

Wes Moore
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor



Rebecca L. Flora
AICP, LEED ND / BD+C
Secretary

Elizabeth Hughes
MHT Director and
State Historic Preservation Officer

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MARYLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ARCHAEOLOGY (MACA)

December 10, 2025

Committee Members in Attendance:

Ethan Bean, Stephen Brighton, Jane Cox, Dave Gadsby, Don Housley, Alexandra Jones, Cheryl LaRoche

Staff in Attendance:

Dixie Henry, Elizabeth Hughes, Matthew McKnight, Troy Nowak, Tricia Samford, Zachary Singer, Stephanie Soder, Brian Snyder

The meeting called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Review of the September 10, 2025, MACA meeting minutes:

The September 10, 2025, minutes were reviewed and accepted in a motion made by Dave Gadsby and seconded by Alexandra Jones; the motion was passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Report from the Director — Elizabeth Hughes

Director Hughes reported that MHT has been busy fielding questions from the budget analyst about the proposed FY27 budget. There are currently no impacts on archaeology, aside from our request for a new archaeology van for fieldwork and equipment transport. However, a recent Dept. of Budget and Management (DBM) report suggests there are likely to be more cuts.

Elizabeth also reported that there is no currently proposed legislation that MHT is aware of which will impact archaeology. However, the federal budget is still in a “continuing resolution” standoff and budgetary problems at the federal level could certainly have impacts across MHT. There is currently a proposal for level funding for the Historic Preservation fund, but we will not know if this is the final outcome for some time.

Since the last MACA Meeting, Senator Mike Lee scheduled a hearing on Section 106 to discuss concerns about overreach. The Utah SHPO and a THPO with the Acoma Pueblo did a good job of both outlining and defending current practice, but it is unknown whether this concerns will lead to 106 tweaks or legislative changes to the definition of APE, etc. NCSHPO is currently monitoring these developments.

Elizabeth also reported that the Cemetery and Burial Sites working group completed its work last month and produced a final report which is up on MHT’s webpage. Budget discussions have revealed that MHT

will not receive a new position to support building out of the database, or survey work, and so many of the tasks may be taken over by the Maryland State Archives.

Chief Archaeologist Report — Matt McKnight

Dr. McKnight stated that staff have been working steadily on the Cresap Site Report. Cataloging is complete and MHT hopes to have the report completed in the late spring/early summer timeframe.

Since the last MACA Meeting, MHT has been moving forward to attempt to purchase a new Field Van for the archaeology program. The van is low mileage, but quite old (2001) and in rough shape. DBM denied the request, so MHT is searching for a used state van that will suffice for a few years.

Matt reports that MHT received 24 full applications for the FY26 Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant Program by the deadline of November 17, with a total amount requested of \$1,135,756. Only \$300,000 is available from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund for these projects. Seven of the requests are for archaeological projects. Staff are currently reviewing those applications in preparation for the review and ranking meeting next week. Recommendation will go to the MHT Board at their January Meeting, with final approvals by the Sec. of Planning by mid- February. The FY27 Non-cap round is expected to follow the traditional schedule. Matt also reported that last week, on December 5, he gave a brief presentation on the program as part of the MHT Virtual Roadshow.

Matt reported that MHT received 18 sets of comments on the revised *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology in Maryland*. Most are multiple comments provided by CRM firms. Dixie and Brian, with some help from Troy, are triaging those comments before the larger revisions committee meets to discuss them in mid-January. MHT is still on track for a spring launch of the new standards.

NAGPRA background work and consultations continue to demand a significant amount of time. Matt and Zac recently drafted an MOU for consideration by the MCIA, which would establish a new working group with representation from federally recognized tribes to deal with NAGPRA compliance. Federal tribal involvement is necessary for any recommendations to be efficacious. The MCIA met last night, but chose not to make a final decision on the MOU. Staff have also prepared the NAGPRA FAQ for the commission members that the committee will be looking at in New Business.

Matt reminded the committee that he and Zac also serve as MHT representatives on the Ancestral Remains Committee with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. The MCAAHC saw some turnover during the summer, which meant that the committee likewise saw some changes in membership. That group has moved quickly to get the local historians for the project on-board and Matt and Zac's main role has been to provide guidance on the legal requirements for effective transfer, as well as to help facilitate access to the archaeological records for these researchers.

