

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:

“POWER TO THE PEOPLE: THE
COMMUNITY’S ROLE IN PUBLIC
ARCHEOLOGY”

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In the 1970s, the emergence of public archeology, a discipline within archeology aimed to engage the participation of the public, led many to raise questions about the public's role in the proper stewardship of cultural materials. The public is encouraged to not only be viewed as the audience, but as equal partners alongside archeologists. With final reporting, analyses, and curation of objects requiring specialized skills, broad participation in the final stages of projects has been limited. Generally, archeologists are viewed as the arbiter of significance in the collections management process and the public's role is challenged as their participation does not often lead to meaningful input into our understanding of the site or material. Using a post-processual theoretical framework, the questions I raise are how does the general public become involved in public archeology, and is the general public aware of its role in public archeology? If not, how can archeologists increase public participation levels? To answer the research questions, I reviewed responses from a questionnaire by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and conducted an anonymous survey of the public, aiming to elicit the public’s opinion on public archeology. The results of the event and anonymous survey reveal that the public is limited in their participation levels by a lack of communication with archeologists and knowledge of what archeology entails. An analysis was conducted to provide reasons as to how both archeologists and the public can benefit from them volunteering

alongside archeologists in the future, which includes empowering communities, expanding their knowledge, and raising awareness for archeology as a field of study.

“POWER TO THE PEOPLE: THE COMMUNITY’S ROLE IN PUBLIC ARCHEOLOGY”

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Prior to the introduction of public archeology, archeology began as a field of study dominated by accredited and working professionals. The public watched from the sidelines as archeologists conducted excavations, field surveys, laboratory work and curatorial services. Thus, the questions I raise are: how does the general public become involved in public archeology and is the general public aware of its role in public archeology? If not, how can archeologists increase public participation levels?

Taking a look into previous decades, a shift occurred in the early 1970s, changing the role of the public for years to come. In 1972, Charles Robert McGimsey coined the term “public archeology” in the publication of his book *Public Archeology*. McGimsey raised his concerns for “greater public involvement with and access to the study of archeology,” which resulted in the public becoming more interested in preserving, protecting, and safeguarding both cultural materials and sites (McGimsey 1972:5). As McGimsey served to make a call for action on behalf of the public, he viewed the introduction of public archeology as a “possibility that legislation combined with thoughtful and well considered programmes of investigation would preserve the archeological resource for the future” (Schadla-Hall 1999, 148). Although McGimsey urged the public to become involved in archeological efforts, archeologists were still reluctant to embrace the widespread public involvement that individuals would be happy to take a part of.

My concern regarding the public’s participation in archeology became evident to me as I began to realize that my family and friends were unaware of their role in public archeology. When I was hired as an archeological field technician at a cultural resource management (CRM)

firm in 2021, I was ecstatic to discuss my job with close friends and family members. However, when I would inform others that I was an archeologist, the first thought that would come to their mind is that I'm either working with dinosaur bones or searching for a crystal skull like Indiana Jones. I couldn't blame them for thinking about how archeology is represented as in mass media. Additionally, since archeology isn't a well-known discipline, I was often asked what credentials I must have or what I majored in during my undergraduate studies. As I would inform others about my roles and the responsibilities I possess, I began to wonder over the course of my CRM career if they were aware of the role and responsibilities they possessed in public archeology. To no surprise, nearly all my family and friends confirmed that they had no knowledge of what their role in public archeology entailed.

Therefore, I decided to conduct literature reviews to view how the role of the public has continued to evolve in modern society. Historically, the public was encouraged to participate in archeology as passive viewers, while the archeologists were the active participants. From my own definition, the primary role of the public was to become informed and consume the results of archeological efforts. The results of archeological work were communicated through various forms of mass media, such as newspapers, television, and the internet. However, notices for the public to increase their involvement within public archeology weren't prominent. Archeologists were viewed as the professionals as in charge of conducting excavations and laboratory work. The role of the public was questioned, as those who didn't have an archeology-related degree or experience working in archeology weren't deemed as reliable or credible. Overall, archeologists were not open to the idea of interpretations outside of a processual-thinking framework.

However, a shift towards a post-processual framework allowed for archeologists to become open to interpretations and for the public to view archeology as inclusive and

welcoming. Individual perspectives were now considered vital, as there is essentially no one truth in archeology. In other words, a post-processual way of thinking encouraged various ideas and interpretations that the public could raise concerns about, which may not have been addressed in the first place by both professional and working archeologists. For once, the public was able to have their voices heard and become active participants within public archeology.

However, the role of the public isn't emphasized or known as much as I would like it to be. As an archeologist, one of my responsibilities is to ensure that the public is well-informed about any new archeological finds or projects that can affect cultural materials or sites. However, I also acknowledge that I have the responsibility of making sure the public is aware of its role in public archeology. I wondered what would happen to public archeology as a whole if the public continued to be unaware of its role in it. Thus, I completed an internship with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) during the Summer of 2024.

The THC is a state agency whose primary focus is to preserve Texas' history by designating historical buildings and landmarks and placing historical markers. In addition, the THC strives to develop and strengthen relationships with communities, especially those who have ties with cultural materials and sites. In fact, the THC's goal "is to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations" (THC 2025a). After reviewing their mission statement, I was certain that I would be able to carry out my research questions during my internship. I interned under the supervision of Jamie Ross. Jamie Ross is a superb archeological curations manager at the THC. Throughout the course of my internship, I emphasized to Jamie how I was interested in understanding why the public isn't active in public archeology and what

the outcomes would be if they were to increase their levels of participation. I wanted to also broaden my focus on viewing what the outcomes would be for archeologists if we were to engage with and invite more people to participate in archeological efforts.

Working alongside Jamie as she prepared for a curation volunteer event at a historic site, I helped develop a guide that would be used as instructions for the volunteers at the San Felipe de Austin historic site in San Felipe, Texas. The volunteers were placed in three individual stations, which consisted of artifact cataloging, checking artifact inventories, and photographing artifacts. A questionnaire seminar of 11 questions was conducted by the THC after all 10 volunteers completed the three workstations. The questions I asked the volunteers revolved around what encouraged them to attend the event, what they view as limitations in archeological volunteer events, and what incentives they would like to receive for their work. Overall, I wanted to understand why the volunteers attended and how I could ensure that they would attend future events.

Following the volunteer event, I reviewed the responses from the 10 attendees and learned that most individuals are motivated by physical incentives. Volunteers felt that the communication with the public was limited, as the call for volunteers was posted on the Texas Archeological Society (TAS) and THC Facebook pages. The participants suggested that if the THC were to reach out to educational institutions, they could encourage more individuals to attend. However, one piece of data that caught my attention was how half of the attendees were in favor of children attending future events, while the others were not. Nearly half of the volunteers at the curation event did not want to introduce children to archeological volunteer events. I understood the point of view that the volunteers have for making this statement, as children could cause harm to fragile cultural materials or have a lack of interest in learning

about archeology.

However, I am certain that the composition of the group for future archeological volunteer events should consist of children or include children, as they receive little to no exposure as to what archeology entails. One volunteer at the curation event noted how television makes archeology look so much more different than the actual work. Thus, archeologists need to find a way to convey what real work is done and how we can motivate the public to participate even though archeological efforts are not as fun as Indiana Jones's adventures.

After attending the volunteer event, I wanted to gather the opinions of a wider range of individuals pertaining to the subject of public archeology. Since a majority of the volunteers at the event had previous exposure to the field, I wanted to ask individuals what public archeology meant to them, while identifying the limitations and benefits of them increasing their participation levels. Following the Institutional Review Board (IRB), my methodology consisted of developing a 10-question anonymous Google Forms survey. I asked participants if they were aware of public archeology, their role, and what the limitations and benefits were, for both themselves and archeologists.

Both the responses from the seminar conducted by the THC and the anonymous survey I created revealed that the public is aware of the connection between archeology and their heritage or community. To no surprise, the public want to learn more about archeology and not for their own personal gain. Rather, they hope to build a bond with their past, heritage, or culture. Archeologists like myself should understand this key finding and encourage individuals to become involved even if they don't feel like they have the credentials or that their

interpretations matter. The public needs to know that their perspectives are valued, and archeologists alone cannot give a final say for findings.

Additionally, an analysis of my results from the anonymous online survey revealed that individuals are interested in participating in public archeological efforts. They would like for there to be less word of mouth communication of archeological events, as they would like to build a connection with communities, share different perspectives, and pass on potentially vital information to archeologists.

When the public becomes more involved, they gather more information about their legacy and challenge archeologists to interpretations and findings. Personally, I am open to the ideas of the public because they may introduce me to concepts that I may not have considered in the first place. Overall, archeologists should strive to work hand in hand with the public to build a world where we all develop a stronger connection with our past, present, and future.

Chapter 2 discusses a literature review of the theoretical approaches in public archeology, along with an analysis of reasons why individuals have been reluctant to participate in public archeological efforts. The reasons I identified are primarily conflicting ideas of significance and authority. I reviewed many articles and journals to identify how archeology can be used as a civic tool of engagement.

