

AZSITE Consortium Board Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2021

10:04 a.m. to 11:39 a.m.

A quorum was obtained.

A. CALL TO ORDER (Watson)

Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m.

Board members present:

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

Members of the public present:

Gabe McGowan (AZSITE Manager)
Carrie Schmidt (AZSITE GIS Professional)
Nina Rogers (WAPA)
Abraham Arnett (Arizona Game and Fish Department)
Cara Lonardo (EPG)
Scott Courtright (NRCS)
Stephanie Bosch (AZTEC)
Caroline Klebacha (PaleoWest Archaeology)
Jenni Rich (ACS)
Karen Leone (Arizona State Museum)
Lynn Neal (LA Neal Consulting)
Ian Milliken (Pima County)
London Lacy (MCDOT)
Reylynne Williams (Gila River Indian Community– THPO)

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 3rd Quarter 2021 Meeting Minutes (Watson):
 - a. Motion to approve (Hays-Gilpin)
 - i. Seconded (Walsh)
 - ii. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Finance Report (Watson):
 - a. Watson reviewed the finance report:
 - i. Beginning Fund Balance: \$256,566
 - ii. Total Income: \$6,150

- iii. Total Expenses: \$34,090
 - iv. Current Fund Balance: \$228,626
 - v. Uncommitted Cash Expenditure: \$123,781
 - b. The encumbrances mainly reflect salaries for the AZSITE Staff. The current fee structure should be maintained.
 - c. Caseldine inquired if total income reflects 2022 membership fees.
 - i. McGowan replied that the total income represents late-year 2021 membership fees. Collection of 2022 membership fees has not yet begun.
- 3. Fee Naming Convention & Pro-Rates (McGowan):**
- a. McGowan stated that the names for different account types should be clarified and updated.
 - i. Walsh stated that this does not require a vote, but the titles should be updated to provide more clarification.
 - b. McGowan stated that previously pro-rated membership fees have been at the discretion of the AZSITE Manager. Having a policy in writing could help with user and fee management after the annual application period. McGowan proposes 50% pro-rate annual accounts after July 1 for organizations with 5 or more annual accounts.
 - c. Discussion:
 - i. Walsh stated that ideally user memberships should be purchased during the annual application period to avoid additional work. However, having a cost associated to offset the work involved in processing these additional membership requests is acceptable.
 - ii. Caseldine inquired why only companies with 5 or more accounts would qualify for having pro-rated memberships.
 - 1. McGowan replied that organizations with 5 or more annual accounts are typically the ones requesting additional users part way through the year.
 - iii. Caseldine stated that a formal policy would be helpful for standardizing the process.
 - iv. Watson stated that there are other options for smaller companies that need additional users, such as the 30-day account.

- v. Watson stated that a formal policy for pro-rated memberships requires board approval. The AZSITE Manager can write a draft policy and present to the board for approval.

4. Mercator GIS Server Security (McGowan):

- a. McGowan stated that the Mercator GIS Server, which is running ArcGIS Server 10.7, allows users to connect to AZSITE through their GIS software. There are two security measures in place on the Mercator GIS Server that attempt to limit bulk extraction of data: 1) Relatively short-lived user token durations, and 2) a limit (500 records) on how many features can be returned by the server before a query is terminated (the MaxRecordCount parameter). Esri has implemented changes in newer software that parses the second limitation and works around it, such that the user obtains all data requested, no matter how many features are requested. Similar behavior is observed with newer versions of QGIS.
- b. McGowan sent out a survey to Mercator users to determine what software they are using. Approximately half (n = 27) of respondents (n = 49, representing about 25% of Mercator users) are using software that will not be subject to the MaxRecordCount limitation. AZSITE has done preliminary research with partners at Arizona State University (ASU) Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) on alternative security measures. McGowan is requesting the opinion of the board on whether unlimited access to Mercator GIS Server data for paid users is of enough concern to devote time and resources to developing additional security measures.
- c. Discussion:
 - i. Hays-Gilpin asked how often users have commented on these security measures and interferences with their work.
 - 1. McGowan replied that there have been no complaints about the security measures.
 - ii. McGowan stated that he discussed this issue with NVCRIS, the cultural resource geodatabase for Nevada, and their solution was to limit access to a Map Service. As opposed to a Feature Service (allows query and export), a Map Service does not support queries or export, only a “click to identify” operation. NVCRIS also has an additional data clip tool available to their users as a geoprocessing service. This geoprocessing service has underlying it a copy of their dataset functioning as a Feature Service, allowing queries and export, but only via the tool. A 1000 feature limit is enforced on this tool

via the MaxRecordCount parameter; their software is old enough to enforce this parameter.

