

AZSITE Consortium Annual Report to the Governor's Office For the Period July 1, 2017, Through June 30, 2018

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 in order 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 2017–2018 fiscal year.

AZSITE Goals:

- To serve as Arizona's 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 delegates, on indefinite appointment. Traditionally, delegates have served as Board members. Current Board representatives are listed below.

Arleyn Simon, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor, ASU, Chair
Kelley Hays-Gilpin, Ph.D., Research Professor, MNA, Vice-Chair
James Watson, Ph.D., Associate Director, ASM
James Cogswell, Ph.D., Archaeological Compliance Specialist, SHPO

User Agreements by Institution Type for 2018:

Information on the breakdown of user agreements by agency type is presented below. As with past years, roughly 70% of user agreements were issued to private companies, usually archaeological consulting firms or engineering firms with archaeologists on staff, and 20% were issued to local, state, or federal agencies.

Private Companies: 48

State & Local Agencies: 10

Federal Agencies: 4

Tribal Agencies: 2

Educational/ Nonprofit Institutions: 3

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 range from \$1,500 per year for one to three users, \$3,000 per year for four to nine users, and \$5,000 per year for ten to 15 users. Occasional users are permitted access for 30 days throughout the calendar year for a \$300 fee, or up to three months access at \$180 per month. 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. With the restructuring of the ASM caused by Senate Bill 1418, the ASM can no longer subsidize AZSITE, a reduction of approximately \$80,000, of a total operating budget of \$140,000 for fiscal year 2017–2018. User fees must now make up this gap. Therefore, user fees now cover approximately 83% of AZSITE costs. Annual funding from the BLM provides approximately 13%; Consortium members provide in-kind support estimated at \$13750.

Activities in 2017–2018:

Sept. 2017: An AZSITE Manager, Dr. Sam Chambers, was hired to replace the Manager who left in March, 2017.

Nov. 2017: The Board elected Dr. Simon to be the Board Chair for 2018. Dr. Hayes-Gilpin was elected to be the Vice-Chair.

Dr. Sam Chambers reported on substantial improvements and repairs he had made to the database software.

Jan. 2018: The Board also voted to create a GIS layer within AZSITE for in-use historical structures to provide users an avenue to upload this information that was previously not available.

Feb. 2018: The Board voted to increase all user fees uniformly up to 50% over the next three years. Fees will increase 20% effective January 1, 2019, followed by an additional 20% effective January 2020, and a final 10% effective January 1, 2021. The Board also voted to eliminate the 10% discount for early payment of fees.

Dr. Simon informed the Board that she will be retiring in June, 2018, but will continue her AZSITE responsibilities through the rest of the year. She will also mentor her replacement on AZSITE.

A major discussion for the Board was the backlog in site and project entries. Dr. Todd Pitezl, ASM Mandated Programs Administrator, presented a summary of the backlog in the AZSITE database and the Archaeological Records Office (ARO), which reviews site and project information for accuracy before releasing it to AZSITE for uploading to the

database. Over 2600 projects and 9200 new sites and site updates need to be checked by ARO. This represents a considerable time requirement that is impossible to accurately estimate because of the unique nature of each site and project, but is on the order of a year or more, in addition to new site and project submissions. Efforts are being made in the ARO to streamline their operations, but personnel to increase output is limited.

May 2018: Dr. Watson informed the Board that Dr. Todd Pitezel would no longer supervise the AZSITE Manager because he was transferring to another position in the ASM. Instead, Keith Knoblock, formerly Director of Operations for the ASM, was hired to replace Dr. Pitezel as Mandated Programs Administrator.

April 2018: Dr. Chambers resigned. A replacement is expected to be hired by August, 2018.

Conclusion

Clearly, AZSITE has endured a challenging year, including lack of a Manager for over half of the fiscal year and related reduction of customer services, loss of support staff, a loss of approximately one-third of its operating funds, and the loss of two Board and supervisory persons. The Board is taking a more active role in planning and directing AZSITE's activities, to ensure that the gains that were made in years past will be sustained to meet the demands of the present and future.