



AZSITE Consortium Annual Report to the Governor's Office For the Period July 1, 2019, Through June 30, 2020

INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a division of Arizona State Parks, the Arizona State Museum (ASM), the Arizona State University (ASU), and the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement that created the AZSITE Consortium (Consortium), with the goal to computerize and electronically share archaeological and historical site and project files for the State of Arizona. This information is extremely important to private companies and municipal, state, and federal agencies to comply with historic preservation laws.

In 2006, Governor's Executive Order 2006-03 identified the Consortium and the original four founding agencies as the official decision-making and planning body within Arizona's Executive Branch for the AZSITE database and Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory of Arizona's historical and archaeological properties. The integration permits AZSITE users to have up-to-date information on a property's eligibility status to the Arizona and National Registers of Historic Places (A/NRHP), project sponsors, and other related information that was heretofore scattered among many separate locations. This report summarizes AZSITE's activities during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

AZSITE GOALS

- To serve as Arizona's electronic inventory of known historical and archaeological cultural resources.
- To provide information about previously documented historic and archaeological sites and previously conducted surveys.
- To assist state and local agencies in meeting federal and state mandates.
- To serve as a tool for the preservation of resources through planning, for the review of projects for compliance with federal and state preservation legislation, and as a research tool for qualified researchers.
- To provide data for improved review of state agency planning processes.
- To provide security for data related to location of archaeological sites.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

The Executive Order establishes the Board members as consisting of the Director of the MNA, the Chair of the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at ASU, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Director of the ASM, or their designees, on indefinite appointment. Traditionally, delegates have served as Board members. Current Board representatives are listed below.

Mary-Ellen Walsh, M.A., Cultural Resources Compliance Manager, SHPO, Chair
James Watson, Ph.D., Associate Director, ASM
Melissa Powell, Ph.D., Curator of Collections and an Assistant Research Professor, SHESC
Kelley Hays-Gilpin, Ph.D., Curator of Anthropology, MNA

USER AGREEMENTS BY USER TYPE FOR 2019/2020

Information on the breakdown of user agreements by agency type is presented below. Roughly 57% of user agreements were issued to private companies, usually archaeological consulting firms or engineering firms with archaeologists on staff; 30% were issued to local, state, or federal agencies, including Tribal agencies; and 13% were issued to educational or nonprofit institutions.

Private Companies: 56
State & Local Agencies: 14
Federal Agencies: 12
Tribal Agencies: 3
Educational/Nonprofit Institutions: 13

AZSITE FUNDING

AZSITE users are required to pay user fees for access to the database. The fees are graduated depending on the number of users an institution wishes to have access the database. Fees during the 2019-2020 fiscal year ranged from \$1,800 per year for one to three users, \$3,600 per year for four to nine users, and \$6,600 per year for ten to 15 users. Occasional users are permitted access for 30 days throughout the calendar year for a \$600 fee, or for a single calendar month at \$300. This allows smaller companies the use of AZSITE. These generally are companies who do a modest business of a few projects annually and cannot afford the higher “anytime access” that the large companies can justify. These user fees cover 100% of AZSITE costs and provided a total operating budget of \$140,000 for fiscal year 2019-2020.

ACTIVITIES 2019-2020

Aug. 2019: The AZSITE Executive Board held an open meeting at MNA on Aug. 2.

Sept. 2019: The current AZSITE Manager left the position.

Oct. 2019: The AZSITE Board held an open meeting at ASU on Oct. 2.

Nov. 2019: The Board elected Mary-Ellen Walsh to be the Board Chair for 2020.

Sept.-Dec. 2019: A hiring committee consisting of representatives from ASM, ASU, and SHPO posted an opening for a new AZSITE Database Manager, considered 29 applicants, interviewed four of the most qualified individuals, and offered the position to Gabe McGowan.

Dec. 2019: The AZSITE Board held an open special meeting (online) on Dec. 18 to acknowledge and respond to a letter from the Governor's Archaeology Advisory Commission (received on Dec. 6, 2019) expressing concerns over the management and direction of AZSITE.