Matt relayed that MHT held a very well-attended Workshop in Archaeology on September 20. Just under 100 attendees including staff, speakers, and the public were coming and going over the course of the day. Cassandra Michaud was the keynote speaker.

Matt delivered the Frederick L. Stiner Memorial Lecture at the October 18, ASM Annual Meeting, where he talked about the 2025 Field Session at Teague's Point.

On the Fieldwork front, since the last MACA meeting, Steph and Matt completed total station work at the Jacob Jackson site in Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park on September 11, and then Zac, Steph, and Matt carried out a GPR survey at the site in October. The GPR identified an area of possible shallow disturbance that corresponds to where a couple of cut stones are located and where metal detecting work by NPS produced some artifacts

On September 18, Office of Archaeology staff met with rangers at Fort Frederick about their plans for a trail interpreting the CCC camp that reconstructed the fort. The HP Non-cap grant program was discussed as a possible funding source for preservation planning work to determine where the trail should go.

On October 2 staff assisted Anne Arundel County's Archaeology program with establishment of a site grid at the Brickhouse Creek site, a newly discovered precontact resource in a county park. The Lost Towns Project has been conducting some shovel testing there.

On October 24, staff participated in the annual ORV Field Research Day, which was held at JPPM this year to collect some data necessary to prepare comprehensive planning documents and assessments for the park. Steph flew the drone and collected roofing data and imagery. Zac and Matt collected GPR data from several areas in the park where planned improvements may eventually be installed.

Matt reported that as far as public outreach goes, most of MHT's efforts since the last MACA Meeting went into the Workshop, but he participated in two CAT defenses on October 8 and participated in the first meeting of the Maryland Archaeology Month committee for 2026, held on October 27. He also reports that MHT has been inundated by requests from the public associated with the LEGO League challenge. The theme this year deals with archaeology.

Underwater Activities Report —Troy Nowak

Troy Nowak reports that he gave a talk about maritime archaeology and underwater robotics in Montgomery County for a school group involved with the First Lego League on September 21.

On September 27-28, Troy led two days of field exercises as part of a Nautical Archaeology Society course for members of the Battle of the Atlantic Research and Expedition Group in the Potomac.

On October 2, MHT hosted a group of preservation professionals from the middle east and north Africa visiting as part of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Troy was tapped to give a talk about the maritime program's responses to looting of archaeological sites. He also provided a talk on the maritime program on October 15 for the Natural History Society of Maryland.

Troy submitted a grant application for Preservation Maryland's Maritime Heritage on October 3, but unfortunately it was not selected for funding.

Troy officially began serving as state underwater archaeologist on November 12. Troy will continue to be responsible for the duties of his previous role until a replacement can be hired, hopefully in 2026.

Troy is continuing development of the Maritime Heritage sub-grant program which will be launched in early 2026 and is planning for next year.

Since the last meeting project review and compliance work and outreach to various federal and state agencies related to ongoing initiatives proceeded with no unusual issues of concern.

Terrestrial Activities — Zac Singer

Between September and December, Dr. Singer reviewed 3 applications for Terrestrial Archaeology permits.

Zac reported that the MHT Volunteer Archaeology Lab has been regularly meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9AM-3PM. Based on a recent social media post calling for volunteers, the lab days are now attracting upwards of 10 volunteers a day. The lab is processing the artifacts from the Teagues Point Field Session, Barton Site, and Piney Grove and preparing them for permanent curation at the MAC Lab.

On September 18, Zac visited an avocational archaeologist on Hoopers Island to document a collection of surface finds from the Island and nearby eroding Islands.

On September 20, Zac participated in the MHT Annual Workshop in Archaeology. Zac presented a workshop on the identification of stone tool raw materials in Maryland.

