Louisiana

Archaeological

Survey and

Antiquities

Commission

September 10, 2024 Meeting

The Louisiana Archaeological Survey and Antiquities Commission met on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in the 4th floor conference room, 1051 N. 5th street, Baton
Rouge, LA.

# Members Attending:

Dr. Chip McGimsey

Dr. Mark Rees

Dr. Heather McKillop

Ms. Julie Doucet

# Members Absent:

Dr. Chandler Vidrine

Ms. Kim Walden

Mr. Ray Berthelot

Dr. Ryan Gray

Mr. Thurston Hahn

# Others Attending:

Ms. Sadie Whitehurst

Ms. Josetta Leboeuf

# Welcome & Introductions

The Chair, Dr. Heather McKillop, called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM. Dr. McGimsey took the notes for meeting.

Everyone attending the meeting introduced themselves.

Dr. McKillop noted the upcoming South Central Conference on Central America to be held on the LSU Campus October 18-20, 2024. The Louisiana Archaeological Society is one of the meeting sponsors.

**Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the minutes for the December 12, 2023 meeting was deferred as Dr McGimsey had forgotten to provide them to the Commissioners for review prior to the meeting.

# Old Business

Dr. McGimsey gave a brief update on the Division of Archaeology. He introduced Josetta LeBoeuf as the new Outreach and Education Coordinator for the Division. She replaced Maegan Smith who resigned in May 2024 in order to pursue opportunities where her husband had taken a position. Dr. McGimsey also noted the Division is searching for a Site Files Manager following Mr. Sam Huey’s decision to resign and pursue his career in private industry.

Dr. McGimsey noted that the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Cultural Development, Ms. Kristin Sanders, had been dismissed from that position in June of this year. Currently the deputy Assistant Secretary, Ms. Carrie Broussard, is serving as acting Assistant Secretary and State Historic Preservation Officer.

Dr. McGimsey reported that the Divion’s budget for FY 24/25 is essentially the same as the previous year and there would be no significant changes in staff or activities anticipated this fiscal year.

# New Business

 Archaeology Month Update

Ms. Josetta LeBoeuf gave an update on planning for this year’s Archaeology Month. The poster will highlight the work of the public and avocational archaeologists in Louisiana archaeology, as well as recognize the 50th anniversary of the Louisiana Archaeological Society. As of the meeting date there were 22 events planned across 18 parishes, including a University of Louisiana at Lafayette field school in the Kisatchie National Forest, an open lab day at the University of New Orleans, presentations at International Archaeology Day at Louisiana State University, and a series of eight talks hosted by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Anthropological Society and the Lafayette chapter of the Louisiana Archaeological Society.

 LSU Campus Mounds Permit Request

Dr. McGimsey is one of the researchers on this permit and presented the proposal to the Commission.

In 2022, Dr. Brooks Elwood and colleagues published an article claiming that the LSU Campus Mounds (16EBR6) could be up to 11,000 years old. If substantiated, this would radically change archaeological understanding of the early history of North America. As a result, it has generated interest in further research at the site. Dr. Josef Hormes and colleagues have recently prepared a paper examining the chemical composition of selected sediments from the mounds to see if the data support some interpretations developed by Elwood et al. This paper has been submitted to American Antiquity for review.

This permit request is an effort to specifically address the age of the mounds and their construction history. The research proposes to collect three sediment cores from each mound. One core from each will be examined by Dr. Rolfe Mandel of the University of Kansas and a sedimentological and pedological description prepared. This will examine the sediments used to construct the mound, whether there is evidence of intermediate surfaces within either mound (suggesting pauses in construction), and whether there is evidence of fired surfaces and ash lenses within either mound. These data will address some of the hypotheses raised in the Ellwood et al. article.

A second core will be used to obtain sediments for Optically Stimulated Luminescence dates. This is an independent dating method that will provide a control for the radiocarbon dates obtained by Ellwood et al. This effort will focus on the initiation of mound building by identifying the base of the mound and selecting samples for dating from immediately below and above that surface. These dates are being provided by Dr. Liz Chamberlain of Wageningen University in the Netherlands.

The third core will be a control core and backup in case there are issues with either of the first two. This project is largely a volunteer effort with the various researchers contributing their time and services. The project is a cooperative effort by the National Center for preservation Technology and Training, the Division of Archaeology, LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology, University of Kansas, and Wageningen University.

Dr. Rees asked for clarification on the process for describing the cores and selection of samples for dating. Dr. McGimsey replied that Dr. Mandel would use the soil science standards for describing the cores. Dr. Mandel and Dr. Chamberlain will be responsible for 1) identifying the base of the mound in the first core taken, and then 2) selecting the specific strata to be sampled for the OSL dates. The selection of samples for dating will occur at Dr. Chamberlain’s lab in the Netherlands.

Dr. McKillop asked about obtaining permission from LSU to undertake this work. Dr. McGimsey replied that they had been in close contact with Dennis Mitchell of Facility Services about scheduling the work and obtaining all the necessary University permissions. Dr. Konsoer and his graduate student Reilly Corkran are also working on the project and are coordinating with LSU on various aspects.

Dr. McKillop also suggested reaching out to the LSU Native American Student Organization. Dr. McGimsey replied that he planned to do so in the near future. Dr. McKillop also inquired about how the project will be publicized and the level of coordination with the LSU Campus Mound committee. Dr. McGimsey noted that LSU will be responsible for coordinating press announcement and publicity, and that the project had been discussed at the most recent meeting of the Campus Mounds committee.

***Motion:*** *Dr. Mark Rees moved that the Commission meeting approve the LSU Campus Mounds permit request. It was seconded by Dr. Heather McKillop. The motion passed unanimously.*

 Poverty Point Limited Investigations Permit

The Poverty Point Station Archaeology Program overseen by Dr. Diana Greenlee is issued a permit each grant year to enable the program to undertake limited excavations at the site as necessary to assist the Office of State Parks in managing the property and in furtherance of research objectives. The permit is issued at the beginning of the grant year and covers potential activities over that year.

***Motion:*** *Dr. Mark Rees moved that the Commission meeting approve the LSU Campus Mounds permit request. It was seconded by Dr. Heather McKillop. The motion passed unanimously.*

# Other Business

There was no other business before the Commission.

***Motion:*** *Dr. Mark Rees moved that the Commission meeting be adjourned. It was seconded by Ms. Julie Doucet. The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.

