

Archeology Committee

January 30, 2024



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

AGENDA ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Holiday Inn Austin Town Lake
20 N-IH 35
Sunflower/Marigold Room
Austin, TX 78701
January 30, 2024
9:00 A.M

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.

1. **Call to Order** – *Chairman Bruseth*
 - A. Committee Introductions
 - B. Establish a Quorum
 - C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

2. **Consider approval of committee minutes** – *Bruseth*
 - a. Archeology Committee Meeting (October 25, 2023)

3. **Division Director's Report** - *Jones*
 - A. **Update on Archeology Division Programs and staff** - *Jones*
 1. Division Staffing
 2. Director Updates
 3. Texas Archeology Month Update
 4. Texas Archeological Stewardship Network Update
 5. Marine Archeology Program
 6. Curatorial Facilities Certification Program
 - B. **Upcoming activities/events** - *Jones*

4. **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 Paige Neumann at (512) 463-5768 at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MINUTES

ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE

The National Museum of the Pacific War
Admiral Nimitz Historic Ballroom
340 E. Main Street
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
October 26, 2023
11:30am

Note: For the full text of action items, please contact the Texas Historical Commission at P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711 or call 512.463.6100.

1. Call to Order -

The meeting of the Archeology Committee was called to order by Chair Commissioner James Bruseth at 11:55 am on October 26, 2023. He announced that the meeting had been posted with the Secretary of State's Office according to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code.

A. Committee Introductions

Committee members present included:
Commissioner James Bruseth (Chair)
Commissioner Donna Bahorich
Commissioner Tom Perini
Commissioner Pete Peterson

B. Establish a Quorum

Chairman Bruseth reported a quorum was present and the meeting was opened.

C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

No absences.

2. Consider approval of committee minutes

Commissioner Bruseth moved to approve the Archeology Committee Meeting Minutes from July 21, 2023, Commissioner Pete Peterson seconded, and the Archeology Committee voted unanimously to approve.

3. Division Director's Report

A. Update on Archeology Division Programs and staff

AD Director Brad Jones first announced that Donna McCarver retired as Office Manager. Maggie Moore also left the agency at the end of August. A new reviewer joined, Tracy Lovingood, who will serve as the coastal reviewer. Brought in two new half-time administrative assistants, June Burke and Ryann Ramirez. Two new reviewers will also join, Danielle Julien and Dr. Mary Jo Galindo, in November and December respectively.

Jones discussed THC's partnership with TxDot for their Annual Tribal Consultation Meeting. Nine tribal representatives were present, and THC was given the afternoon to discuss their programs that intersect with the interests of the Tribes. Mark Wolfe gave opening comments. Jones provided an overview of AD and THC programs, including a preview of THC's new Mobile App and the

agency's Historic and Texas Archeological Sites Atlas. Tiffany Osburn, Deputy State Archeologist, gave a presentation titled "Successful Convictions of Looting on Private Property". Bob Ward, a History Steward, also gave a presentation on correcting "Native Histories in Historical Markers in Travis County". All attendees visited the THC's French Legation for an after-hours tour led by HSD staff Mary Margaret Kennedy. On the final day, TxDot arranged a tour of the Gault Archeological Site in Bell County.

The Texas Archology Month (TAM) team reported succeeding in its goal of making ten-thousand pinch pot kits, with a final tally of 10,117. A community effort, 115 different THC employees contributed time and effort, and AD staff coordinated with Generation Serve who had 160 volunteers make pinch pot kits. Pinch pot kit making events were held at the Elrose Building and the French Legation. Special recognition was given to Austin restaurant Chicken Bowl that donated tacos for lunch during sessions. Generation Serve said that these events were the best attended volunteer events they have had. The Alamo Trust also participated, organizing a pinch pot kit making session along with staff from CRM firms Raba Kistner and SWCA in San Antonio. Finally, Virginia Moore and Laney Fisher dropped off kits at locations across Texas. Historic Sites Division had many sites that served as drop off/pick up locations, as well as plans to host several TAM events. TAM had 95 events scheduled and 44 counties participating during October.

The Texas Archeological Stewardship Network (TASN) team is planning for 2024 workshop celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the program with the Bullock Texas State History Museum as the workshop location. Consideration is being given to a TASN poster for TAM 2024 to promote the program alongside publication of another newsletter. The TASN fall business meeting occurred on October 5th at the Texas Archeological Society Annual Conference.