From September 26-October 1, Zac led the return of the PaleoDigger to the Barton site. In 2025, the ASM dug 23 test pits, but stopped two at a depth of 43 cm due to the presence of features. The 21 deep test pits had an average depth of 280 cm, with the deepest being 310 cm below ground surface. The field crew removed and screened 51 cubic meters of soil in 6 days. That volume of soil is equivalent to five 2 X 2 meter test blocks dug to a depth of 250 cm! This innovative research was greatly facilitated by the enthusiastic crew of volunteers processing all of the silty soil generated by the PaleoDigger and then manually encouraging the soil through the 1/4 inch mesh screens to recover artifacts, all while keeping provenience to 10 cm levels. Volunteers contributed around 1600 hours of volunteer participation with an average of around 30 volunteers per day, and a high of over 40 volunteers during the weekend.

The Maryland Archeology Month (MAM) 2026 planning committee held a kickoff meeting on October 27. The committee is comprised of members of the Council for Maryland Archaeology, the Archeological Society of Maryland, M-NCPPC PG County, Montgomery Parks, Historic St. Mary's City, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Maryland Historical Trust. The MAM Committee voted for MAM 2026 theme to focus on the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. The MAM Committee members will reach out to State and County MD250 groups to synergize efforts. Committee members will continue to brainstorm potential theme titles and topics for the booklet. The MD250 executive order by the Governor will be used to guide the discussion.

From November 3-7, Zac led unit excavations at the Piney Grove Site. In 2025, MHT staff and volunteers dug nine 1 X 1 m units and found evidence for quarrying of local chalcedony nodules to make stone tools. End thinning flakes in the assemblage are suggestive of Clovis point production at the site. WMAR and *The Baltimore Banner* have covered the Piney Grove research. The most recent WMAR story was published two weeks ago and has 15,000 views on Youtube. WMAR's first story published 6 months ago now has 88,000 views.

From November 13-16, Zac attended the Annual Meeting of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation and presented on the Maryland Fluted Point Survey.

Since the last MACA meeting, Zac reports that he made several presentations for the public on various archaeology topics. These included a display on Piney Grove at Historic Glyndon's *Celebrate Glyndon Day* on October 4, attending JPPMs American Indian Heritage Day and displaying Ice Age stone tools on

November 1, a presentation to the Dorchester County Historical Society on November 20 about the Maryland fluted point survey, a November 21 visit to the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society to provide guidance on a trail project for the Catoctin Furnace cemetery, and a presentation of the preliminary results for the Piney Grove project at St. John's Church (property owners) on December 4.

MAC Lab Activities Report — Patricia Samford

Dr. Patricia Samford reported that substantial completion of the MAC Lab Expansion Project is now anticipated in late January of 2026, several months behind the original schedule. At substantial completion, we can start using the new spaces created in the building, get oversized objects moved back in, and move furniture and other items back to their original locations. It is anticipated that the reopening of the lab to the public will take place in the late summer of 2026.

JPPM received a grant from Chesapeake Gateways to create a long-term exhibit on the Wallville community. Several initial meetings with staff and the steering committee have been held, with a community meeting planned for January. Themes will be developed with input from the steering committee and the local community, and the writing of panel text will begin early in 2026. The exhibit is anticipated to open in 2027. Alex, Scott and Tricia gave two lectures on the Wallville project in September: one to the Calvert County Historical Society and the other to a St. Mary's College of Maryland archaeology class.

The MAC Lab is gearing up to have the new Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland website launched in April of 2026, in conjunction with Maryland Archeology Month. The new website will include all of the previous artifact categories with a lot of new additions, as well as several new sections: equestrian artifacts (saddles, horseshoes, horse care equipment, bridle bits and cheek bosses), jaw harps, thimbles, spoons, forks, and bone handled utensils. The new site will also contain over 200 site summaries.

After a two-year hiatus due to the lab construction and the building's closure to the public, the Gloria King Research Fellowship will resume in 2026. An announcement about the funding will go out early in 2026, with scholars anticipated to be allowed into the lab starting in the late summer.

Tricia stated that next year's Public Archaeology program will be conducted on the Straiten site, a Black tenant farm on JPPM's property. In 2026, we are changing up the structure of the program, offering it one Friday and Saturday a month in April, May, June, September and October. The program weekends were chosen to tie in with other educational activities taking place at the park.

