AZSITE Consortium Board Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2023
10:00 a.m. to 11:31 a.m.

A quorum was obtained.

A. CALL TO ORDER (Caseldine)

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

      Board members present:

            Christopher Caseldine, Chairperson, Arizona State University (ASU)

            Patrick Lyons, Arizona State Museum (ASM)

            Mary-Ellen Walsh, Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

            Kelley Hays-Gilpin, Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA)

      Members of the public present:

            Gabe McGowan (AZSITE Manager)

            Carrie Schmidt (AZSITE GIS Technician)

            Jenni Rich (ACS)

            Krystina Isaac (ADOT)

            Mowana Lomaomvaya (ASM)

            Reylynne Williams (GRIC)

            Abraham Arnett (AZGFD)

            Sarina Mann (ASM)

            Stephanie Bosch (AZTEC)

            Dan Garcia (Salt River Project)

            Kelin Flanagan (Wilson and Company)

            Emily Fioccoprile (ASM)

            Sara Cullen (AZ DFFM)

            Ximena Lemoine (SWCA)

            Lesley Rodriguez (North Wind)

            Nina Rogers (WAPA)

            Ashley D'Elia (PaleoWest)

            Keith Pajkos (AZ DFFM)

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 2023 Meeting Minutes (Caseldine)

        a. Motion to approve (Walsh)

        b. Seconded (Hays-Gilpin)

        c. Approved – 1 abstention

2. Finance Report (McGowan)
   a. McGowan presented the finance report. The current fiscal year accounts for the purchase order to Geospatial Research and Solutions (GRS). The encumbrances exceed the balance this time of year since the membership application period is at the end of the calendar year, while encumbrances are highest at the beginning of the fiscal year.
      i. Current Fund Balance: $108,094
      ii. FY24 Total Income: $7,300
      iii. FY24 Total Expenses: $11,066
      iv. Encumbrances/Pre-encumbrances: $177,566
      v. Uncommitted Cash Expenditure: ($69,473)
   b. McGowan noted that the encumbrances will rise over the course of the year, due to some factors to be discussed later in the meeting, as well as to credit card fees and University of Arizona administrative fees that are charged on revenue and expenses.

3. Server Migration (McGowan)
   a. McGowan discussed the recent changes to server hosting. AZSITE has three production servers at Arizona State University (ASU) University Technology Office (UTO): application server (azsite3), database server (azsitevdb), and a standalone GIS server (Mercator). ASU UTO informed AZSITE this summer that they are decommissioning all on-premise servers by September 30, 2023. AZSITE's servers were moved to UTO roughly 10 years ago along with several other servers from the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR). As a personal favor to the dean of the ISSR at the time, these servers were granted free hosting. With UTO ending on-premise hosting, this free hosting arrangement for AZSITE is also ending.
   b. AZSITE's fourth server, where AZSITE staff edit and upload data that syncs to the production servers, is located at the ASU Research Computing (RC) on-premise data center.
   c. Two migration alternatives for the three production servers were compared: on-premise hosting at ASU RC and cloud hosting with Amazon Web Services (AWS). The RC option has higher costs in the first year but is cheaper over multiple years ($38,000 over five years compared to $51,000 for AWS). RC also offers networking advantages as all four AZSITE servers would be on the same intranet, and more control over AZSITE data as it is an on-premise data center.

d. A decision on the server migration had to be made quickly so that the migration could be completed before the end of September to avoid any downtime for AZSITE.

e. RC was the selected alternative, primarily due to cost.

f. McGowan noted that it may be possible to find a cheaper hosting arrangement, but that it would be outside of ASU and require a broader restructuring of AZSITE and longer-term planning than was possible under the circumstances of this migration.

g. Discussion:

   i. Caseldine stated that having as much control over the data as possible is best.

4. State Funding (McGowan & Lyons)

a. McGowan stated that previously it was suggested to seek funding from the state legislature. AZSITE staff have met with Arizona State Museum (ASM) personnel to get more information about this process.

b. Lyons explained the experience ASM had with fees and the state legislature. There are very few government entities in Arizona with permanent state funding. State money cannot be used to subsidize private business unless specified in state statues. Fee-for-service models were put in place to generate revenue. The AZSITE Consortium was created as a government entity through an Executive Order and exists outside of state statute, including the Arizona Administrative Procedure Act (AAPA). As a statutorily created entity, all consortium rules, standards, and fees would need to be approved by the Governor's Regulatory Review Council and the Governor per the AAPA. This would involve the development of an economic impact study, hearings, published notices, and a public comment period. State employees are prohibited from lobbying for changes to state laws. Requesting state appropriation would be a very complicated and long process that needs to be reviewed before the AZSITE Consortium moves forward. Board members, at a minimum, should consult with their respective attorneys before any actions are taken. AZSITE should attempt budget stabilization through the fee model before beginning this process, so that decision makers understand the real costs.

c. Discussion:

   i. The AZSITE Board thanked Lyons for taking the time to share ASM's experiences with a similar situation.

   ii. McGowan stated that AZSITE staff discussed funding issues with another archaeology cyberinfrastructure organization. They noted that finding grant funding for operational costs is very difficult, as most grants need a specific

end product. AZSITE staff will research and develop grant proposals, but these will be very targeted; user fees will need to cover most operational and personnel costs.

    iii. Caseldine inquired about the fee structure.