Chapter 3 is a historical and context chapter to provide a review of public archeology in the past. I reviewed three polls that were conducted to elicit the public's perception on public archeology. In addition, I reviewed the historical context of San Felipe de Austin, the historic site that the THC curation volunteer event was held at.

Chapter 4 provides the methodology for how I engaged participants in public

archeology. Under the authority of the THC, I volunteered as an intern and helped my mentor develop questions that would be asked to participants of the curation volunteer event. The questions asked would help me understand why individuals attended the event and how I could encourage others to participate in public archeological efforts. Additionally, I created my own anonymous Google Forms survey to target individuals who represent a more general public audience in public archeology. The purpose of the survey was to understand how the public feels about public archeology, if it is aware of its role, what the benefits are of becoming involved, and what limitations they face in terms of increasing their participation levels.

Chapter 5 presents the responses collected by the THC from the volunteer curation event and my responses from the anonymous survey I created. These provide insight as to how the public feels about archeology, what could encourage them to become involved, and if they would like to become involved in future archeological-related activities.

Chapter 6 is an analysis of the data from the THC and the responses from the anonymous survey I created. The results of the THC questionnaire and my survey were then compared with the results of the previous public archeological polls commissioned by the Society for American Archaeology (SAA). The analysis of the results presents key findings of the reluctance of the public to join in public archeological efforts and the benefits to increasing their participation.

Chapter 7 is a conclusion of my thesis, along with a discussion of recommendations I have for both archeologists and the public, in terms of increasing public participation levels in public archeology.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Background

Understanding the various anthropological frameworks applied in this literature review is crucial to understanding the research questions within a theoretical context. My research questions aim to cross-examine the challenges and accomplishments present within civic engagement and public archeology. Thus, the research questions I propose are how does the general public become involved in public archeology and is the general public aware of its role in public archeology. If not, how can archeologists increase public participation levels?

Civic engagement is a vital tool that complements many aspects of public archeology. In this thesis, I define civic engagement in archeological terms as the promotion and distribution of archeological resources in order to include the public in outreach activities. The cooperation and inclusion of the general public can lead archeologists to address the gap between material culture and our prehistoric and historic timelines. Public opinion can contribute to archeological advancements and assessments, as archeologists may possess different approaches than the public. The role of public archeology is to promote cultural stewardship among communities and share archeological findings (Little and Shackel 2007).

However, the involvement of the public in an archeological context can lead to negative and positive elements. In this literature review, I will discuss the benefits and challenges often encountered in public archeology, which relate directly to theoretical approaches applied in civic engagement, conflicting interpretations of significance, community archeology, authority, and the curation crisis.

Theoretical Approaches in Public Archeology

Studies of public archeology were conducted to identify the major roles of archeologists. The central roles of archeologists are to identify areas of archeological interest, conduct fieldwork and assessments that lead them to encounter material culture, and conduct investigations of their findings. It should be noted that material culture does not refer to the physicality of archeological finds. Rather, material culture encompasses cultural meanings expressed through objects and even ideas. Ian Hodder defines material culture as “the environment within which individuals find their places and learn the places of others, their goals and expectations” (Hodder 1985:5). The expressions of material cultures encountered cannot be determined solely on the account of archeologists. This is where the role of the general public comes in.

It is worth noting Carol McDavid is a notable archeologist who is praised for her work on the importance of critical theory in public archeology and Diaspora studies. McDavid took a call to action, as she helped develop the Levi Jordan Plantation Historical Society. The purpose of the Society was to work alongside African American descendants and discuss whether they wanted any public interpretation of the site to take place (Shackel 2007). She developed an inclusive board and worked with descendants to ensure “that the society’s focus on multiculturalism and inclusivity continues within a large governmental agency” (Shackel 2007:6).

McDavid has emphasized the importance of inclusivity in *Descendants, Decisions, and Power: The Public Interpretation of the Archaeology of the Levi Jordan Plantation* through various mechanisms of implementing public interpretations and empowering communities. It is

evident that McDavid's work with the public fostered an inclusive and welcoming environment, as she hoped to "provide a way to begin positive, meaningful communication between the various community groups who have a stake in the past, present, and future of this plantation" (McDavid 2016:129).

Previous studies by Christopher N. Matthews, Carol McDavid, and Patrice L. Jeppson were conducted to analyze the dynamics of inclusion in public archeology. The observations made in their work emphasize the complex relationships that exist between archeologists, stakeholders, and communities (Matthews et al. 2011). A post-processual archeological approach is applied when one views the correlation between these three primary groups. Post-processual archeological approaches are based on the subjectivity of archeological interpretations. In contrast to processual archeology, which promotes a scientific approach, post-processual archeologists focus on idealist interpretive frameworks. Hodder claims that anthropologists "cannot make general deterministic laws about human behavior, but we can identify the general principles by which individuals construct their worlds within culture-historical contexts" (Hodder 1985:7).

As previously mentioned, Matthews, McDavid, and Jeppson investigated the relationship between the public and history. History is not set in stone, and many anthropologists favor collaboration, even though it may lead to conflict. The collaboration between various groups in an archeological context can introduce ideas and theoretical frameworks that have never been considered. The conclusion obtained from their study is that public involvement "encourage[s] more complex understandings of community participation, belonging, and conflict, thus fulfilling a greater potential and relevance for community and collaborative archaeologies" (Matthew et al. 2011:448). Post-processual archeological theory is

applied in their discussion as the perspectives of stakeholders, CRM firms, and the public may possess similar attributes. However, when the perspectives of these groups dispute one another, challenges can arise in the context of public archeology.

Community-Based Archeology

Over the past fifty years, public involvement has become a critical aspect of modern archeological work. Paul Shackel is a well-known archeologist for his promotion of community-based archeology. Instead of studying communities, Shackel has placed an emphasis on working with communities, addressing social topics such as inequality and collective memory. Shackel's book, *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration, and the Post-Bellum Landscape*, dives into the world of how various communities remember and represent the past (Shackel 2003). In *Archaeology as a Tool of Civic Engagement*, Barbara Little and Paul Shackel emphasize the importance of multivocality amongst archeological interpretations, as there is no definitive truth. Additionally, Shackel addresses how archeology can be used to address contemporary social issues, and not just focus on the past (Little and Shackel 2007).

This evolution of public involvement has allowed people to gain closer access to the history and heritage of their communities. Individuals can create a deeper and stronger connection to their cultural legacy through first-hand experiences versus through an archeologist relaying information they have gathered. This deeper connection creates a stronger sense of cultural identity and belonging (Little and Shackel 2007). In return, archeologists can build a deeper connection with local communities, where they can gain invaluable information and knowledge that can only be told from a first-person perspective.

In Yvonne Marshall's analysis of what constitutes community archeology, she emphasizes the public's lack of exposure to archeological news. Thus, motivating individuals to attend archaeological workshops and conferences is essential, as their perspective matters as much as archeologists'. Most sessions are held at conferences for the general public (non-members of archeological societies) to gain access to archeological research that may pique their interest. Regarding the importance of community archeology, Marshall states that two communities will usually emerge. The first group "consists of people who live locally, either on or close to a site," and the second group "consists of descendants and includes those who can or choose to trace descent from the people who once lived at or near the site" (Marshall 2002:216). The first type of community that emerges is identified within the present and primarily based on their relationship to their place of residence. On the contrary, the second group of individuals generally associate their relationships with the past and other people (Marshall 2002).

A perfect example of the importance of the second group is the enactment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), passed on November 16, 1990. The purpose of the law is to require museums to return Native American cultural items, which include human remains, to the appropriate group. The appropriate group is designated based on lineal descendants and culturally affiliated tribes. One accomplishment post-NAGPRA Kathleen S. Fine-Dare highlights is the increase in "discussions regarding knowledge production and authority, the meaning of expertise, new methodological approaches, ethical intentions and practices, and the role of advocacy and alliance" (Fine-Dare 2009:123). The transmission of knowledge between Native groups, CRM firms, public agencies, and stakeholders can lead to groundbreaking discoveries and alter our perceptions.

However, Fine-Dare recounts one issue in terms of collaborative archeology: the lack of

clarity in the regulations. Legal language is challenging to interpret, and the law does not address interests as cultural property (Fine-Dare 2009). With these challenges in place, the general public feels less inclined to participate in protecting and repatriating native remains and cultural materials. The purpose of the law is to strengthen relationships with descendants of Native groups, as well as provide restorative justice and recognition of human rights. Thus, NAGPRA should become more geared towards encouraging public participation.

In the past, the public's participation in archeology was generally questioned. Anthropologist Margaret Hanna's review of *Archaeology as a Tool of Civic Engagement* supports the public's participation, as she believes archeology is "no longer an esoteric pursuit but rather is a political one that promotes the virtue ethics of respect, trust, and honesty" (Hanna 2008:271).

