

Georgia Archaeological Site File Policies



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2019

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I. Overview

GASF is the official repository for Georgia's archaeological site information. As an archive, GASF does not evaluate historical significance or potential impact of development to archaeological sites. Further, GASF does not explain the CRM system to agencies or organizations that require CRM guidance other than referring them to the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and providing the HPD letter dated February 22, 1995 (see Appendix A). Please contact the Historic Preservation Division with questions related to these topics. GASF currently curates information for about 59,000 recorded archaeological sites with over 4,200 sites added in the last three years. In addition, GASF houses over 12,000 Cultural Resource Management (CRM) reports, with over 2,300 reports added in the last two years. Further, there are over 2,000 manuscripts that detail information on the cultural heritage of Georgia.

The Site File is in place so that CRM companies, government agencies, and qualified individuals have archaeological information readily available for research, as well as for Section 106 compliance review. Due to Georgia law (OCGA 50-18-72[a][10]) the specific information about location and contexts of archaeological sites is protected. Therefore, only those individuals with proper credentials are granted access to Site File information. The Site File is open to professional archaeologists conducting research or engaging in Cultural Resource Management activities. There are numerous protocols in place that GASF personnel follow to ensure that site forms, maps, reports, and GNAHRGIS are accurate and current.

II. History of Georgia Archaeological Site File

GASF was established in 1976, in compliance with a federal mandate (Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act) that centralizes information about historic properties and archaeological sites (see Appendix B for detailed history). Up until that time, the three main universities in Georgia—Georgia State University, University of West Georgia (formerly West Georgia College) and University of Georgia each maintained separate site files. The National Park Service in Macon, Georgia (before it moved to Tallahassee in 1970) had its own site file. Another separate site file was that of Robert Wauchope. Before GASF officially began in 1976, the site file used by archaeologists at UGA was stored in a small file box and would travel from office to office depending on who would need to access the information. Upon receiving short-term startup funds from DNR, Lewis Larson, state archaeologist of Georgia at the time, decided to establish the official Site File at UGA.

Upon establishment at UGA, work immediately began to combine the data from all of the various site files throughout the state. The Site File diligently coded data and curated the information for years without using the electronic data for anything. Users would come to the Site File (one afternoon a week) and simply look through the maps and site forms. It was always hoped that in the future this electronic information would be made into a useful research tool.

Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) was established as a major data outlet through money funneled by the Federal Department of Transportation to the Georgia Department of Transportation and on to UGA's Information Technology Outreach Services (ITOS). Once developed, all new data were then entered, and updated into GNAHRGIS as it arrived at the Site File. There are numerous protocols in place that GASF personnel follow to ensure that site forms, maps, reports, and GNAHRGIS are accurate and current. GASF has evolved greatly over the years from the 5x7 cards that recorded site information to an integrated limited GIS program that contains information about Georgia's archaeological, natural, and historic resources.

III. Requests for Information

If you are a professional archaeologist (with at least a master's degree in archaeology) please make requests by email gasf@uga.edu or by phone 706-542-8737. Due to Georgia law, site location and information is protected (OCGA 50- 18-72[a][10]). Therefore, if you are not a professional archaeologist then we cannot accommodate your request.

IV. Site File Searches

A fee of \$330 per project search will be charged for funded projects by CRM firms and agencies for access to the Site File. This fee, due within 30 days, is necessary to cover the cost of the operation and management of the Site File. Any number of in-house visits to and uses of the Site File may be made for any individual project through the payment of a single fee within six months of the original invoice date. However, an additional paper search completed by Site File staff and provided to a client remotely will be charged a new project fee and not considered a project revisit. A fee of \$66 will be charged per tower search, including railroad PTC tower searches.

Site File searches may be conducted in four ways: (1) Site File personnel will conduct the search for users for a fee of \$25.00 per hour following the first hour, plus the \$330 project fee. GNAHRGIS access can be granted upon request in addition to an in-house search for a sub cost of \$75 for a single month of access. (2) For the standard project fee of \$330, the user's own staff may conduct the research at our facilities. If staff other than Site File personnel conducts the research, they must meet minimum professional standards for an archaeologist or be working under the supervision of an archaeologist who meets professional standards. (3) Firms can conduct their own searches online through GNAHRGIS. Access can be granted for up to three contiguous counties, unless otherwise authorized by the Director, for a short period of time (4 months) per project, with the standard project fee of \$330 still applied. Documentation must be provided for approval by the Director relating to any projects with non-contiguous counties. A charge of \$30 will be applied to each additional county beyond the three included with the project fee. A fee of \$75 will be charged for each additional month beyond the initial four granted per project fee. (4) Engineering and environmental firms without an archaeologist will not be allowed to access site information. However, Site File searches with limited information about site location may be conducted or requested by non-archaeological professionals in engineering firms if all the following conditions are met:

- The representative of the environmental, geological, or engineering firm attests, as a

professional in his or her field, that information obtained from the Georgia Archaeological Site File will not be divulged to any party other than the client for whom the engineering firm is conducting the research.

