AZSITE Consortium Board Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2024
8:30 a.m. to 9:49 a.m.

A quorum was obtained.

A. CALL TO ORDER (Caseldine)
   Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m.

   Board members present:
   - Christopher Caseldine, Chairperson, Arizona State University (ASU)
   - James Watson, 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)
   - Danny Sorrell (HDR)
   - Michael Brack (Tierra Right-of-Way Services)
   - Brent Kober (Desert Archaeology)
   - Natalie Sanford (USFWS)
   - Jenni Rich (Logan Simpson)
   - Keith Pajkos (AZ DFFM)
   - Thomas Beranek (Arizona State Parks and Trails)
   - Sara Cullen (AZ DFFM)
   - Scott Courtright (NRCS)
   - April Carroll (APS)
   - Joel Tyberg (Pinyon Environmental Inc.)
   - Stephanie Bosch (AZTEC)
   - Ian Milliken (Pima County)
   - Chance Copperstone (PaleoWest, LLC. DBA Chronicle Heritage)
   - Steve Swanson (Agave Archaeology)

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 4th Quarter 2023 Meeting Minutes (Caseldine)
      a. Motion to approve (Walsh)
      b. Seconded (Hays-Gilpin)
      c. The motion passes – Unanimous
   2. Finance Report (McGowan)

a. McGowan presented the detailed financial summary from January 5th, which included some of the outgoing GIS Technician's salary and ERE. He also presented some of the key numbers pulled on January 16th. By this date, encumbrances from the GIS Technician were gone.

    i. January 5th

        1. Current Fund Balance: $111,860

        2. Total Income, FY24: $114,565

        3. Total Expenses, FY24: $119,129

        4. Encumbrances/Pre-encumbrances, FY24: $84,619

        5. Uncommitted Cash Expenditure: $22,677

    ii. January 16th

        1. Current Fund Balance: $111,011

        2. Total Income, FY24: $123,555

        3. Total Expenses, FY24: $124,404

        4. Encumbrances/Pre-encumbrances, FY24: $47,141

        5. Uncommitted Cash Expenditure: $63,870

b. McGowan noted that AZSITE has not yet been invoiced for the new servers and software associated with the September 2023 server migration. This invoice will be $12,000-$14,000 and is not included in encumbrances.

c. McGowan described progress in 2024 user applications and billing.

    i. Invoiced amount has increased significantly, and is currently $182,750

    ii. $68,950 of that is unpaid

d. McGowan noted that encumbrances inflate over the year due to administrative and credit card fees that accrue on income and are not reflected in initial encumbrances.

e. McGowan described the results of an analysis of changes in user organization spending patterns between 2023 and 2024. He regressed paired counts of user account types for each for non-Consortium organizations that purchased accounts in both years (n = 70 organizations). The slopes of linear trendlines with y-intercept of 0 were as follows:

    i. Standard I account: 0.51 (organizations are purchasing roughly half as many of these accounts)

    ii. Standard II: 0.85 (organizations are purchasing roughly 85% as many of these accounts)

      iii.   Government Standard I: 1.08 (government organizations are purchasing roughly 8% more of these accounts)

      iv.   30 Day: 1.10 (organizations are purchasing roughly 10% more of these accounts.

      v.   Educational: 0.98 (more or less the same)

      vi.   Total Number of Accounts: 0.87 (organizations are purchasing roughly 87% as many accounts as last year)

      vii.   Total Spending: 1.19 (organizations are spending roughly 19% more than last year)

  f. McGowan noted that the trend has been for larger private companies to purchase fewer Standard I accounts and, in some cases, purchase some 30-Day accounts instead of annual accounts, to reduce costs. Overall, organizations slightly decreased their participation to reduce the hit from the fee increase. However, the increase in revenue is still significant.

