

# Archeology Committee

July 25, 2024



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## AGENDA ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Hilton Garden Inn  
Ballroom  
220 E. Grande Blvd.  
Tyler, TX 75703  
July 25, 2024  
8:30 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. **Consider approval of committee minutes** – *Bruseth*
  - A. Archeology Committee Meeting (April 2, 2024)
  
3. **Division Director's Report**
  - A. Update on Archeology Division Programs - *Jones*
  - B. Upcoming activities/events – *Jones*
    1. Texas Archeology Month
    2. Upcoming field work
  
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

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## MINUTES

### ARCHEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Renaissance Austin Hotel

Bluebonnet Room

9721 Arboretum Boulevard

Austin, TX 78759

April 2, 2024

9:15 A.M.

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#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Archeology Committee was called to order by Chair Commissioner James Bruseth at 9:15 am on April 2, 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

#### B. Establish a Quorum

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

#### C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

No absences reported.

#### 2. Consider approval of committee minutes

Commissioner David Gravelle moved to approve the Archeology Committee Meeting Minutes from January 30, 2024, 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

###### 1. Director Updates - Jones

AD Director Jones presented a general overview of activities in the division. Jones highlighted visits to two current research projects: the Kirby Kiln Project in Montgomery County and the Paint Rock Project in Concho County. Kirby Kiln is the largest known groundhog style stoneware ceramic kiln in the state, and the new research is exploring associated production areas. The current research is being supported by the landowners and overseen by archeologist Dr. David O. Brown with a team of professional archeologists, TASN stewards, and students. In addition to archeological research, they are engaged with the local CHC to acquire historical markers. The Paint Rock is a natural rock

outcrop along the Concho River that is renowned for rich rock art that adorns it. The Paint Rock Project is a collaborative effort between the landowners, history and archeology professionals, and Native American tribes and descendants to collaboratively investigate the archeology of the site while teaching archeological techniques and learning from indigenous knowledge. The project has been partially funded by a Texas Preservation Trust Fund Heritage Education Grant.

## 2. Landowner Assistance Programs -*Osburn*

Tiffany Osburn gave an overview of programs that provide AD staff assistance for landowners to ensure that they have the resources to protect and preserve archeological resources on their lands. Osburn presented a distributional map of the over 100 easements in 32 counties designated for historical resources managed by AD, noting an upcoming priority will be a comprehensive review and developing a program to physically review the properties for cultural resources. Osburn also summarized two recent landowner visits that had resulted in the recording of new sites in south Texas.

## 4. Marine Archeology Program – *Jones*

Jones gave a brief overview of the activities of the Marine Archeology Program (MAP). In January, State Marine Archeologist Amy Borgens was a co-chair for a session at the Society for Historical Archeology meeting in Oakland, where she also attended the Maritime Governments Management meeting. MAP has assisted the Ice House Museum in its recent discovery of a wooden barge, and continues to monitor large timbers washing ashore around Brazos Island.

## 5. Review and Compliance Activities – *Dylla*

Emily Dylla, the AD Team Lead for Review and Compliance, gave a brief overview compliance in the division, highlighting several projects including the ongoing investigations at Lake Ralph Hall in Fannin County and the excavations of the recently SAL-designated Nighthawk Bison Jump Site at TPWD's Caprock Canyons State Park. Dylla continues regular site visits to the Alamo to monitor the ongoing investigations. Dylla noted through collaboration with NASA the agency was able to send new Regional Archeologists Mary Jo Galindo, Tracy Lovingood, and Danielle Julien to Section 106 training.

## 6. Curatorial Facilities Certification Program – *Jones*

Jones shared photos of the damage to the Wheless Lane Archeological Laboratory after water lines burst during the January freeze. The facility has now been repaired and there was no damage to any archeological artifacts or collections. The Galveston County Historical Museum will be applying for curatorial facility certification from the agency, making them the eighteenth curatorial facility in Texas, if successful.