In the past quarter the Marine Archeology Program was contacted by The Icehouse Museum about a shipwreck in the Neches River. This known wreck was one of many Emergency Fleet Corporation's vessels that was being built at the end of WWI that were sold when the war ended, and some were intentionally scuttled in Neches River. Thanks to the Communications Division for creating an announcement with information on what the ship was. Borgens will be going and giving a presentation at the museum in the next month and working with local groups to relay ethics and procedures.

AD applied for a Maritime Heritage Grant from the National Park Service to Survey Matagorda Bay for the pirates Aury's 1817 encampments and shipwrecks. Asking for sixty-thousand dollars in matching funds, the National Park Service awarded \$159,000. To accept the funding, the survey size was increased. A combination of maritime survey and complementary terrestrial surveys will also be done. In addition to Aury's encampment, there are hopes to find the Spanish Port of Matagorda, where goods were coming in and going out to Goliad. Other cultural resources will also be discovered and documented.

Finally, examples of grater bowls from the Old Socorro Mission and Presidio La Bahia projects were shown. Staff is working with last year's Preservation Scholar to build a webpage on Texas Beyond History to talk about these devices.

B. Upcoming activities/events

October 6th, Council of Texas Archeologist (CTA) Meeting will be held at the Texas Archeological Society Annual Meeting. Many staff will participate in the both meetings. At the TAS meeting a Tribal Forum organized by staff will permit the audience to discuss issues and questions of concern with the Tribes. AD staff will provide a training on November 14-15 at the Museum of Coastal Bend for staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners Program.

Adjournment

Commissioner Bruseth adjourned the Archeology Committee meeting at 12:15 pm.

Quarterly Report

Archeology Division
October–December 2023

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

The past quarter included the annual October celebration of Texas Archeology Month (TAM), keeping Archeology Division (AD) staff busier than usual with public outreach in addition to their regular review and compliance duties. The annual Texas Archeological Society (TAS) Conference also occurs during October, this year taking place October 6-9 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, Texas. AD staff Rebecca Shelton served as the program co-chair, working with TAS members for a very successful event. AD staff Brad Jones and Marie Archambeault hosted a panel on Native American tribal interests featuring Rick Quezada, of Yselta del Sur Pueblo and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Holly Houghton from the Mescalero Apache. The forum was well attended and offered an opportunity for TAS members to engage directly with tribal representatives on working together to protect Texas archeological and cultural resources. AD staff also attended the fall Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA) Meeting, and AD staff held the annual business meeting for members of the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network (TASN) during the conference. A special symposium looking broadly at safety in archeology was organized by AD and HSD archeologists Emily Dylla, Virginia Moore, and Sarah Chesney in collaboration with other TAS members.

Other staff activities of note:

- September 23 –Site recording on the Starry Night ranch near Doss in Gillespie County. This is a very special site with a limestone shelf overlooking Squaw/Nolan Creek with 20+ bedrock mortars lining the creek and a camp site with a midden on the upland surface. The family is excited to conduct research on their land in the future (Tiffany Osburn).
- October 2/28 – Recorded two sites with the landowner of the 930 Ranch in Bastrop County to record sites in support of a conservation easement on the property through a local land trust. This project was done as part of AD's conservation lands and landowner assistance programs. The

landowner is looking forward to future survey opportunities with volunteer or steward assistance (Tiffany Osburn).

- October 17—Worked with staff at LCRA's Nightengale Archeological Center to complete mapping and backfilling the open and degraded excavation units of the SAL-designated Lions Creek Site. The site can now be safely used for educational and youth camp purposes and without continued erosion of site deposits (Tiffany Osburn).
- November 6—Monitored USACE site protection efforts at 41WM117, Granger Lake, Williamson County (Rebecca Shelton)
- November 16—Visited ongoing archeological investigations at Washington-on-the-Brazos (Jeff Durst)
- November 18—AD staff attended the Austin Powwow, sharing an exhibit table with TxDOT promoting THC's archeology and culture resource programs (Marie Archambeault, Danielle Julien, Brad Jones)
- December 19—Visited San Antonio to monitor data recovery excavations outside the Long Barracks at the Alamo and Brackenridge Park where investigations are being conducted to better define the construction of the acequia (Emily Dylla, Brad Jones)