- The environmental, geological, or engineering firm accepts that the following information will not be provided: maps, site numbers, site forms, information within site reports (only number and abstract is provided).
- Additionally, environmental, geological, or engineering firms that do not have a professional archaeologist on staff accept a paragraph outlining the limitations of Site File research (see Paragraph of Disclaimer), which the GASF strongly recommends be placed in the firm's report to their client.
- The environmental, geological, or engineering firm accepts that the project fee of \$330 is still applied.

V. Paragraph of Disclaimer

Although research conducted at the Georgia Archaeological Site File is useful for gaining a preliminary understanding of the distribution of archaeological resources in a given area, there are important limits to this data that must be understood in order to evaluate the data properly. First, the presence of a few sites in the area of interest does not by any means imply that the locations of all sites in the area are known. In most cases the data are quite spotty. Second, archaeological salvage and mitigation work on known sites may ultimately turn out to be less expensive than the mitigation of unknown sites discovered later in a project. Human settlement has traditionally been centered upon well-drained soils on level ground with a nearby fresh water supply. While locales meeting these obvious criteria are certainly more likely locations for archaeological sites than other locations within a project area, there may be sites located anywhere within an area. In light of these factors, it is prudent to seek the consultation of a professional archaeologist to assess the possible impact of a proposed project on its cultural resources.

In addition to our policy, the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia DNR has issued a memorandum, briefly mentioned above, to which contract archaeologists should pay special attention (Appendix A).

VI. Recording Sites

Both professional archaeologists and private citizens may submit an archaeological site form. To get an official number, the site form must be completed, along with accompanying maps. Site File staff will work with the individual, researcher, or CRM firm to ensure that all information is filled out properly. Official State Site Numbers are assigned only by Site File personnel. All site numbers include a two-letter county code and a number in chronological order within each county. For example, "9GE1" refers to the first site recorded in Greene County in Georgia. Every attempt will be made to assign numbers within three business days of receiving properly filled Site Forms. Site forms must be submitted on acid-free paper and must be double-sided, single

page forms. If these requirements are not met, the site forms will be returned with no official number assigned. Site forms produced on computer should closely resemble the Official State Site Form. Official State Site Numbers will be changed only under the most extreme circumstances. To document a site as archaeological, the site must be at least 50 years old and follow the Georgia Council of Professional Archaeologist standards and guidelines for archaeological work (http://georgia-archaeology.org/GCPA/standards_for_survey/).

VII. GNAHRGIS

GNAHRGIS: Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources Geographic Information System (<https://www.gnahrgis.org/>) contains information about archaeological, natural, and historic resources. Access to archaeological data is limited and must be granted through the Site File. The archaeological data in GNAHRGIS is updated frequently, but since we continually acquire new information from the Historic Preservation Division and other CRM firms, we cannot guarantee that we have all information about every archaeological site in Georgia. Additionally, the Site File does not administer access to the natural and historical resources data on GNAHRGIS, and individuals interested in accessing these data should contact gnahrgis@itos.uga.edu for more information.

VIII. Reports

GASF curates technical reports from all archaeological cultural resource projects in Georgia. GASF works directly with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division office to ensure that projects submitted to the Historic Preservation Division office for review also get incorporated into our report database and GNAHRGIS. Site File staff work diligently to process these reports in a timely manner. However, due to the long process of integrating such data, there is often a delay in adding reports to GNAHRGIS.

IX. Public Requests and Concerns

GASF will try and accommodate requests from the public, but in general the Site File can only help to a small degree.

- Things Site File can do:
 - The Site File can process site forms for locations on private property (see Appendix B) and provide limited information to landowners concerning sites on their property. *Please email to learn what information can and cannot be disclosed.*
 - The Site File can attempt to identify archaeological artifacts. However, we do not guarantee that we will be able to identify artifacts. *Please email images first.*
- Things Site File CANNOT do:
 - The Site File cannot, due to Georgia Law (OCGA 50-18-72[a][10]), give out archaeological site location information to those who do not meet minimum professional standards for an archaeologist.
 - The Site File cannot visit potential archaeological sites, and we cannot conduct archaeological fieldwork.
 - The Site File cannot assign a monetary value to an artifact.