3. AZSITE GIS Technician Re-Hire

  a. Watson said he will have to submit paperwork justifying a re-hire, based on the source of the money and the role of the position. He cannot say for certain that AZSITE will be able to re-hire during the current UA hiring freeze but says that UA Human Resources has indicated it is likely to grant an exception.

  b. McGowan presented FY25 budget estimates for a 1.0 FTE re-hire ($231,078) and a 0.5 FTE re-hire ($195,050). He also presented projections showing the evolution of the AZSITE account balance given each scenario. He noted that a 0.5 FTE employee may allow AZSITE to have sustainable finances without another fee increase for 2025.

  c. McGowan recommended to the Board that AZSITE request to re-hire the GIS Technician position at 0.5 FTE, with a future increase to 1.0 FTE possible depending on finances. This is what was done with Carrie Schmidt in 2020.

  d. Watson noted that promoting to 1.0 FTE later would not be an issue with HR (Human Resources).

  e. Walsh inquired what the 2025 fee increase would be. McGowan stated the annual account fees increased $200 this year, and the planned increase for 2025 was another $110. This would make a Standard I account $860, and a Standard II/Government Standard I account $760.

f. Walsh inquired about the workload at AZSITE, and if 0.5 FTE is sufficient. McGowan stated that there is clearly a significant amount of work to be done on AZSITE's data, including adding missing project/site boundaries, correcting generalized site boundaries. The backlog materials remaining are minimal. McGowan said ASM is transitioning its Collections Information System (CIS), resulting in a slowdown in new fee structure ASM projects and sites coming through to AZSITE. That transition will be completed in the next month or two. When that happens, there will be a large volume of negative surveys from 2017-2023 that comes through at once. However, AZSITE has developed various tools that allow for rapid processing of these ASM data. McGowan also stated there are some new incoming data streams, including ASU site cards and some federal data.

g. Caseldine stated that users are expecting a high level of production from AZSITE, particularly with the higher fees. He inquires whether AZSITE could absorb the financial hit from maintaining a 1.0 FTE GIS Technician, to maintain recent performance.

h. McGowan stated that the actual loss for the current FY, even with a 1.0 FTE re-hire, will be lower than projected due to Carrie allocating some time elsewhere at the museum as well as the gap in that position being filled.

i. Watson stated it is reasonable to hire at 0.5 FTE initially and then promote to 1.0 FTE later as was done with Carrie if the workload becomes unmanageable or it is financially feasible.

j. Walsh asked whether the second year of fee increases should still be pursued.

k. Hays-Gilpin indicated her support for increasing fees in 2025 to increase AZSITE's reserves for unexpected costs. She also indicated that MNA and NAU have data that could be put into AZSITE but would require work on AZSITE's part.

l. Motion to re-hire the AZSITE GIS Technician at 0.5 FTE (Watson)

m. Seconded (Walsh)

n. The motion passes – unanimous.

4. Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee Report (McGowan)

a. McGowan reported on the activities of the Ad-hoc Advisory Committee in the absence of a current committee chairperson.

   i. The Ad-hoc Advisory Committee met on 11/6/2023 and 1/9/2024.

   ii. McGowan distributed tribal consultation letters regarding the Data Sensitivity Training in late October and early November. There have been

responses from two tribes. These responses have been more general interest in AZSITE than specifically in providing materials for the training. McGowan stated that he will begin sending follow-up letters.

    iii. The Committee has discussed grant opportunities and provided McGowan with some useful leads for grant programs.

    iv. The Committee has discussed issues with canals data in AZSITE and potential sources of additional data. McGowan stated that this may become a priority for AZSITE.

    v. There may be several positions on the Committee opening over the next several months.

    vi. Walsh inquired about the level of participation in the Committee. McGowan stated that currently all the positions on the committee are filled, and the meetings are well-attended by members. He stated that the committee has not generated new initiatives since the Data Sensitivity Training.

    vii. Caseldine inquired whether the AZSITE fees are discussed in the Committee meetings. McGowan stated that there has not been much discussion.

