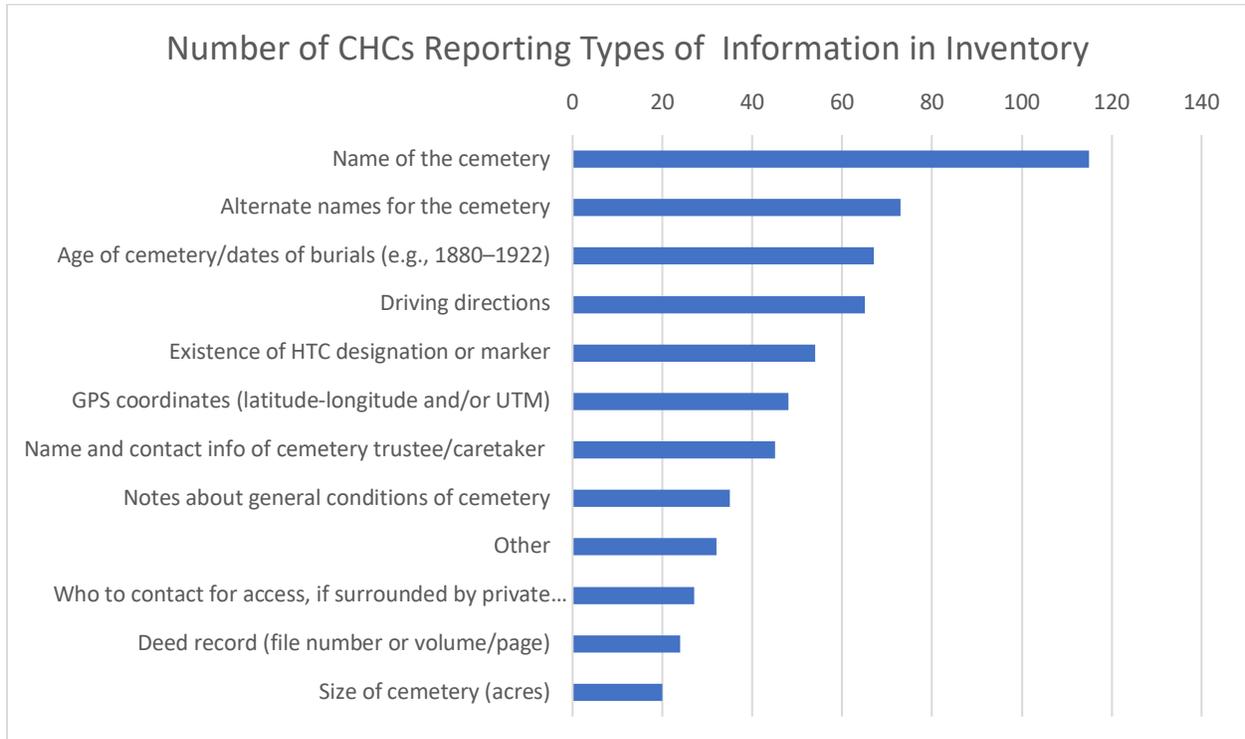
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
▼ CHC office		44.44%	52
▼ Other county office		19.66%	23
▼ Local library		34.19%	40
▼ Local museum		31.62%	37
▼ Individual's home		44.44%	52
▼ CHC website		20.51%	24
▼ Genealogy Society website		19.66%	23
▼ Other organization's website		10.26%	12
▼ Find-A-Grave.com		33.33%	39
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	21.37%	25
Total Respondents: 117			

Thirty-four CHCs (of 117, or 29%) report keeping their inventory in a single location:

- CHC office (9)
- Other county office (5)
- Local library (2)
- Local museum (6)
- Individual's home (4)
- CHC website (4)
- Genealogy Society website (3)
- Other organization's website (1)
- Find-A-Grave.com (0)

QUESTION 14

One hundred and fifteen CHCs answered this question and reported that the following information is included in their inventories. All of them obviously collect the name of the cemetery, but aside from that, the type of data included varies, as shown below.



