



## **AZSITE Consortium Annual Report to the Governor's Office For the Period July 1, 2020, Through June 30, 2021**

### **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 2020-2021 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 (2020)  
James Watson, Ph.D., Associate Director, ASM, Chair (2021)  
Melissa Powell, Ph.D., Curator of Collections and an Assistant Research Professor, SHESC  
Kelley Hays-Gilpin, Ph.D., Curator of Anthropology, MNA

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2020-2021**

August 2020: A hiring committee consisting of representatives from ASM and SHPO posted an opening for the AZSITE GIS Technician role, reviewed multiple applicants, interviewed three of the most qualified individuals, and offered the position to Carrie Schmidt. The AZSITE Executive Board held an open virtual meeting on 8/5/2020, during which the Board voted to approve a new fee structure, and created an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to serve in lieu of the Governor's AZSITE Advisory Council. AZSITE established new procedures for transfer and integration of SHPO NRHP determination data into the AZSITE database. This data was updated for the first time in several years, and will be updated on a quarterly basis.

September 2020: The AZSITE GIS Technician started at 0.5 FTE. AZSITE's GIS server was upgraded, and direct GIS access was granted to all AZSITE users through the end of the calendar year.

October 2020: The AZSITE Executive Board held an open virtual meeting on October 28, during which they approved a request from the Arizona State Land Department for all project and site data from State Trust Land.

November 2020: The AZSITE Executive Board held an open virtual meeting on November 17, a special session during which the Board voted to increase the AZSITE GIS Technician to 1.0 FTE, and approve a new policy on Data Clips.

January 2021: AZSITE published the 2021 Standalone Entry Module, a modular Microsoft Access database with associated forms, reports, and VBA functions, for use in submitting data to the ASM Archaeological Records Office (ARO) and AZSITE. This entry module represented a significant overhaul and update to past versions. The AZSITE Executive Board held an open virtual meeting on January 20, during which Jim Watson was elected Chair for 2021. The Board also heard a report from the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee recommending creation of an AZSITE application tailored for National Park Service Certified Local Governments (CLGs) lacking qualified archaeologists on staff, which would provide more granular cultural resource sensitivity information than is currently provided in the AZSITE Public Mapper.

March 2021: ASM and AZSITE prepared a grant application for the National Park Service National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) grants. The proposal involved development of a web application for submission of data to AZSITE. The total project cost, including AZSITE and ASU developer effort, was roughly \$29,000. The NCPTT grants were for amounts up to \$20,000. AZSITE's proposal was not selected for award.

April 2021: The AZSITE Board held an open virtual meeting on April 21. The Board approved a request for all AZSITE data intersecting Bureau of Land Management lands, made by a contractor working on BLM’s cultural resources data digitization/centralization effort. The Board reviewed quotes from developers that manage AZSITE’s servers at ASU related to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee’s previous proposal for a CLG application.

**AZSITE STAFFING**

At the second quarter, 2020 Board meeting, the AZSITE Board voted to approve a job search for and hire of a 0.5 full-time employee (FTE) GIS technician to assist the AZSITE Manager with digitization and upload of cultural resources GIS and attribute data. The application period and interviews were held in the summer months; Carrie Schmidt, M.A., started in the role in September 2020. At the November 2020 special Board meeting, the AZSITE Board voted to increase Schmidt to 1.0 FTE. This brings AZSITE staffing up to 2.0 FTE.

**AZSITE FUNDING**

AZSITE users are required to pay user fees for access to the database; access periods are based on the calendar year. In past years, a tiered fee structure was used for annual accounts, with each tier having a maximum number of individual user accounts; the minimum cost per user decreased moving up the tiers. In addition, access to AZSITE data directly via GIS software was limited only to those organizations purchasing the most expensive license tier, which allowed up to 15 individual user accounts with direct GIS access at \$6,600 per organization. The fee structure used in calendar year 2020 is shown in Figure 1.

