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# Maryland

## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

### MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

#### MARYLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARCHAEOLOGY (MACA)

December 11, 2024

#### **Committee Members in Attendance:**

Ethan Bean, Stephen Brighton, Marian Creveling, Jane Cox, Dave Gadsby, Don Housley, Bob Wall

#### **Staff in Attendance:**

Dixie Henry, Elizabeth Hughes, Susan Langley, Matthew McKnight, Patricia Samford, Zachary Singer, Stephanie Soder

#### **The meeting called to order at 1:01 p.m.**

#### **Review of the September 11, 2024, MACA meeting minutes:**

The September 11, 2024, minutes were reviewed and accepted in a motion made by Jane Cox and seconded by Don Housley; the motion was passed unanimously.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS**

#### **Report from the Director — Elizabeth Hughes**

Elizabeth reported on the MHT budget noting that no reductions in positions or staffing were expected.

Elizabeth also reported on the efforts of the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites and others to create a database of cemeteries and the various issues with the proposed legislation still to be ironed out.

Finally, Elizabeth described her work with Project Review and Compliance staff to prepare comments on the ACHP's "Proposed Program Comment on Certain Housing, Building and Transportation Activities." The final consultation meeting on this topic will be held tomorrow and comments are due by December 15 (a Sunday).

#### **Chief Archaeologist Report — Matt McKnight**

Dr. McKnight reported on the \$106K in Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant funding dedicated to archaeology projects. Grant awards have been announced and successful applicants for archaeology projects include the Will's Creek Museum (a.k.a. 28 Washington St., Inc.), the Beach to Bay Heritage

Area, Towson University, and the College of William and Mary.

Matt also reports that MHT has accepted the final report for SMCM's Piscataway Landscape study (an FY22 grant), and the final deliverables for Catholic University's Jesuit study from FY21. Both grants will be closed out soon.

Matt reported that on September 28, MHT held its 33rd Annual Workshop in Archaeology with the ASM. The event was well attended (about 75 non-staff attendees).

All 9 chapters of the *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology in Maryland* revisions are drafted and all but two have been laid out.

Matt provided an update on NAGPRA-related meetings and undertakings. This was followed by some discussion of the outcomes of the CfMA and Preservation Maryland Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Archaeologists, held in early October (which MHT attended). Elizabeth and Matt have a follow-up meeting scheduled with CfMA and PM next week.

Matt also provided an overview of his public meetings and presentations since the last MACA meeting including the public meeting of the Ancestral Remains Working Group held in Anne Arundel County on November 9 and a presentation to the DAR chapter in Harford County on the Rochambeau project. In addition Matt mentioned his involvement in most of the fieldwork Zac and Stephanie describe below.

### **Underwater Activities Report —Susan Langley**

The Maryland Maritime Archaeology Program (MMAP) held its annual Dive Safety Board Meeting virtually in November, and continues to work with the U.S. Coast Guard on emergency response preparedness.

Dr. Langley reports that the dive buoy is off the U-1105 for the winter.

MHT now has an AED which is mounted on the wall by the elevators, and Dr. Langley (who is a certified trainer) will offer familiarization and instruction to staff in the new year when the third floor is open again.

Susan provided an update on new interpretive offerings for the Mallow's Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary including four hand-cranked listening posts, 3D vessel reconstructions on their webpage, drone imagery, and other resources.

MMAP is preparing its annual submission for the Board of Public Works and so is planning their annual fieldwork calendar now. Examination of a larger and older than expected vessel identified during compliance work is planned for warmer weather, and some fieldwork is being planned to test newly acquired equipment.

Susan will be participating in the SHA meetings in New Orleans; chairing the Government Maritime Managers Meeting, sitting on a panel, hosting a table for student guidance at the Past-presidents' student reception, and attending the UNESCO, Government Affairs, and Climate Change Committees.

The period between January and March is the time when most pieces of wreck wash up on Maryland's ocean coast so a Shipwreck Tagging Archaeological Management Program (STAMP) training is being

planned. After the SHA meetings in January, Susan will be working to prepare and cut new tags for the program.

