

Archeology Committee

April 2, 2024



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

AGENDA ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Renaissance Austin Hotel
Bluebonnet Room
9721 Arboretum Boulevard
Austin, TX 78759
April 3, 2024
9:15 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 (January 30, 2024)

3. **Division Director's Report** - *Jones*
 - A. Update on Archeology Division Programs
 1. Director Updates – *Jones*
 2. Landowner Assistance Programs - *Osburn*
 3. Marine Archeology Program – *Jones*
 4. Review and Compliance Activities – *Dylla*
 5. Curatorial Facilities Certification Program - *Jones*
 6. Texas Archeological Stewardship Network Update - *Shelton*
 - 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

Holiday Inn Austin Town Lake

20 N-IH 35

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

The meeting of the Archeology Committee was called to order by Chair Commissioner James Bruseth at 9:00 am on January 30, 2024. 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

Commissioner David Gravelle

Chairman Bruseth welcomed new committee member Commissioner Gravelle.

B. Establish a Quorum

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

C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

All members are present.

2. Consider approval of committee minutes

Commissioner Bruseth moved to approve the Archeology Committee Meeting Minutes from October 25, 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 Jones presented a general overview of activities in the division. He first announced that for the first time since 2022, the Archeology Division is fully staffed. He introduced Dr. Mary Jo Galindo, the new South Texas Reviewer, Tabitha Tracy-Sweis, the new Office Manager, and Danielle Julien, the new North and Central Texas Regional Reviewer.

Jones provided details on a training he conducted on November at the Museum of the Coastal Bend for the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The training was designed for their wildlife field staff, who have requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to be knowledgeable and

concerned for cultural resources. The training provided discussion with examples of what archeological cultural resources look like in different regions of Texas. During the second day of training, sites visits were conducted to an ongoing excavation on private lands at the McNeil Ranch and later to Riverside Park in Victoria, to visit a publicly-managed Spanish Colonial site.

Jones mentioned that for the first time AD shared a table with TxDOT at the Austin Powwow on November 18th. It was a very successful public outreach event, with lots of interest for THC and AD programs. The Alabama Coushatta Tribe invited the AD to participate in their Powwow on May 31st and June 1st. Jones noted these events were outcomes from AD's development of an outreach program to Tribal Nations in the past three years, led by Marie Archambault, the Division's Tribal Liaison. It has shown great success, and there have been great developments in creating a collaborative relationship with tribal partners.

October was another very successful Texas Archeology Month (TAM), in large part thanks to hundreds of partners and volunteers. Over 10,000 Pinch Pot Kits were distributed to students and various Archeology fairs across the state, including the Archeology Fair at the THC's French Legation State Historic Site. Jones stressed the importance of continuing to collaborate within the agency to expand and ensure future success for TAM.

The Texas Archeological Stewardship Network assists AD across the state alongside History Stewards. In the past year they have been able to contribute the equivalent of what nine full-time archeologists could, over 16,000 hours. 2024 is the 40th anniversary of the program, and a celebratory annual TASN workshop is being planned along with a much-needed revision of the Stewards Handbook.

On behalf of State Marine Archeologist Amy Borgens, Jones presented an overview of notable Marine Archeology Program activities in the last quarter. These included her presentation on November 17th at the Ice House Museum in Silsby. News and social media have been reporting on a local individual who identified WWI-era shipwrecks that scuttled in the Sabine River, which has created a renewed interest in finding shipwrecks. Borgens went to educate the public on the historical context of the wrecks and how to abide by the Antiquities Code. She is working with at least two new discoveries by the local community, all on private property, and she stressed the importance of proper documentation and permission.

Jones explained that there are 17 certified curatorial facilities across the state that are allowed to hold state associated artifacts from state lands or collected under a TAC permit. The program has been stable the past year, with new facilities hoping to join, an example being the Alamo's Curatorial Facility. The AD has gradually introduced an online submission system for curation forms and HIT documents. Larger curatorial facilities have been slowly onboarded, which allows for streamlining of document signing and information for permitting. AD is looking to bring all facilities onto the system by the end of the year.