Conflicting Ideas of Significance

The relationship that the public builds with archeologists can lead to the risk of a conflict of interest, as the designation of what is considered the truth or significant is questioned. Public archeology tends to fall under a post-processual archeological framework. Thus, it is inevitable that individuals will voice differing opinions based on their interpretations and observations of archeological finds. Others may not agree with the significance that one person identifies. Therefore, public archeology raises questions about what is described as culturally significant.

For instance, a long-held debate about the designation of sites in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) revolves around the definition of significance. William B. Butler discusses the issue in depth in *Significance and Other Frustrations in the CRM Process*, as

archeologists “simply do not understand the term in context within both the cultural resource laws and the cultural resource management” (Butler 1987:820). It should be noted that there is substantial literature of significance, with a lot of guidance. In terms of criteria of significance, in particular, Criterion D sparks conflict between both archeologists and the general public. For a site to be deemed eligible under Criterion D in the NRHP, the site must have the potential to yield important information on prehistory or history. Thus, the question of what is considered necessarily “important” is raised to both parties.

Mark Raab and Timothy C Klinger’s *Critical Appraisal of “Significance” in Contract Archaeology* explores the critique of the word “significant.” In general, contract archeology possesses three key elements that must be accomplished. The first obligation is to provide the maximum capacity for new historical or prehistoric information. The second obligation is to ensure the agency's sponsor is satisfied with the results. Lastly, the third obligation is geared towards public archeology. As Butler emphasizes, the general public is one of the target audiences, as archeologists are expected to “provide a balance between archaeological goals, the goals of the sponsoring agency, and the public interest in such a way that maximum benefit accrues to the discipline and to the public” (Raab and Klinger 1977:630). Unfortunately, contract archeology is mildly complex and relies on a successful approach to assessing the “significance” of archeological resources. Significance is not only used as a means of criterion for the eligibility of a site in the NRHP, as archeologists and the public constitute what is essential in contract approaches as well.

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and John Carman approach the topic of definitions in archeology and how they can relay positive information while simultaneously making the public feel less apprehensive about participating. For instance, they emphasize how definitions

will “bring focus and coherence to the field of study but will also limit and make fixed both what is included for study and what have hitherto been permeable borders towards other academic concerns” (Stig Sørensen and Carman 2009:13).

As I mentioned earlier, post-processual archeology is still influential to this day. Discussing “important” information in prehistory or history leaves one to provide a definition based on substantive or theoretical knowledge (Hardesty and Little 2009). Although definitions can somewhat censor archeology, it is essential to remember that these definitions can lead to constructive criticism and the transmission of new ideas. Archeology as a discipline encourages individuals to accept their truth. However, when “significant” archeological findings pique the interest of both the public and archeologist, the authoritative figure that can make the final decisions regarding significance or eligibility tends to be the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and to some extent, the lead federal agency. Thus, the public may feel as if they do not have a say and are discouraged to participate in public archeology.

Authority

The questioning of authority is one of the significant drawbacks of public archeology. The public's exposure to archeological findings encourages them to become more involved. However, what happens when they want to participate to their fullest potential but can't because they are not considered as qualified archeologists? Unfortunately, there is a gap between the public and archeologists in the context of public archeology.

The gap that has formed between the public and archeologists stems from a knowledge gap, as archeologists have specialized training in terms of excavation and working with cultural materials. Additionally, a communication gap exists, as archeologists tend to often publish their

work in academic journals and use technical language, which may not be the easiest to understand for a vast majority of individuals. Lastly, an access gap weakens the relationship between the public and archeologists, as many excavations are conducted on restricted sites.

However, there are manners of collaboration that the public can follow, such as volunteer excavations, attending field schools or educational workshops, or assisting with collaborative exhibits or museums. Yet one must acknowledge that the goals of archeologists have always been to provide new cultural-related or archeological information, even with the help of the public. Thus, the authority of archeological interpretations that they possess must be addressed.

Usually, if an individual encounters an archeological site, they cannot take any action. That is, unless they are a landowner who encounters an archeological site on their own private property. Nonetheless, the exposure to an archeological site will not be familiar to most individuals. In *The State, People, and Archaeologists*, Sharon Sullivan outlines the limitations of the public regarding archeological findings and sites. It should be noted that archeologists have the advantage over the general public as they can receive a permit. Sullivan explains the purpose of a permit as it is “not a restriction, but a special privilege given to a particular class of people, not for their benefit (though they do benefit from it) but for the good of society” (Sullivan 1975:25). With my experience working in cultural resource management for over three years, I can personally confirm that my firm conducts work with the intent of benefiting and informing the public after receiving permits. For instance, when the principal investigator at my firm closes out the permit for a project, final copies of the report are made available to the public at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Moving forward, one aspect that Sullivan pointed out, which I agree with, is that “the state must not consider simply whether an

archaeologist is competent in his/her discipline, but whether the particular project proposed is necessary and not unduly harmful to the site” (Sullivan 1975:25).

I mentioned earlier that an archeologist's academic credentials and qualifications make them seem qualified to conduct archeological efforts. Sadly, sometimes archeologists fail to acknowledge the public's role of interpretation and decision-making. Reuben Grima remarks that archeologists deal “with the serious business of discovering and understanding the past” (Grima 2016:4). Archeologists indeed deal with more of the technical and formal processes behind public archeological outreaches, as they are trained in data collection methods and various excavation techniques. However, Grima should not make the public feel its role is not serious.

Grima continues his unnecessary tangent as he claims the access the public has to archeological information is a privilege and should be “considered inseparable from the professional credentials of the archaeologist, which not only legitimize those privileges, but also reinforce them by cumulatively widening the divide between the specialists’ knowledge and experience, and that of the wider public” (Grima 2016:2). Grima essentially makes multiple statements that disclaim the role of the public in archeology, which is inaccurate. His remarks towards the public wrongly insinuate that they need an archeologist to mediate the information. I disagree with his position, as the public is more than capable of understanding the archeological information we provide.

I appreciate the discussion on authority in *Creating Community and Engaging Community: The Foundations of the Estate Little Princess Archaeology Project in St. Croix, United States Virgin Island*. The authors emphasize how the gap created is similar to

“disciplinary norms within academia,” which force “scholars into a project paradigm that looks vertical in nature with one Principal Investigator having the final say on the direction and outcome of a project” (Flewellen et al. 2021:154). It should be argued that the intentions of archeologists are never to confuse the public, as one of our primary goals is to inform and encourage them to learn more about the discipline without making them feel inferior.

Thomas F. King makes an outstanding remark about one of the challenges that public archeology generates as “there is scarcely anyone involved in (public archeology) who is not said to be in an inherently unethical position by those on the other side of one issue or another” (King 2005:143). In most cases, it is nearly inevitable for the public to feel that their voices do not matter as they do not possess the state-required academic qualifications that an archeologist retains. However, this gap in academia should not create a barrier between these two groups. As mentioned earlier, public archeology aims to allow individuals to come together and share their perspectives. Although professional archeology has the pros of scientific rigor, encouraging cultural heritage protection, and specific expertise, there are cons that fall on the shoulders of the public such as undermining the public’s authority or creating a perception of elitism. Unfortunately, a lack of transparency or engagement will follow, creating a feeling of disinterest. Overall, archeologists need to understand the authority they hold and should not abuse it, while also encouraging the public to aid in decision-making and interpretations.

Curation Crisis vs. The Public

Regarding King’s comment of there inherently being two opposing sides in public archeology, the curation crisis is a leading example of conflict between the public and archeologists. Barbara Voss defines the curation crisis as an “increasing disparity between the

continued generation of archaeological assemblages through excavation and survey without a parallel dedication of resources and facilities to accessioning, analyzing, reporting, curating, and otherwise caring for collections” (Voss 2012:146). The curation crisis is not solely due to the lack of space in repositories. Unfortunately, the curation process in general is not viewed as critically important as fieldwork efforts and continues to be dangerously underfunded.

When comparing past curation procedures and collections methods to current ones, there has been an influx in curated records and materials as environmental laws were passed to ensure the safekeeping and proper maintenance of critical cultural materials. J.A. King and J. T. Milanich additionally outlined the increase in curated records due to the proliferating amount of “compliance-driven excavation and surveys are routinely deposited in local, state, and national museums, archives, libraries, and institutions to be ‘curated in perpetuity’” (Milanich 2005:64). Now, what is the correlation between the curation crisis and public archeology?

The correlation between the curation crisis and public archeology reflects upon the discussion of authority. When archeologists conduct fieldwork and encounter cultural materials, they must adhere to the surveying policies. Collection methodologies can be included within a project surveying policy in order to limit the type and number of archeological materials collected for eventual curation. When archeologists collect materials from the field, they must curate them at the appropriate curatorial facility, which tends to be within their home state. With the curation crisis in full swing, it is unfortunately inevitable for a wide range of materials to sit inside a banker’s box and collect inches of dust. In addition, the provenience of these artifacts may be lost, or they may degrade in improper storage conditions. Even worse, the repositories may place curated materials in temporary storage places (Voss 2012). The public has the right to raise questions about what gives the curatorial facility the right to practically hold the

materials hostage versus showcasing them for a large audience. However, curatorial facilities do pose opportunities for those interested in collections, as some provide tours and allow for individuals to access the collections in person.

