**Archaeological Research Center – Board Report**

**March 24 to June 25, 2025**

**In-House Contracts: fieldwork completed by ARC archaeologists**

Projects for South Dakota Department of Transportation

* 13 surveys completed
* 10 survey reports completed
* 10 record search letters submitted
* 11 archaeological sites and 52 structures recorded and/or revisited
* 4 archaeological sites evaluated
* Soil and artifact processing from 39HT0150 was completed. Artifact analysis and cataloging is currently in progress. Report writing will begin in August.

Projects for Private Contractors, and South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks

* 6 surveys completed
* 1 construction monitoring project completed, report in progress (Meade Co.)
* 4 survey reports completed
* 24 record search letters submitted
* 1 archaeological site and 3 structures recorded
* The Lewis and Clark Recreation Area site 39YK0036 site evaluation fieldwork began on 6/16/25. This project will last several weeks.

Project for US Army Corps of Engineers

* The Swan Creek NRHP research project report was submitted in May, after 3 years of effort.

**GIS**

* ARC staff entered or updated a total of ~121 survey boundary features, ~75 site boundary features, ~48 investigation boundary features, and ~2 NRHP boundary features in the ARCH geodatabase. (Site boundary feature totals include Megan Ostrenga Fabricius’s contribution)
* A Subsurface Testing points feature class was created to contain the geospatial locations of excavations as documented in selected archaeological survey reports, including shovel tests and excavation units. This feature class currently contains ~7,719 point features. The goal is to eventually have all formally documented locations of archaeological excavations represented geospatially within this feature class.
* Existing features and records in the ARCH geodatabase continue to be checked for accuracy and are undergoing edits where necessary.
* A replacement web map for ARMS Online has been created to keep ARMS Online’s web map active following scheduled server upgrades and is currently undergoing testing and improvements to make maintaining its referenced duplicate feature classes more efficient. Server upgrades have been required by the state’s Bureau of Information and Technology.
* ~141 external and ~59 internal record search requests were fulfilled.
* ~27 internal projects were prepared for archaeological survey.
* Hydrographic model feature coding has been completed for the South Dakota archaeological site predictive model pilot project. The archaeological research center is currently in the process of finalizing a contract with MNSU, Mankato to move forward to the QA/QC, variable creation, and statistical modeling portion of the project.

**Burial/NAGPRA Reports**

* 14 new burial reports
* Minnehaha County – Call from Kris Hicks regarding possible house construction within/near 39MH6
* Multiple Counties – Tracking number for Dennis Toom’s USACE collections that he retained and needed to transfer back to the USACE. MHA, USACE, and UND have taken lead on this for the time being.
* Out of State – Tracking number assigned to the Oklahoma/SE US repatriation with Osage, Tunica, Quapaw, and Caddo.
* Multiple Counties – Tracking number for MHA request for list of MHA affiliated sites at the ARC.
* Multiple Counties – Tracking number for CRST request for list of CRST affiliated NAGPRA ancestors or funerary objects.
* Unknown County – Bone ID for Gary Gibson – nonhuman, avian
* No Prov/West River – Report from Augustana of a citizen wanting to turn in ancestral remains collected by his father along the Missouri River in the 1980s.
* Oglala-Lakota County – Bone ID for OST Law Enforcement – two nonhuman and one possible human, but fragment is very small and difficult to identify. Possible human fragment would be associated with modern forensic case.
* Davison County – Consult with City of Mitchell regarding Lake Mitchell draining project – Discovered SHPO was already involved as was the USACE, so deferred to those agencies.
* Perkins County – Notification from Perkins County Sheriff of human remains collected from St. Mary’s Catholic Church in 2015 – essentially no provenience or collection history information for these remains.
* Hughes County – Tracking number assigned for USACE repatriation from 39HU0200 and reburial at 39HU0126 on 11/15/2024.
* Buffalo County – Tracking number assigned for USACE repatriation and reburial from 39BF0225 on 5/14/2025.
* Lawrence County – Inadvertent Discovery in Deadwood, SD during construction of retaining wall at 35 Jackson Street.
* Oglala-Lakota County – Bone ID for FBI found near Red Cloud School – nonhuman.

No full forensic and osteological reports were produced during this time; however, inventories for six sites (39BR-, 39SL4, two for 39WW-, 39YK0203, and one site with no provenience) were completed for the current ARC/USACE curation contract regarding their NAGPRA collections. Three to four inventories remain to be completed so that final age, sex, and MNI can be determined.