X. Important State and Federal Laws

Please see below for a list of Federal and State laws that are in place to protect archaeological sites from looting and disturbance. For more information on artifact collecting and metal detecting, please see the Georgia Historic Preservation Division website <https://georgiashpo.org/artifactcollecting> and the Georgia Council of Professional Archaeologists' website <http://georgia-archaeology.org/GCPA/frequently-asked-questions/>.

Federal Laws

National Historic Preservation Act, as Amended (Public Law 95-515) and Section 106 Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (P.L. 96-95)
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601)

State Laws

Archeological Exploration, Excavation, or Surveying (OCGA* 12-3-52).
Protection of Archeological, Aboriginal, Prehistoric, and Historic Sites (OCGA 12-3-620 to 622).
Notification of Department Before Beginning Investigation or Disturbance of Site (OCGA 12-3-621 [b]).
Submerged Cultural Resources (OCGA 12-3-80 to 83).
Abandoned Cemeteries and Burial Grounds (OCGA 36-72 -1 to 16).
Notification of Law Enforcement Agency Upon Disturbance, Destruction or Debasement of Human Remains (OCGA 31-21-6).
When Public Disclosure is Not Required (OCGA 50- 18-72[a][10]).
Georgia Environmental Policy Act (OCGA 12-16-1 to 8).
Cave Protection (OCGA 12-4-140 to 147).
State Archeologist (OCGA 12-3-53).
Criminal Trespass (OCGA 16-7-21).

*See the *Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) at your courthouse or local library for a cited code section.*

XI. Appendices

Appendix A. Historic Preservation Division Memorandum

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division

Mark R. Edwards, Director and State Historic Preservation Office
205, Butler Street, Suite 1462, Atlanta, Georgia 30333
Telephone (404) 656-284
Fax (404) 651-873

February 22, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Site File Users

FROM: Mark R. Edwards, State Historic Preservation Office

ISSUE: Consulting with the GaSHPO in Compliance with Section 106

Section 106 of the **National Historic Preservation Act** (NHPA) requires a Federal agency head with jurisdiction over a federal, federally assisted, or federally licensed undertaking to take into account the effects of the agency's undertakings on historic properties (e.g., archaeological sites) included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Preservation officer's (GaSHPO) responsibilities under NHPA include the following:

Consulting with the appropriate Federal agencies in accordance with the Act on Federal undertakings that may affect historic properties and on the content and sufficiency of any plans developed to protect, manage, or to reduce or mitigate harm to such properties; and

Advising and assisting, as appropriate, Federal and State agencies and local governments in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities.

Therefore, a federal agency official, or the agency's representative (consultant or contractor), must consult directly with the GaSHPO for the purposes of assessing information needs, of locating archaeological sites, and of evaluating archaeological significance to comply with Section 106 and the Advisory Council's regulations. Although research of the Site file is an important step in compiling information about archaeological sites in a project area, discussion of a project or compliance needs with the site file staff does not replace or fulfill an agency's Section 106 requirement to consult with the GaSHPO. Any recommendations or advice given by the site file staff should not be construed as coming from the GaSHPO.

Appendix B. History of the Georgia Archaeological Site File

Georgia Archaeological Site File History

By

Amanda D. Roberts Thompson and Mark Williams

The Georgia Archaeological Site File (GASF) is the official repository for information about archaeological sites in Georgia. GASF was established in 1976, in compliance with a federal mandate (Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act) that centralizes information about historic properties and archaeological sites. Up until that time, three universities in Georgia—Georgia State University, University of West Georgia (formerly West Georgia College) and University of Georgia each maintained separate site files. The National Park Service in Macon, Georgia before it moved to Tallahassee even had its own site file. Another separate list of site numbers was Robert Wauchope’s records. Lewis Larson’s (state archaeologist at the time) objective was to combine the site forms from all of these, establish a working relationship with the state archaeology office, and to centralize the knowledge for easier research and maintenance. Larson decided that the state file should be situated at UGA for two primary reasons. First, UGA Laboratory of Archaeology and the Anthropology Department had had an active role in archaeology in Georgia since 1947, had the largest file box of site locations, and had the largest collection of Georgia artifacts. Second, the faculty dedicated to archaeology was composed of a young and energetic crew of PhD archaeologists: David Hally, Donald Graybill, Bruce Smith, and Paul Fish.