The practical answer would be that there are laws that cultural resource firms must follow; however, these requirements still lead to actions that challenge the public's trust. Voss discusses how the lack of space in curatorial facilities can lead to the loss and misplacement of materials, claiming that "the loss of irretrievable data through the mismanagement of collections is a breach of the public's trust— is a fundamental duty of archaeologists and the profession to curate and preserve excavated and surveyed resources" (Voss 2012:44). Our job is to provide the public with new information about our prehistoric or historic timeline, so we should not take our responsibilities and privilege of collections management for granted. The purpose of collecting artifacts is to present them to inform others. Although, there are many projects that follow "no collection" strategies, which don't pose as much of a curation issue. Overall, we should combat the curation crisis to ensure the safekeeping of materials, especially when we are the ones who decide where the materials will be stored.

Chapter 3: Historical View of Public's Opinion on Public Archeology

Importance of The Public

Before discussing the historical importance of the public's role in archeology, it is essential first to define the concept of public archeology. In my own terms, public archeology involves sharing archeological research with the public. The practice of sharing archeological research is to not only educate the public but also to raise awareness and encourage the public to become engaged in archeology. The term 'public archeology' was first coined by Charles R. McGimsey, a key figure in the development of Cultural Resource Management (CRM), who recognized the need to engage both professionals and the general public in archeological efforts. McGimsey identified two audiences in public archeology: "colleagues in the archeological profession ... and the growing number of legislators and other interested citizens who are becoming increasingly concerned with preserving their state's archeological heritage" (McGimsey 1972:xiii).

Historically, before McGimsey's introduction to a new targeted audience, archeology had been viewed as a distinguished field of study dominated by accredited professionals. The public considered themselves as passive recipients versus active participants, due to the questioning of their authority and credibility. Individuals would watch from the sidelines as archeologists would conduct research, manage excavations, and present the interpretations behind their findings. However, there were opportunities for the public to get involved, mostly through university-sponsored projects. The large-scale Works Progress Administration (WPA) archeological program as part of the New Deal, for instance, used archeological projects to employ fieldworkers, artists, photographers, and copy editors.

2000 Poll: View of the Public's Opinions on Public Archeology

A review of previous public opinion polls was conducted to understand how the public's opinion has changed over time. In 2000, Harris Interactive, a market research company, conducted "a study among the American public to understand their perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes about archeology" (Ramos and Duganne 2000:3). The poll was instituted by a coalition of archeological organizations, such as the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Harris conducted a random sample of 1,1016 American adults for the poll. One key finding showed that when individuals of the poll were asked what word they think of when they heard the word archeology, a large portion (22%) of respondents answered with digging. The 2000 poll also revealed that "people who think archeology is important have a higher interest level (6.7) than people who do not think it is important (4.4)" (Ramos and Duganne 2000:20).

In terms of participation in archeology, respondents were asked if they had participated in different archeology-related activities, such as museums, archeological sites, or an archeology event sponsored by a state or local government. One key finding identified was the "percentage of respondents who have a low level of interest in archaeology but have visited a museum exhibiting archaeological material is high (72%)" (Ramos and Duganne 2000:21). It was interesting to view that those who had previous exposure to archeological materials were still not interested in archeology. However, "those who have a high level of interest in archaeology have visited a museum exhibiting archaeological materials (92%)" (Ramos and Duganne 2000:21). Responses to a question regarding the importance of archeology showed that a majority (90%) of responses considered archeology important to understanding the modern world.

Additionally, the poll revealed that there are many misconceptions amongst the public when asked what archeologists do. The majority of respondents believe that archeologists study dinosaurs, which can be due to a lack of exposure to the work that archeologists really conduct. In fact, the “majority believes that the subject of archaeology should be included as part of the school curriculum beginning with grade K” as the only exposure individuals receive is through television as the primary medium (Ramos and Duganne 2000:31). Thus, individuals would most likely be more willing to participate in archeology if they were exposed to the field of study at an educational institution. Overall, the poll demonstrated that those who “have a higher level of formal education, who are more interested in archaeology, and who place a higher level of importance on the field of archaeology tend to be more knowledgeable and exhibit more favorable attitudes toward archeology and its core values” (Ramos and Duganne 2000:32).

2018 and 2023 Public Archeology Polls

Commissioned by the Society for American Archeology (SAA), IPSOS, a global market and researching company, conducted a poll “to gain insights and understanding of the American public’s views and opinions of archaeology” (IPSOS 2018:1). A random sample of 1,024 American adults were contacted. Key findings revealed that nearly a quarter (26%) of Americans were interested in archeology and those who have visited a museum have a higher interest in archeology than those who haven’t visited a museum. It is plausible that those who have no experience in viewing archeological materials would not have any interest in archeology. It should be noted that “a lack of understanding does not seem to be a barrier to interest in archaeology” as those who had no interest in archeology had a low level of interest in most subjects, such as animals, American history, and space (IPSOS 2018:2).

In 2023, an additional poll was commissioned by the SAA in 2023 for IPSOS “to learn what the public knows (or doesn’t) and thinks about archaeology” (IPSOS 2023:1). By conducting an additional poll of 1,008 American adults, the SAA wanted to gather data to assist archeologists with understanding “where greater attention is needed” and how they can “support public education efforts” (IPSOS 2023:1). This public opinion poll revealed that “1 in 4 Americans say they are not interested in archaeology (28%), rating their interest between 0 and 3 on the interest scale” (IPSOS 2023:1). The reasonings behind the public’s lack of interest in archeology is due to the fact that some of the respondents have never had the opportunity to learn more about archeology, don’t have the time for it, consider it boring, or believe it is not important to them.

However, when asked if archeology was considered important, 88% of Americans from the poll agreed. It was nice to view that individuals consider archeology important to their nation, community, heritage, public policy, and economy (IPSOS 2023). Overall, these findings are similar to how Americans responded to a previous poll in 2018. Archeology is considered an important field of study amongst most Americans, who believe that students should learn about archeology in school during some period of their academic career.

As discussed previously, individuals do not receive any exposure to archeology during their academic careers, especially in Texas. Based off the previous surveys conducted by the SAA, I wanted to assist the THC with developing questions that would ask the public what their opinions are on archeologists. My goal was to understand whether individuals feel that the work archeologists do is important. In addition, I used the previous surveys as a framework when developing my anonymous survey questions. I wanted the questions to be short and straight to the point. However, I felt that it was necessary to have open-ended responses, as this would

allow for many individuals to elaborate in detail on their personal opinions towards public archeology.

Texas Outreach Programs

On the topic of Texas archeological outreach programs, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) has held volunteer events to give individuals an opportunity to work alongside archeologists. In fact, the THC has numerous ways that individuals can become involved in public archeological efforts, such as volunteering at a historic site, or joining the THC Internship Program or the THC Preservation Scholars Program (THC 2025b).

Similarly, the Texas Archeological Society (TAS) is a society that I am familiar with, as many of my colleagues attend TAS events, such as field schools, excavations, and workshops. The purpose of TAS is to encourage both professional and avocational archeologists to build a society where they can promote archeological research, and advocate for the preservation and conservation of both cultural materials and sites. There are no credentials required for members or volunteers, which fosters a welcoming environment for those who have an interest in archeology yet do not possess any archeological technical expertise. Both children and adults are encouraged to attend the events held, such as archeology academies, field schools, annual meetings, and board meetings. I am pleased to see that TAS encourages a wide range of individuals to join and learn about archeology, as the Texas educational system does not prioritize this subject of study.

Texas Historical Commission Outreach Event

From my previous exposure to the THC at my firm, I began to investigate the ways that

I could become involved in outreach events. During my summer term, I was able to enroll in the THC Internship Program, with Jamie Ross serving as both my mentor and internship supervisor. As my internship supervisor, Jamie assisted in my thesis study, as I helped develop a guide that would be provided to volunteers at a San Felipe de Austin Historic Site volunteer event (Appendix C). San Felipe de Austin is a notable historic site as it is the location of Stephen F. Austin's headquarters for his colony in Mexican Texas (THC 2025c). The historic site includes a 10,000-square-foot museum, gallery, and various archeological finds such "as a field desk that belonged to Stephen F. Austin, an 1830s printing press, and many artifacts recovered during archeological excavations" (THC 2025c). The THC has a variety of tours that are geared towards specific target audiences, such as adults, schools, and scouts.

As an archeological curations manager, Jamie brought my attention to the curation issues specifically in Texas, as there is little to no room for archeological collections. In addition, many individuals are unaware of the need for curation tasks. Luckily, from her previous experience, she suggested that I help participate in a volunteer event, where individuals were invited to assist with curational tasks. The THC would also conduct a questionnaire at the event to strengthen the relationship between archeologists and the public, and to show individuals how easy it was to get involved, specifically in aid of the curation crisis.