5. Grant Proposal for Tribal AZSITE Access Subsidies (McGowan)

    a. McGowan said AZSITE was given an opportunity to apply for a Social Investment grant from a mining company. The Tribal Affairs representative from the company indicated up to $5,000 would be available. The intent is to use the funds to pay for one AZSITE account for each interested Arizona tribal government (THPO or cultural resources office) until the funds are exhausted.

    b. McGowan stated that because AZSITE's account is with UA, if AZSITE is the applicant the award would be subject to 56% overhead from the UA because the grantor is from private industry. McGowan worked with a UA grants person to prepare a draft budget. With some cost sharing for McGowan's effort in administering the program, the amount available for the subsidies came out to about $3,200. That would be roughly five accounts, compared to about eight accounts for $5,000.

    c. McGowan stated that UA is prepared to submit the proposal by February 14th. The funds are available until exhausted. McGowan asked if an alternative applicant should be sought so that more of the award funds could be used for the intended purpose. The Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona and the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts have been suggested.

d. McGowan inquired if the Board would like to complete the proposal via UA or seek an alternative applicant.

e. Walsh suggested Archaeology Southwest and stated it is best to look for non-profits. Walsh stated she will follow up with the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona and with Archaeology Southwest.

f. Caseldine inquired whether UA would take overhead from such an arrangement.

g. Watson said the organization receiving the grant would pay the invoice for each tribe. The overhead would be limited to the 11% that UA takes on all income.

h. McGowan stated he will try to identify an alternative applicant that is willing to move quickly. Walsh stated she would make contacts today.

6. USFWS Document Library

a. McGowan stated that USFWS Region 2 requested a cost estimate for AZSITE to build and implement a document library for their site and survey documents in AZSITE. They would like to purchase this deliverable as a micro-purchase from their perspective.

b. McGowan obtained a cost estimate from ASU Geospatial Research Solutions for their effort on the project. These costs are $1,975. McGowan estimated AZSITE's costs, including overhead and subcontracting costs, at about $1,020. The total project cost is $2,995.

c. McGowan said this work would be done with USFWS providing site and survey GIS data, which would be mapped into AZSITE's existing sites and projects feature classes and related tables. McGowan stated that USFWS provided a data dictionary and test data, that all their data is GIS-based, so there would be no digitization, and that the data mapping process would be straightforward.

d. Caseldine inquired whether this data is only for Arizona or for USFWS Region 2. McGowan stated that it would only be Arizona.

e. Caseldine inquired whether this would be a recurring payment. McGowan stated that this request is for a one-time payment for a specific enhancement to AZSITE, and that in the longer-term there is an opportunity to work out a mutually beneficial data-sharing agreement with USFWS.

f. Caseldine inquired whether this information will be available to all AZSITE users or just to USFWS users. McGowan and Sanford confirmed it will be for all users.

g. Walsh inquired what data besides reports will be available. McGowan stated that there are survey reports and site forms.

h. Caseldine inquired if Sanford, attending the meeting as a member of the public, had anything she wished to add.

i. Sanford stated that funding for this initiative had been approved. She stated that this would be part of her agency's efforts to build their cultural resources program and help other agencies understand the impacts of their projects on resources on USFWS lands.

j. Motion to approve the proposal (Watson)

k. Second (Hays-Gilpin)

l. The motion passes – unanimous

7. Next Board Chair (Caseldine)

a. Caseldine stated that this was tabled from the last meeting.

b. Watson stated that Hays-Gilpin is next in the rotation.

c. Hays-Gilpin stated that she is not willing to serve as the Board Chair due to past difficulties, MNA's diminished role in the Consortium, and her phased retirement status.

d. Watson stated that things are easier on the Chair since a full-time AZSITE Manager was hired and handles meeting agenda, minutes, and website updates.

e. Walsh stated that getting AZSITE into state statute would provide an opportunity to remove MNA from the consortium.

f. McGowan inquired whether that could be accomplished with an update to the MOU between the Consortium agencies.

g. Watson stated the Consortium composition is in the Executive Order.

h. Walsh stated the change would have to be in statute as a result, and that ASM would need to lead that effort.

i. Walsh volunteered to be the next chair of the AZSITE Board.

j. Caseldine stated that there may be time to work on AZSITE's legal status and the composition of the Consortium before Hays-Gilpin retires in 1.5 years.

k. Hays-Gilpin stated that MNA has not been contributing data to AZSITE in some time, but that there are data MNA could contribute if there was interest and funding.

