

AZSITE Consortium Board Meeting Minutes

August 5, 2020

10:00 a.m. to 11:35 a.m.

A quorum was obtained.

A. CALL TO ORDER (Walsh)

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Board members present:

Mary-Ellen Walsh, Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Melissa Powell, Arizona State University (ASU)
Jim Watson, Arizona State Museum (ASM)
Kelley Hays-Gilpin, Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA)

Members of the public present:

Gabe McGowan (AZSITE Manager)
Nicole Webb (Logan Simpson Design)
Jenni Rich (ACS)
Natalie Ortega (Western Area Power Administration)
Ashley D'Elia (Tierra Right of Way)
Teresa Gregory (Arizona Army National Guard/Statistical Research, Inc.)
Lynn Neal (LA Neal Consulting)
Ian Milliken (Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation)
Chance Copperstone (Tierra Right of Way)
Cara Lonardo (Environmental Planning Group)
Kris Powell (Arizona Department of Transportation)
Steve Swanson (Environmental Planning Group)
Nina Rogers (Western Area Power Administration)
Christina Rocha (Arizona State Museum)
Sarina Mann (Arizona State Museum)
Abraham Arnett (Arizona Game and Fish Department)
Karen Leone (Arizona State Museum)
Branden Fjerstad (SWCA Environmental Consultants)
Sarah Herr (Desert Archaeology)
Dan Garcia (Salt River Project)
Andrew Vorsanger (North Wind Resource Consulting)
Michael O'Hara (Arizona State Land Department)
Carolina Klebacha (PaleoWest Archaeology)
Megan Fuller (Western Cultural Resource Management, Inc.)
Ryan Arp (Environmental Planning Group)
John Langan (AZTEC Engineering)

B. Introductions

- 1.** Members of the AZSITE Board were introduced
- 2.** The AZSITE Manager was introduced

C. Agenda Items – The Board may consider or take action on any of the following:

1. Discussion and Approval of 2nd Quarter 2020 Meeting Minutes (Walsh)
 - a. Motion to approve Watson
 - b. Second by Hays--Gilpin
 - c. Minutes approved with a roll call vote of the board

2. Discussion and Vote on Large Data Requests (McGowan) – There were no large data requests this quarter.

3. Financial Report (Watson) – The account balance is currently about \$278,000; notes that charges from the ASU Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) over the last fiscal year were high as improvements were begun and ISSR staff covered in the absence of an AZSITE manager in late 2019. Charges are expected to continue to be relatively high as system improvements are made over the next couple of years.

4. Discussion and Vote on 2021 Fee Proposal (Watson) – The 2021 fee proposal moves to a per-user pricing model, including for Mercator GIS server access, offering users more flexibility with a simplified fee structure. McGowan put together a fee survey that was distributed at the user organization level, with the rationale that the points of interest (spending, change in number of accounts) were relevant more at this level than at the individual user level.
 - a. There were 48 responses, representing about 53% of user organizations. Watson notes this exceeds the threshold response rate of 30% for social science surveys.
 - b. The results indicate:
 - i. the majority (77%) of respondents anticipate little change in the number of users;
 - ii. the majority (79%) of respondents anticipate spending about the same or less on their AZSITE access; and,
 - iii. about 17% of respondents anticipated spending more.
 - c. The majority (77%) of respondents were in favor of the new fee structure; only 2% (1 respondent, from an educational/non-profit institution) was opposed. A notable finding was that many respondents did not know or understand the utility of the Mercator server.

 - d. Motion to accept the proposed fee structure (Watson)**
 - i. Seconded by Hays-Gilpin**
 - ii. Motion is approved by roll-call vote of the board**
 - e. Discussion shifts to the request from Milliken and others that AZSITE grant municipalities/government agencies 2021 Mercator server access at the non-Mercator price point.
 - i. Watson and McGowan note that there are currently 68 AZSITE users from agencies at the local, state and federal level; providing Mercator access to these users at no extra charge under the proposed 2021 fee structure entails a

potential opportunity cost of up to \$6,800. Watson estimates the actual opportunity cost may be lower, as not all these users would want access.