Chapter 4: Methodology: Engaging Participants in Public Archeology

THC Volunteer Event

As mentioned previously, the purpose of my thesis is to understand how the general public becomes involved in public archeology, whether the general public is aware of its role in public archeology, and how archeologists can increase public participation levels. Therefore, the data collected from the THC will be applied, as the purpose of the event was to gain an understanding of what motivates individuals to join public archeological efforts, and view how their current involvement can continue in the future. This data will be sufficient for my thesis, as I will use the responses from the authority of the THC to analyze how I can encourage a wide audience outside of the volunteer event to participate in archeological events.

Thus, after conducting literature reviews and evaluating the modernizing role of the public in archeology over the last fifty years, members of the THC and myself as an intern came together to develop questions to ask the public at a community archeology volunteer event under the authority of the THC. The volunteer archeology curation event was held on September 1, 2024, at the San Felipe de Austin historic site. The event was projected to last from 10:00 to 1:00 PM. The purpose of the volunteer event was to encourage individuals to participate in a grant-funded project toward rehabilitating archeological artifact collections. A total of four volunteer workstations would be available to attendees, which included artifact sorting, object cataloging, artifact photography, and a questionnaire seminar. By encouraging the public to attend with curation efforts, volunteers would be able to become more involved in caring for their history.

Considering the general public has not been as involved in archeological efforts in the past, I wanted to elicit the public’s opinion on how they feel about its role in public archeology today. To obtain current information on how the public feels about public archeological volunteer events, I and members of the THC composed 11 open-ended questions to ask the volunteers at the questionnaire seminar they would participate in. The questions varied from very specific to broad questions about the volunteers’ personal interests in archeology and their views on community engagement in public archeology (Table 1). The individuals who attended the curation volunteer event were invited to participate in the questionnaire. Before the curation event began, Jamie informed the participants that I was enrolled in the THC Internship Program and would use the responses the THC gathered within my thesis. All the participants were eager to respond to the questions. The responses were not anonymous, as everyone provided a response out loud. I read the questions to the participants and transcribed each individual’s response on paper. The responses of the questions on paper were scanned and are on file at the Austin headquarters of the THC.

My main goal after the event was finished was to receive responses from the public on personal interests in archeology, what encourages them to participate in archeological efforts, and various other questions that allow them to describe the accomplishments and challenges they experience in public archeology.

Table 1. Texas Historical Commission (THC) Public Event Seminar Questions

1. What brought you here today?
2. What topics would you be interested in learning about? E.g. Metal stabilization, reconstruction for photography, faunal identification, data rendering and writing for analysis, microbotanical, etc.
3. What is your level of interest in a monthly volunteer program? Is a series of training that would build on each other something you could commit to?
4. What would keep you from being involved?

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5. What do you think are the best days and times to schedule volunteer trainings and volunteer session? How long should the workshops be? What about the length of the full program?
 6. Do you have any recommendations on who to reach out to?
 7. Volunteer programs have issues with being one-sided - what would help balance those scales? What benefits would you like to see to make you feel involved? What do you think would encourage others to be involved?
 8. What are the ways that you would like your work to be recognized? Do you have suggested incentives?
 9. What would be a good group size for this project? What would the group make-up look like (trained volunteers only, newcomers, children, etc.)?
 10. If this is a program where each volunteer training session builds on one another, what would an end goal look like to you?
 11. Do you have any other comments, questions, or suggestions?
-

I began the questionnaire with a straightforward and concise question that would allow for the participants to explain why they attended the event. If they had participated in archeological outreach events in the past, then they would answer with a response notating their ongoing interest in public archeology. However, I was hoping that there were individuals who had never been to an archeological volunteer event in the past, to allow myself to gather information as to what interested them to join. Question 2 was a specific open-ended question that would encourage the participants to communicate what their niche interests were in terms of archeology. The question included a handful of suggested tasks that participants could assist with, in case there were individuals who were not familiar with the tasks that they are able to complete as a volunteer.

The third question aimed to move the seminar towards a discussion of whether a monthly volunteer event was an option that the attendees were interested in. Question 4 specifically asked the participants what would keep them from attending the events in the future. It was important to gather relevant information pertaining to challenges and limitations for the volunteers in terms of attending community events. By identifying the challenges the

participants faced, future volunteer events could be altered to encourage a wider range of participants. The fifth question was more specific, as the volunteers were asked to provide an answer as to the best days and times that would be suitable for allowing themselves to participate in future events. The purpose of this question was to identify if there are any time constraints that are similar amongst the participants' responses.

Question 6 was targeted at identifying if participants had any suggestions as to who the event should be geared towards. In most questionnaires, the volunteers provide answers that are related to their personal interests. However, the sixth question encouraged the volunteers to work hand in hand with archeologists to identify who the target audience should be for future events.

Moving forward, the next set of questions would identify the incentives and motives that the volunteers have for attending the curation event. It was important to identify the bias of archeology as historically one-sided, as the public was not encouraged to participate as much as they are today. Therefore, it was vital to gather responses that could devise the benefits participants would like to see to make them feel included and involved. Question 8 specifically asked the participants how they would like their work to be recognized. I believe that this question was extremely important, as I hoped to identify the suggested incentives the volunteers hope to experience or gain.

The last two questions revolved around the public's opinion for developing future groups of volunteers. I wanted to know if the public felt that the event should be open towards newcomers, trained individuals, etc. It was important to note if the public felt that a certain group should not be involved. In the past, archeologists have not been so keen to encourage

public participation. Therefore, I wanted to know if the public wanted the events to be geared towards only newcomers. The tenth question would ask the participants what their end goal would look like after participating in archeological volunteer events. It is important for archeologists to gain an extra set of hands with curation work. However, I believe it was more important to identify what the purpose of the event looked like to the volunteers.

The last question was open-ended to ask for any questions, comments, or concerns. I wanted to allow the public to have the opportunity to discuss any limitations, challenges, or other opinions that they had in terms of the curation event that were not previously addressed. No matter the results of the participants' responses, I was confident that I would be able to gather an idea of how people felt about their role in public archeology.

Public Survey

After receiving responses from the public's opinion on its role in public archeology at the curation volunteer event, I developed a survey for this thesis to target a wider audience. To complete this survey, I was required to complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. Along with the IRB application, I was required to take a training course that focuses on social and behavioral research. The IRB process was completed, and the IRB letter of exemption will be attached in Appendix A.

With the intent of obtaining information on how the public feels about its role in public archeology, I created a survey using Google Forms. To minimize the time it would take for the participants to answer the questions, only ten questions were asked (Table 2). None of the questions were mandatory and I made sure to communicate this to the participants. The survey was sent through email, with a copy of my abstract and a form on consent language.

Participants were notified that the survey would take approximately 8 to 10 minutes to complete. The survey was sent to 22 individuals. The individuals selected were those that have no archeology-related job, are ages 18 and up, are non-cognitively impaired, have lived in America for more than half of their lifespan, and speak English as their first language.

Table 2. Anonymous Online Survey Questions

Question	Answer Choices
1. What is your age?	Free response
2. What is your occupation?	Free response
3. Are you familiar with archeology (the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and analysis of artifacts and other physical remains)?	Yes, Somewhat, No
4. Are you familiar with public archeology (engaging the public in archeology through lectures, interpretive signs, or tours of sites and excavations)?	Yes, Somewhat, No
5. Were you aware that the public has a role in public archeology, and not just the archeologists?	Yes, Somewhat, No
6. What do you think are the limitations for the public participating in public archeology?	Free response
7. What do you think are the benefits for the public participating in public archeology?	Free response
8. How do you think the public can help archeologists in public archeology?	Free response
9. Are there incentives that you would like to receive for participating in public archeology, if yes, then what incentives? If no, respond "N/A" please.	Free response, N/A
10. Would you be interested in participating in public archeological efforts (volunteer events, field schools, excavation sites, museums, etc.)?	Yes, Somewhat, No

Questions 1 and 2 were asked so that I would look at age and occupation of the respondents and view if there were any patterns that arose. I did not want the individuals to have to provide their name, as the survey was strictly anonymous. Questions 3 and 4 would let me know if the participants had any prior knowledge of what archeology and public archeology entail. Unlike the participants at the volunteer event who had frequently attended archeological events, I was expecting a majority of the participants from my survey to not have any prior exposure to public archeology. For the fifth question, I wanted to determine whether the participant was aware of their role in public archeology. If the participant had not been aware of their role in public archeology, my intent for this question was to also encourage them to

become more involved.

Question 6 would allow for the public to voice their opinions on what they view as limitations for participating in public archeological efforts. This question was vital to ask, as my main goal within this thesis is to understand how I can help increase the participation levels of the public in public archeology. I developed Question 6 to encourage the participants to question what the benefits would be if the public was to become more involved in archeological efforts. If the participants had not thought about this topic before, I wanted them to open their mind to the idea of how strong their role truly is.

As an archeologist, Question 8 was very important for my research, as I wanted to learn more information as to how the public view their relationship with archeologists. My goal was to determine if the public felt that they could strengthen their relationship with archeologists by exchanging information, building a sense of community, or raising awareness. However, the participants could respond noting that they didn't think the public could help archeologists in public archeology.

