

# Archeology Committee

April 28, 2022



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## AGENDA ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Alamo Complex  
Alamo Hall  
300 Alamo Plaza  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
April 28, 2022  
10:00 a.m.

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*This meeting of the Archeology Committee has been properly posted with the Secretary of State's Office according to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code. The members may discuss and/or take action on any of the items listed in the agenda.*

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1. **Call to Order** – *Chairman Bruseth*
  - A. Committee Introductions
  - B. Establish a Quorum
  - C. Recognize and/or excuse absences
2. **Approval of Minutes** – *Bruseth*  
Archeology Committee Meeting (February 1, 2022)
3. **Division Director's Report** - *Jones*
  - A. Update on Archeology Division Programs and staff
    1. Marine Archeology Program Update
    2. TASN Update - *Shelton*
    3. Curatorial Facilities Certification Program Update
    4. FBISD Merit Awards
    5. SAA/CTA Meetings
    6. Landowner Survey Report - *Osburn*
  - B. Upcoming activities/events – *Jones*
4. **Battle of the Medina Project (American Veterans Archaeological Recovery)** – *Jones*
5. **Adjournment** – *Bruseth*

NOTICE OF ASSISTANCE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS: Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print or Braille, are requested to contact Esther Brickley at (512) 463-5768 at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Archeology Committee  
Members

4/28/2022

**James (Jim) Bruseth**

6806 Rio Bravo Lane  
Austin, TX 78737  
512-288-6053  
Email: jim.burseth@gmail.com

**Gilbert E. "Pete" Peterson III**

c/o Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, TX 78711  
Email: gpeterson@bigbend.net

**Tom Perini**

Perini Ranch Steakhouse Owner  
P.O. Box 728  
Buffalo Gap, TX 79508  
325-572-3339 / office  
Email: tom@periniranch.com

**Earl Broussard, Jr.**

Chairman of the Board/Founder  
TBG Partners  
1705 Guadalupe Street, Ste. 500  
Austin, TX 78701  
512-327-1011 / office  
Email: earl.broussard@tbgpartner.com

**Donna Bahorich**

c/o Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, TX 78711  
Email: donna.bahorich.thc@gmail.com

ITEM # 1

## Quarterly Report

Archeology Division  
January–March 2022

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the past quarter, Archeology Division (AD) staff participated in several conferences around the state and the U.S. In early January, State Marine Archeologist Amy Borgens and AD Reviewer Emily Dylla attended the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) Conference in Philadelphia. Borgens attended as a new board member on the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology and as a presenter, while Dylla organized and chaired a symposium of papers examining the historical archeology of San Antonio. During the Real Places Conference, AD reviewer and Tribal Liaison Marie Archambeault organized a workshop centered on opening dialogues with federally recognized tribes with guests Holly Houghton of the Mescalero Apache Tribe and Martina Minthorn of the Comanche Nation. Though Minthorn was unable to attend in person due to weather, she sent a recorded message, and the workshop was deemed a success by all the participants. As part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen relationships with our tribal partners in the federal review process, in mid-February several staff virtually attended both the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and the U.S. Forest Service's Bridging the Gap tribal consultation meeting. In late March, AD staff participated in the first in-person Council of Texas Archeologists meeting in Austin since the 2020 meeting went virtual. Finally, Brad Jones, Borgens, and Dylla all attended the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) Annual Conference in Chicago. Jones participated in the annual meeting of the National Association of State Archaeologists, Borgens presented on recent research in the Gulf of Mexico that was originally scheduled for the canceled 2020 meeting in Austin, and Dylla attended in preparation for her role as the arrangements chair for the 2023 meeting in Oregon. Getting back out on the conference circuit has been a wonderful change after too many virtual meetings and reminds us all of the importance of personal interactions in achieving our

preservation goals. The following highlights other activities staff were involved in.

February 15–17—AD and Division of Architecture staff visited with City of Brownsville, National Park Service, and SpaceX staff to review ongoing projects. A short field visit was also taken to an eroding precontact burial identified in the Laguna Atascosa Wildlife Refuge (Dylla, Jones, Ashley Sahlie)

February 17—AD staff collected a sample from a dugout canoe found in the Rio Grande that was donated to the Museum of South Texas. This is the sixth sample for a larger study of canoes undertaken by Jones and Borgens meant to describe, radiocarbon date, and speciate the wood of canoes held in public and private collections.

February 17—During the opening of a new community exhibit, Bill Martin presented awards of merit to the researchers, school district, and contractors who identified and ultimately excavated the Sugarland 95 from an endangered cemetery for convict laborers in Fort Bend County.

March 14–19—Drew Sitters visited with groups in the El Paso region to assess projects at Fort Bliss and by the International Boundary and Work Commission. In addition, Sitters met with adjoining landowner to the THC's Old Mission Socorro State Historic Site to discuss possible future collaboration on archeological deposits associated with the mission and Piro Pueblo.