- iii. Watson inquired why NVCRIS has implemented the feature limit.
 1. McGowan stated that NVCRIS wanted more control of the data exports, to make it somewhat more difficult so that users think about what they are doing.
- iv. Watson stated that since data clip requests can still be made, the actual concern is how that data is stored and protected by users.
- v. Walsh supported the best course of action recommended by the AZSITE Manager.
- vi. Caseldine inquired how users would be aware of the feature limit.
 1. McGowan stated that the query results would just terminate at 500 records and users would need to notice if the results are fewer than expected or review the detailed messages associated with the geoprocessing operation they have performed.
- vii. Caseldine suggested having a note stating that if the query results are expected to be over the 500-record limit, please contact the AZSITE Manager.
 1. McGowan stated that this is present in the Data Clip Policy. However, with the newer Esri software, queries are parceled out in as many 500 record portions as required to meet the intention of the query. The end user does not receive any indication that they are exceeding any kind of limit.
- viii. Milliken stated that queries can be automated to result in multiple clips even with a feature limit. Milliken suggested having a way for users to make data clips themselves to save time and resources. If AZSITE users have been vetted by SHPO, then they have been granted access to the data and entrusted with maintaining adequate security. Since gaining Mercator GIS Server access, Pima County has not had to make yearly data clip requests to the AZSITE Manager.
- ix. Watson stated that it is not possible to control how users are storing and protecting AZSITE data. The feature limit is not addressing an actual security issue.

- x. McGowan stated that previously ASU ISSR was storing the Mercator GIS Server logs in a database with the goal of monitoring for suspicious activities. However, this tracking ended due to the size of the resulting database. ASU ISSR suggested that large requests could be interpreted and blocked at the web server level, but this method was determined to be not viable. There is also a custom option for requests to be held in memory until the entire request is parsed, after which the request could be permitted or denied. This option would require considerable development and costs.
- xi. Ultimately, there are no viable solutions that would not affect performance and/or involve additional costs.
- xii. The board agreed that attempts to reinstate previous security measures are not necessary.

5. AZSITE User Agreement Updates (McGowan):

- a. McGowan stated that the AZSITE user agreement was evaluated for updates and corrections in response to recent user inquiries. User agreements for similar databases from other Western states were reviewed as part of this process. A draft version of a new user application was sent to the board for comment.
- b. Discussion:
 - i. Walsh stated that AZSITE user vetting for archaeological consultants should be tied to Arizona Antiquities Act (AAA) permitting. SHPO should be involved in approving user applications that do not meet archaeological qualifications. Training should be required for these user applications. For membership renewals, CV/Resumes should not have to be submitted. Walsh requested reorganizing the signature lines and adding the position of the person requesting membership.
 - ii. McGowan stated that there is a distinction between the user agreement and the AZSITE Access Policy. It was suggested in the recent Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee meeting to open membership to those who do not meet current criteria contingent on additional training. There is currently not a training program in place.
 - iii. Walsh recommended having the trainings twice a year: once at the Arizona Historic Preservation Conference and once in the middle of the year. Walsh stated that SHPO has been granting AZSITE access to non-archaeological professionals in local governments already. The Access Policy should be

updated to reflect this type of access because it is necessary for ongoing work in the state.

- iv. Caseldine inquired if the training would be one-time only or recurrent.
 1. Walsh responded that it would need to be recurrent.
- v. Caseldine questioned why the signing authority does not need to be a qualified AZSITE user.
 1. Walsh stated that the contract is with the organization as opposed to the archaeologist(s) on staff.
- vi. Watson stated that there can be a special board meeting to approve changes to the user agreement for 2022 annual memberships or approve at the first board meeting in January 2022 and ask existing users to sign.
 1. McGowan replied that he does not have a strong preference for one option. Additional discussion and specification for the Access Policy, in addition to the user agreement, are likely needed to incorporate all suggested changes, and will probably require additional time to develop.
- vii. Caseldine suggested holding off on making decisions until the January 2022 board meeting and have discussion in the interim, possibly at a special meeting.
- viii. McGowan stated that both the user agreement and the Access Policy, the latter last updated in 2012, would need to be updated.
 1. Walsh replied specifically the first four user types listed in the Access Policy need to be updated.
- ix. Milliken stated that the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee discussed having a letter of recommendation for non-archaeological professional users in addition to training. The committee also discussed using an AAA permit in place of a CV/Resume.
 1. Walsh replied that a letter of recommendation is part of the current approval process being implemented by SHPO for non-archaeological professionals.
- x. Watson said the board will provide additional comments, and in combination with suggestions from the Ad-Hoc Committee, McGowan will compile a draft for board approval.

1. McGowan asked if the discussion of those comments must occur during a board meeting, which could push approval to an additional board meeting.
 2. Watson replied that this should not be an issue for approving the user agreement and Access Policy drafts at the same meeting as discussion, provided the Board members can individually review and provide comment on the documents ahead of time. McGowan can then collate these reviews into a single draft for discussion at the meeting.
- xi. McGowan stated that there are plans to streamline the user approval process using web forms.
 - xii. Walsh requested that the drafts for the user agreement and Access Policy be put in a Google Doc so all board comments can be collected in one place, and that comments be submitted by the end of November.
 - xiii. Milliken inquired if the board would like the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee input for AZSITE user training.
 1. Walsh and Watson agreed.

6. Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee Report (Klebacha):

- a. Klebacha presented the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee report prepared by Dan Garcia, Chair of Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee:
 - i. The committee nominated and voted Dan Garcia as Chair for the next year. Direction from the board is requested concerning how to replace members who have left the committee.
 - ii. Imagery and background layer updates were discussed by the AZSITE Manager, Gabe McGowan. The slight performance slow-down associated with switching to a Web Mercator projection was presented to the committee.
 - iii. Potential questions and suggestions for the current AZSITE user agreement from the committee was requested by the AZSITE Manager.
 - iv. Improving the land ownership/jurisdiction layer, adding well known sites, and updated prehistoric canal data are ongoing committee projects.
 - v. Reylynne Williams suggested a training program focusing on the importance of data protection. All individuals, even those who meet qualifications, should be required to have this training to gain access to AZSITE.

b. Discussion:

i. Caseldine inquired where the members of the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee are listed.

1. McGowan stated that this information is the AZSITE Board meeting minutes from the meeting when the group was selected. Currently the contact information for the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee is listed on the AZSITE website. The committee members can also be listed on the AZSITE website. McGowan said he would follow up with the committee to get this information, and any application materials, posted on the AZSITE website.

ii. Milliken stated that the committee is meant to replicate the original AZSITE Advisory Council that no longer meets. Membership is meant to reflect the different types of AZSITE users.

iii. Walsh recommended that the Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee can call for membership applications and select members moving forward.

iv. Hays-Gilpin stated that the membership should be open and transparent, and not a closed network. At this time, the committee should look into potential users who could contribute.

v. Watson stated that the positions that need to be filled should be determined before requesting applications.

7. Legislative Updates (Klebacha):

a. No legislative updates.

8. AZSITE Updates (McGowan & Schmidt):

a. Backlog:

i. Projects:

1. 2060 uploaded (80%)

2. 526 not uploaded

a. 226 without shapefiles

ii. New Sites:

1. 5046 uploaded (66%)

2. 2578 in Advanced Sites Layer (33%)

iii. Site Updates

1. 4435 (basic) uploaded (62%)

b. Uploads Overall

- i. McGowan reviewed historical upload trends from 2004-2019 and how they compare to the years 2020 and 2021. With increased staffing since 2020, AZSITE has exceeded historical levels of production.
- ii. Uploads of ARO New Fee Structure submissions:
 - 1. Projects (by ASM Accession Year):
 - a. 2018 projects uploaded – 87
 - b. 2019 projects uploaded – 188
 - c. 2020 Projects Uploaded – 94
 - d. 2021 Projects Uploaded – 7
 - e. About 170 new fee structures projects uploaded in Q3 2021
 - 2. Sites (uploaded per calendar year)
 - a. New fee structure sites uploaded in 2020 - 167
 - b. New fee structure sites uploaded in 2021 - 110
- c. Updates:
 - i. A Data Clip Request web form has been created to streamline the data clip process and create less manual work for AZSITE Staff.
 - ii. The Data Fix Request process is in development.
 - 1. Instead of previously developed PDF forms, web forms will be used, using the template of the web entry module, to provide to direct submission to AZSITE’s secure servers.
 - iii. ASU ISSR will be granting AZSITE Staff developer access to some AZSITE applications hosted by ASU.
 - 1. This will allow for AZSITE Staff to directly make improvements to applications, beginning with the Attribute Search.
 - iv. Updates to topographic basemap, hydrology, transportation, and land ownership layers.
 - 1. Moving these layers to a Web Mercator projection, which may slightly slow-down performance, is under discussion. McGowan and Schmidt may poll the users as to their preferences and use habits.
 - v. Web Entry Module – progress is ongoing.
 - 1. The major remaining hurdle is to add the ability to print a Site Card from data entered.
 - vi. There will be an updated standalone Entry Module with updated fields in order to meet Archaeological Records Office (ARO) curation needs.

- vii. McGowan has requested family leave beginning January 2022.
 - 1. Schmidt and ASM Database Manager, Sarina Mann, will be taking over tasks during this time.

9. Other (Watson):

- a. AZSITE Board 2022 Chair:
 - i. Watson stated that a new AZSITE Board chair needs to be selected for 2022.
 - ii. Due to scheduling conflicts, it was decided that Watson and Walsh will divide the year between them.
- b. AZSITE Staff will be presenting at the AGIC Symposium on October 25.

D. Public Comment

- a. No public comments.

E. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 2, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be on Zoom.

F. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 11:39 am