I decided to ask Question 9 to determine whether the public was interested in incentives for participating in public archeology. If the public wasn't aware of public archeology in the first place, I wanted to motivate them to communicate what would encourage them to become more involved. Lastly, Question 10 asked the respondents if they would be interested in participating in public archeological efforts, such as volunteer events, field schools, excavation sites, and museums. My purpose for asking this question at the end was to elicit the public's opinion as to whether they would like to participate in future archeological efforts and build a relationship with archeologists.

Chapter 5: Results

THC Curation Event Results

As previously mentioned, one questionnaire was conducted at a volunteer curation event sponsored by the THC. The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions relevant to the public's role in archeological efforts. All (10) of the volunteers participated in the THC's questionnaire. The answers were all free responses to provoke deeper thoughts and reveal perspectives that may have been disclosed if the questions were close ended. Individuals were allowed to refrain from any questions they did not feel comfortable answering. The questions asked were:

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1. What brought you here today?
 2. What topics would you be interested in learning about? E.g. Metal stabilization, reconstruction for photography, faunal identification, data rendering and writing for analysis, microbotanical, etc.
 3. What is your level of interest in a monthly volunteer program? Is a series of training that would build on each other something you could commit to?
 4. What would keep you from being involved?
 5. What do you think are the best days and times to schedule volunteer trainings and volunteer session? How long should the workshops be? What about the length of the full program?
 6. Do you have any recommendations on who to reach out to?
 7. Volunteer programs have issues with being one-sided - what would help balance those scales? What benefits would you like to see to make you feel involved? What do you think would encourage others to be involved?
 8. What are the ways that you would like your work to be recognized? Do you have suggested incentives?
 9. What would be a good group size for this project? What would the group make-up look like (trained volunteers only, newcomers, children, etc.)?
 10. If this is a program where each volunteer training session builds on one another, what would an end goal look like to you?
 11. Do you have any other comments, questions, or suggestions?
-

Responses for Question 1 revealed 10 participants attended the volunteer event because they had previous experience at an archeological volunteer event. One of the volunteers was a steward archeologist at the THC. Historical archeology and interest in the curation processes

also led individuals to attend the event. Overall, a majority of the responses revealed that the participants thought the program sounded interesting. One volunteer noted that the representation of archeology in mass media piqued their interest, leading them to sign up for the event.

Question 2 responses presented a wide range of topics the volunteers would be interested in learning about. The two general settings for the topics that the participants responded with were field-based and laboratory-based. The laboratory-based topics consisted of faunal identification, glass analysis, soil flotation, and temper analysis. The volunteers were interested in specific analyses that were relevant for learning more in-depth about animal bones, glassware, soils and ceramics. Those who responded with an interest in field-based topics listed site documentation and the excavation of units as trainings they would be interested in learning about. In addition, the participants displayed curiosity regarding curation processes.

Question 3 was the only question where the participants had a consensus for the question that was presented to them. All ten of the participants showed high interest in a monthly volunteer program. A monthly commitment for the volunteers was not too much to ask for and was suitable for their personal schedules.

The responses for Question 4 displayed various reasons as to why the participants would be hesitant to attend future archeological volunteer events. The commute to volunteer events seemed to play a role amongst the participants, due to the fact that the event was held roughly forty minutes outside of the nearest city, which is Houston, Texas. In addition to travel, the participants revealed that the season could lead to individuals feeling discouraged to attend. The harsh summers would lead individuals to feel less inclined to participate, especially if fieldwork

would be a part of their tasks. Another limitation that would discourage volunteers is a lack of advertisement. The participants made it clear that not everybody uses Facebook, which was one of the social media platforms used to recruit volunteers. One participant also stated that a disorganized event would keep them from being involved in future events. However, the same participant also mentioned this event was very well organized.

For Question 5, the answers revealed a consensus on how long the workshops should last. Most of the participants requested that the volunteer events should be at least a minimum of four hours. Regarding the best days to schedule the volunteer trainings, most of the responses displayed interest in the weekends. Saturday and Sunday were the ideal days for the volunteers to participate. One participant recommended that 10 AM should be the workshop's start time.

Question 6 did not receive as many responses (n=6) as the other previous questions. The participants did give a variety of responses concerning who the targeted audience should be for future archeological workshops. One response mentioned that social media platforms should be oriented towards different groups of people. Those with a previous interest in archeology shouldn't be the only ones who the program is geared towards. However, one participant had a differing response. The participant recommended that archeology clubs should be the target audience for the volunteer events. Two participants agreed that educational outreach programs should be notified about the volunteer events.

The responses for Question 7 displayed differing opinions on why the volunteer programs have issues with being one-sided. Participants suggests that word of mouth doesn't encourage outsiders to participate. The lack of advertisement can lead less individuals to attend the volunteer events. One participant mentioned that younger people should be targeted for

future workshops. Homeschooled individuals, college students, and Anthropology students are those that should be encouraged to attend the events. One response suggested that field trips be used as a mechanism for making individuals feel more involved.

For Question 8, the individuals were happy to suggest incentives that would make their work feel recognized. Stickers, badges, pins, and volunteer passport books were amongst the incentives. Another physical incentive that was agreed upon by the participants was coffee. The responses revealed that physical incentives were seen as great rewards for the hard work the volunteers conducted. However, one participant stated that a simple thank you by the person they are volunteering for would make their work feel recognized.

Question 9 revealed that a handful of participants did not want children to be a part of the group make-up for future volunteer events. However, one individual suggested that children ages 10-12 along with homeschooled individuals were ideal volunteers. In addition, the same participant mentioned newcomers and trained individuals should be partnered up together. Another participant suggested that children should attend events and be tasked with fieldwork, such as digging.

The responses for Question 10 displayed the varying end goals that each participant had in relation to the volunteer event. Most of the participants wanted to be a part of a story and feel a closer connection to their history. In addition, hands-on work in the field was an end goal for the volunteers. One participant had a specific end goal of assisting with an exhibition. The participant expressed that an exhibition would be a great way to recognize the volunteers for their assistance.

Question 11 responses showed that the volunteers were highly satisfied with their

experience at the volunteer event. The individuals felt motivated to attend future events. One response stated that the volunteer event was a great way to socialize and form connections with others. There were no negative comments, suggestions, or concerns for the event.

Public Survey Results

To elicit views and opinions from the general public on the limitations and benefits of the public's increased participation in public archeology, I developed an anonymous online survey. I reviewed the responses from the THC volunteer curation event questionnaire, and I wanted to ask similar questions to individuals who had no prior experience or exposure to public archeology. Following receipt of an exempt determination from the University of Maryland (UMD) IRB, I reached out to approximately 22 individuals through email and asked if they would like to participate in an anonymous online survey regarding public archeology. 18 out of 22 of those invited to participate responded. The questions asked were:

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1. What is your age?
 2. What is your occupation?
 3. Are you familiar with archeology (the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and analysis of artifacts and other physical remains)?
 4. Are you familiar with public archeology (engaging the public in archeology through lectures, interpretive signs, or tours of sites and excavations)?
 5. Were you aware that the public has a role in public archeology, and not just the archeologists?
 6. What do you think are the limitations for the public participating in public archeology?
 7. What do you think are the benefits for the public participating in public archeology?
 8. How do you think the public can help archeologists in public archeology?
 9. Are there incentives that you would like to receive for participating in public archeology, if yes, then what incentives? If no, respond "N/A" please.
 10. Would you be interested in participating in public archeological efforts (volunteer events, field schools, excavation sites, museums, etc.)?
-

Responses from Question 1 displayed a range in the age of the individuals who participated in the survey. The age range is between 25 to 82, which allowed for my results to depict a wide range of individuals from various generations. Question 2 would not have a direct impact on the analysis of my results, as I was primarily interested in identifying any patterns in job sectors based on the level of exposure to public archeology. The primary job sectors of individuals who participated in the survey were educators (n=4) and law professionals (n=4).

For Question 3, I wanted to learn if individuals were familiar with archeology. As expected, 50% of individuals responded “Yes” while 50% responded “Somewhat.” I was glad to review that none of the participants answered “No,” as I am sure the participants had been introduced to archeology at least once, whether that was in educational institutions or through depictions in mass media.