A possible looting situation in the Potomac near the Virginia shore was reported to Susan and information is being collected from VDHR and NPS to determine an appropriate response.

Susan is working with Traci Verzi in MHT's finance division to prepare an application to NPS for a Maritime Heritage Grant. Susan provided an overview of past grants MHT has been involved in and the categories for grants.

### **Terrestrial Activities — Zac Singer**

Between September and December, Dr. Singer reviewed one application for a Terrestrial Archaeology permit.

Dr. Singer has reviewed and accepted the final reports for the FY23 Non-Capital Grants to the Archeological Society of Maryland for the Field Session at Chapel Branch West and to Towson University for survey in Herring Run Park.

Zac reported that the MHT Volunteer Archaeology Lab has been regularly meeting on both Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9AM-3PM. Lab days have regularly attracted 5-10 volunteers. The lab is processing the artifacts from the Field Session and preparing them for permanent curation at the MRCE. The lab is also working on processing the artifacts recovered from the Barton Deep Testing (PaleoDigger) excavations.

From October 2-7, Zac led excavations at the Piney Grove site in Reisterstown.

On October 12, Zac attended the Annual Meeting of the Archeological Society of Maryland. Zac presented an update on the Cresap's Fort field session.

Zac attended the Annual Meeting of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation from November 7-10 at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI. Zac presented on the deep test excavations at the Barton site.

On November 20, Zac presented on MHT's archaeology program to the Frederick Chapter of The American Society of Civil Engineers. On November 21, Zac presented updated on the Maryland Fluted Point Survey to the Charles County Chapter of the ASM.

Zac reported that the Maryland Archeology Month planning committee will hold their kick off meeting on December 16.

### **MAC Lab Activities Report — Patricia Samford**

Dr. Samford reports that the MAC Lab expansion project is on schedule, with an anticipated substantial completion date of April 2025. Tricia provided an overview of specific construction tasks completed to-date and/or tasks still underway and their statuses.

Tricia reports that the *Witnesses of Wallville* grant period has ended and that MAC Lab staff are currently completing the final technical report for the project, due in late December. Staff are currently coordinating with the Calvert Marine Museum on a small two-year exhibit on the "Women of Wallville" for their museum. MAC Lab staff also submitted a request for Chesapeake Gateways grant funding to

create a long-term 1,000 square foot exhibit on the Wallville community, which will be installed in the Exhibit Barn at JPPM.

The 2025 JPPM Public Archaeology program will conduct work on a Black tenant farm occupied by the Straiten family, who worked for the Petersons before the property was sold to Jefferson Patterson. Testing there in late 2023 showed that the site contains significant evidence of occupation there as early as the early 19th century.

A 50-box collection is coming to the MAC Lab in January for a data recovery at the Newman site, 18AP39.

Hannah, the lab's digital archivist has had a very productive year. She has completed a full physical inventory of the paper records and completed a full inventory of digital files using DROID software, which is a check on potential data loss and file corruption over time. She is working Greg Brown to migrate the Collections Inventory database to SQL server and is working on a draft of an archival management plan for all paper and digital records.

Tricia reports that MAC Lab staff continue to work with Crownsville staff on revamping the Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland project, which is currently on track for a spring 2025 re-launch.

Tricia reports that the completion of some construction tasks in the main conservation lab, will allow conservation staff to now begin taking in revenue generating projects again. The lab's largest external client at this time is Montpelier, which suffered a fire several months back. Arianna Johnston is separating artifacts from melted plastic bags and recovering their contextual information. Tricia is currently interviewing candidates for a vacant conservator position and hopes to have that filled in the new year.

Tricia provided an update on the activities of the Ancestral Remains project MHT is collaborating with the MCAAHC on. The committee held one community meeting in Charles County in September and in Anne Arundel County in November, and is currently seeking information on labs that conduct ancient DNA testing.

Alex Glass' position as park archaeologist, was made a permanent state position in October.