Contact information for each cemetery, the size of the cemetery (in acres), and the file number or copy of the deed were least likely to be captured.

The lack of contact information was not a surprise; during the interviews, respondents often said that they either knew who was responsible for each cemetery or they could easily find out that information. They did not feel it was important to capture that because the primary contact for a particular cemetery changed frequently and keeping that information up-to-date would be more difficult and time-consuming than tracking down the appropriate person when needed.

“Other” responses included:

- A comprehensive list of persons interred
- Location of cemetery on a map
- Photos, locations, and descriptions of tombstones (for some graves)
- Sources of information
- A list of who has this information if it’s not in the inventory

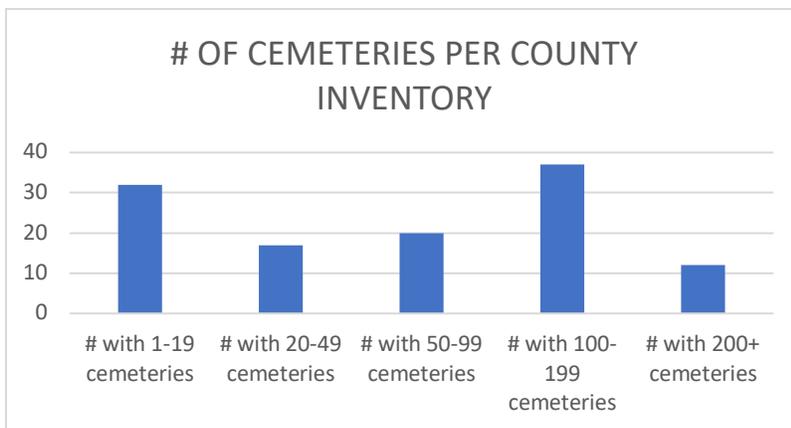
Respondents also noted that the information available varies by cemetery.

QUESTIONS 15–16

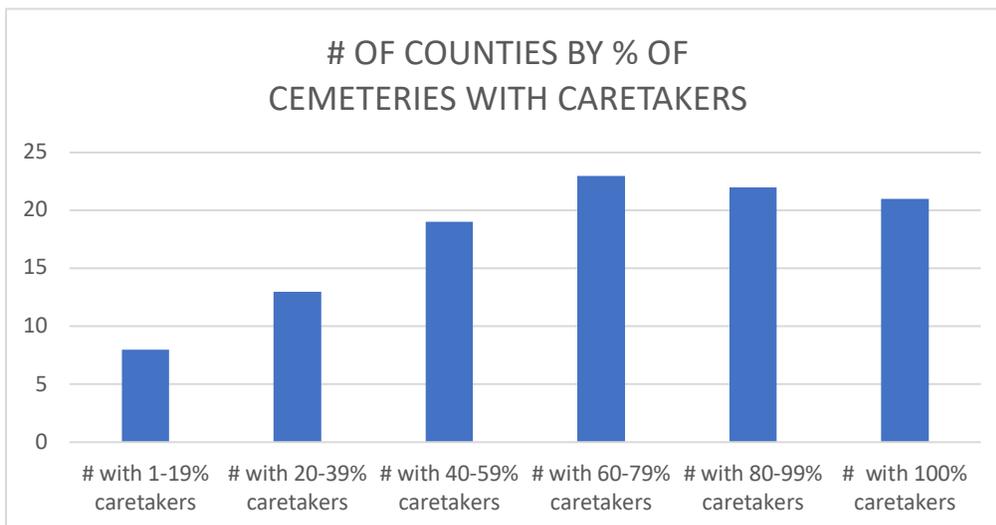
The survey attempted to determine both the number of cemeteries in each inventory and the number of those in each county which were not being overseen by a caretaker of some kind (city or county, individual, family, cemetery association, church, or other organization). Again, for any counties that provided inventory information during the interviews but not the survey, we added that data to the survey during post-processing.

One county that reported nine more unattended cemeteries than in the inventory overall, so we did not include it in the percentage-with-caretakers data reported below.

CHCs reported inventories containing between 1–275 cemeteries, with an average of 87 cemeteries per inventory.