MARINE ARCHEOLOGY PROGRAM (MAP)

An increasing number of shoreline restoration projects are occurring in Texas and being reviewed by the agency. The largest quantity of underwater antiquities permits issued by category in FY 2023 and 2024 (35%) were for environmental projects such as beach nourishment (sand is predominantly dredged from offshore) and/or breakwater projects designed to protect the state's shorelines. With pronounced coastal retreat occurring in Texas more projects like these are anticipated. On average, 4.17 ft. of shoreline is lost annually in Texas, which along with Louisiana, Florida, and North Carolina, lead the nation in shoreline loss—80% of the Texas coast is in an erosional state. Coastal construction projects are now more frequently

occurring in areas that were once land and that contain recorded shell middens, camp sites, and historical settlements. Other leading categories for underwater permits are oil exploration projects and channel creation/modification projects. Towards completion of one of its own antiquities permits, the Marine Archeology Program (MAP) finalized the technical report for the 1998 THC investigation and more than two-decade conservation project of the Pass Cavallo Wreck, featured last December in the Alamo episode of National Geographic's Drain the Ocean.

The MAP presented two talks this quarter as part of its public outreach objectives. In November, a discussion of the World War I Emergency Fleet Corporation vessels and other regional shipwrecks was presented to the patrons of the Ice House Museum in Silsbee, Texas. The museum's Facebook page was the source of the viral post this past summer that resulted in state and local media attention on these unique wrecks. At the invitation of National Park Service Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS), the state marine archeologist (SMA) hosted a workshop in December at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History for visiting staff of the NPS Gulf Coast Inventory and Monitoring Network. The workshop introduced the participants to the types of artifacts frequently discovered along the shoreline and included discussion of the history of the shipwrecks of the 1554 Spanish Plate Fleet discovered in PAIS and Texas state waters.

Under ad-hoc Committee Chair Amy Borgens, the CTA Standard and Guidelines (S&G) Committee presented a revised draft of report guidelines that was approved by the membership during the October CTA meeting. In December, AD concluded its review of the draft guidelines. Adherence to the CTA Report Guidelines is required in the Texas Administrative Code for reports produced under Texas Antiquities Permits.

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 2,413 proposed development projects during the period of October 1–December 31. Of those, approximately 76 archeological surveys were required to determine whether any significant cultural resources would be adversely affected, and about 38,375.26 acres were surveyed.

Approximately 143 historic and prehistoric sites were recorded, and of those, 3 were determined eligible for listing in the National Register, while 110 were determined not eligible, with 30 of undetermined eligibility.

CURATORIAL FACILITIES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CFCP)

The THC's CFCP ensures that state-associated archeological collections are properly curated. AD maintains over 300 archeological site collections and is currently managing several research projects. Working with Commissioner Jim Bruseth, AD staff Brad Jones, Jeff Durst, and Roland Pantermeuhl have been finalizing the Keeran Site (41VT4) draft report, detailing the THC's excavations of the French colony of Fort St. Louis and the first location of the Spanish Presidio La Bahia. AD staff Danielle Julien has begun assisting with the reinventory and analysis of faunal remains recovered from the Old Socorro Mission collections. Finally, Brad Jones and Emily Dylla toured the new curation facility at the Alamo, discussing the forthcoming application for CFCP certification.

TEXAS ARCHEOLOGY MONTH (TAM)

Each year, the THC celebrates the spirit of discovering Texas' past with archeology-related events across the state. We appreciate everyone who made TAM 2023 a great success! There were 95 events on the TAM calendar, both virtual and in-person, held in 44 counties across the state. In collaboration with several organizations and volunteers, the THC was able to provide more than 10,000 archeology pinch pot kits to the citizens of Texas. TAM 2023 expanded our partnering efforts to include more than 65 organizations committed to contributing to our educational outreach efforts including museums, regional societies, day cares, schools, clubs, senior centers, libraries, local fairs, and THC historic sites. Our expanded efforts included a focus on economically limited groups such as Title I schools where archeology may have been less accessible. This group effort was made possible by staff from several THC divisions and exemplified the strength of moving toward an interdivision committee model for future TAMs. This year's TAM Fair hosted at the THC's French Legation Historic Site had over 350 visitors and 20 participating partners including TARL, CAS, TPWD, BISD, TAS, Generation Serve, Texas Science & Natural History Museum, etc...