<b>AZSITE Fees</b>	
<b>Account Type</b>	<b>2020 Fees</b>
Small (up to 3 users)	\$1,800.00
Medium (up to 9 users)	\$3,600.00
Large (up to 15 users)	\$6,600.00
Each additional user (w/sm med account)	\$600.00
Educational Institution	\$420.00
Single Calendar Month (per month)	\$300.00
30 non-consecutive days single year	\$600.00

**Figure 1: 2020 AZSITE Fees (Per Organization)**

In addition to the small, medium, and large annual access tiers (Figure 1), the 2020 fee structure allowed an educational institution to purchase an unlimited number of accounts (without GIS

access) for \$420. Any organization could purchase 30 days of access within the calendar year for \$600, while a single calendar month of access was \$300.

At the second quarter, 2020 Board meeting, the Board heard a proposal to change the AZSITE fee structure from a per-organization model to a per-user model for calendar year 2021. This change would have two important effects: 1) making access more affordable for most small organizations (and most organizations overall), and 2) making direct GIS access to AZSITE data possible for more organizations. At the same meeting, an estimated budget for AZSITE in fiscal year 2021 was presented by ASM Board member, Dr. Jim Watson. This estimated the budget at approximately \$130,000, including a 0.5 full-time employee (FTE) GIS technician, to be hired later in calendar year 2020.

After the second quarter, 2020 Board meeting, a survey on the proposed changes was distributed to users. This survey collected information linking spending patterns under the old, per-organization fee structure to anticipated participation and spending patterns under the proposed, per-user fee structure. The results of the survey were analyzed and presented to the Board at their third quarter 2020 meeting. The results suggested that annual revenue would decrease by about \$50,000 from roughly \$180,000 - \$190,000 to roughly \$130,000 - \$140,000. This amount was still estimated to be sufficient to cover AZSITE’s annual operating expenses.

At the third quarter 2020 Board meeting, the Board voted to approve the fee structure proposal, with a modification to discount GIS access for users from government agencies. The Board’s rationale was that the fee structure would benefit the majority of AZSITE users, improve access to AZSITE data for archaeological professionals and thus preservation of cultural resources in the state, and that AZSITE had enough money in its account to cover any deficit resulting from the fee structure change for several years, including after personnel costs increased with Schmidt increased to 1.0 FTE midway through the fiscal year.

<b>2021 AZSITE Fees</b>	
<b>Account Type</b>	<b>Fee Per User</b>
Standard I (annual, with Mercator GIS server)	\$550.00
Government Standard I (annual, with Mercator GIS server) <sup>1</sup>	\$450.00
Standard II (annual, no Mercator GIS server)	\$450.00
30 Day (no Mercator GIS server)	\$250.00
Educational (annual, with Mercator GIS server) <sup>2</sup>	\$100.00

<sup>1</sup>government agency personnel only  
<sup>2</sup>educational or non-profit institution students/personnel only

**Figure 2: 2021 AZSITE Fees (Per User)**

As shown on Figure 2 above, the 2021 fee structure charges \$550 per user for one year of access with direct GIS access (Standard I account), \$450 per government agency user for one year of access with direct GIS access (Government Standard I account), \$450 per non-government agency

user for one year of access with web-only access (Standard II account), \$250 for one user account with 30 days of access within the calendar year (30 day account), and \$100 per educational institution user for one year of access with direct GIS access (Educational account).

## **ANALYSIS OF AZSITE USER PARTICIPATION 2020/2021**

In calendar year 2020, AZSITE had approximately 361 individual users, representing the four Consortium agencies, 56 private companies (usually archaeological consulting firms or engineering firms with archaeologists on staff), 14 state and local agencies, 12 federal agencies, three Tribal agencies, and 13 educational or non-profit organizations. About half of the users had direct GIS access.

In calendar year 2021, AZSITE had approximately 336 individual users; the shift from the tiered, per-organization fee structure to a per-head fee structure resulted in some organizations decreasing their participation and spending. These users represented the four Consortium agencies (44 individual users), 60 private companies (usually archaeological consulting firms or engineering firms with archaeologists on staff; 190 individual users), 13 state and local agencies (excluding consortium agencies; 36 individual users), 12 federal agencies (25 individual users), four Tribal agencies (9 individual users), two public utilities (6 individual users), and 11 educational or non-profit organizations (26 individual users). In 2021, roughly two-thirds of users had direct GIS access.

