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MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MARYLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARCHAEOLOGY  
(MACA)  
March 4, 2026

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Ethan Bean, Stephen Brighton, Dave Gadsby, Don Housley

**Staff in Attendance:**

Dixie Henry, Matthew McKnight, Troy Nowak, Tricia Samford, Zachary Singer, Stephanie Soder, Brian Snyder

**The meeting called to order at 1:03 p.m.**

**Review of the December 10, 2025, MACA meeting minutes:**

The December 10, 2025, minutes were reviewed and accepted in a motion made by Don Housley and seconded by Ethan Bean; the motion was passed unanimously.

**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**Chief Archaeologist Report — Matt McKnight**

Dr. McKnight reports continued progress on the Cresap Site Report. Several sections have been drafted and MHT hopes to have the report completed in the late spring/early summer timeframe. Matt also stated that he gave a public presentation about the project on February 27 in Cumberland for the Western Chapter of the ASM.

Matt reports that at the end of January MHT learned that money has been budgeted for a new archaeology van and will be available in the new fiscal year. MHT hopes to be able to move quickly to get a replacement van as the 2003 Passenger van is showing many signs of its age.

The HP Non-cap grant awards were announced on February 18. Of the \$300,000 in funds that were made available this year, \$103,000 went to archaeology projects, which is in keeping with prior years and commensurate with the percentage of applications that come in for archaeology as opposed to standing structures projects. The largest archaeology grant went to Historic Kent Island, Inc., who received \$40,000 for archaeological survey of several properties associated with early English Settlement on the island. \$26,000 went to the Patapsco Heritage Greenway for archaeological survey at Hockley House, an

18th-century forge master's dwelling and iron works in Howard County owned by DNR. \$22,000 went to Towson University for a second installment of the Trowels to Teaching Program. And finally, \$15,000 went to the Washington County Historical Society for Shovel Testing at Springfield Farm, which is a large public park owned by the City of Williamsport with very likely Native American, Colonial and Rev War era components that have never been identified. We will be generating grant agreements soon for these projects and then plunging headlong into the FY27 Grant Round.

Matt also reviewed and provided comments on the draft technical report for Julie King's FY24 HP Non-Cap grant that carried out fieldwork in Chapel Point State Park at the Potapaco I site. The final draft is expected in June and then that grant can be closed out.

All of the comments received on the revised *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology in Maryland* have been collated into a matrix and we've drafted new language for those issues that need addressing. The next step is to incorporate those into the new draft and publish the finalized guidelines. Staff hope to complete this task by the end of March.

Matt reports that MHT received 19 complete applications for this year's summer internship in archaeology. However, one person got a job with the NPS and has asked for their application to be withdrawn. A meeting is scheduled on March 10 to select candidates for interviews.

On the fieldwork front, there hasn't been a whole lot of activity due to the widespread abundance of "snowcrete" since the last MACA meeting. On February 18 and 19 MHT conducted a "no dig" metal detection survey (mapping hits w/ total station) at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Park as part of the Jacob Jackson Project. The data we collected better defines the site limits and identifies some concentrations for future excavations. Word of the project got picked up by WMAR News and the *Baltimore Sun*, both of which produced news pieces. Matt, Zac, and Steph also collected GPR data at Fort Frederick State Park on Feb 24 and 25 in preparation for the Scout Merit Badge course. The fieldwork identified a cluster of possible postholes/shaft features in the center of the fort that we hope to ground truth with the Scouts.

Matt also reviewed several revised webpages for archaeology. MHT's webpage is undergoing a major revision, along with the rest of the state, to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities and incorporate the Governor's executive order regarding the Plain Language Initiative. It has been very challenging. The deadline for implementation is April 24.

### **Underwater Activities Report —Troy Nowak**

Troy Nowak reports that he recently attended the Society for Historical Archaeology/Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology Conference and participated in the Government Managers Meeting from January 6-11. He reports that current issues of concern over funding and recent changes to federal agency programs and priorities seem to be similar among all SHPOs.