## 7. Texas Archeological Stewardship Network Update – *Shelton*

The next annual workshop will take place May 4<sup>th</sup>, at the City of Austin's Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Research in Travis County.

## **B. Upcoming activities/events – *Jones***

Jones closed his update, noting that Archeology staff will be attending the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archeology in New Orleans, in April. Jones will be there attending the National Association of State Archeologists and Emily Dylla will be participating in a symposium.

## 8. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Bruseth adjourned the Archeology Committee meeting at 9:45 am.

## Quarterly Report

Archeology Division

April-June 2024

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR

In June, AD staff were excited to welcome FTHC Preservation Scholars Arian Perez and Tahlia Tran to the team. Arian will be working closely with State Archeologist Brad Jones on collections and research-based projects, and Tahlia will assist State Marine Archeologist Amy Borgens with the statewide geo-database of ferry launches. Jennifer Campbell will also be joining the AD team after the first half of her internship in HPD.

The Texas Archeological Society annual field school is held every June, and it is typically one of the larger public outreach opportunities for THC staff from both AD as well as other divisions. The 2024 field school was hosted in Nacogdoches June 9–17. For the second year in a row, the primary excavation site was a historic Caddo village located on private property in collaboration with the land owners. Three hundred participants gathered for a week of excavation, survey, lab work, and educational programming. Field school included a robust youth program, continuing education credits for educators, and a newcomer’s instructional orientation. Nine THC staff from three divisions attended and served in various leadership roles throughout the week. In addition, AD staff were involved in the following activities of note related to our landowner assistance and outreach programs:

- April 3-5—AD staff presented, participated, and assisted with the annual Real Places conference in Austin. (Emily Dylla, Virginia Moore, Rebecca Shelton, Ryann Ramirez, Tiffany Osburn, Brad Jones)
- April 17-21—Staff went to the Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting in New Orleans to give professional papers and attend the annual National Association of State Archaeologists (Brad Jones, Tiffany Osburn, and Emily Dylla).
- May 16—Presentation on the Archeological History of Webber’s Prairie presented virtually for the Houston Archeological Society (Brad Jones)
- June 8—Visited Presidio County to meet with the People of La Junta for Preservation, a 501c3 non-profit organization aimed at “preserving regional sacred and historical lands for public spaces through restoration and caretaking.” Visited the SAL-designated Polvo site in Redford that the People of La Junta recently acquired

portions of from former landowner David S. Duke. Partnering with regional nonprofits and community collaborators, they plan to restore native vegetation to the site and preserve a 250-year-old adobe home, with the goal of creating space for public access. Also toured the redesigned SAL-designated Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes in Presidio that enhances the boundary and protects the cemetery (Drew Sitters).

- June 28—Visited Webberville, Travis County, with descendants of original settler John Webber, the current mayor, and Travis County CHC and TASN member Bob Ward to attempt to locate the site of Webber’s original fort and ferry (Brad Jones, Amy Borgens).

### MARINE ARCHEOLOGY PROGRAM (MAP)

At the invitation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Texas General Land Office (GLO), State Marine Archeologist Amy Borgens presented a talk as part of the Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique Class on April 4 in Port Aransas. The THC’s training lecture is designed to inform emergency oil spill responders of state and federal protections for cultural resources and help these specialists recognize coastal archeology as a means to avoid impacts during a response. In addition, Borgens, in her role as the SHPO Emergency Response Coordinator, coordinated with NOAA and the GLO in regard to the May 15 collision of a barge with the Pelican Island Causeway. Approximately 20,000 gallons of vacuum gas oil was released into the environment due to this accident. The THC provided guidance to help avoid impacts to three archeological sites in the vicinity of the spill.

On May 24, MAP staff visited Goliad with Jamie Ross and AD reviewer Tracy Lovingood to examine artifacts in the collection. As part of the forthcoming archeological investigations of areas associated with Louis-Michel Aury’s 1817 Matagorda encampment, the AD is subcontracting portable X-ray fluorescent analysis of material cultural from La Bahía and the contemporaneous and nearby shipwreck site known as the Pass Cavallo Wreck (41CL92).