Tricia provided an update on the Chesapeake Ranch Estate Coffin, which was exposed on a Calvert County beach in early November. Public reporting on this occurrence was erroneous in many respects. Calvert County government took the lead in responding, with MAC Lab staff providing support as appropriate.

Several MAC Lab staffers provided public lectures and other programming during the reporting period.

The MAC Lab won first place in the Society for Historical Archaeology's Mark E. Mack Community Engagement Award, for its work with both the Wallville project and with the Ancestral Remains project.

## **Review and Compliance Activities Report — Dixie Henry**

Dr. Henry reports that project review submittals remain at a steady volume. In the past 3 months, the PRC unit reviewed a total of 1,099 state and federal projects. 205 Determinations of Eligibility (DOE's) were completed in those 3 months. 176 of those were produced for MDTA's Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study.

Beth Cole retired near the end of November after 40 years with MHT! Dixie is now the Administrator of

the PRC Unit, which means that the PRC Unit is currently down by one position (Archaeologist/Preservation Officer). Paperwork for a job announcement and a revised MS-22 (position description) have already been submitted to MDP.

Before leaving in November, Beth finalized the PRC Policies and Procedures Manual and the MHT e106 User Guides (users, reviewers, and administrators).

Dixie and Beth participated in multiple monthly and quarterly interagency meetings to facilitate agency coordination, including: MDE/COE JE meetings and the MDOT SHA quarterly meeting, as well as coordination meetings with DNR, MTA, FEMA, and MDOT's interagency meeting for the Francis Scott Key Bridge Rebuild project.

Dixie reports that PRC staff have also been working with Elizabeth Hughes and Anne Raines to draft MHT's final comments on the ACHP's "Proposed Program Comment on Certain Housing, Building and Transportation Activities." This proposed Program Comment consolidates four originally proposed Program Comments into one and has been raising some concerns regarding the potentially more limited role of SHPO's and other consulting parties in the review of various types of transportation and housing projects.

### **Synthesis Report** — Stephanie Soder

Ms. Soder relayed that MHT just completed its annual reporting for the National Park Service and records indicate that 47 synthesis sites were updated between Oct 1 2023 and Sept 30 2024, which is four more reports than the same time last year.

Calvert and Frederick Counties are almost completed in the Archaeological Synthesis Database. After those are completed, that will be the end of the list of reports added from 2022. The next reports to be added are those from January 2023 through February 2024 and includes sites primarily in Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties.

The next synthesis database update is penciled in for February 12, 2025. Staff will need to do more work on it to hopefully identify any problems and streamline the updating process.

Steph is currently working with Greg Brown and his staff to create a Medusa layer for both the professional and the public synthesis database sides. The locations of the public entries will be randomized but this will still provide a visual facet to the database instead of only searching it by county or name/number.

Steph accepted the final report for the Institute for Maritime History FY2023 non-capital grant. They also recently submitted their final project report and final disbursement, so that grant should be closed out soon.

In October, Steph participated in a round-robin field trip day at Tuckahoe State Park for Sudlersville Middle School. There were 152 participants to the archaeology program.

Staff completed fieldwork at two sites as part of the ABPP grant to study the Washington-Rochambeau encampments. The fieldwork that was started in August at Elk Landing in Elkton (Cecil County) was

completed, and then staff worked on a site in Bush (Abingdon) in Harford County. Staff surveyed with the magnetic susceptibility meter, fluxgate gradiometer, and ground penetrating radar. Both areas had small anomalies that may warrant a closer look during excavation, but staff still need to sit down to determine next steps. Unfortunately, the anomalies at the recreational field in Elkton that appeared to be a historic road trace and three shallow, 15-ft square features, have been determined to be modern. Based on aerial photographs that Matt obtained, it appears they are related to a pull-off area or picnic area from the mid-20th century.

**Selection of Next Meeting Date** — Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 1:00 PM in the MHT Executive Conference Room (or virtually).

With no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:02 PM, in a motion made by Dave Gadsby and seconded by Jane Cox; the motion was unanimously approved.