Overall, 107 organizational user agreements were issued for calendar year 2021. Roughly 56% of user agreements were issued to private companies; 29% were issued to local, state, Tribal, or federal agencies, or public utilities; 10% were issued to educational or nonprofit institutions.

## **AZSITE ACCOUNT BALANCE**

Table 1 below summarizes the AZSITE account balance over fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

**Table 1: AZSITE Account Balance, FY 2020, 2021**

<b>FY</b>	<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Annual Balance</b>	<b>End Balance</b>
<b>2020</b>	\$ 207,875.55	\$184,290.00	\$113,470.38	\$ 70,819.62	\$ 278,695.17
<b>2021</b>	\$ 278,695.17	\$142,965.00	\$165,093.70	\$ (22,128.70)	\$ 256,566.47

With the transition to the new fee structure in calendar year 2021, fiscal year 2021 income is lower than fiscal year 2020 by about \$40,000, as expected. At the same time, expenses have increased, primarily due to increased staffing. AZSITE ran a deficit in fiscal year 2021, but maintains a significant balance in its account.

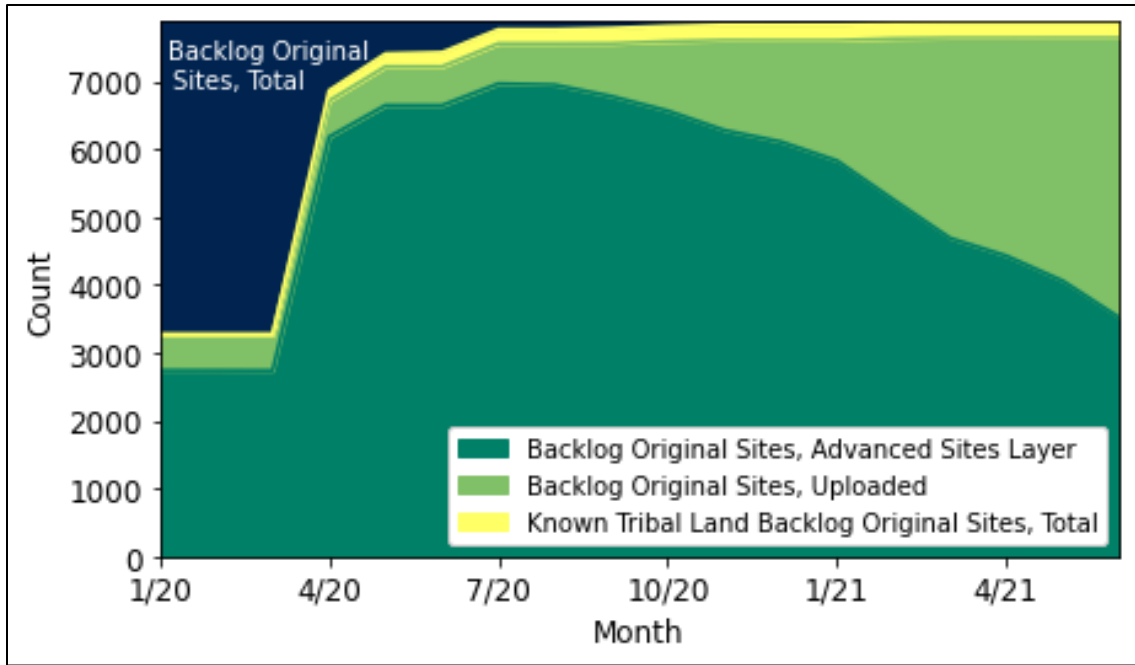
## **AZSITE DATA MANAGEMENT AND BACKLOG**

In the second half of 2020, AZSITE personnel scaled up efforts on the data backlog after being granted permission by the ASM Archaeological Records Office (ARO) to upload backlog data to AZSITE prior to completion of ASM curation. AZSITE developed internal workflows and scripts to facilitate bulk upload of site and project data from the backlog.