The Ancestral Remains Project, undertaken in collaboration with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Banneker Douglas Tubman Museum, seeks to work with local descendant groups in 5 counties to return ancestral remains of African ancestry to the local communities for reburial. Project coordinator, Maleke Glee, has brought on board five historians (one for each county that the lab has ancestral remains from) who will work with groups in each county to conduct research that will potentially lead us to lineal descendants. Based on the wishes of each community, DNA analysis of the ancestral remains may be conducted and compared with DNA from possible lineal descendants. If no lineal descendants can be located, the project working group will work to return the ancestral remains to an affiliated community, like a historic church.

Becky Morehouse and Nichole Doub assessed the Jonas Green Print Shop (18AP29) archaeological collection in preparation for the collection coming to the MAC Lab after the start of 2026. Becky also brought the four boxes of lead type from the site to the lab for rehousing and archaeological conservation. Becky spent time reviewing the field records in preparation for the collection coming to the MAC Lab.

She began sorting the printer's type into provenience order. Once the lab has been turned back over the park, collections and conservation interns will be hired using grant funding from a Freedom of the Press MD 250 Grant.

Scott Strickland ran a one-day workshop for a University of Maryland College Park Piscataway history class in November.

Discovering Archaeology Day 2026 will be held on April 11 in 2026. Requests for exhibitors will go out in the new year.

Tricia reports that on the collections front, Megan Kearns is currently rehousing the Compton collection (18CV279) and the Claggett Retreat collection (18FR25). Also, collections staff have been going through avocational collections donated to the museum to ensure that there are no unreported human remains contained within them. Since the last MACA meeting, 8 collections have been turned over to the lab for curation. Most of them are small one to two box collections, but we did receive 11 boxes from the Brice House, and 11 boxes from the lab's Wallville project.

The lab was joined two days a week this fall by Amya Roland, an undergraduate student at Towson. She worked with Collections Technician Megan Kearns to rehouse artifacts from additional archaeological sites that came in with the Middle Plantation collection, and several other sites. Mya's last day was Dec. 8.

Our digital archivist has been going through the webpages and PDFs associated with the MAC Lab (Curator's Choice, Maryland History by Object, Outlander exhibit, for example) and making them accessible for users with disabilities.

Tricia states that MAC Lab staff have been meeting with Greg Lattanzi from Temple University regarding legacy collections from Michael Stewart that will need to be turned over to the MAC Lab.

Becky Morehouse attended the 33rd annual Native American Festival in Vienna, hosted by the Nause-Waiwash tribe.

Hess Love and her conjuring group visited to access several of the ritual objects in the collections related to the practice of hoodoo.

Several MAC Lab staffers were involved with preparations for MHT's Workshop in Archaeology held on September 20.

The Conservation Department has a number of projects ongoing, including artifacts from Mount Vernon, Alexandria, Philadelphia, the World Trade Center, Kippax Plantation in central Virginia, as well as projects from several state collections. The fire remediation work on Montpelier's archaeological artifacts is almost complete. They are also in the process of hiring a part-time conservator.

Conservation staff also report that the new large freeze drier has been installed, but will need some additional work before it can be used. Also, the lab's x-ray unit power source has been replaced, and the lab is now able to do x-radiography.

Review and Compliance Activities Report — Dixie Henry

Dr. Dixie Henry reported that project review submittals remain at a steady volume. In the past 3 months (September, October, November of 2025), the PRC unit reviewed a total of 1,363 state and federal

projects. A total of 220 Determinations of Eligibility (DOE's) were also completed in those 3 months.

MHT's newest Preservation Officer/Archaeologist in the Project Review & Compliance Unit, Brian Snyder, has now been with the agency for a little over 3 months. Brian completed his onboarding tasks and hit the ground running with project reviews, site visits, and getting to know his points of contact at the various state and federal agencies that he has been assigned to (Army, Navy, Corps of Engineers, DNR, PSC, USFWS, etc...).