Jan. 2020: In the position of "Specialist, AZSITE GIS Database" (AZSITE Manager) Gabe McGowan began work with AZSITE on Jan. 6 at ASM. The AZSITE Board held an open special meeting (online) on Jan. 8 to discuss the Open Meeting Law Complaint and Response Letter and plan for improved transparency and communication.

Feb. 2020: The AZSITE Board held an open meeting online on Feb. 5.

April 2020: The AZSITE Board held an open meeting online on April 29. At this meeting, the AZSITE Manager was authorized to begin the hiring process for a 0.5 FTE AZSITE Technician to focus on the backlog.

AZSITE DATA MANAGEMENT AND BACKLOG

For the first half of 2020, the AZSITE Manager focused on characterizing and understanding the existing AZSITE systems and processes, improving communication and transparency, developing methods and strategies for processing backlog data, and beginning work on the backlog.

Programmatic methods for updating user accounts were developed, a listserv was created for user communications, and a blog area was added to the AZSITE website allowing for the frequent posting of updates and backlog progress.

The backlog was characterized and methods for programmatic compilation and batch upload of data were developed. In total, the backlog consisted of 7,877 original site recordings and 2,586 projects. 227 of these site recordings are known to be on Tribal land, meaning they will not be added to the AZSITE production database. At the beginning of 2020, 121 projects and 528 original site recordings from the backlog had previously been uploaded to AZSITE.

Many of the remaining backlog data were awaiting curation at the ASM Archaeological Records Office (ARO) prior to AZSITE upload. In lieu of site boundaries requiring curation, site center points for original site recordings in the backlog were uploaded as an interim measure that would provide approximate site location information to users. Center points were programmatically harvested in bulk from backlog data where possible.

Approximately 4,000 backlog site center points were uploaded between April and June of 2020. Added to the approximately 2,700 backlog site center points present in AZSITE at the beginning of 2020, and the 43 backlog sites fully uploaded between March and June of 2020, total coverage

of backlog original sites not known to be on Tribal land with at minimum a center point in AZSITE was 94% by the end of June 2020. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below. Over the same period, 151 projects from the backlog were fully uploaded.