- ii. Walsh raises the issue of these agencies potentially sharing AZSITE data with consultants who do not pay for it. Milliken notes that most such agencies would only be sharing their own data with consultants and basic user application fees would still apply.
- iii. Walsh notes that with the new fee structure, Mercator access is much cheaper and more accessible, and that it may not be necessary to make this access free to agency users. Milliken and Walsh clarify their understanding of the 2021 fee structure.
- iv. McGowan notes that the results of the fee survey are informative, but that it is still difficult to predict what the outcome will be. He notes that 20 of the 48 respondents estimated they would spend less on AZSITE in 2021 under the new fee structure than they did in 2020; he also notes that many of the current agency users have small accounts, and that 7 of the 20 survey respondents anticipating less spending in 2021 were current small account holders. He notes that adding free Mercator access for agencies in addition to the lower pricing of the 2021 fee structure makes it more likely that revenue will fall below the projected budget.
- v. There is a discussion of potentially developing a specific definition of an agency that would qualify. Watson notes that this will create complication while the goal of the new fee structure is simplicity. Garcia notes that SRP should qualify, and Walsh disagrees. Garcia notes that he can provide a legal justification for this if necessary.

f. Motion to grant free access to the Mercator server for agencies in 2021, subject to a review prior to implementation past 2021 (Watson).

- i. **Seconded by Hays-Gilpin.**
- ii. **Approved by roll-call vote of the board.**

5. Discussion and Vote on Server Upgrades (McGowan)

- a. Software upgrades for ArcGIS Server, SQL Server and Windows Server have been delayed since April by ASU ISSR but are scheduled for this Friday, August 7, 2020.
 - i. As part of these software upgrades, the Mercator server hardware were upgraded, including doubling the RAM, increasing the number of cores, and moving from a magnetic drive to a solid-state drive. All of these should improve performance. In addition, the AZSITE services will now be the only services running on the Mercator server. This should also improve performance and capacity.
 - ii. Once the software upgrades take effect, the ISSR wants to monitor the new Mercator server to make sure the applications are running properly, and to see levels of concurrent use. They anticipate the new Mercator server will be able to handle the traffic associated with expanding Mercator access to all who want it for the rest of the year.

- b. The server upgrades approved by the Board at the February 2020 meeting are slated to occur once the software upgrades are in place and stable. These upgrades will further improve performance. The ASU ISSR took it upon themselves to provide McGowan with costs for cloud hosting with AWS as a point of comparison with continued on-premise hosting at ASU. They wanted to make sure that upgrades undertaken would be a long-term solution and would not need to be reconsidered in another year or two. ASU ISSR consider AWS a more stable, higher-performance solution that is becoming the standard for state agencies; however, it is more expensive than on-premise hosting at ASU.
 - i. Multiple attendees in the Zoom chat noted that AZSITE data are not allowed to be stored in cloud due to the security of tribal cultural resources, as these extend off tribal land jurisdictions (from which no data are included in AZSITE).
 - ii. **It is decided that unless the ISSR can make a compelling argument for further consideration, on-premise hosting at ASU will continue, with upgrades as previously approved by the board in February 2020, due to security commitments and cost concerns.**
 - iii. McGowan notes that ASU ISSR anticipates being able to complete sever hardware upgrades in relatively short order once the software upgrades are implemented and stable.
6. Discussion and Vote on 2020 Mercator Access (Watson) – At the April 2020 meeting, the Board voted to open Mercator GIS server access to any 2020 AZSITE user who wants it for the remainder of the year, once server upgrades to accommodate this level of use were complete. Due to delays of the upgrades, this decision has not been fulfilled yet, but McGowan anticipates being able to follow through by September with the software and interim Mercator hardware upgrades scheduled for August 7, followed by a monitoring period.
- a. Watson notes there has been one request for a refund from a user organization that purchased a Large account for 2020, currently the only account tier allowing Mercator access, given this decision. Milliken notes that a future credit may be more realistic, and Hays-Gilpin concurs. Christina Rocha, Research Administrator at the Arizona State Museum, says it may possible to offer a refund.
 - b. There is agreement among the board that giving such a refund would set a bad precedent and would likely require additional refunds to be issued. Given that the free Mercator access is now anticipated to be for only four months, it is decided not to give the refund.
 - c. McGowan will grant Mercator access to those who want it as soon as is technically feasible.

