

ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

5 goals set in Trust plan in the new year

By Elizabeth Hughes, Maryland Historical Trust Director

Condensed from the MHT winter newsletter

Beginning in early 2023, MHT will embark on a new statewide planning effort to help align Maryland's efforts in historic preservation and cultural heritage toward shared goals. The current plan "PreserveMaryland II," has served us well - even through a pandemic! As we begin to prepare for a new planning cycle, I wanted to reflect on some of our accomplishments under the current plan and invite your feedback as we begin to look at setting goals for the future.

Since 2019, we have dramatically bolstered our online content and public engagement, adding a new Instagram account and YouTube channel to our already growing Facebook audience, which allows us to share educational videos on-demand with a much broader audience. MHT and the Maryland Heritage Housing Authority (MHAA), which MHT staffs, have launched efforts to increase the participation of historically marginalized and underserved constituents in our programs, especially our financial incentives. We look forward to building on these foundations and continuing to increase access and participation for all Marylanders in the next iteration of the statewide plan. (*Goal 1: Connect with Broader Audiences*)

MHT has continued to make enhancements to its grants programs to improve accessibility and ease of use by streamlining forms and requirements. By popular request, MHAA and the Certified Local Government Program eliminated cash match requirements, which will foster a more diverse pool of grant applicants. The Maryland General Assembly recently endorsed the work of the African American Heritage Preservation Program, which MHT co-administers with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), by increasing the program's authorization from \$1 million to \$5 million. With MCAAHC, MHT also helped produce a report on the needs and opportunities facing African American cemeteries in the state, which includes recommendations for additional support for historic Black cemeteries. (*Goal 2: Improve the Framework for Preservation*)

MHT's Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant Program and supplementary funding through the National Park Service's Underrepresented Community grants have helped expand and update documentation on cultural properties prioritized in PreserveMaryland II. Since the plan launched, MHT and its partners have funded new research on women's suffrage, LGBTQ heritage, Indigenous sites, Asian-American communities, the African-American Civil Rights legacy in Baltimore, and more. Archeological and architectural research has also focused on sites threatened by climate change in Southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore. (*Goal 3: Expand and Update Documentation*)

While Covid-19 interrupted some of the strategies for increased networking and training opportunities, MHT continued to build its training offerings, including public archeology and the revamped Architectural Fieldwork Symposium, and moved to engage more stakeholders virtually. New efforts included a National Alliance of Preservation Commissions training for Certified Local Governments statewide, as well as quarterly

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Upcoming events

March 4: ASM board meeting, Virtual

April 22: Spring Symposium. Crownsville.

May 19 – 29: Annual ASM field session. Chapel Branch Site.

Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:

ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays: The lab in Crownsville. Contact Zachary Singer at

Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center seeks participants in its Citizen-Scientist Program in archeology and other environmental research programs in Edgewater. Field and lab work are conducted Wednesdays and on occasional Saturdays. Contact Jim Gibb at jamesggibb@verizon.net

Charles County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Esther Read at ReadE@charlescountymd.gov

For more information, contact Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com.

The **Anne Arundel County Archeology Lab** in Edgewater, in conjunction with The Lost Towns Project, accepts volunteers for lab work. No experience needed. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The lab is generally open 2-3 weekdays each week from 9:00-3:00. Volunteers must sign up in advance. There are occasional opportunities for fieldwork as well. For more information, the current lab or field schedule, or to sign up, email Drew Webster at volunteers@losttownsproject.org.

UPAG/Howard County Recs and Parks invites volunteers interested in processing collections and conducting historical research to contact Kelly Palich at Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-0423.

Montgomery County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslog at 301 563 7530 or

Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org

Mount Calvert. Lab work and field work. 301 627 1286.

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact 410 586 8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up www.archaeological.org/fieldwork to get started.

CAT corner:

If your email address changes please remember to let Tom know. It's the only contact we have for many of you. For more information on the CAT program contact Tom McLaughlin at mclaugh01@verizon.net

Five goals set in Trust plan in the new year

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listening sessions on different topics, which allowed for peer-to-peer exchange. With a new outreach coordinator position, we look forward to relaunching more and varied in-person programming in 2023, including MHT Roadshows. (*Goal 4: Build Capacity and Strengthen Networks*)

MHT continues to collaborate with sister agencies and other partners to protect and restore historic and cultural sites. Since PreserveMaryland launched, senior staff from MHT have worked closely with the Department of General Services on the maintenance and rehabilitation of the Maryland State House, and MHT archeologists have worked on land held by the Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration and the Department of Natural Resources to conduct assessments and protect sites from looters. MHT also participates in interagency planning efforts, such as the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group. (*Goal 5: Collaborate Toward Shared Objectives*)

Disasters bring archeologists new problems

By Jennifer A. Kingson

Condensed from Axios, January 9, 2023

The job of the modern-day archeologist is changing rapidly, as flooding, wildfires and other extreme weather-related curveballs damage or destroy excavation sites — and drought reveals long-hidden artifacts.