Chairman Bruseth had requested an update on the *La Belle* and 1554 collections housed at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History. Jones discussed options being considered on how to transfer the collections to Austin. The museum is right on the coast, which means the artifacts are vulnerable to hurricanes. It is preferred that they go to a more secure facility to ensure they can be cared for. Currently the collection is safe, but the most sensitive material is being slowly transferred to Austin.

B. Upcoming activities/events

Jones closed his update, noting that the Council of Texas Archeologist Annual Meeting will be in Austin in April. Of note, Jenny McWilliams, from HPD, will be presenting an overview of cemetery law at that event. Several AD staff will be attending the Society for American Archeology meeting in New Orleans and the National Association of State Archeologists Meeting, which is also held there. During the conference, Emily Dylla will be presenting. Finally, the National Park Service notified the AD that the Maritime Heritage Grant is fully approved for \$150,000 to undertake archeological research in Matagorda Bay, searching for Pirate Aury's 1817 fleet, which will be an interesting challenge.

4. Adjournment

Commissioner Bruseth adjourned the Archeology Committee meeting at 9:22 am.

Quarterly Report

Archeology Division
January-March 2024

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

AD staff have been very busy the past quarter conducting site visits and public outreach including:

- January 12—Visit to Slumber Falls Camp on the Guadalupe River in Comal County in response to numerous contacts reporting an “Indian mound.” Survey revealed natural deposits only. (Tiffany Osburn and Emily McCuiston).
- January 23—Joined review staff from DOA and HPD to a visit to Joint Base San Antonio. Met with the new cultural resources staff and toured Building 100 (the "Taj Mahal") at Randolph AFB. (Emily Dylla)
- January 28-February 2—With cultural resource staff from Environmental Resource Management and representatives from ONEOK, visited sites recorded in advance of the proposed Saguaro Pipeline in Hudspeth County: 41HZ221; 41HZ223; 41HZ866; 41HZ868; 41HZ876; 41HZ877; 41HZ879; 41HZ880; and 41HZ863. In El Paso, met with Mark Howe, international boundary and water commission cultural resources specialist, and Dr. Mark Calamia, cultural resources program manager and tribal liaison at the Chamizal National Memorial and Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, to discuss upcoming agency-sponsored projects and the nomination of the Keystone Dam site (41EP493) to the National Register of Historic Places. Also visited a pithouse village (41EP2908) being mitigated in advance of the proposed Borderlands Expressway, and joined cultural Fort Bliss resource staff to visit the Hot Well Pueblo site. In Presidio, met with THC Steward Monroe Elms, former State Archeologist Robert Mallouf, and Presidio Mayor John Ferguson, to assess damage to the State Antiquities Landmark-designated Millington site and 41PS58. Finally, assessed possible damage to sites 41PC848 and 41PC850 in Pecos County. (Drew Sitters)
- January 29—Site visit to Barton Springs Road Bridge in advance of a City of Austin replacement project. Joined by USACE representatives and Alexander Shane from DOA. Travis county. (Tiffany Osburn)
- February 14-15—AD staff visited the THC-managed Pace-McDonald Mound Site to work with adjacent owner to repair fencing and conducted site visits at Lake Ralph Hall with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the water district, and the archeological consultant to continue moving the project forward while remaining in compliance. (Emily Dylla, Rebecca Shelton, Danielle Julien)
- February 16-17—Attended the East Texas Archeological Conference, where AD staff met with several East Texas stewards and Rebecca Shelton presented an update on changes and new resources at the THC. (Emily Dylla, Rebecca Shelton, Danielle Julien)
- February 20—Attended meeting at Mitchell Lake in Bexar County with USACE, City of San Antonio, San Antonio Water Supply, and the consultants to map a path forward for testing and possible mitigation of significant archeological sites (Brad Jones, Emily Dylla)
- February 26—Visited Caddo Mounds State Historic Site with HSD staff, Caddo and local stakeholders, and Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects to discuss long-term design strategy. (Brad Jones)
- February 27—Attended stakeholder meeting in Houston on the city’s proposed plans to improve utilities under the historic brick streets in the Fourth Ward (Freedmenstown). (Brad Jones)
- February 27—Met USACE District Archeologist Brian Cockerell in Liberty Hill to visit a prehistoric site where crews were wrapping up testing investigations. (Rebecca Shelton)
- February 27—Private landowner property survey to record a reported archeological site with two members of the Texas Archeological Stewardship Network (TASN) and Hill Country Archeological Association members. Documented a large lithic procurement site at the top of a hill with Edwards chert outcrops in Medina county. (Tiffany Osburn)
- February 28—Presentation to the Lampasas Kiwanis on the THC’s Archeology Division, with about 40 in attendance. From that meeting, we have already been invited to several other public outreach events and have