An average county reports that 67% of cemeteries in its inventory are being taken care of by someone on a regular (at least annual) basis. That number ranges from 8% of cemeteries in a county, at the low end, to 100% -- reported by 21 counties.



We also compared the number of cemeteries per county as reported by the CHC versus the number known to THC. In only 10 counties did THC and the CHC report the same number of cemeteries in their inventories. The rest of the counties were split evenly between the CHC or the THC reporting more cemeteries.

# of counties where CHC reports more cemeteries	59
# of counties where THC reports more cemeteries	57
# of counties where THC and CHC report same number	10

In many cases, the differences were very large with 10 counties reporting a discrepancy of more than 100 cemeteries between the CHC and THC lists. Counties where CHC have the larger number of cemeteries on their lists include:

- Duval (194)
- Fayette (141)
- Lamar (115)
- Palo Pinto (103)
- Wood (100)

THC has more than 100 additional cemeteries not counted in the inventories for Harris (160), Houston (172), and Wilson (124) counties.

Guadalupe, Upshur, and Wise CHCs did not report a number, but THC lists more than 100 cemeteries in each county.

An additional 12 counties showed a disparity of 50–99 cemeteries, with 75% of those CHCs having the larger number of cemeteries in their lists.

QUESTION 17

The final set of questions on the survey attempted to determine the CHC's highest priority needs and how THC might best respond.

The first of these questions asked CHCs to report the areas in which they encountered difficulty when trying to preserve cemeteries in their county. The most commonly cited challenges were lack of maintenance, lack of interest (not enough people to help), and lack of funding; although respondents generally reported that two-thirds of all cemeteries have a caretaker who is attending to maintenance at least once a year, that still leaves one-third of all cemeteries without regular care.

Locating and accessing cemeteries on private property was reported as an issue by half of respondents. This was described as the most pressing challenge in the telephone interviews but ranks sixth in the survey results. This is similar to the difference between Survey Question 5 and the interview question that preceded it; the interview did not provide a list of challenges to which the CHC could respond, but rather simply served to identify issues that were top-of-mind at the time of the interviews. By including a list of challenges in the survey, we are able to test the extent to which each of them is an issue for CHCs statewide.

Challenges to Cemetery Preservation	# of CHCs Reporting	%
Lack of maintenance	84	65%
Lack of interest, not enough people to help	82	63%
Lack of funds	80	62%
No identifiable trustee	73	56%
Accessing cemeteries on private property	67	52%
Locating cemeteries on private property	65	50%
Damage from livestock or wildlife	54	42%
Vandalism	47	36%
Removal of grave markers ("erasing" a cemetery)	42	32%
Damage from maintenance crews	32	25%
Damage from "cleaning" with inappropriate methods	24	18%
Law enforcement agency does not enforce cemetery laws	17	13%
Development	16	12%
Other	20	

“Other” comments that did not simply elaborate on the above items included:

- The CHC does not do anything with cemeteries (4)
- Damage from oilfield spill
- Nature
- Fallen trees or branches
- Cemeteries are not in deed records
- Lack of maintenance is only an issue for cemeteries on private property

QUESTION 17 – REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The Mountain Region named the fewest challenges (the five shown below). This region contains only six counties in total, three of which participated in this survey. These CHCs claimed only the following issues in their counties:

- Locating cemeteries on private property
- Accessing cemeteries on private property
- Lack of maintenance
- Lack of interest, not enough people to help
- Lack of funds

CHCs in the other Western regions (Pecos, Plains, Forts) noted slightly fewer challenges (9–10) than the regions in the rest of the state (12–13 challenges per region). None of these regions identified either development or a lack of enforcement of cemetery laws as issues. Damage from maintenance crews was only an issue for CHCs in the Plains Region, not Pecos or Forts.

CHCs in all of the Eastern regions except Tropical listed all 13 items as challenges in their region. No CHCs in the Tropical Region listed “damage from livestock” as an issue; otherwise, the CHCs in that region claimed all of the other challenges.