Why it matters: Important cultural treasures and historical records are at stake as heirlooms from the past are damaged or curiosity-seekers grab souvenirs.

- "From Iran to Scotland, Florida to Rapa Nui and beyond, sites are currently being eroded at an increasing rate, often before scientists can record them and assess their value," according to a article in *Antiquity* magazine.
- At the same time, drought and low water levels have uncovered everything from 113-million-year-old dinosaur tracks in Texas to World War II-era boats in California's Lake Shasta and the Nevada portion of Lake Mead.
- Tourists who stumble on relics are being asked to report them to authorities — and keep their distance.

Driving the news: As deadly storms pummel Northern California and record-shattering heat envelops Europe, archeologists brace for more research sites to be washed away or degraded.

- Inundation can harm relics, but worse still is the yo-yo action of being repeatedly submerged and exposed.
- Artifacts can be damaged by many phenomena — coastal erosion, mudslides, shifting sands that bury ruins .
- "Archeological sites are rapidly disappearing due to the effects of climate change such as sea level rise, as well as storm surge and modern development," said the U.S. National Park Service.

- **Of note:** Native American history is at stake in particular in California, where ancient villages and settlements are being washed into the sea.

- "It's the coastal maritime heritage of dozens of tribes, and it's about to go away all at once," says Michael Newland, who leads the study of climate change for the Society for California Archaeology.
- The growing prevalence of massive wildfires has also reshaped the practice of archeology in California, with more scientists dedicating their time to post-fire cleanup, Newland tells *Axios*.

Meanwhile: Widespread drought is revealing previously buried treasure.

Wondrous discoveries in 2022 included a "Spanish Stonehenge" of megalithic rocks, three 600-year-old Buddhist statues on the Yangtze River, and (perhaps less wondrously) dozens of explosives-laden German warships sunk in 1944 in the Danube.

- In the U.S., the catalog includes a 19th Century wooden shipwreck dredged up by Hurricane Ian in Florida and a variety of vessels — both curious and mundane — in Lake Mead.

What they're saying: "In all of those places, people are seeing things that haven't been seen in a generation or more," says Charles "Chip" McGimsey, Louisiana's state archeologist.

- "These are random opportunities for archeologists," he told *Axios*. "You can't plan on a drought."

How it works: This fall in downtown Baton Rouge, a ferry, *S.S. Brookhill*, that sank in 1915 became a major tourist attraction after a treasure-hunter stumbled upon it while looking for trinkets in the Mississippi River.

- As people flocked to see the skeleton of the 100-foot-long boat it thrust McGimsey and his colleagues into the spotlight.
- "Once the word got out, we had hundreds of people a day coming down to see her," McGimsey told *Axios*. "There were times when I'd be down there at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and there'd be 40 to 50 people."
- Because his office is small — and typically occupied with the more quotidian work of checking out cemeteries and oil spills — "it wasn't possible for us to have someone there 24/7 monitoring things and answering folks' questions," he said.
- While the ferry wasn't that historically significant, "from a science and historical perspective, what we got was information on how she was built," McGimsey said. Nonetheless, people started stealing pieces of the boat.

The bottom line: It's illegal to toy with a relic on state or federal land.

- "Vandalism, graffiti and climbing on walls damage the resources," Mary Plumb of the Park Service said.
- "Moving objects and creating 'collector's piles,' which is where visitors pile up all the artifacts that they find into one place, destroy the original context of how the artifacts were arranged in the site, and thus information about the site is lost," Plumb adds.