more opportunities for landowner assistance in the region (Shelton).

- February 29—Onsite meeting with the USACE, City of San Antonio, Witte Museum, archeological consultants, and general contractors about the Carnahan Canal project in Brackenridge Park.
- February 28-March 1—Attended the Texas Land Conservation Conference and furthered collaboration with nonprofit organizations for the long-term preservation of sites on private land. (Tiffany Osburn)

MARINE ARCHEOLOGY PROGRAM (MAP)

In early January, state marine archeologist Amy Borgens attended the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Society for Historical Archeology (SHA) in Oakland, California. Borgens co-chaired and presented a talk for a session on the history and evolution of the technology used for underwater archeological remote-sensing investigations. As part of her role as the state marine archeologist, Borgens participated in the Government Maritime Managers Meeting, held annually at SHA. She also participated in the executive meeting for the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology as a member of the board of directors.

In February, Borgens presented two talks at Texas A&M University (TAMU): an evening presentation for the Department of Anthropology on the environmental processes that impact Texas coastal archeology, and a three-hour guest lecture for the graduate class Anth 608 on the state management of underwater archeology. This lecture has been presented annually for the Nautical Archaeology Program at TAMU since the class was introduced in 2017.

Borgens has also assisted in two recent shipwreck discoveries. Patrons of the Ice House Museum have discovered a potentially historic vessel, a possible flatboat or ferry, that was removed from Massey Lake in 1980 and is now buried and unrecognizable under dense foliage. Borgens has also communicated with a TASN steward and other local volunteers about several sizeable shipwreck timbers that washed ashore at Brazos Island in late January. These belong to a currently unknown vessel offshore in the Gulf. A similar collection of timbers came ashore in the same area in 2016.

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 1,959 proposed development projects from January 1–March 31. Of those, about 55 archeological surveys were required to determine whether any significant cultural resources would be adversely affected, and about 8,362.25 acres were surveyed. Approximately 104 historic and prehistoric sites were recorded, and of those, 3 were determined eligible for listing in the National Register, while 87 were determined not eligible, with 14 of undetermined eligibility.

CURATORIAL FACILITIES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CFCP)

The THC's CFCP ensures that state-associated archeological collections are properly curated. AD staff June Burke onboarded all the currently certified CFCP facilities into the new online, state-associated, held-in-trust collections database. Several staff met with UT Tyler archeologist Thomas Guderjahn, toured the university's collection storage, and discussed next steps in applying for certification. AD is currently managing several research projects, including an inventory of Rex Gerald's excavations from the site of the THC's Old Socorro Mission and AD's investigations searching for the adjacent Piro Pueblo. AD staff are coordinating with Yselta del Sur's tribal historian and NAGPRA coordinator Rick Quezada to collaborate with master potter and former Ysleta governor Albert Alvidrez on the analysis of the excavated ceramic assemblage.

TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK (TASN)

This year is the 40th anniversary of the stewards network, and we are still preparing for the Annual Meeting and Workshop. This spring, AD staff will review the steward membership for renewals and consider new nominations. There are already three new nominees to consider, and 26 members up for renewal.