        1. McGowan explained that the Board voted to approve a 50% increase to AZSITE fees in 2018. The increase was to occur over a three-year period. However, only the first year's increase (20%) was implemented, in 2019. The subsequent years were not implemented, likely due to staff turnover and other issues.

    iv. Walsh stated that the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee can help look into grants focused on preservation and heritage needs. Typically grants are research driven and would require a specific project.

    v. Hays-Gilpin stated that National Endowment for the Humanities grants would require that the project be public facing.

        1. Caseldine stated that there is the AZSITE Public Mapping application.

5. **Fee Increase Proposal (McGowan)**

    a. McGowan noted that the current AZSITE user fee structure was implemented in 2021. This structure shifted from a per-organization to a per-user fee model, and decreased fees for most user organizations. Since then, personnel and operational costs have increased. The current fee structure was adopted by the Board knowing that AZSITE would operate at a deficit for a few years, reducing the account balance while making improvements to AZSITE and increasing user trust. Revenues have increased each year since 2021, but not enough to cover increases in expenses. McGowan presented an updated annual budget at the April 2023 board meeting, along with a fee increase proposal. This proposal would increase fees over a three-year period. The proposed budget would account for credit card and University of Arizona administrative fees. The fee proposal was submitted to organizational point-of-contacts with a survey in July 2023. There was a 35% response rate.

    b. McGowan reviewed the results of the fee proposal survey. Overall, those surveyed responded that their participation in AZSITE would be about the same. More respondents indicated their participation would increase than decrease. One large private sector organization, several of which account for a significant fraction of AZSITE's annual revenue, stated they might reduce the number of accounts

purchased. Most organizations anticipate spending somewhat more on AZSITE under the fee increase proposal, though more organizations indicated they would try to keep spending flat (presumably by reducing the number of accounts purchased) than indicated they anticipated reducing the number of accounts purchased. Most respondents stated that they were in favor of or neutral concerning the proposed fee increases.

c. The survey also included several more open-ended questions to allow the user organizations to provide written feedback. McGowan reviewed a selection of these responses. Users questioned disparities in the proportional fee increases for different account types and were concerned about how the increased fees relate to government micro-purchase limits. Some user feedback indicated AZSITE would be one of the most expensive state cultural resources geodatabase systems in the western United States. Others thought that the increased fees were more modest. There was also concern about data latency between the Archaeological Records Office (ARO) and AZSITE for new ASM fee structure materials. Users also requested more transparency about how fees are being used to operate AZSITE.

d. McGowan presented the survey conclusions. There might be a slight decrease in participation, but the survey suggested that there would not be a significant or long-term decrease in participation. McGowan noted that maintaining, or ideally increasing, AZSITE's participation levels is critical for the fee increase to have the intended effect. Maintaining AZSITE staffing will allow AZSITE to continue improving data, bring in new sources of data, working with the ARO to reduce data latency, and allow AZSITE the resources to pursue grant funding for specific enhancements, such as web-based data entry.

e. Due to server hosting cost increases, and increased personnel costs following UA raises that went into effect in July and slightly exceeded the 5% used for planning purposes, McGowan presented an AZSITE annual budget estimate updated from the one presented in April. Compared to the budget estimate presented in April, personnel costs were about $2,800 higher ($162,900) and operational costs were $11,847 higher ($35,847) due to the server migration. This increase to operational costs will decrease after the first year (charges for software and hosting) to $6,747 (hosting only). Accounting for credit card and administrative fees, the total expenditure is estimated at $236,923.

f. Due to server hosting cost increases, McGowan recommended accelerating the 3-year fee increase proposed in April to a 2-year timeframe, with the 2024 increase bringing fees to the level originally proposed for 2025. Another increase to slightly higher final fee levels than originally proposed for 2026 would be planned for 2025 (see Appendix A). The updated proposal aims to stabilize the account balance more quickly, so that additional funds are available should other expenses arise. One such expense will be an update to AZSITE's authentication system, which will be required within roughly a 5-year timeframe.

g. Discussion:
   i. Hays-Gilpin thanked everyone who responded to the survey.
   ii. Caseldine inquired why other states have less expensive databases.
      1. McGowan speculated that these databases may receive state appropriations as part of the respective State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) or other agencies but is not certain.
      2. Walsh stated that Arizona is one of the few states that separates site and survey data from SHPO, which receives no state appropriations.
   iii. Walsh inquired what funding would look like if the 2018 proposed fee increase was implemented.
      1. McGowan replied it is difficult to determine because there was a larger structural shift from charging at the organizational level to the per-head model in 2021. He estimated annual revenue would be about $210,000-$220,000, as revenue in 2020, prior to the fee structure change, was roughly $180,000 to $190,000. This was after the 20% increase implemented in 2019. The planned total increase was 50% from baseline.
   iv. Caseldine stated that the accelerated fee increase makes sense to keep AZSITE at the current operational level and standard.

h. Motion to approve the proposed fee increase. (Walsh)
   i. Second (Hays-Gilpin)
   ii. Approved unanimously.