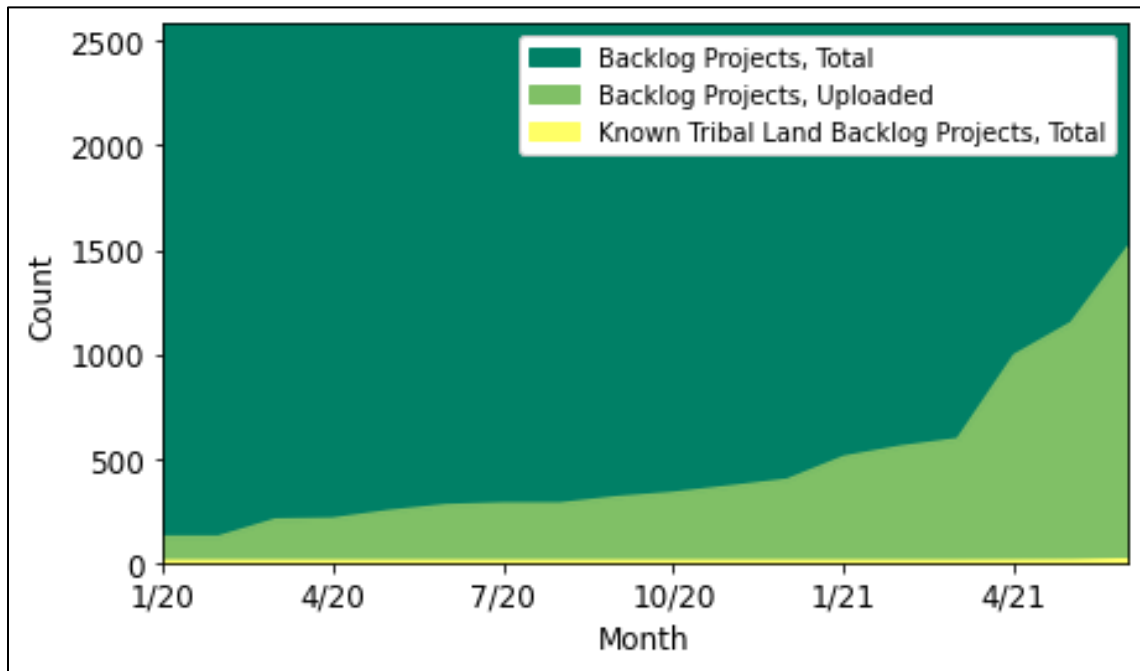
The data backlog consisted of 7,877 original site recordings and 2,586 projects submitted to the ASM ARO between approximately 2003 and 2017. More recent submissions are handled by the ASM ARO under a different fee structure and workflow and are not available for AZSITE to upload prior to curation. 227 of the backlog site recordings and 13 of the backlog projects are known to be entirely on Tribal land, meaning they will not be added to AZSITE. In the first half of 2020, prior to backlog submissions being made available for AZSITE to upload prior to ASM ARO curation, site center points for original site recordings in the backlog were added to a provisional data layer in AZSITE as an interim measure that would provide approximate site location information to users.

At the beginning of 2020, 121 projects and 528 original site recordings from the backlog had previously been uploaded to AZSITE. By the end of June 2021, 1,511 projects and 4,122 original site recordings had been uploaded. In the spring of 2021, AZSITE began compiling and uploading project entries in bulk using scripting techniques. This greatly accelerated backlog project upload progress. Bulk project uploads were conducted ahead of site uploads, as project documentation available in AZSITE indicates whether sites were located, and sites in the provisional layer can be related to the project both spatially and by the project number. Backlog sites are then uploaded and linked to the project in a second pass by the AZSITE GIS Technician.