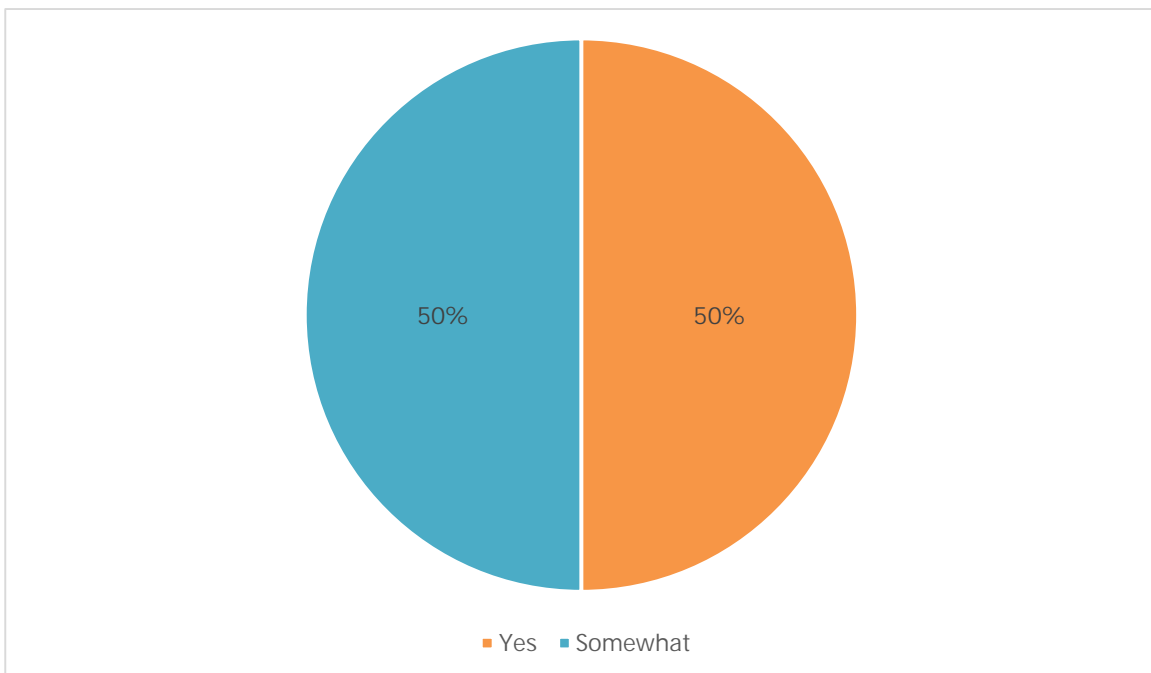


Figure 1. Question 3 Responses

The responses for Question 4 revealed that half (50%) of the respondents were somewhat familiar with public archeology. In the question, my definition of public archeology was engaging the public in archeology through lectures, interpretive signs, or tours of sites and excavations. The results reflect that a large majority of the participants are familiar with public archeology, as the exposure they have received in the past could have primarily been through museum tours or visits to historic sites. However, the results for Question 5 showed contrasting information, as 56% of the participants responded “No” when individuals were asked if they were aware that the public has a role in public archeology, and not just the archeologists. It was interesting to see how individuals were aware of public archeology, but not the role that they possess.

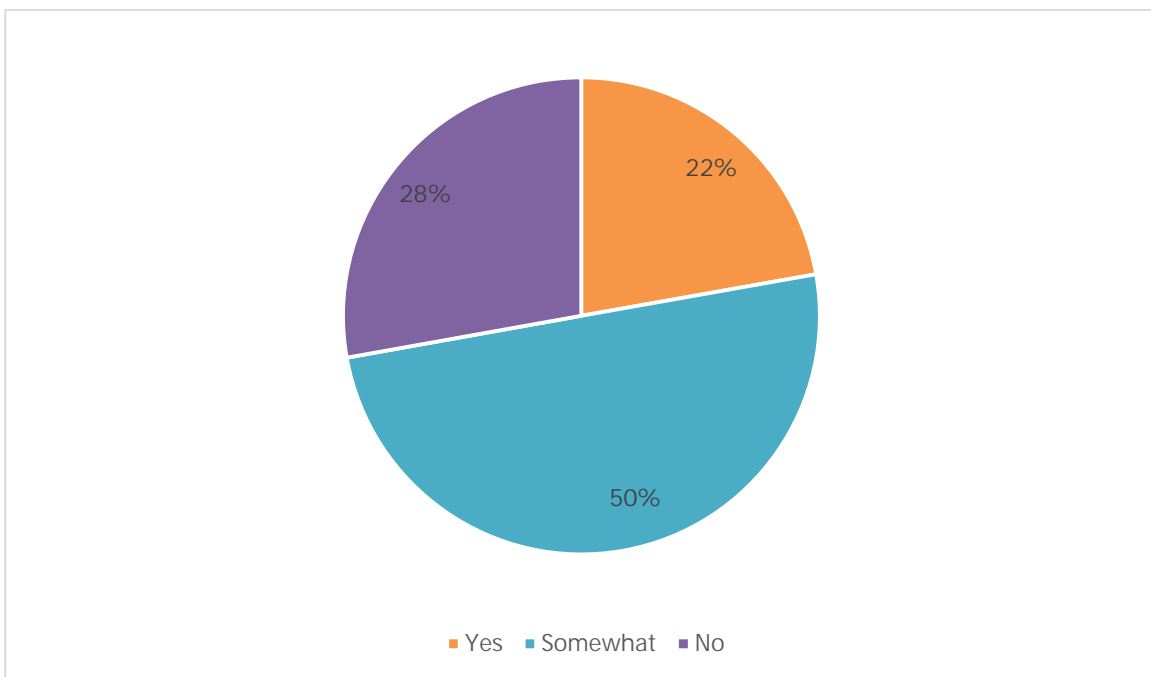


Figure 2. Question 4 Responses

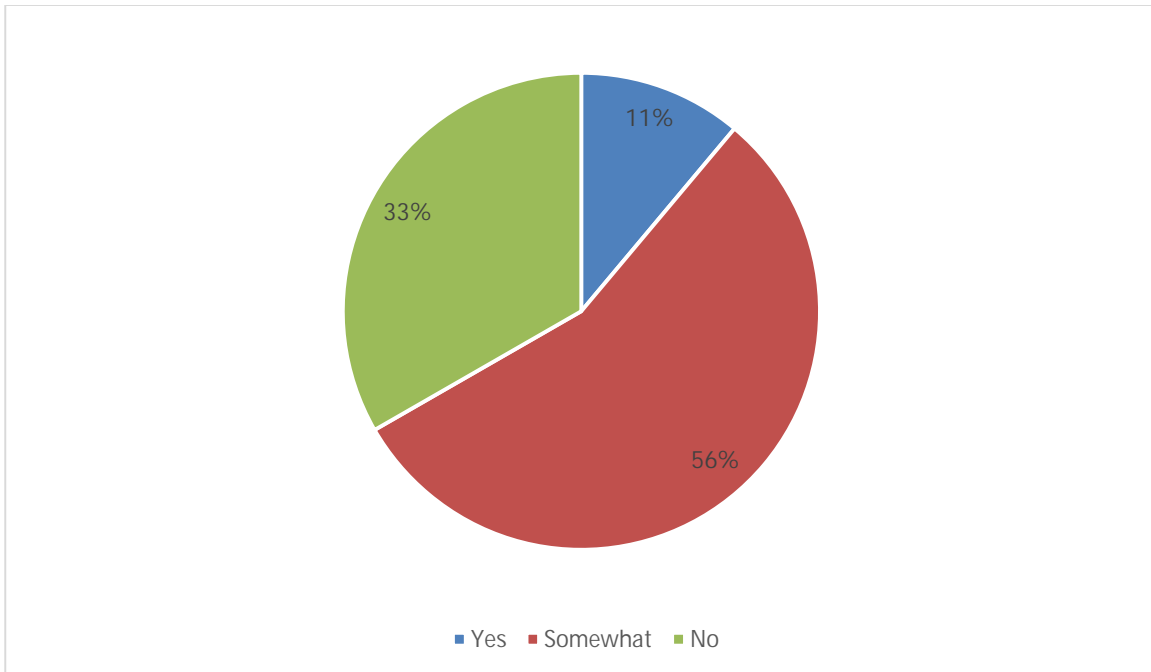


Figure 3. Question 5 Responses

Question 6 responses revealed vital opinions that would aid in my identification of what the public views as limitations for their participation in public archeology. A primary consensus for the public’s limited involvement in public archeological efforts was revealed to be a lack of awareness and knowledge. The public is unfortunately unable to increase their level of participation, due to little to no communication to the general public. Here are a few of the responses:

- “I think generally speaking that the public doesn’t really understand what archeology is”
- “Limited word of mouth/marketing”
- “The main limitation is the public's lack of general knowledge about archeology. This could be a possible risk of ruining the preservation process of specific items that could be collected & identified for historical means. There could also be a risk from the public's lack of knowledge over specific laws relating to

archeology. This may result in an issue that would hinder the process of collecting the "historical evidence" that is found. This correlates especially for the people who often "collect" items they think are free game, they might not know that it's important data for archeologists.”

- “Lack for knowledge and information regarding opportunities for participation”
- “Not knowing how or where to get involved, not knowing the benefits of participating, lack of education on archaeology in general, not knowing that public participation was even an option”

Additionally, other limitations that individuals identified were time, expenses, a lack of formal training, understanding theories exclusive to archeology, and safety precautions. One response that stood out was identifying a concern for theft of artifacts as a limitation for the public participating in public archeology. Although the public’s participation can be essential, it is worthy to note that there are looters who don’t have the best intentions when it comes to working with archeological efforts.