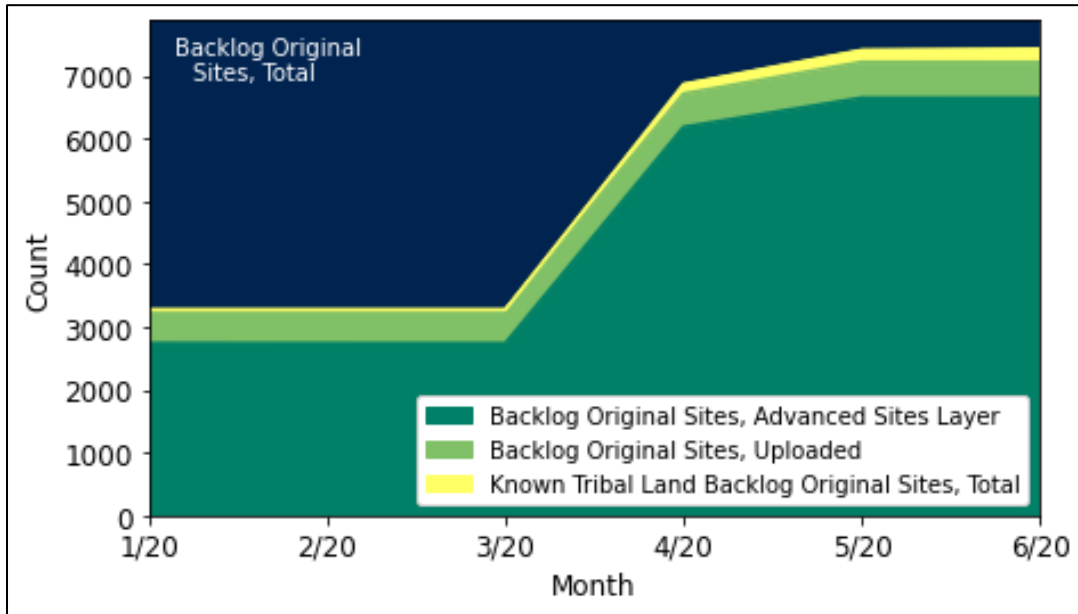


Figure 1: Backlog Original Site Recording Progress, Jan.-June 2020

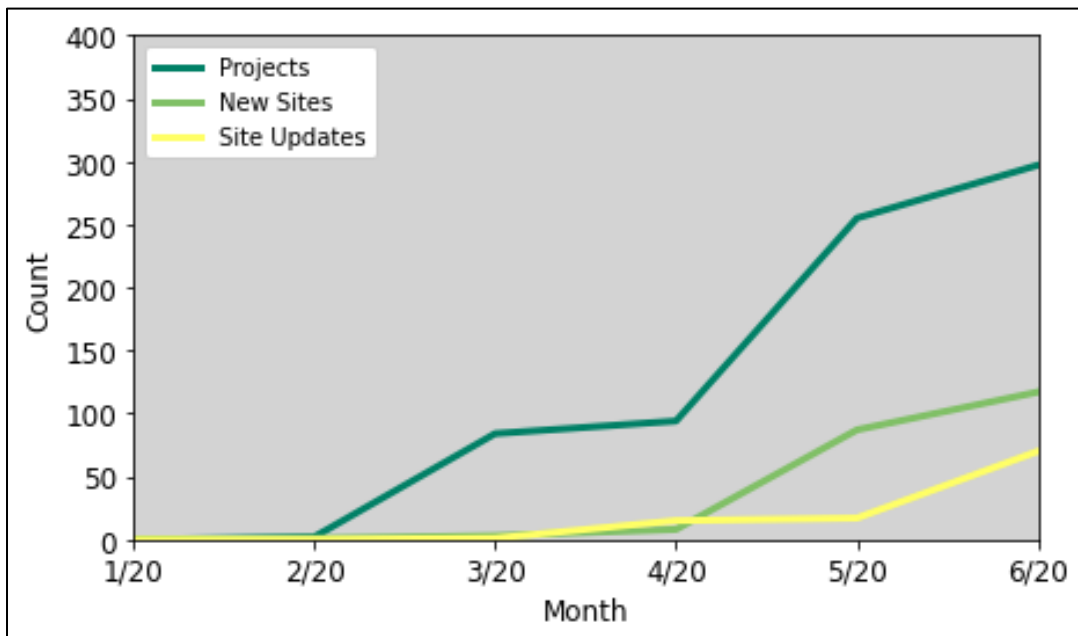


Figure 2: Total Projects, New Sites, and Site Updates Uploads, Jan.-June 2020

Total uploads between January and June 2020, including both backlog and new submission items, amounted to 297 projects, 117 original sites fully uploaded, and 70 site updates (illustrated in Figure 2). Documents uploaded over the same period included 257 Project Registration Forms

and 254 Site Cards and Site Card Updates. Programmatic methods were used to reconcile the documents available for upload with those already present in the database.

Between January and June 2020, various corrections and updates to that data already present in AZSITE were made, including corrections to the topographic quads layer, several site consolidations, and a number of fixes to site and project data, making the dataset more accurate and useful to users. Development of data submission methods was also resumed.

With the planned hire of a 0.5 FTE AZSITE Technician, and the progress on backlog characterization and upload methods, AZSITE is poised to begin making significant progress on the backlog in FY 2021.

CONCLUSION

AZSITE experienced several significant changes through the 2019-2020 year including the AZSITE Manager leaving the position, hiring a replacement database manager, responding to the demands of this transition, and discussing the user community's concerns regarding AZSITE's priorities and future directions. In response however, the AZSITE Executive Board prioritized planning and directing AZSITE's activities, directly addressing concerns expressed by users, assessing and planning for the management of the backlog, improving functionality, and ensuring its relevance into the future.