### MARINE ARCHEOLOGY PROGRAM (MAP)

Two significant agency semicentennial anniversaries occur this year: the creation of the MAP on Feb. 1, 1972, and the excavation of *San Esteban* and additional data recovery of *Espíritu Santo*, both of the 1554 Spanish Plate Fleet, from 1972 to 1975. The MAP was formed to lead the field investigations on these important shipwrecks, the oldest shipwreck archeological sites in the U.S. The investigations are believed to be the first such scientific study of their type conducted in U.S. waters and the first state-funded

underwater archeological project. It was the salvage of *Espritu Santo* in 1967 that led to enactment of the Antiquities Code of Texas and created the Texas Antiquities Committee, now the THC. The MAP has social media and other content planned to recognize these anniversaries, including an article for *The Medallion* and *Sea History* magazines. THC blog posts and Facebook posts were published in February and March on the MAP anniversary and about Vida Lee Connor, who discovered the 1554 shipwrecks in 1964.

In January, Borgens presented at the SHA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia on an overview of the 50-year history of the MAP and its evolution; it was submitted as a paper for the conference's underwater archeological proceedings published by the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology (ACUA). Borgens also co-chaired the annual Government Maritime Managers Forum and attended the ACUA Board Meeting. In late March, she presented a paper on a Texas coastal canoe at the SAA Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Also in March, the MAP, with assistance from Texas State University student intern Hunter Johnson, completed preparation of the artifact collection from the Pass Cavallo Shipwreck (41CL92) for curation at Tuscan Way. This early 19th-century shipwreck at the historic entrance to Matagorda Bay may represent the remains of a vessel from Louis-Michel Aury's privateer fleet, though other shipwreck candidates are also under consideration. The Pass Cavallo Shipwreck is being featured for a segment of National Geographic's *Drain the Ocean* series, which will also include the Alamo and San Jacinto Battlefield. Borgens and former THC MAP staff Layne Hedrick were interviewed for the Pass Cavallo Shipwreck segment. The MAP is in the planning stages for AD surveys of Aury's Matagorda Bay camp and lost abandoned fleet, with the inaugural research meeting held in January. This project had been delayed by the pandemic, but should be field ready by late 2022 or early next year.

## **REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES**

Under the auspices of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Antiquities Code of Texas, the state and federal review section staff of the AD reviewed approximately 2,634 proposed development projects from Jan. 1–March 31. Of those, about 84 archeological surveys were required to determine whether any significant cultural resources would be adversely affected, and approximately

5,074 acres were surveyed. About 85 historic and prehistoric sites were recorded, and of those, six were determined eligible for listing in the National Register and 64 were determined not eligible, with 15 of undetermined eligibility.

## **CURATORIAL FACILITIES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CFCP)**

The THC's CFCP ensures that state-associated archeological collections are properly curated. In the past quarter, staff from the Anthropology Department at Texas A&M University and the Galveston County Museum have indicated intent to undertake the CFCP certification process. AD staff Maximilian Hall and Bradford Jones will be working closely with both institutions to assess their potential for becoming certified. In addition, AD staff delivered the first shipment of artifacts from the Lake Gilmer archeological collection to the Stephen F. Austin University Archeology Laboratory for curation.

## **TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK (TASN)**

The current membership of terrestrial and marine stewards is at 132, with 18 stewards up for renewal in 2022. We sent renewal request letters in February and received confirmation from 15 stewards. We received six outstanding nominations, which AD staff reviewed and provided recommendations to State Archeologist Jones. TASN Coordinator Becky Shelton and Jones met with the Advisory Committee on Feb. 24 to review the nominations. Invitation letters have been sent, and we will finalize these nominations next month. Our annual meeting and workshop will be held Saturday, May 14 at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site. The updated, reimagined steward newsletter is undergoing the final production edits and should be available very soon.

Last year, five stewards passed away, and we would like to recognize their contributions. They are: Bryan Boyd (Gregg County, 21 years); Sheldon Kindall (Harris County, 37 years); Russell Potocki (Harris County, Marine Steward, 20 years); J. Travis Roberts, Jr. (Brewster County, seven years); and Rolla Shaller (Randall County, 28 years). We were honored to have known them and to have worked with them so closely for many years. Their hard work and dedication to preservation of cultural resources and outreach to the residents of Texas will not be forgotten.

ITEM # 2

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

### Minutes

Hilton Austin  
Room 400/402  
500 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78701  
February 1, 2022  
2:45 P.M.

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*Note: For the full text of action items, please contact the Texas Historical Commission at P.O. Box 12276, Austin TX 78711 or call 512.463-1858*

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### 1. Call to Order

Chairman Jim Bruseth opened the Archeology Committee (AC) meeting on February 1, 2022, at 2:45 P.M. Bruseth announced that the members would discuss and act on any of the items listed on the agenda. He welcomed everyone to the Archeology Committee meeting and called the roll.

#### **Members Present**

James Bruseth  
Earl Broussard  
Donna Bahorich

#### **Members Absent**

Tom Perini  
Pete Peterson

Bruseth announced that Pete Peterson and Tom Perini were absent, that a quorum was established, and that the meeting was opened.