l. Walsh stated that the other Board members should investigate changing the AZSITE's legal status and the composition of the Consortium, and that SHPO cannot participate in that.

m. McGowan inquired what the Board members are hoping to accomplish. Walsh stated it is to get AZSITE into state statute with some state funding. McGowan noted that

ASM Director Patrick Lyons attended the Q3 2023 Board meeting as the ASM representative and provided his perspective on this issue, including the potential pitfalls and risks.

    n. Caseldine noted this may be something the Ad-hoc Advisory Committee could investigate and requested McGowan relay the request to them.

8. AZSITE Updates (McGowan)

    a. Backlog:

        i. Projects: 2,453 projects uploaded (96%)

        ii. New Sites: 7,467 sites uploaded (98%)

    b. Summaries:

        i. Overall:

	2004-2009	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Projects	1,061	840	109	452	2,225	172	199	5
New Sites	1,706	1,287	194	1,084	4,087	1,663	634	0
Site Updates	-	-	-	752	5,033	299	338	22
PRFs	-	-	-	335	231	257	359	123
New/Updated Site Cards	-	-	-	322	511	405	675	0
Fixes	-	-	-	73	316	48	146	5
ASM Reports	-	-	-	-	-	4	3951	12
ASU Site Cards	-	-	-	-	-	117	56	241

        ii. ARO New Fee Structure:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Projects Uploaded by Accession Year	95	199	146	117	31	0	0
Projects Uploaded by Calendar Year	0	0	128	368	74	77	5
Sites Uploaded by Calendar Year	-	-	167	140	177	82	0

        iii. Data Clips:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Requests	48	46	51	200	102	1

        iv. Other:

            1. Ongoing ASM database migrations have impacted the amount of new few structure data and documents being uploaded to AZSITE.

            2. One consequence is that many ASM projects from recent years have PRFs in AZSITE but no other entry, as AZSITE has not been given permission to upload those materials.

3. McGowan stated he is hoping to create provisional entries for those projects that will allow the PRFs to be searchable by quad, PLSS, and county.

c. Other Updates:

  i. Application Development:

    1. The new Public Mapper, Carrie Schmidt's Masters capstone project, is online and integrated with AZSITE's authentication system. There is some fine-tuning of the data and annotations still required.
    2. A per-feature Data Fix Request workflow has been implemented in the web mapper and attribute search application.
    3. AZSITE has been consolidating code into a GIS toolbox to speed up various workflows and ease the transition for a new GIS technician.

  ii. Next Steps:

    1. Continue outreach to federal agencies regarding data sharing agreements.
    2. Identify grants and grant projects. McGowan met with an NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) program officer to identify the best NEH program under which to apply.
    3. New layers of consolidated ASM site boundaries and inactive ASM site boundaries are online, accessible only to SHPO and ARO AZSITE users. The inactive ASM sites layer (sites or segments of sites with ASM site numbers no longer meeting the ASM site definition) is intended to be made available to all AZSITE users.
    4. McGowan noted that Caseldine provided his Lower Salt River Valley canals data to AZSITE, and that this may be added to AZSITE as well.
    5. To save costs, McGowan is waiting until the new canals data are ready to request integration of the inactive ASM sites layer with the web application. Adding them both at the same time will reduce costs with ASU GRS.
    6. Walsh stated that the consolidated ASM sites layer should also be made available to all AZSITE users. McGowan stated that the ARO felt it would be confusing. McGowan stated that SHPO and ARO should have this discussion with AZSITE.

D. New Business

    a. Caseldine formally expressed appreciation from the Board for outgoing AZSITE GIS Technician Carrie Schmidt.

E. Public Comment

    a. No public comments.

F. Date and Time of Next Meeting

    a. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be on Zoom.

G. Future Agenda Items

    a. Annual Report

        i. McGowan noted that he will prepare a draft annual report and distribute it to the Board ahead of their next meeting. This will allow time for the report to be finalized and submitted by the end of the fiscal year.

H. Adjournment

    a. Meeting adjourned at 9:49 am