**Miscellaneous - Burials**

* Plans and coordination for the reburial in Harding County (BR 2022-15) continue; however, it seems unlikely it will occur this year. Last contact from them was August 22, 2024. Lloyd has attempted to reach out to SRST THPO and tribal archaeologist on 02/20/2025, but did not receive a reply. ARC will continue to reach out.
* Scanning of all active burial files was completed. The active NAGPRA project spreadsheet and NAGPRA database updates are approximately 95% complete. Twenty-two entries remain to be entered onto the spreadsheet. Repatriation efforts have been shifted to planning and executing a large scale NAGPRA summit within the next 18-24 months. The goal is a discussion and cultural affiliation determinations of all known NAGPRA ancestors, funerary objects, and other cultural items over the course of multiple days in order to a facilitate Notices by tribe instead of on a case by case or site by site basis.
* Work continues on the Deadwood inadvertent discovery. The current plan is to rebury the remains at plots donated for unknown Deadwood Pioneers at Seth Bullock’s gravesite. As of now, there are no funerary objects or other indicators of potential identity. Will continue to work with the City of Deadwood to establish what, if any, analysis they would like to do on this individual.

**Grants – Burial Mounds NRHP Nomination**

* No further details about this are available at this time. Have heard nothing else from Chris regarding another round of nominations; however, current pressure on federal funding has likely deterred these efforts.

**Outreach**

* The ARC fielded six outreach requests during this timeframe, including artifact identifications (one of a cannonball!) and informational requests. Outreach site visits are currently being prioritized for the summer field season in Custer County and Mellette County
* The ARC hosted a tour for this year’s University of South Dakota Fort Meade Soap Suds Row field school students on June 2.
* On Saturday, June 7, Katie Lamie presented at the annual Sturgis and Meade County History Day. The presentation entitled “Taking One for the Road: An 1878 Bottle Dump Between Grasshopper Jim’s Scooptown and Camp Sturgis” was well-received by roughly 30 attendees. The private landowner also attended the presentation and allowed for its recordation; it will be hosted online by the Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society.
* Archaeologists assisted SHPO staff with final planning efforts for the 2025 Kids Archaeology Camp, which was held June 10-12 at Fischers Lilly Park in Fort Pierre and at the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau. Six ARC staff attended to help out.
* On Saturday, June 21, Danny Fabricius and Megan Ostrenga-Fabricius led an atlatl throwing event at the Journey Museum’s free community summer festival. Approximately 350 museum visitors checked out the atlatl throwing activity and archaeology educational display!
* Megan Ostrenga-Fabricius and Lynn Griffin are finalizing a Fort Meade Soap Suds Row archaeology exhibit at the Fort Meade Cavalry Museum at the request of the Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve, a major sponsor of the ongoing excavations at the site.

**Repository and Records Archives**

* 76 new archaeological sites entered into the site database
* 53 updated archaeological sites entered into the site database
* 112 new archaeological reports entered into the report database
* 1 closed archive numbers fixing duplicates in database
* 12 new artifact collections were accessioned; 8 curation agreements were finalized.
* A total of 47 deaccessions were approved at the May Board Meeting; staff continue to finalize draft NAGPRA publications and sets of documentation under contract with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the federal agency that is ultimately responsible for repatriation.
* As part of the current U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contract, curation staff are also digitally cataloging all artifact collections as recovered from sites 39ST0292 (Fort Galpin) and 39ST0217 (Fort Pierre II) during the Kids Archaeology Camps conducted between 2013 and 2023.

**Mining Reviews and State Land Permits**

* 27 Sand/gravel licenses (11 Intent to Mine, and 16 Intent to Continue Operations), 0 SECUL (DTRC), and five EXNI application (Clean Nuclear Energy, Longview, Lion Rock Resources, Pete Lien and Sons, and DTRC) reviewed.
* 4 State Land permits reviewed.

**Other**

* The 2025 History Conference took place on May 7-9 in Deadwood, SD. The conference sold out and was an overall success.
* ARC hired two seasonal field techs for the summer, one a recent graduate and one a current student at USD. Both field techs participated in the Kids Archaeology Camp in Pierre as 4th graders and attended the Soap Suds Row field school at Fort Meade as part of their college coursework. It’s encouraging to see young people take advantage of these opportunities that SDSHS supports and go on to pursue archaeology as a career.