Bruseth made the motion to excuse the absence of Perini and Peterson.

Earl Broussard moved on the motion.

Donna Bahorich seconded.

Bruseth called for a vote, heard no opposition, and the motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

Bruseth called for the approval of the AC minutes for October 28, 2021.

Bahorich moved for approval.

Broussard seconded.

Bruseth heard no changes, called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Discussion of proposed adoption of amendments to the Texas Administrative Code**

Bruseth called on Archeology Division (AD) director Brad Jones to present Item #3.

Jones welcomed the committee members and followed up on the proposed rule changes that were brought forward during the previous quarterly meeting. He informed the AC members that his presentation was strictly informational and did not require a vote. Jones explained that the proposed changes ushered in procedural updates that brought AD review into line with the ETRAC online system.

Jones informed that the THC had received public comments. Two of the comments favored the amendments and one called for a modification to the required number of final report copies. Jones agreed with the proposed amendment and modified the Chapter 26.16 rule change. He noted that this modification would be voted on at the AAB meeting.

Bruseth thanked Jones.

### **4. Battle of Medina**

Bruseth called on Jones to present the Battle of Medina project.

Jones shared that Chairman Nau had tasked AD with investigating the location of the Battle of Medina in 2019. He explained that the location of the battlefield remained controversial, because several researchers had proposed various locations for the former battlefield, but none had been archeologically confirmed. While doing research AD staff began working with Brandon Seale – an independent researcher who maintained the *Finding Medina* blog.

Seal's blog focused on determining the precise location of the Battle of Medina. Jones briefly summarized AD's support of Seal's partnership with the American Veterans Archeological Recovery and their project to archeologically test proposed sites. He shared that in recent weeks he issued 3 archeological permits for the Battle of Medina investigations and is looking forward to sharing with the Commission the results at the next meeting.

### **5. Division Director's Report**

Jones said that AD was doing well. He informed the committee that the AD staff remained active in the field and continued to participate in ranch surveys and regulatory projects. Jones asked State Marine Archeologist Amy Borgens to present one of her recent projects.

Bruseth welcomed Borgens.

Borgens began with an observation of a 50% increase in her review work over the past quarter. She mentioned that oil exploration and restoration projects had returned to the Gulf of Mexico. Borgens noted that field work kept her busy. Highlights of the last quarter included two shipwrecks exposed in the Trinity and Sabine rivers. Borgens showcased slides of one of three wrecks, a historic ferry that was found near the town of Carthage.

Borgens mentioned that the THC was invited to participate in a ship timber tagging project that was sponsored by the Florida Public Archeology Network and the University of West Florida. The project utilized QR codes to mark timbers and track their movements and locations and was conceived as a citizens science project. She shared that the timber tagging project covered ships eroding out of oceans and rivers and therefore included the Carthage ferry wreck.

Borgens announced that 2022 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the scientific excavations of the 1554 Spanish Plate Fleet wrecks. She proudly shared that February 1st was also the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Marine Archeology program and the date the THC's first Marine Archeologist was hired.

Bruseth shared that this anniversary was also the beginning of the Texas Antiquities Code.

Borgens highlighted the Indianola project that remained one of the THC's longest ongoing investigations. She informed that the former town of Indianola served as an immigration point for early German settlers to Texas. Borgens explained that the investigations started in 1995 and had resumed in 2005. She shared that the project area was largely inundated.

Borgens said that her annual goal was to complete the Indianola project and to collaborate with the private landowners to further investigate the Sabine and Trinity river shipwrecks.

Jones thanked Borgens.

Jones provided a brief update and photos of AD's internship program. He thanked the THC's volunteers and shared that they served as a crucial component to the THC's Archeology program.

Jones updated the committee on the AD's 2021 Texas Archeology Month (TAM). He noted that 68 events had taken place throughout the month of October. Events were attended by AD staff members and hosted by organizations across the state. Jones showcased photos from the events and highlighted the successful "pinch pot" clay project. The clay project was sponsored and produced by AD in collaboration with the Texas Archeological Research Lab (TARL) and distributed to school children throughout the area.

Jones briefed the AC members on the Certified Curatorial Facilities Program (CFCP). He shared that the University of Texas at Tyler was interested in joining the CFCP and that he would assist them over the next few years. Jones added that Southern Methodist University remained interested in the CFCP and that their program had made improvements.

Jones concluded his presentation and shared a few upcoming events.

Bruseth thanked Jones and his staff.

Bahorich asked about the TAM clay kits. She wanted to know if the kit provided more than one activity.

Jones explained that TAM partners had provided numerous activities and that the clay kits had been the THC's contribution to TARL's TAM fair.

Bahorich suggested that the clay kits could come with an expected time commitment that would allow parents to better plan out the clay kit project.

Jones thanked Bahorich for the suggestion.

Bruseth thanked the AC members.

## **6. Adjournment**

Bruseth motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Broussard seconded.