The Marine Archeology Program has four student interns for the summer, three of which started in June and with the final intern scheduled in July 2024. Three interns are

graduate students from the Nautical Archeology Program at Texas A&M University fulfilling an internship requirement. The final summer intern is Preservation Scholar Tahia Tran. Tran is an undergraduate from the University of Texas working on the State Waterway Archeological Mapping Project and other tasks related to artifact curation, documentation, and research.

## 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 1960 proposed development projects from April 1–June 30. Of those, about 73 archeological surveys were required to determine whether any significant cultural resources would be adversely affected, and about 17349.55 acres were surveyed. Approximately 186 historic and prehistoric sites were recorded, and of those, 11 were determined eligible for listing in the National Register, while 156 were determined not eligible, with 19 of undetermined eligibility.

- April 12—All AD review and compliance staff attended the Council of Texas Archeologists’ spring meeting in Austin. Staff provided updates on THC programs and policies, and several played a key role in drafting and acceptance of updated Guidelines for Archeological Reports.
- June 9—Met with Big Bend National Park cultural resource staff to discuss the proposed Chisos Mountains Lodge Design Development project, which will replace the 1964 Chisos Mountain Lodge and potentially adversely affect site 41BS908, a deeply stratified archeological site dating back at least 9,000 years (Drew Sitters).
- June 10—Visited the Loma Alta site (41BS15), interpreted as the early historic pueblo of San Juan Evangelista, visited by the Espejo entrada in 1582–83 as well as the type site of the Concepcion phase. Alongside THC Archeological Steward Monroe Elms and regional archeologist David Keller, staff evaluated damages to the site caused by the construction of an access road in advance of an Autonomous Surveillance Tower erected by Customs and Border Patrol. (Drew Sitters)
- June 16—Visit to Lake Ralph Hall, to observe current status of mammoth remains found near the dam, and megafauna unexpectedly encountered during the final investigations at the Merrill Cemetery Site (Rebecca Shelton).

## TRIBAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

The AD’s Tribal Program continues to meet monthly with tribal representatives, providing assistance to other divisions developing tribal outreach activities, and is currently planning a joint tribal consultation meeting with

TxDOT and TPWD in October at Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Brad Jones visited the Alabama-Coushatta Pow-wow May 31–June 1. In addition, AD staff have initiated, at the request of the tribe, a monthly call to discuss issues of particular interest to the tribe. On the June call, assistance was requested with research on tribal history at the Texas State Library and Archives. Preservation Scholar Arian Perez, guided by Brad Jones, visited the archive and took notes on the Sylestine collection to share with the Alabama-Coushatta in the July meeting

At the invitation of Rick Quezada, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Marie Archambeault and Danielle Julien attended the pueblo’s Feast of St. Anthony on June 13. St. Anthony is the saint of lost causes and the original patron of the Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico. Many tribal members dedicate their prayers during the day’s events. The feast includes all-day dancing beginning at the Tuhle (too-ckla), or ceremonial place, and traveling to the Ysleta Mission and back again, from dawn until dusk. Photos were not allowed during the event. Today the Mission is dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. While at the event, Marie and Danielle visited with Tigua members who were very interested in learning more about the THC’s future plans at the archeological site of Socorro.

## CURATORIAL FACILITIES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CFCP)

The THC’s CFCP ensures that state-associated archeological collections are properly curated. In May, Brad Jones returned a large collection of artifacts from the Bernado Plantation excavations to the Sam Houston Memorial Museum in Huntsville. Preservation Scholar Arian Perez is assisting with finalizing the curation of the accompanying paperwork and images.

## TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK (TASN)

This year, the 40th anniversary of the TASN was celebrated at the City of Austin’s Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend in east Travis County. The meeting was well attended, with presentations and training by AD staff. During the 2024 TAS Field School, a special Steward’s Meet & Greet was hosted for stewards and the public.