7. Discussion and Vote on Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee Applicants (Walsh) – Walsh provides a list of applicants categorized by the type of organization they represent. Teresa Gregory is not on the list but comments that she applied in her capacity as an Arizona Army National Guard employee. Walsh agrees to add her to the list.
 - a. Applicant list:
 - i. Local Government: Ian Milliken (Pima County), Mark Reavis (City of Flagstaff), Theresa Coleman (City of Bisbee)
 - ii. State Government: Michael O’Hara (Arizona State Land Department)
 - iii. Federal Government: Margaret Hangan (USFS Kaibab National Forest), Teresa Gregory (Arizona Army National Guard)
 - iv. Utilities: Dan Garcia (Salt River Project)
 - v. Private sector, large: John Langan (AZTEC Engineering), Caroline Klebacha (PaleoWest), Ashley D’Elia (Tierra ROW)
 - vi. Private sector, small: David Stephen (PAST), Ryan Arp (EPG)
 - vii. Academia: Steve Swanson (ASU)
 - viii. Ranching: Tina Thompson
 - b. There is discussion of how to pick a single representative from each category. Walsh notes that there is not a process established for a selection. Walsh asks to hear a brief statement from each applicant as to why they should be chosen
 - i. Federal government
 1. Teresa Gregory (Arizona Army National Guard) states she would like to be on the committee because she represents a federal land manager, has private sector experience, and is a past AZSITE manager who is familiar with the system.
 2. Margaret Hangan (USFS Kaibab National Forest) is not present.
 - ii. Private sector, large
 1. Carolina Klebacha (PaleoWest) states that her firm has a vested interest in AZSITE’s success, because it will help facilitate their work and archaeology in Arizona; also says she is on the Arizona Archaeology Council board and is the chair for the legislative committee; has been attending house and senate hearings for the past year and will continue doing so, and is also trying to influence the ways things are done at the state level as well as at AZSITE.
 2. John Langan (AZTEC) comments in the Zoom chat to make his statement: “AZTEC’s interests are similar to those of other large firms with respect to AZSITE. Having worked for such businesses since 2007, I can represent those interests. I am the permanent person responsible for GIS in CRM work at AZTEC.”
 3. Ashley D’Elia (Tierra ROW) states that she is interested in representing the interests of the CRM community, is uniquely qualified as the laboratory director, staff archaeologist, permit

coordinator, and GIS lead at Tierra ROW, and would like the opportunity to serve.

iii. Private sector, small

1. Ryan Arp (EPG) says that he uses AZSITE and the Mercator server nearly daily, and that he also uses Nevada and New Mexico's equivalent systems, and that he is aware of the data structures in California and Utah as well, and is aware of the differences with AZSITE. He also has experience putting together technical services in the private sector.
2. David Stephen (PAST) does not respond. Walsh provides a brief introduction, stating he has a single-person company and was involved in the early development of AZSITE.

c. Walsh notes that there are currently no applicants representing tribes, and perhaps all three local government representatives could be chosen as a result.

- i. Hays-Gilpin notes that this would provide some diversity that is unfortunately not present in the form of tribal representation, due to their current focus on the pandemic.
- ii. Both note that any tribal representative interested can join at any time.

d. Discussion returns to how to make the selections.

e. Ian Milliken proposes that the Board start with a smaller group for the committee, which then can develop a process to select the remaining members, which would be approved by the Board. Members could then be added throughout the year.

- i. The Board agrees that this is a good idea.
- ii. Walsh calls for a vote to approve the non-competitive appointments (utilities, ranching, state government, local government, academia) as the initial board.
 1. Approved by roll call vote.

f. Walsh notes that the committee will choose a representative to attend and contribute to the next Board meeting.

g. The initial committee is comprised of Ian Milliken (Pima County), Mark Reavis (City of Flagstaff), Theresa Coleman (City of Bisbee), Michael O'Hara (Arizona State Land Department), Dan Garcia (Salt River Project), Steve Swanson (ASU), and Tina Thompson (Rancher).

h. Milliken asks if the Board will set up the first meeting; Walsh says this should be up to the committee.

8. AZSITE Updates (McGowan)

- a. Backlog and Uploads: At the April 2020 Board meeting, McGowan identified current AZSITE upload priorities as the remaining AZSITE backlog (items passed to AZSITE by ARO prior to July 1, 2018), remaining ARO backlog negative surveys,

new fee structure negative surveys, and the addition of remaining ARO backlog original site submission center points to the Advanced Sites Layer.