The recruitment for a new Assistant State Underwater Archaeologist opened on February 13 and closes on March 13. MHT is hoping to fill the position with a geoarchaeologist to bring a new skill set to MHT and help the Program focus efforts on developing effective techniques for finding and evaluating submerged and buried precontact sites.

Maritime staff reviewed 192 (77 December, 59 January, 56 February) state and federal undertakings to assess their effects on submerged archaeological historic properties.

Troy continued to work to launch a sub-grant program for the NPS National Maritime Heritage Grant for \$409,692 awarded to MHT. Drafts of the application, guidelines, and grant manual are being finalized with next steps including grant agreements and approvals to launch the program.

The annual Diving Safety Board Meeting will be held on March 11. Brian is scheduling his physical and some additional training so he can participate in the Program, and we are scheduling required First Aid and Oxygen provider courses.

Troy reported that the mooring buoy for the U-1105 Historic Shipwreck Preserve was damaged in 2025 and will be repaired, repainted and deployed this spring, with an updated target date of April 15 for the opening of the Preserve. Work will be coordinated with the Battle of the Atlantic Research and Expedition Group which maintains and deploys the buoy and monitors the Preserve.

Troy stated that he is currently working with Zac and ASM on developing a project at Point Lookout State Park focusing on precontact sites in response to a request by ASM to assist in the investigation of the source of Mockley pottery found along the Bay shore. MHT and ASM will be visiting the Park on March 18.

Troy is also partnering with NOAA to survey a selection of sites in Malloys Bay – Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary off Widewater State Park to assist with interpretation, scheduled for April 20-22 with rain dates of May 4-6.

Troy is reaching out to DNR about development of a new channel near Martinak State Park and coordinating survey of its proposed location in the April-May timeframe. In addition, he is testing equipment and surveying sites during June on the Potomac River, including sites which might be suitable for outreach and training and sites believed to be NR eligible. MHT will be assisted by the selected archaeology intern and will offer limited volunteer opportunities.

Troy provided a presentation on the Maritime Archaeology Program to the MHT Board of Trustees on January 22 and is giving similar talks at the ASM Spring Symposium and at the April meeting of the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society. Troy also met with the Calvert County Rescue Dive Team (<https://www.ccrdt.org/>) on January 20 regarding partnership opportunities related to remote sensing and diving. They received funding for a new vessel and are keen to coordinate their training efforts with MHT.

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

Between December and March, Dr. Singer reviewed five applications for Terrestrial Archaeology permits.

Zac reports that the MHT Volunteer Archaeology Lab has been regularly meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9AM-3PM. Based on a recent social media post calling for volunteers, the lab days are now

attracting upwards of 10 volunteers a day. The lab is currently processing the artifacts from the 2025 Teagues Point Field Session.

On January 8, Zac conducted a routine inspection of the central Maryland Appropriate Place of Repose (APR) and found the APR undamaged and in good condition.

Dr. Singer reminded the committee that Maryland Archeology Month (MAM) is only 1 month away! The MAM Planning Committee is comprised of members of the Council for Maryland Archeology, the Archeological Society of Maryland, M-NCPPC PG County, Montgomery Parks, Historic St. Mary's City, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Maryland Historical Trust. The theme for 2026 will be "250 Years, Many Voices: Digging into Maryland's Story". For this year's booklet the committee is seeking essays highlighting Maryland's roles before, during, and after the Revolutionary War, archaeological investigations of military campsites, what archaeology reveals about everyday life in revolutionary Maryland, and how archaeology reframes "founding" stories. Dr. Singer provided a draft design for the MAM poster which will highlight, "Press, Print, and People": Press being journalism and its role in the American Revolution, highlighted using the Death's Head print type from the Jonas and Anne Green collection; Print being Josiah Henson's story being inspirational to the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its effects on discourse about slavery; and lastly, People being used to highlight Piscataway historical connections through time and how those stories relate to the lasting effects of colonialism and how families persisted and held onto knowledge. Zac has spent much of February organizing for Maryland Archeology Month in April.