• An archeologist looks at the Milky Way

- **By Brad Lepper**
- *Condensed from the Columbus Dispatch*
- For most of us, living in or near cities, light pollution makes it impossible to fully appreciate or even to see the Milky Way.
- The first time I saw the Milky Way, it came as a revelation. I was camping in the Big Horn Mountains in Wyoming, shivering in my sleeping bag but completely dumbfounded by the brilliant, twinkling swath of millions of stars arching overhead.
- The editors of the *Journal of Skyscape Archaeology*, Fabio Silva, of Bournemouth University, and Liz Henty, of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, recognize that the Milky Way "must have been awe-inspiring to prehistoric or early historic peoples" who didn't have to contend with city lights.
- They invited a number of scholars to contribute short essays to a forum on how the Milky Way helped to shape the cultures, stories and worldviews of ancient societies. I was one of those invited to contribute and I chose to write about Ohio's Serpent Mound.
- Serpent Mound is a monumental sculpture of the Great Serpent, Lord of the Beneath World. In many indigenous American traditions, this huge and powerful being appears in the night sky as the Milky Way.
- Ohio has only two effigy mounds, mounds built in the shapes of animals. In contrast, Wisconsin had thousands of these mounds built between about AD 700 and 1150 by the aptly named Effigy Mound Culture. Many of them occur in groups, which appear to telling stories.
- My colleagues and I propose that Serpent Mound is actually three separate mounds representing the two key figures in the genesis story of the Dhegihan Sioux: the Great Serpent and First Woman. First Woman is depicted somewhat abstractly as a wishbone-shaped mound with a large oval earthwork partially framed by her spread legs and the gaping jaws of the Serpent. We think the oval represents the opening to First Woman's womb, which is also the portal through which the Sun sets in the evening.
- We interpret this group of mounds as a depiction of the pivotal moment when First Woman mated with the Great Serpent and thereby acquired his powers of regeneration, which she then used to create all life on Earth. If this interpretation is correct, Serpent Mound isn't just a sculpted portrait of the Lord of the Beneath World; it is a story written in the earth.
- My colleagues and I think that Serpent Mound was built in AD 1100 by the Fort Ancient culture. We based our conclusion partly on radiocarbon dates obtained from the effigy and partly on the importance of serpent symbolism in Fort Ancient era societies. We think the mound represents a fusion of local Fort Ancient cultural traditions, artistic styles from the Mississippian civilization centered at Cahokia near what is now St. Louis, and the Effigy Mound Culture's idea of using effigy mounds as a way to tell sacred stories.

Chapter news

Central Chapter

All Meetings will be held on Zoom the third Tuesday of every second month. For more information and to be added to the Zoom list contact: Katharine Fernstrom at kwfappraising@gmail.com

Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday (September-May). The next few will be virtual. Contact President Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com for Zoom access information. Website ccarchsoc.blogspot.com and Facebook [@ccasm2010](https://www.facebook.com/ccasm2010)

Eastern Shore

Meeting details being worked out. For information on the chapter, contact Julie Markin at jmarkin2@washcoll.edu On Facebook at Eastern Shore Maryland Archaeology, Instagram: @esmdarch or email esarcheology@gmail.com

Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month. In-person meetings begin at 7p.m. at Needwood Mansion for the business meeting followed by a presentation at 7:30. Pizza will be available before the in-person meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. for \$5 per person. Virtual meetings will be via Zoom with the business meeting also starting at 7 and the presentation at 7. For up-to-date information concerning meetings, please contact Don Housley at donhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526 or check the chapter website: <http://www.asmmidpotomac.org>, or send an email to: asmmidpotomac@gmail.com

February 16: (In-person) Frank Sanford, chapter member, will present on his Mesolithic archeological experience in Portugal.

March 16: (In-person) Ralph Buglass, chapter member and local historian, will give a talk on "The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal: History and Nature."

April 20: (In-person) Tara Tetrault, anthropology professor at Montgomery College, and Suzanne Johnson, president of the Sugarland Ethno-History Project, will speak on the history and archaeology at the Sugarland site near Poolesville, Md.

May. TBD. Normal meeting date will be changed due to a conflict with the beginning of the ASM Field Session.

Monocacy

Meetings are at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday, at the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick. For more information, visit the chapter's web page masarcheology.org or call 301-378-0212.

Northern Chesapeake

A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410- 808-2398 or dancoates@comcast.net.

St. Mary's County

Meetings are at the Leonardtown Library in Leonard every second Tuesday night of the month at 6:30. For information contact Craig Lukezic at crlukezic@gmail.com

Upper Patuxent

Meetings the second Saturday or Sunday of the month, virtual or at the Heritage Program Office, 9944 Route 108, Ellicott City, unless otherwise noted. www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358 or www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com or call Kelly Palich, 410-313-0423.

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 211 S. Lee Street in Cumberland, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: wmdasm@yahoo.com

February 24: Brent Chippendale will report on the 2022 ASM Field Session held at the 18th Century Barwick's Ordinary on the Eastern Shore.

Have you renewed your ASM membership?

The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink, the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10-percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Ethan Bean, 765-716-5282 or beans32@comcast.net for membership rates.

Newsletter submissions: Send to Myron Beckenstein, 3126 Gracefield Rd., Apt 106, Silver Spring, MD. 20904 or 240-867-3662 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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