- i. As of today items remaining in these groups are 3 projects (34 uploaded), 0 new sites (171 uploaded), and 208 site updates (75 uploaded) in the AZSITE backlog; 3 negative surveys in the ARO backlog (143 uploaded); 0 new fee structure negative surveys (124 uploaded); and 116 ARO backlog original site submission center points (about 900 added to Advanced Sites Layer since April; about 4,500 added this year).
 - ii. Total uploads to date in 2020: 314 projects; 187 original sites; 100 site updates; 290 PRFs, 267 site cards.
- b. Recent SSL error: McGowan explains that recently an issue with the AZSITE website's SSL certificate resulted in a browser security error that limited functionality; this was also the root of the system outages experienced in May and June. The ASU ISSR fixed this problem on July 31. Rebuilding the SSL certificate in turn required some work on the back end of AZSITE. This issue is not expected to recur.
- c. AZSITE GIS Technician hiring: McGowan notes that there was a very large (43 applicants) and strong group of applicants for the position, which was flown in late June. Three interviews were conducted on August 3 and 4. He is checking references and anticipates making an offer within the next few days.
- d. Entry modules:
- i. McGowan has been working with the ARO on a new standalone (MS Access) entry module. The goal is to simplify and modernize this module so that more users can use it. Changes include: the front end/back end merged in one file (about 6 MB); module limited to one project entry, allowing the back end schema to be simplified; redundant or obsolete fields removed; obsolete tables and functionality removed; separate site update form added; new site card and site update report forms added. This will provide the ARO with the functionality they need and provide AZSITE with the digital data to streamline uploads.
 - ii. McGowan notes ASU ISSR staff have been busy with the software updates, and will have more time for other tasks, including the web entry module, once those are finally in place. The base of the web entry module was built previously and can be adapted to meet the needs of the ARO. He says the key piece will be working out how the data will flow from the web entry module to ARO (when required) and then into AZSITE. He is hoping this can be a priority for ASU ISSR staff in the fourth quarter.
- e. SHPO data transfer to AZSITE:
- i. McGowan says it seems of the SHPO GIS data currently in AZSITE, only the historic structures dataset (i.e., buildings) is still being updated by SHPO.

He has been in communication about receiving an update to this dataset and has been told there is a need to cull the existing dataset, and any future ones, to those structures old enough to be of interest to the archaeology community. This would reduce the size and weight of that dataset in the web mapper and the Mercator services.

- ii. ASU ISSR and SHPO technical staff have been working out a way to transfer NRHP, site, and project attribute data from SHPO to AZSITE. Because the databases cannot be linked directly, they are setting up an intermediate container for the data. In the meantime, McGowan was able to use the last NRHP data transfer from several years ago to mine 1,345 additional NRHP decisions for sites in AZSITE and is ready to implement that workflow when new data are received.
- iii. McGowan notes he has recently received requests for some corrections to the historic districts layer. He will be addressing these as he has time and evaluating the need for an update to this layer.

f. Attribute search application changes:

- i. McGowan says one of ASU ISSR's priority tasks once the software updates are complete will be to make some changes to the AZSITE attribute search applications. These will include:
 - 1. Change the display of several binary fields to "yes/no" or "true/false" instead of 0/-1.
 - 2. Change the site search query so that apparent duplicate results do not appear.
 - 3. Add a project history tab to the project search endpoint. Currently each site endpoint shows a "history" tab listing associated projects; this will be the inverse and will also include a list of associated Advanced Sites. This will explicitly link projects and advanced sites, making the expanded advanced sites layer more useful to users while the detailed site data are going through ARO curation. This also allows AZSITE to upload data for projects with associated original site submissions that are still in curation at ARO. The project backlog can be cleared for AZSITE relatively quickly in this way.

g. AZSITE correction request form:

- i. McGowan has researched a few ways to collect correction request data. He hopes to distribute at least a simple form for this purpose soon.

D. Public Comment

- 1. Teresa Gregory asks what are the entry modules that McGowan spoke about, and if they are similar to what ASU ISSR was working on when she worked at AZSITE. McGowan explains that there is the standalone entry module, a Microsoft Access database with associated forms, that has traditionally been used to map project and site data into the AZSITE schema for upload. The new standalone entry module would be a modernization of this serving the same purpose. At the same time, the web entry module would be an option for users who don't

have Windows and Microsoft Access, and in the long term would likely be the preferred method for most users. The goal is to have both options available.

E. Date and Time of Next Meeting

1. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be on Zoom unless there are acceptable conditions for an in-person meeting; if so, the meeting will be at ASU.

F. Adjournment

1. Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.