And finally, Zac reported a number of site visits and public outreach events that he was involved in during January and February including: January 12 – visit with archaeology textbook author Lee Preston to document his collection of artifacts from Howard County; January 15 – presentation on the Maryland Fluted Point Survey to the ASM's Mid-Potomac Chapter; January 21 – presentation on public archaeology programs offered through MHT to the Natural History Society of Maryland; February 5 – site visit with an avocational archaeologist in Salisbury to document his collection of artifacts from nearby; February 11 – presentation on the Archaeology of Maryland's Ice Age Inhabitants to the Senior Adventures in Learning program at Community College of Baltimore County; February 12 – site visit to 18CA23, the Kraus site to examine the site and the owners collection of artifacts including three fluted points; February 13 – another visit with an avocational archaeologist who has generated a collection of artifacts from Baltimore County, which he would like to donate to the MAC Lab; the February 18-19 metal detection survey at HATU; and the February 24 and 25 GPR Survey at Fort Frederick.

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

Dr. Samford reports that substantial completion on the MAC Lab expansion is anticipated in mid-March of 2026, which is about 5-6 months behind the original schedule. At substantial completion, staff can start using the new spaces created in the building, get oversized objects moved back in, and move furniture and other items back to their original locations. It is anticipated that the reopening of the lab to the public will take place on Thursday, September 3, 2026, with a rain date of Thursday, October 1. The delayed opening of the lab due to the extended construction has delayed the restarting of the Gloria King Research Fellowship until 2027.

JPPM received a grant from Chesapeake Gateways to create a long-term exhibit on the Wallville community. Two community listening sessions—one in person at the Calvert County library Prince Frederick and one virtual—were held in February to solicit stakeholder input into exhibit themes and artifacts. The exhibit is anticipated to open in 2027.

The new requirements and impending deadlines associated with making state government websites ADA accessible has delayed the launch of the Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland website until the summer of 2026. MAC Lab staff had hoped to have the new website launched in April of 2026, in conjunction with Maryland Archeology Month. The new website will include all the previous artifact categories with a lot of new additions to the artifacts in these categories, as well as several new sections: equestrian artifacts (saddles, horseshoes, horse care equipment, bridle bits and cheek bosses), jaw harps, thimbles, spoons, forks, and knives. The new site will also contain about 450 site summaries.

The 2026 Public Archaeology program will be conducted on the Straiten site, a Black tenant farm on Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum property. In 2026, the Lab is changing the structure of the program, offering it one Friday and Saturday a month in April, May, June, September and October. The program weekends were chosen to tie in with other educational activities taking place at the park. Registration is now open for the program.

Becky and Tricia met in January with two of the historians involved with the MCAAHC Ancestral Remains Project. They met with Mark Auslander and Russell Smith about the human remains, field records, and funerary objects from Bennett's Point and with Alex McDougle about the Deep Creek cemetery.

The MAC Lab is responsible for a portion of the larger Freedom of the Press MD 250 Grant Project, to rehouse and conserve artifacts from the Jonas Green Print Shop (18AP29). The four boxes of lead type that had been at the University of Maryland are now being rehoused in archival conditions. The new isolation room where we will have two interns funded by the grant rehouse the larger site collection has been turned over to the lab and is just awaiting the installation of a door lock so that we can bring the artifacts from storage with the Historic Annapolis Foundation. Tricia has received applications for the two collections interns (7 applications) and the two conservation interns (25 applications). Six candidates will be interviewed for the curation and conservation interns, and those interviews are underway this week. In addition, the lab has a new intern from Towson University. Ben Prunty has been working one day a week since mid-January and will put in 112 hours for course credit. He is assisting State Curator Becky Morehouse with rehousing the lead type from the Jonas Green print shop collection.

Discovering Archaeology Day 2026 will be held on April 11. Requests for exhibitors are being accepted until March 6.

Megan Kearns is rehousing the Compton collection (18CV279) and has completed rehousing the Claggett Retreat collection (18FR25).

In coordination with Zac Singer, collections staff went through avocational collections to ensure that there were no human remains inadvertently contained within them. Only one avocational collection had some human remains that were confirmed by Dana Kollman and we are following up with Crownsville about next steps.