6. ARO Data Layers
   a. McGowan stated that there has been discussion about adding an additional GIS layer to AZSITE to show pre-consolidation ASM site boundaries. There is a need for pre-

consolidation boundaries so that National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility recommendations and determinations can be attributed to specific areas of a site by SHPO, and for ARO to review past consolidation decisions. The ARO recommends not making this layer publicly available to avoid confusion. They have proposed making the layer available to ARO and SHPO personnel on the Mercator server. AZSITE would add to this consolidation layer for all consolidations moving forward. GRS estimated a cost of approximately $250 to deploy this layer on the Mercator server, which would be within the purchase order of this year.

b. The ARO also proposed a separate layer for inactive historic ASM site boundaries. These would include in-use historic sites, historic waste piles, and projected site boundaries just based on archival research. This layer would be available to all users. GRS estimated a cost of $1,250 to implement in the AZSITE web applications and on the Mercator GIS. This amount would be within the purchase order of this year.

c. Discussion:

    i. Caseldine stated that the layers would be worth the cost since at least one layer is available to all users.

    ii. McGowan stated that AZSITE will move forward with developing these layers with the ARO and SHPO.

7. AZSITE Updates (McGowan & Schmidt)

a. Backlog:

    i. Projects: 2,432 projects uploaded (96%)

    ii. New Sites: 7,395 sites uploaded (97%)

    iii. Site Updates: 5,992 basic uploaded (84%)

b. Summaries:

    i. Overall:

	2004-2009	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Projects	1,061	840	109	452	2,225	172	192
New Sites	1,706	1,287	194	1,084	4,087	1,663	530
Site Updates	-	-	-	752	5,033	299	330
PRFs	-	-	-	335	231	257	359
New/Updated Site Cards	-	-	-	322	511	405	674
Fixes	-	-	-	73	316	48	105
ASM Reports	-	-	-	-	-	4	1170

							117	32
ASU Site Cards	-	-	-	-	-		117	32

    ii.   ARO New Fee Structure:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Projects Uploaded by Accession Year	93	199	145	84	2	0
Projects Uploaded by Calendar Year	0	0	128	368	74	76
Sites Uploaded by Calendar Year	-	-	167	140	177	14

    iii.   User Applications and Billing

	2021	2022	2023
User Organizations	109	114	114
Users	331	345	363
Mercator Users	218	237	253
$ Invoiced	$126,075	$138,350	$144,500

    iv.   Data Clips:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Requests	48	46	51	200	62

c.   Other Updates:

    i.   Application Development:

       1. New Map Application and Attribute Search Application were deployed on August 4 along with an accompanying user guide.

       2. User side credential management is in the final stages of testing.

       3. New Public Mapping application in development. Schmidt demonstrated the updated application.

    ii.   Next Steps:

       1. Working with federal agencies on data sharing

       2. Project/site entries and missing geometries

       3. Rectify ASM site boundaries with ARO maps

       4. Vogel "Hilltop" sites

       5. MNA and ASU materials

       6. Identify grant proposals

    7. Updating SHPO historic structures and districts datasets

 d. Discussion:

   i. Caseldine stated that the amount of progress AZSITE is making is great. He inquired about the possibility of obtaining funding from federal agencies in exchange for subscriptions to AZSITE.

    1. McGowan stated that currently AZSITE is discussing data sharing with various federal agencies. There has previously been funding from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Most of the federal agencies are moving towards having their own individual systems.

    2. Caseldine stated there is a benefit to having everything in one database due to land exchanges. It could be a good way to incentivize agencies to participate in AZSITE.

     a. McGowan inquired if the subscription would be an alternative to per-head memberships.

     b. Caseldine stated that the subscription would be for yearly on-demand data clips.

    3. Walsh stated state and federal agencies that aren't land managers could be potential funding sources.

     a. Caseldine stated there are agencies that don't manage land but need to cross several different land jurisdiction.

     b. Walsh stated AZSITE could host a session during the Arizona Historic Preservation Conference.

     c. McGowan replied that AZSITE staff are also presenting at the Arizona Geographic Information Council (AGIC) conference in August 2023.

    4. Nina Rogers (WAPA) stated that a presentation at the Arizona Historic Preservation Conference would be a great way to discuss funding with various agencies.

D. Public Comment

  a. Dan Garcia (Salt River Project) stated that the updated AZSITE Public Mapping application would be very useful in places with increasing development. He inquired if the updated Resource Sensitivity layer could be added to the main Mercator service.

          i.   McGowan replied that this would be possible.

E. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

      a.   The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be on Zoom.

F. **Adjournment**

      a. Meeting adjourned at 11:31 am

Appendix A

Updated AZSITE Proposed Fee Structure

Account Type	Current	2024		2025
Educational	$100	$120		$125
30 Day	$250	$400		$500
Standard II	$450	$650		$760
Government Standard I	$450	$650		$760
Standard I	$550	$750		$860