QUESTION 18

Asking CHCs to help THC prioritize the information/training and other assistance that the agency could provide was, however, less helpful, as every item on the 18-item list was selected by at least one-third of CHCs. More than half of these items were selected by at least 50% of CHCs, and those include:

- How to locate unmarked graves (58%)
- Maintenance do's and don'ts for cemeteries (57%)
- Suggestions for raising money for cemetery preservation activities (56%)
- How to clean grave markers (55%)
- Resources for repairing and resetting grave markers (55%)
- Suggestions for making cemetery information available to the public (52%)
- Do's and don'ts for clearing brush from overgrown cemeteries (51%)
- How to update old cemetery information for ease of use today (50%)
- How to gather and maintain accurate burial records for individual cemeteries (50%)
- How to locate and record abandoned cemeteries (50%)

Additional comments included:

- Soliciting volunteers to do the work.
- We do most all of this and know how ... the public and law enforcement does NOT have a clue. Training needs to be directed towards people outside the CHC
- I think cemetery oversight is too much of a task for the average CHC to handle with only volunteers and maybe should be governed by a separate county cemetery protection board funded with tax dollars.
- They had a website years ago, but they've lost the password and can't access it to update. Now have a Facebook page. Would like to have another website and digital copy of cemetery list available to public.
- Nothing needed at this time. Two individuals have just recently taken photos of every grave marker in each cemetery and this information is accessible to the public. Also, each cemetery has a caretaker.
- Grid system for grave locations in each cemetery.
- Especially need a way of documenting cemetery records, currently using just a copy of the pages in a book from 2009; would like a computer program to input these records for easier use and reference.
- CHC MUST find and empower a cemetery committee chair who will be active and work with someone who will have the ability to use the internet and install information in the correct format.
- Many of the new developments being built in our County have set aside a lot to preserve an existing cemetery thru HOA's or similar organizations; a few have developed park-like settings for 'their' gravesites. There are several burial sites where descendants are no longer in the area to maintain their family's plots. These need help from the community.