Since the last MACA meeting, 1 collection has been turned over to the lab for curation—Chapel Point site (18CH112) site that was part of the Piscataway Landscapes Project.

The MAC Lab's digital archivist has completed going through the webpages and pdfs associated with the MAC Lab (Curator's Choice, Maryland History by Object, Outlander exhibit, for example) and making them accessible for users with disabilities.

Patricia Samford attended the Society for Historical Archaeology meeting in Detroit and presented a paper on Staffordshire ceramics in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Baltimore in a session on the influence of the Staffordshire pottery industry.

Federal Curator Sara Rivers Cofield gave a talk on Revolutionary War period clothing at the North Beach branch of the Calvert County Library in February. The talk was attended by 66 people. She is scheduled to do a repeat of this talk on March 22 at the Sellman House at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC).

Dr. Samford will co-present a lecture on the archaeology of Middle Plantation on March 24 at Linthicum Walks in Gambrills. Her co-presenter will be Jean Doepkens Wright, daughter of William Doepkens, the avocational archaeologist who dug the site on his family farm.

Scott, Alex and Tricia have prepared two presentations on archaeological sites at JPPM for the park's Back to Basics series. One presentation will be an overview of archaeology and archaeological sites on the park, and the other will be an in-depth look at 5 sites that have been more extensively excavated and are interpreted on public trails at the park.

Scott and Tricia worked with MAC Lab staff and MHT Board funding to prepare an exhibit on the MAC Lab for the Miller Legislative building in Annapolis. This banner-based exhibit (three 8 x 8 ft banners mounted in frames) will go up in mid-March and remain in place through April.

MAC lab staff are working with students at Huntingtown High School on an exhibit entitled Maryland in the Revolutionary Era. The lab is assisting the students with choosing and borrowing appropriate artifacts from the MAC Lab collections and editing/fact checking interpretive materials. The exhibit will be in the Prince Frederick branch of the Calvert County Library between April and July.

Conservation has a number of projects ongoing, including two early 19<sup>th</sup>-century cast iron stoves from Catoctin Furnace, artifacts from Mount Vernon, Alexandria, Philadelphia, Kippax Plantation in central Virginia, as well as projects from a number of state collections. The fire remediation work on Montpelier's archaeological artifacts is completed. Arianna did a condition assessment on a 19<sup>th</sup>-century horse drawn hearse for Rosehill Manor in Frederick. Monica Kitner started work in February as a part-time conservator.

The Lab is still negotiating with the manufacturer to get resolution on issues with the installation of the new large freeze drier.

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

Dr. Dixie Henry reports that project review submittals remain at a steady volume. In the past 3 months, the PRC unit reviewed a total of 1,331 state and federal projects. 42 Determinations of Eligibility (DOE's) were also completed in those 3 months.

Dixie and Brian have attended multiple interagency meetings to facilitate agency coordination, including meetings with DNR, MDOT SHA, FHWA, FEMA, the NPS, and the U.S. Naval Academy. Meetings included:

- Participation in multiple meetings with FHWA, MDOT SHA, MDTA to discuss draft programmatic agreement and possible mitigation measures for Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study Tier 2;
- Attended multiple meetings with FHWA/MDOT SHA/MDTA/MHT to work through the renewal of a statewide programmatic agreement;
- Attended monthly interagency JE meetings to discuss multiple projects requiring joint Corps/MDE permits;
- Brian Snyder assisted ORSR Archaeology staff with the GPR survey out at Fort Frederick;
- Brian also went on 2 site visits and met with DNR staff to discuss ongoing projects at 2 state parks – 1) archaeological investigations associated with the stabilization of 2 cabins at the Elkridge Furnace Inn property on Patapsco SP, and 2) cultural resources investigations that are being carried out at Freedman’s SP as part of the master planning process for that park;
- Attended multiple meetings with the NPS, DGS, MSD, Applied Archaeology and History Associates, and Tim Horsley to consult on the unanticipated discovery of human remains during archaeological investigations that are being carried out at the Hessian Barracks in Frederick County as part of the planning efforts for a stabilization project that has received NPS grant funds;
- Phase I and Phase II investigations continue down in Annapolis for the Annapolis City Dock Flood Mitigation project – FEMA and MHT are being provided with regular interim reports; and
- Participated in a meeting with Goodwin & Associates to get an update on the Phase III data recovery at the early 19th C. Bierly Tannery site in Frederick and to discuss the proposed sampling methodology for a number of vat features.