Before GASF officially began in 1976, the site file used by archaeologists at UGA was stored in a small metal file box of 5 by 7 cards and would travel from office to office depending on who would need to access the information. The origins of this box likely lay in the 1950s by Arthur Kelly and students. Upon receiving startup funds from DNR, and officially establishing one comprehensive state site file, a number of things occurred. First, UGA was able to give the site file its own room (now G35) in the basement of Baldwin Hall and hire one graduate student, Charles M. Baker to work with Don Graybill (first UGA archaeologist to use a computer-main frame) to set up a databases coding scheme for sites. This coding scheme involved recording data, in pencil, one line per site on large multicolumn sheets of paper. The data from the coding sheets were then typed onto punch cards (80 columns per site and 3 cards per site). The punch card machines were in the Sociology Department and the Site File would occasionally hire someone to “type” the data onto the punch cards. Once there was a box of 2000 or so newly punched data cards, students would then take them to the mainframe computer center in the basement of the science library to be put onto a standard 9-track tape. The tapes were curated at the computer center and a backup tape was kept in the Site File room in Baldwin Hall. Quad maps, essential to the site file were also purchased at this time. Later, Candy Quillian was hired to keep the site file open one afternoon a week and to begin transferring information from the cards to the quad maps and resolving the inevitable problems that came with having different site files and numbers. Every imaginable problem was present—the same site with many numbers, and many sites with the same number. By 1977, a new site form was designed and the old 5x7 cards were stapled to 8 ½ x 11 inch sheets, punched, and put on a large shelf in 159 large blue 3-

ring binders categorized by county. After Candy left the site file around 1979, undergraduate Terri Smith inherited the job until 1981 when Mark Williams, then a graduate student, began working there. David Hally managed the Site File account up to this point. Williams, upon arriving continued the work of going through county by county and fixing problems. By 1984, Williams was able to hire occasional work study students for the first time to assist in the site file, a tradition that continues today. An important advance took place about 1983, when Williams was able to purchase an IBM Personal Computer for the first time. The tape with all of the coded information from the punch cards had its information transferred to a floppy disk and put into Quattro Pro spreadsheet on the PC. About 1985 the site file moved to a new room (now G39) in Baldwin Hall. During this time, the site file continued to be funded through 1 year grants from DNR.

Historically, GASF has been operated by primarily undergraduate students under the guidance of the Director, Mark Williams. The Site File diligently coded data and curated the information on for years without really using the electronic data for anything. Users would come to the Site File (one afternoon a week) and simply look through the maps and folders. It was always hoped that in the future, this electronic information would be made into a useful tool for research. In the late 1980s the data was transferred in to Paradox database. By the mid-1990s it was transferred into Microsoft Access. The first use of GIS software for the Site File data was Atlas GIS, initially used around 1994.

Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) was established as a major data outlet between 2004-2005 as the result of money funneled by the Federal Department of Transportation to Georgia Department of Transportation and UGA's Information Technology Outreach Services (ITOS). Once developed, all Site File data were then coded, entered, and updated into GNAHRGIS every day as new data arrive to the Site File. There are numerous protocols in place that GASF personnel follow to ensure that site forms, maps, reports, and GNAHRGIS are accurate and current. GASF has evolved greatly over the years from the 5x7 cards that recorded site information to an integrated limited GIS program that contains information about Georgia's archaeological, natural, and historic resources and is currently in use.

GASF presently curates site forms for over 58,000 recorded archaeological sites with many new sites added each year. In addition, GASF houses over 8,000 Cultural Resource Management (CRM) reports. Further, there are over 2,000 scholarly manuscripts that detail information on the cultural heritage of Georgia. The Site File is in place so that CRM companies, government agencies, qualified individuals, and research organizations have archaeological information readily available for research, as well as Section 106 compliance review. Due to Georgia law (OCGA 50-18-72[a][10]) the specific information about location and contexts of archaeological resources are protected. Therefore, only those individuals with proper credentials can access site file information. The site file is open to professional archaeologists conducting research or engaging in Cultural Resource Management activities.

What Will Happen if I Submit a Site Form?

If you submit a site form, the form will be given an Official State Number and we will notify you of that number, either by phone or in writing. We will also thank you for the truly valuable contribution you have made to Georgia Archaeology. Although amateur archaeologists are normally not allowed direct access to the GASF database, (OCGA 50-18-72[a][10]) rare exceptions are made.

State laws protect **all** human burial sites and archaeological sites on public and private property and listing helps preserve them. Knowing where and what these sites are assists landowners, law enforcement officers, and archaeologists in carrying out their responsibilities under these laws (see state laws below). The GASF as a tool to preserve and protect sites for research and interpretation is only as good as the information it contains. *For more information about laws pertaining to archaeology*, contact the Office of the State Archaeologist (770-389-7863) or the State Historic Preservation Office (770-389-7844).