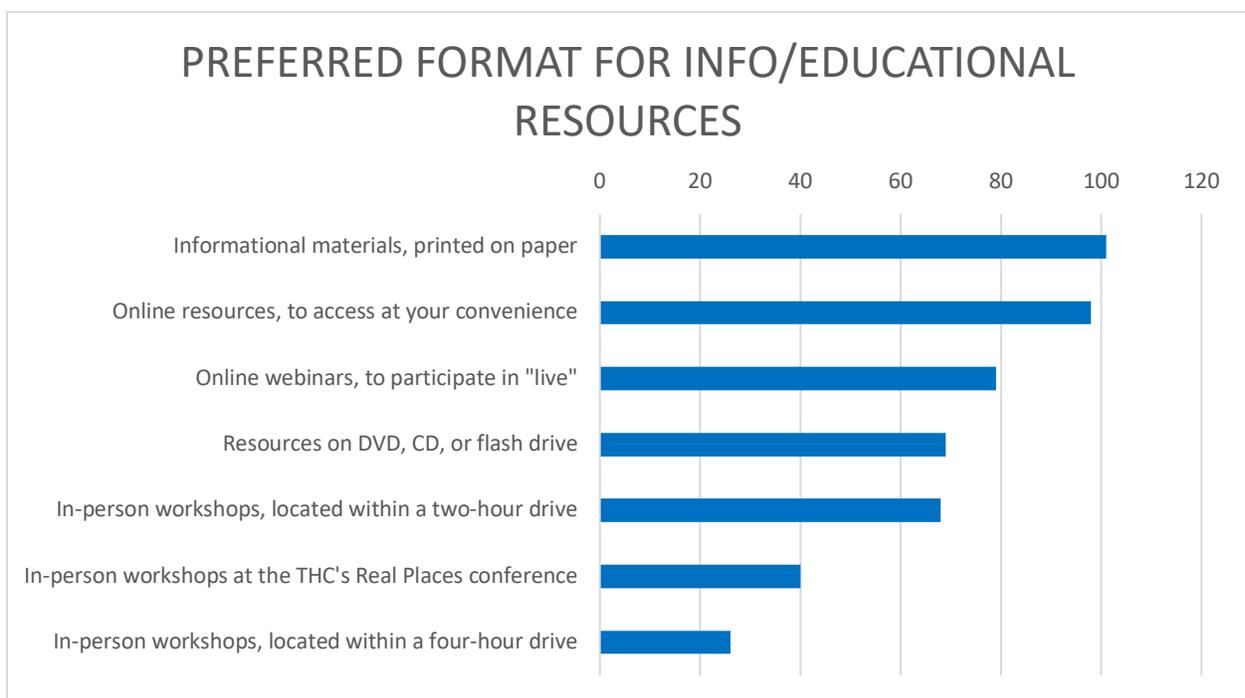
QUESTION 19

When asked how they would like to access informational or educational resources, most CHCs said that they could use at least two different methods.

Only 11 CHCs selected one method only, and of those, only five selected “Informational materials, printed on paper,” which was also the most popular option overall. However, most CHCs also said that they could use “Online resources to access at your convenience.”

Online webinars were also a fairly popular option.

For in-person workshops, only those held within a two-hour drive were of interest to more than half of the survey respondents.



QUESTION 19 – REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Although one might have expected to see different preferences expressed by the more rural Western CHCs, we saw no meaningful Regional trends in this data. We suspect that these answers have much more to do with the individual respondents and their personal preferences and capabilities than where they are located.

QUESTION 20

Many CHCs shared success stories. Selected examples from both the interviews and surveys are included in Appendix E.

CONCLUSIONS

The following considerations are based on our analysis of the data gathered throughout this project, and our understanding of the THC's needs and goals.

CAPACITY IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE

The overall activity level in a county seems to be primarily driven by the capacity of individual CHC members, with budget/funding a (lesser) factor. During the telephone interviews, respondents generally indicated that they are relatively limited in what they are able to accomplish, due to the age of members, declining county populations, and a lack of interest among younger people. Additionally, in many cases, cemetery associations, county genealogy societies, local governments, or individual families are doing the work necessary to document and maintain cemeteries. Text excerpts from the annual CHC reports indicate that they are working with other groups on a regular basis.

The number of cemeteries in a county do not seem to be a factor in the activity level of the CHCs. Instead, survey results indicate that, in many cases, CHCs are prioritizing activities that they can easily accomplish within their limited resources. These priorities do not always align with THC's goals for cemetery preservation. The challenge for the Cemetery Preservation program is to determine how to best encourage and support CHCs in this area, given the funding and manpower constraints that so many of them report.

Due to the advanced age of many CHC appointees, THC is unlikely to be able to affect this situation. It might, however, help them identify and recruit a younger (and potentially more inclusive) membership through increased public awareness efforts.

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS EFFORTS

Making citizens and county officials aware of the importance of preserving historic cemeteries, and the availability of laws, tools, and programs to support their preservation, presents an ongoing opportunity as well as a challenge. The lack of an online presence in many counties, where the CHC or even the county itself has no website/page, may amplify other challenges reported by many CHCs. These include the generally advanced age of appointees and corresponding capacity to identify cemeteries in the field; a lack of interest by the public, reflected in a lack of volunteer assistance; and low awareness and support from law enforcement and county officials in some counties. As a result, the public may not realize that the CHC is a resource and should be the first point of contact for questions and requests regarding cemetery preservation.

Since online options for information dissemination are not always available, THC might provide CHCs with evergreen news release templates that a CHC could customize and provide to local news outlets to help make citizens and county officials aware of local cemetery preservation activities and encourage public interest and participation. These could also be used on CHC websites when those online options are available.

PROVIDE AN ANNUAL FOCUS AREA

We believe that many CHCs would benefit from THC suggesting an annual goal or focus area, related to cemetery preservation activities, toward which they can choose to work. It could also provide a focus for THC's cemetery preservation activities, such as collecting and publishing best-practice information, developing new educational resources, and conducting workshops and webinars. CHCs who are already doing great work in the focus area could serve as peer advisors or lead workshops; CHCs who are limited by the capacity of their individual members might be able to use the focus area as a way to recruit new people to the team.