Dixie reports that PRC has also been spending quite a bit of time reviewing, editing and reorganizing the web content of the PRC pages on MHT’s website – rewriting our content for plain language – in accordance with the Governor’s Maryland Plain Language Executive Order and trying to make all of the documents posted on our website accessible in accordance with the federal Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Related to that there have been regular meetings to discuss how the MIHP forms, DOE forms, and our e106 system (our online project submittal system) will be impacted by changes to the website and the federal accessibility requirements and how to develop solutions that will not be super frustrating to other constituencies.

Creating efficiencies in the federal permitting processes has been a priority outlined by many federal lawmakers. New policies and Executive Orders prioritize speeding up project approvals, which can lead to inadequate consultation and reduced public input. Examples include: the Energy Emergency Executive Order (7-day review period), & the Department of the Army’s proposed “Program Comment for Army Warfighting Readiness and Associated Infrastructure”, which would essentially make the majority of projects on Army installations exempt from SHPO review and would eliminate consultation - consolidating all actions and decisions with the federal agency.

In response, and as part of National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week – fact sheets have been prepared by NCSHPO and MHT: Section 106 success stories from all 8 of our congressional districts

(Ellicott City Safe & Sound Flood Mitigation Projects, Revitalization of the Pine Street neighborhood in Cambridge, etc...).

## **Synthesis Report** — Stephanie Soder

Staff completed the most recent update on August 13, 2025 to keep up with the 6-month update schedule. Steph plans to complete one final update to the Synthesis database on or around April 8. In order to be compliant with updated ADA Title II standards, we have to recreate the Synthesis database. The current Synthesis database will still be available and open to the public, but we cannot add any new entries after the April deadline. There are currently 1,413 entries in the database, and we will have at least an additional 22 sites added with the next update. CRIM is currently exploring options for how to create a compliant database or website, and the MEDUSA layer is currently on hold until that can be sorted out. Steph will continue to complete the site narratives and artifact counts outside of the database so that when we get the new database/website up and running, we can begin adding into it immediately.

For the Rochambeau American Battlefield Protection Program grant, the RFP was posted on the eMaryland Marketplace Advantage portal for consultants on March 3. The listing will close on April 1, 2026 at 5:00 PM. The RFP is for a consultant to conduct archaeological excavations at two sites: one in Harford County and one in Cecil County. We have determined which sites we would like to survey at, and while both landowners seemed very amenable to continuing survey work on their land, we have not formally reached out to them for approval. Steph wrote an essay for the Maryland Archaeology Month booklet on this project.

Over the last several months, MHT has been fielding requests from First Lego League teams. Their theme this past year was archaeology, and so we have seen requests for meetings, reviewing ideas, and feedback on fine-tuning their final projects. Steph alone fielded requests and assisted 26 teams, Matt and Zac have also answered some requests.

MHT has begun planning the Scouts BSA Archaeology Merit Badge workshop that will take place on April 25, and May 2 and 3. The first weekend is a lecture day that includes presentations from MHT archaeologists, and rotating activity stations that include an experimental archaeology activity, lab tours and artifact washing, and presentations by scouts. The second weekend is a full day in the field. This year we will be at Fort Frederick State Park. We cap attendance at 40 scouts, and right now we have 25 signed up. We have reached out to the Archeological Society of Maryland for volunteers to monitor scouts.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**NAGPRA Updates** — Dr. McKnight provided the committee with a new draft of the NAGPRA FAQ document for their review and briefly outlined some of the recent updates related to NAGPRA consultation with federally recognized tribes and letters sent recently to the tribes.

**Selection of Next Meeting Date** — Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at 1:00 PM in the MHT Executive Conference Room (or virtually).

With no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:17 PM, in a motion made by Dave Gadsby and seconded by Ethan Bean; the motion was unanimously approved.