

AZSITE Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Report

July 2021

Prepared by Daniel Garcia, AHAC Chair

Meetings

AHAC has met once following the last AZSITE Executive Board Meeting in April 2021. Our July 1, 2021 committee meeting was again held via zoom. The meeting focused on three specific issues identified during the April board meeting as well as one new issue involving National Register of Historic Places eligibility information.

[AZSITE Land Ownership/Jurisdiction Data Improvements](#)

AZSITE Board Chair Jim Watson asked AHAC at the April meeting to prepare a proposal to improve AZSITE's ownership data layer to better identify State, County, and Municipal lands that are subject to Arizona Antiquities Act oversight. AHAC Advisor Ian Milliken will be leading this effort and working closely with Gabe McGowan, Carrie Schmidt, and AHAC Advisor Ryan Arp to develop a plan including identification of data sources and development methods. This may include acquisition of county assessor data for actual right-of-way and parcel information or, alternatively development of attributed jurisdiction layers alerting users of possible Antiquities Act requirements and advising them on the requirements of individual jurisdictions.

[Adding well-known archaeological sites not already in AZSITE.](#)

AHAC Advisor Steve Swanson will develop a recommended best practice process to gather information on well-known archaeological sites and alternative site locations not currently in AZSITE and funnel these to the ASM ARO for review before incorporation into AZSITE. Steve also will work with Gabe McGowan to find a way to incorporate submissions of site locations as part of the in-development data correction request tool.

[Updating prehistoric and historic canal information in AZSITE](#)

AHAC Chair Dan Garcia is coordinating with the City of Phoenix and Bureau of Reclamation regarding existing AZSITE canal data. Prehistoric canal information is being compiled as part of an Arizona Archaeological Council/City of Phoenix Canal Symposium scheduled for September 24th at PGM. Revised canal data may be ready for AZSITE by end of 2021, and they are working on a plan to maintain and update this data. Regarding historic canal data, coordination with Bureau of Reclamation has been only preliminary. Reclamation supports revision of data but has no data or resources to contribute. Dan Garcia suggested that these data could be "retooled" to clarify the data and how they should be utilized by AZSITE users.

[National Register of Historic Places eligibility information in AZSITE.](#)

AHAC was recently contacted by a CRM consultant regarding the integrity of NRHP eligibility information included in AZSITE. It was alleged that SHPO eligibility data sent to AZSITE was not correctly matched to sites, resulting in random and incorrect eligibility data. Our preliminary investigation suggests that there is some level of mistrust in the existing data and that very limited and unscientific tests by others have suggested at least some discrepancies between eligibility information when comparing consultation

letters to the AZSITE records. There also seems to be a fair amount of misinformation and misuse of this data both by consultants and by agencies.

The data integrity is something that can be relatively easily tested in a limited fashion, and we recommend that the AZSITE board ask Gabe McGowan to audit the complete SHPO eligibility data set against the AZSITE version of this data to identify any errors. If such errors exist, the old data can be replaced with the most current data set provided by SHPO. If errors are not found, we recommend that a limited random sample of AZSITE eligibility records be compared against SHPO eligibility documentation to test the allegation that SHPO data was not correctly entered into AZSITE.

AHAC Tribal Advisor Reylynne Williams also pointed out that NRHP eligibility information in AZSITE ignores often expressed Tribal opinions on archaeological site significance, and this information is not passed on to AZSITE users who, in turn, do not take Tribal perspectives into account when using this information. We suggested that Gila River Indian Community representative Larry Benally attend the next Board meeting and speak about this issue. We recommend that the Board place this on the agenda and formally invite Mr. Benally to speak.

Recommendations

AHAC will continue to focus on the land ownership and improvements to site and canal data going forward. We recommend that the Board ask Gabe McGowan to check old AZSITE eligibility data against the newest data sets for integrity and perhaps initiate a sample comparison of data against SHPO eligibility documentation. AHAC is available to assist with these efforts, as appropriate.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Garcia", written over a large, light blue circular scribble.

Daniel Garcia, M.A., RPA
Chair, AZSITE Ad Hoc Advisory Committee