For example, the large discrepancy between cemetery inventory totals at the CHC and THC level is a major concern. THC might make this a focus area, making CHCs aware of the gaps between inventory information at the state and county levels and asking for their help to resolve those disparities. Based on the results of this project, we believe that this is an achievable goal which CHCs would take up readily, especially if THC can communicate how accurate Atlas data will benefit the CHCs. (THC would need to provide some instruction and possibly a process document on how to access, check, and update Atlas data.)

This strategy would also serve to support more peer-to-peer interactions; many CHCs could benefit from networking with one another, both within and across geographic regions.

Finally, THC could use an annual focus area as a basis for regular cemetery-specific communications, which could keep cemeteries top-of-mind with CHCs, as well as providing them with useful information resources. Some CHCs who have not been active in cemetery preservation indicated that they were spurred to take up additional activities in their county as a result of this project, leading us to believe that more communication about cemeteries might generate more preservation work in that area.

APPENDIX E: SUCCESS STORIES SHARED

County	Brief Description of Success Story
CEMETERY ASSOCIATIONS	
Ellis	The Boren-Reagor Springs Cemetery Association has done an outstanding job of restoring and maintaining their cemetery. Two volunteers have completed HTC research for all cemeteries in Ellis County Commissioner's Precinct 3.
Hill	Two neglected and abandoned cemeteries have been restored by the community following the organization of a new cemetery association. Individual contributions and a grant funded activities such as marker survey, marker cleaning and resetting, a flagpole and steel fence, and an HTC marker.
Houston	CHC has a process for organizing a cemetery association or Friends group, establishing processes for burials and documentation, contracting for maintenance, and fundraising.
Johnson	A cemetery association formed in 1971 to oversee a previously city-owned property and has managed its investments so that it has sufficient funds to care for the cemetery properly (with more than \$1m in the bank in 2011).
Llano	A Cemetery Association has a marvelous website; as well as concise records, census of those buried, plot ownership/assignments, and Active Patrons contact information. They maintain up to date bylaws and have a very active Board of Directors.
Milam	Numerous individual families are restoring previously abandoned cemeteries.
Parker	The Abandoned Cemetery Association of Parker County (ACA) has cared for 83 of the 153 known cemeteries in Parker County. The ACA uses both volunteer and paid personnel to mow, fence and re-fence, repair and restore monuments, and remove trees and brush. It has provided information to other cemetery associations in the county. In the past few years, Commissioners Court has provided partial funding for the ACA's efforts.
Van Zandt	Two CHC members, at the request of the City of Canton, helped to organize a cemetery preservation group to rehabilitate Hillcrest Cemetery which is maintained by the city. In 2017 that effort earned an award from Preservation Texas and resulted in an award-winning book, "STORIES BENEATH THE STONES" written by two CHC members.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	
Atacosa	Worked with several landowners to restore small family cemeteries previously destroyed by cattle, tractors, etc.
Bell	Partnering with City, County Work Release Program, and Sons of Confederate Veterans to clean tombstones, clear brush, upright tombstones, plant trees, and perform weekly watering in a cemetery.
Brazoria	After the grave marker of an early settler suddenly disappeared when a new house was being built on private property, CHC notified the mayor, police dept., property owners, construction company, and county historical Museum, provided a copy of state cemetery laws, and requested that the stone be returned to its original location. The museum president spotted the missing stone in a pasture and facilitated the return of the stone.