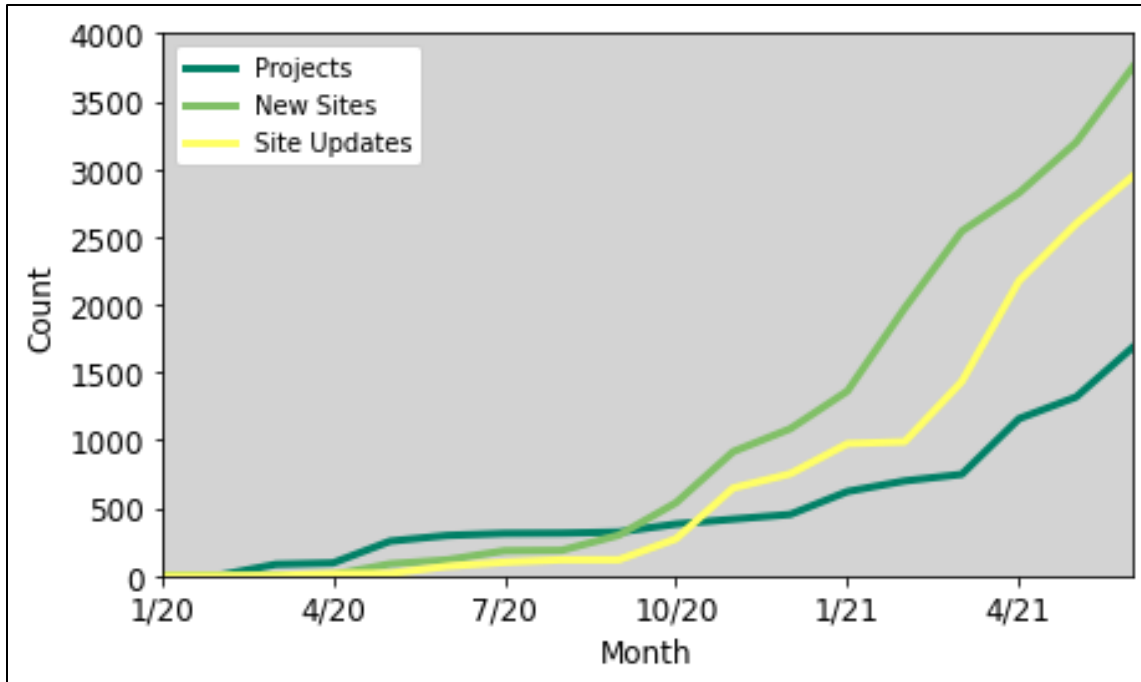
Progress on backlog uploads from January 2021 through June 2021 is summarized in Figures 3 and 4 below. Figure 5 summarizes total uploads over the same period, which includes submissions fully curated under the ASM ARO new fee structure, as well as backlog submissions. At the end of fiscal year 2021, 54% of backlog sites and 59% of backlog projects had been uploaded.



**Figure 3: Backlog Original Site Recording Progress, Jan. 2020-June 2021**



**Figure 4: Backlog Project Progress, Jan. 2020-June 2021**



**Figure 5: Total Projects, New Sites, and Site Updates Uploads, Jan. 2020-June 2021**

Total uploads between January 2020 and June 2021 amounted to 1,698 projects, 3,801 original sites, and 2,950 site updates (Figure 5). Documents uploaded fiscal year 2021 included 140 ASM Project Registration Forms and 287 ASM Site Cards. 280 fixes to existing AZSITE data were implemented over this period.

## CONCLUSION

With the increase in staffing, access to backlog submissions for upload, and improved internal processes, AZSITE made tremendous progress on the backlog over the reporting period. AZSITE and the ASM ARO are hopeful that the 2021 Standalone Entry Module will encourage clients to submit fully digital submissions that can be easily uploaded to AZSITE upon curation. AZSITE was not successful in securing grant funding for the development of a web application for data submission but will continue to look for viable grant opportunities.

The change in the AZSITE fee structure, coupled with the increase in staffing, will result in AZSITE drawing down its standing account balance over the coming years. This is something that the Board was willing to accept to rapidly improve AZSITE and gain back trust and goodwill in the AZSITE user community. Future fee increases will follow once AZSITE has been significantly improved.