

The Georgia Archaeological Site File and You:  
*Information for the Avocational Archaeologist*

By

John F. Chamblee

### **Why Submit a Site Form?**

The Georgia Archaeological Site File (GASF) is a centralized location where archaeologists access information concerning Georgia's archaeological resources. GASF staff members, led by Dr. Mark Williams, assist archaeologists in determining the locations of previous archaeological investigations and compile important information about the history and prehistory of settlement across Georgia. Professional archaeologists are obligated by law to fill out and submit a site form for every archaeological site they find. While amateur archaeologists are not under the same legal obligation, the contributions amateurs can make by submitting site forms are no less significant than those of professionals.

GASF staff members perform a number of functions that increase the usefulness of the information on a site form. Site forms are catalogued by county in the order in which they are received. Every site is plotted on a U.S. Geological Survey topographic map, which archaeologists examine to view the site distribution in a given area. In addition, the data from every site form are entered into a computer database. Archaeologists use this database to gather information about many aspects of a site or sites. The computer data have also been converted into a Geographic Information System computer database which is used to plot various site characteristics on computer generated maps. When taken individually, the information on a site form may not seem impressive. However, once aggregated in the ways described above, the data become impressive indeed. Each form represents a component of this impressive data set, so every recorded site matters, no matter who records it.

### **How Do You Create A Site Form?**

As an amateur archaeologist who wishes to fill out forms for your archaeological sites, you may obtain blank forms by contacting the Georgia Archaeological Site File (the address and phone number are on the back of this pamphlet.) Once you have your form, simply follow the instructions below.

#### Supplies

*In order to properly fill out a site form, there are a couple of items you need to complete the form properly.*

1. A compass. If your site is not circular and has clear boundaries, you should be able to determine in which direction your site is oriented (North / South, East / West, Northeast /Southwest, etc.) You will want to bring the compass in the field with you, as this information is required on your site form.

2. A topographic map of your area. The section on the site form marked OFFICIAL MAP is reserved for a Xerox copy of a 1:24000 US Geological Survey (USGS) Topographic Map showing the location of your site. To obtain a copy of these maps, write to Georgia Geologic Survey, 19 M. L. King, Jr. Dr., S. W., Room 400, Maps & Publications, Atlanta, GA 30334 or call (404)656-3214 and ask for the catalog entitled Publications of the Georgia Geologic Survey (1996). You might also find copies at your local library, or you can call the USGS at 1-800-USAMAPS. It is often useful to bring your topo map in the field with you and draw your site boundaries while you are actually on the site. If you cannot get a USGS map, a county map or a **very** accurate hand drawn map in the SKETCH MAP section is acceptable.

### Filling out the Form

*Filling out a site form is certainly not as difficult as it may seem. Simply do your best and your contribution will be appreciated. The following instructions are numbered to correspond to the diagram below:*

1. Leave this space blank. A GASF staff member will assign the Official State Number.
2. A name is optional, but be creative.
3. A number is optional and not necessary unless you have found a number of sites and develop your own system for keeping track.
4. Fill in the full county name for the site.
5. You must give the name of the topographic map on which your site is located. USGS stands for United States Geologic Survey. USNOAA stands for United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. You will only use USNOAA maps if you are recording submerged sites on the Georgia Coast. UTM stands for Universal Transverse Mercator. It is the metric equivalent of Latitude and Longitude in map projections and is much easier to use. The UTM grid is drawn across most new USGS topographic maps. Older maps have blue tic-marks indicating a UTM grid- line at every 1,000 meters. Use the transparency included with this pamphlet to determine the exact location of the site. You should align the scale marked "1:24000" inside the grid drawn on the map, and take measurements from west (the lowest number) to east (the highest number). The transparency will provide you with the last three numbers for your UTM's. The first set of numbers will be provided beside the blue tic- marks on the map's margins. UTM north readings should have seven digits total. UTM east readings should have six digits total. Please contact the GASF if you need assistance calculating UTM coordinates.
- 6.(a&b) Land Owner's name and address (if known).
7. Size and elevation. Measure this as best you can. If you know the length of your stride, you can pace the site and estimate the length that way. You may also estimate the size from your topographic map, if your drawing of the site boundaries is accurate. Convert feet into meters by

dividing the distance in feet by 3.28. Take the elevation from the topographic map, again converting feet to meters.

8. Use your compass.

9. "Amateur" would be the most likely response, unless this is a systematic survey, in which case "survey" would be acceptable.

10. Indicate whether there are buildings present.

11. Unless you are collecting from a plowed field or digging with a qualified archaeologist, "Only surface known" is the appropriate response.

12a. Unless a trash pit, rock pile, defensive ditch, or other non-architectural modification of the landscape is clearly evident, "unknown" is the appropriate response.

12b. Unless a dark soil stain is clearly present, "unknown" is the appropriate response.

13. Estimate how much of the site has been redeposited.

14. What do you believe you have found? Be careful about classifying Native American artifacts as "campsites" or "villages." Information of that detail is usually not available without excavating. "Artifact scatter," or "lithic scatter," is a common designation for aboriginal sites discovered during surface collection.

15. Notice the topography, distance from water, slope, etc.

16. List tree or plant names as well as general classification (forest, fallow field, plowed field, etc.) if known.

17. Any extra information that could be helpful. (ground visibility, directions to the site, etc.)

18. If you do not have access to a USGS map, please make this section as accurate as possible.

19. Place only a xerox of a portion of a USGS 1:24000 topographic map in this space. Do not reduce or enlarge the xerox.

20. Except in rare cases, in which a site is obviously of great significance, "Public Status, National Register Standing, and National Register Level of Significance" only apply to sites discovered in Professional investigations. Leave this area blank.

21. Circle the two items that best describe the site's condition. Record any knowledge you have of the future of the site in the Preservation Prospects section.

22. Your name and the date you recorded this site.

23. Any reports discussing this site.

24. Put as much information as you can in the space provided.
25. Presumably, at your home or office.(Please provide name and address and phone number).
26. Any OTHER collections you know of from this site.
27. The name and address of OTHER private collections.
28. Optional. (Please do this and the one below if you know your artifacts well.)
29. Optional.
30. Please do not attach any lists, large maps, or other records. We cannot include them in the Site File. If you wish to submit a paper, we will include in our Manuscript file. Contact the GASF for help and suggestions.
31. Mail the form to the Georgia Archaeological Site File.

### **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 - 836 - 6454) or the State Historic Preservation Office (404 - 656 - 2840).