County	Brief Description of Success Story
Kaufman	KCHC has been very successful using adult probationers to clean at least 6 cemeteries; the probationers are very proud of the cemetery they helped clean and will hopefully continue to maintain it.
Kendall	The genealogy society started in 1982 to survey each cemetery with a list of each grave, pictures and the location of the cemetery. We added to the list as we surveyed each one. Books of genealogy on First Families and Early Settlers are kept in our library for the public to use with their research. Families of these people were invited to be part of the annual celebration for our First Families and Early Settlers.
Kimble	An individual purchased a ranch containing a cemetery, then voluntarily paid to re-route the ranch road so it is no longer necessary to keep the gate locked and installed a new entrance to the cemetery, including a parking area.
Liberty	Identified a small African-American cemetery in a rural area with graves as old as circa 1870, which had been bulldozed in the 1960s and lost over time. The current owners were raising hay on this cemetery. We researched, found death certificates which established some of the graves and searched the deed records back to the headright; in one of the deeds, the property description referred to the cemetery and a map. We asked the County Attorney to meet with us and the property owners, who did not know the location of the cemetery since it no longer had headstones, fencing or any other markings. They agreed to fence off the cemetery tract according to our surveyor and gave an easement to the public for access. We agreed the site will not be used for more burials.
Montgomery	We have an individual who has identified a lost African American cemetery in Conroe and has enlisted community support for preserving the cemetery.
Montague	A collaborative effort to reclaim one of the oldest cemeteries in the county involved the MCHC, Forestburg Historical Society, MC Cemetery Board, Boy Scout Troop 554 and community members. MCHC conducted a talking tombstone tour to call attention to pioneer cemeteries.
Nueces	After an NCPTT marker workshop, we have recruited volunteers from the community and the Naval Air Station Corpus Christi to reset or repair 36 markers. Texas Cemetery Resources has conducted GPR on Old Bayview Cemetery. We just held our 9th annual "Voices of South Texas - Old Bayview Cemetery Comes Alive" tour for more than 750 visitors in a 4 hour period.
FUNDRAISING	
Burleson	CHC has developed a process for identifying relatives of decedents and contacting them annually to raise funds for cemetery maintenance.
Collin	Because of the CHC's grantmaking program, several neglected cemeteries have been restored and stones repaired.
Carson	A HTC designation was noted as a factor but a potential grantor when a cemetery association applied for a grant to help with operating expenses for that year.
Delta	CHC worked with the local school district to help them publish books containing the names of the people buried in each cemetery in the county.

County	Brief Description of Success Story
MARKERS	
Callahan	They started a county historical marker program for places that don't meet THC standards or if the THC marker is too expensive and have used that to mark one cemetery on a ranch where a community used to be.
DeWitt	A cemetery, which had been neglected and had markers destroyed, was cleaned by the CHC, which erected a large marker listing the names of all known persons buried there.
Dickens	The cemetery chair organized CHC members and used CHC funds to locate and mark "unknown" graves throughout seven of the cemeteries in the county with simple concrete stones; also funded and marked the graves of historical figures whose markers had fallen into disrepair.
Victoria	We recently had a very successful marker workshop. The CHC provides marker cleaning buckets, containing all approved cleaning products and tools, that can be checked out by volunteers.
OUTREACH	
Fannin	Some CHC members use the Fannin County Historical Group Facebook page to provide information and ideas to individuals regarding cemeteries.
Fayette	Local museum created and maintains a comprehensive countywide list of burials since the early 1980s and has worked with youth group to offer living history programs for many years.
Lamar	Lamar County has one of the most comprehensive online databases in the US. It has been shared with other counties who now also have similar data.
Lavaca	We have compiled a database of all WWI veterans, using their DD214 forms, death records etc. and made sure each one has a VA marker; that project led to our working to get an HTC designation for each cemetery in the county.
Marion	A large area at the back of a cemetery was a "free ground" used by citizens of the city, and the markers were wooden or simply glass bottles or rocks. In the 1950s the man who mowed the cemetery got a tractor with a blade and pushed all of the markers to one side to make mowing easier, but the locations of the graves were lost. The CHC has compiled a list of all the people buried in the free ground from city records and will be putting that information online to make it available for research. We hope to put a memorial at the free ground, and possibly an Undertold Marker.
Matagorda	We maintain a list of every burial in every Matagorda County cemetery on our website, including maritime deaths.
Washington	A monthly newsletter also goes to county judge and elected commissioners. We have worked with families and local funeral home to get markers for unmarked graves; we have also placed markers for a family who was unable to purchase them.