Dixie and Brian have attended multiple interagency meetings to facilitate agency coordination, including meetings with DNR, MDOT SHA, FEMA, and the U.S. Naval Academy. Meetings included:

- Participated in meeting with FHWA, MDOT SHA, MDTA to discuss draft PA for Chesapeake Bay Crossing Study Tier 2;
- Attended multiple Maryland Coordinated Permitting Review Council (MCPRC) Team Meetings each month and provided MHT review data on the 6 pilot projects;
- Attended FHWA/MDOT SHA/MDTA/MHT coordination meeting with agenda items that included renewal of statewide PA, project updates on Francis Scott Key bridge replacement, Bay Crossing Study, MD 97, and Managed Lanes Study;
- Attended monthly interagency JE meeting to discuss multiple projects requiring Corps permits including the Landover 2 Natural Gas Pipeline and Pepco's Dickerson to Potomac 550kV Transmission Line;
- Participated in Fort Frederick site visit with Office of Archaeology and DNR staff to discuss proposed CCC interpretive trail;
- The final draft of the PA for the Annapolis City Dock Flood Mitigation project was signed and archaeological investigations have begun in the Phase 1 construction area.

Dixie reports that in December, PRC staff have been spending quite a bit of time reviewing, editing and reorganizing the web content of the PRC pages on MHT's website. Staff is rewriting the PRC content for plain language in accordance with the Governor's executive order on the Maryland Plain Language Initiative. Also, starting in April 2026, all of the documents posted on our website must be WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) accessible, which has required considerable staff attention.

Synthesis Report — Stephanie Soder

Research Archaeologist, Stephanie Soder reports that staff completed the most recent update on August 13, 2025 to keep up with the 6-month update schedule. Since the last MACA meeting, 22 sites have been completed and added to the database. They won't be available on the public side of the database until the next update, which is penciled in for February 11, 2026. Phase II/III reports added to our system between March 2024 and June 2025 are currently being updated.

Steph is currently working with the Cultural Resources Information Management Unit (CRIM) to create a Medusa layer for both the professional and the public synthesis database sides. A “draft” model has been completed and CRIM is working out some issues with it. The layer had to be put on hold for a bit while CRIM staff undertook other projects, but we are hopeful that we can start the effort back up in January.

For the Rochambeau American Battlefield Protection Program grant, staff conducted metal detecting in Harford County in the hope of finding the location of a bivouac site. While we did not find anything Rochambeau related, we did find a likely World War I-era collar disk, which was a surprise. The archaeology RFP will be going out soon so that MHT can hire a consultant for the excavation work at two of the sites where geophysical survey was completed. Steph also presented some of the results of the geophysical survey at the Harford County Historic Preservation Commission meeting in October. An end of year newsletter will be going out to interested parties at the end of the month, which provides updates on the grant and shares volunteer information. Since the beginning of the grant, we have had 37 individual volunteers contribute approximately 464 hours of work towards geophysical survey.

On November 5, Steph participated in an *Ask an Archaeologist* event that was geared towards the First Lego League challenge, though it was open to the public. There were 143 participants, although some of those participants were actually groups logging on to watch together, so the number was likely higher. Additionally, we have been fielding First Lego League requests for comment, most from Maryland but some from PA, DE, and as far as Brazil. Because of the high volume of requests, we have been asking that FLL groups to send us questions with a description of their project in lieu of in-person meetings.

On November 20, Steph made a site visit to the Cheltenham Boy’s Village cemetery. She has been assisting the Department of Juvenile Services since July 2024 with locating both parts of the cemetery and providing guidance on preservation and potential grant funding.

NEW BUSINESS

NAGPRA FAQ Discussion — Dr. McKnight provided the committee with a draft NAGPRA FAQ document for their review. Matt relayed that MHT reached out to the MCIAC Commissioners, Co-chairs, and Director both via email and at their in-person meetings for suggestions of questions to include in the document, but none were received. He stated that the intent of the document is to provide the public with guidance and information about NAGPRA without using the legislation’s very technically dense language, as well as links to relevant sections of the law for further inquiry. The document will eventually be posted on the MHT webpage and MHT is open to suggestions for additional questions for inclusion on the document. A brief discussion followed.

Selection of Next Meeting Date — Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 1:00 PM in the MHT Executive Conference Room (or virtually).

With no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:08 PM, in a motion made by Jane Cox and seconded by Alexandra Jones; the motion was unanimously approved.