For Question 7, the responses identified numerous benefits for the public’s participation in public archeology. An increase in knowledge, involvement, and awareness were key aspects that the respondents made sure to note in their answers. If more people were to become aware of what public archeology entails, then perhaps more individuals would become more enticed to participate. These are some of the answers:

- “I think history is taken for granted and a lot is lost because people don’t care. Public participation would help ensure that we take responsibility for our part in history, educate the public and show the importance of preservation.”

- "Increase in historical awareness"
- "Knowledge is power, and it doesn't hurt to learn about and be exposed to different disciplines even if they don't practice or apply it themselves in their day-to-day lives."
- "More exposure and participation would lead to more involvement and awareness."
- "Sharing knowledge about history, learning to appreciate the past"

In addition, one aspect that respondents identified as a benefit was encouraging impacted groups and communities to have their voices heard. If the public was to increase their involvement, they could create a connection with communities and share information to continue preserving cultural heritage and ideologies. Here are a few of the responses:

- "Members of impacted groups gain a voice in how their culture is memorialized. They can also share information relevant to their culture that may be beyond the experience or understanding of the professionals working on a specific project."
- "More people could connect with and learn from the history of indigenous peoples, cultures, etc. Appreciating and preserving cultural heritage would be an important outcome."
- "Unique insights from non-professionals, greater public support for projects, more interest in seeking local opportunities"
- "A deeper understanding of history and different cultures, being more in touch with the world, could be a cool hobby for people, potentially could encourage people to advocate for different environmental protections"

Question 8 asked participants how they thought the public could help archeologists in public archeology. Similarly to the previous questions, the public responded with opinions that they can assist archeologists by spreading information, such as personal knowledge and resources. One individual responded with an emphasis on the connection the archeologists can build with previous landowners. In a sense, the public can provide archeologists with perspectives that they may not have considered in the first place. Additionally, increased participation was included amongst the responses, such as attending lectures and supporting local projects. By increasing the public's participation levels, a stronger relationship can be developed with archeologists. Thus, the public may feel more inclined to advocate for awareness and funding to continue working alongside archeologists. These are some of the answers:

- “By sharing specific cultural information that may not be understood by the professionals. By having a voice in how their culture is represented and preserved.”
- “Volunteer efforts, fund raising, and education could be ways that the public could help.”
- “Support funding, publicize local projects, influence local government support”
- “Providing perspectives from people that don't have a deep understanding of archeology the way archeologists do, giving insight on what the average person would care about regarding archeology, sharing information with other people about public archeology”
- “The public can help by providing historical information, such previous owners of land and their relation to the land.”

By asking Question 9, I wanted to view if there a correlation between receiving incentives for the public's participation in archeological efforts. A vast majority of the responses depicted that the participants had no interest in incentives. However, some individuals (n=8) noted that the shared knowledge and awareness through public archeology is an important aspect. Lastly, Question 10 presented the participants with a question regarding if they would be interested in participating in public archeological efforts, such as volunteer events, field schools, and museums. A large portion of the participants (n=12) responded "Yes," which was satisfying to review as an archeologist who is trying to engage with the public more.

Chapter 6: Analysis

The purpose of the volunteer event sponsored by the THC was to encourage the public to become more involved with archeological efforts and uncover why they haven't fulfilled its role in public archeology to its fullest potential. The questions developed in the questionnaire and anonymous online survey allowed me to identify how I can encourage the public to become more involved in public archeology.

Reluctance of the Public in Public Archeology

Limitations

When the volunteers at the event were asked what would limit their participation in future events, responses revealed several reasons. The commute to the location of the event served as a factor that would hinder volunteers from attending. Unfortunately, most historic sites tend to be on the outskirts of the nearest city. In this specific case, the event was roughly forty minutes away from the nearest city, which is Houston, Texas. Forty minutes may not be a long commute for some individuals, but if the event was held on a weekday, it would be very difficult for eager volunteers to make time within their schedule to attend. In addition, the hectic traffic that Houston itself presents would also serve as a limiting factor.

In addition to travel time serving as a limitation, participants revealed that the season would also be something they would have to consider before committing to future volunteer events. Luckily, the event was held towards the beginning of September. The weather in Houston during September is suitable for fieldwork and lab analysis. However, if the THC had decided to host the event in the middle of the summer, then there would not have been that

many participants who would have signed up. The intense heat and humidity that Houston provides would not encourage a large audience to attend the event. Therefore, the season can serve as a huge factor as to whether individuals will go out of their way to volunteer.

In addition, one participant responded that a lack of organization would be a factor that could trigger participants to avoid volunteering. The participant had prior experience volunteering at excavations and made it clear that she was very pleased with the setup of the event. Her experience at disorganized events before this one led her to become reluctant to join other archeological events. However, from the flyer that the THC posted, she was confident that this event would be successful.

Lack of Advertisement

First and foremost, a lack of advertisement for archeological efforts is one of the key issues contributing to the public's hesitation to collaborate with archeologists. If more individuals were to hear about public archeological efforts through popular social media apps such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, then more individuals would have an interest in contributing, as they would be able to see how accessible it is to volunteer. Advertisements can emphasize that a majority of the time, no experience is needed, it is free to join, and the volunteer event includes family-friendly activities. Additionally, when archeologists reach out to individuals through advertisements, they can enhance the work they do and volunteers can even share personal stories or experiences, making it more of a participatory appeal versus the typical academic appeal.

Responses to the questions asked in the questionnaire and anonymous online survey revealed that the public feels only archeologists and those with previous archeological

experience are aware of archeology-related events. The lack of communication between archeologists and the public leads to individuals feeling excluded and unaware of relevant events. Additionally, the lack of visibility makes the public feel like outsiders, when they should know that their voice in public archeology is more powerful than they think.

Participants of the volunteer event raised concerns about the lack of advertisement for the volunteer event. The event was posted on the TAS and THC Facebook pages. Usually, many individuals who have an interest in archeology will already be following the TAS or THC Facebook page. However, how are those who don't have any knowledge of what the THC even is supposed to get involved? The purpose of the event is to encourage the public to assist with archeological tasks; however, the target audience is still considerably limited. For the THC to encourage more individuals to become involved, they should try to reach out to a wider audience on multiple social media platforms. In addition, they could try to get in contact with their local news station or put an advertisement in a newspaper. Although many individuals nowadays are notified of events through digital platforms, archeologists should know that they should reach out to as many people as possible.

In addition, participants in the anonymous online survey view a lack of communication regarding findings and archeological efforts continues to make the public feel as if it is watching from the sidelines. For instance, archeologists tend to place emphasis on academic focus over public impact when they describe their findings. Archeologists need to publish their findings in academic journals; however, these mechanisms of communication are rather limited. Archeological societies and clubs have very niche targeted audiences and costly memberships. Thus, the public is less inclined to join these societies and clubs. It's much more convenient for the public to have free access to conferences, volunteer events, and excavations. Thus,

archeologists should understand the responsibility they have and take action to encourage the public to become involved.

Viewer vs. Participant

Historically, archeological events have been geared towards professional archeologists leading excavations, lab work, and curation processes. Thus, the public felt that its role was to serve as a viewer, rather than assisting with any archeological tasks. In fact, the IPSOS 2023 poll results revealed that 81% of individuals have confidence in the explanations that archeologists provide about our past. It is understandable that the public continues to feel like a viewer, as museums serve to display objects and information to educate the public. It is very rare that museums are interactive, due to the sensitive nature of the objects being displayed. However, this lack of connection that the public have with displayed objects only weakens the relationship that exists between them and the past.

Responses from the questionnaire at the event revealed that the participants were highly interested in attending future archeological volunteer events. In fact, all of the participants responded with an eager yes when asked if they would be able to commit to a once-a-month volunteer event. Similarly, a large majority of the participants in the anonymous survey (n=12) responded that they would be interested in participating in public archeological efforts such as volunteer events, field schools, excavation sites, and museums. Similarly to the IPSOS polls, the majority of the respondents are also in agreement that they would be very interested in participating in archeology-related activities, such as excavations or museums.

Target Audience

There seemed to be a consensus among the participants' responses to the seminar. However, one question that I'd like to analyze in depth is when the participants were asked, "What would the group make-up look like (trained volunteers only, newcomers, children, etc.)." Half of the participants made it very clear that they did not want children to be a part of the group make-up for archeological events. It is understandable as to why the participants wouldn't want children to participate. There would be safety concerns since, as mentioned previously, historic and archeological sites can be in remote locations. These remote locations may not be suitable for children, and there is a risk of them injuring themselves or damaging delicate artifacts.

In terms of artifacts, younger individuals may not fully understand the importance of the delicacy of artifacts. In addition, archeological events can be fairly complex. Children may lack a sense of interest and understanding of the event. If the event is geared towards older individuals, then the children may become restless or disruptive. However, several participants revealed that they felt children could benefit from the volunteer events, which leads me to a discussion of the benefits of the public's participation in public archeology.

On the contrary, 86% of Americans from the IPSOS 2023 poll believed that students should have exposure to archeology in their academic career. Whether that is through volunteer events or within educational institutions, Americans have realized the need for archeology to be targeted towards younger individuals.

Benefits

Exposure to Younger Individuals is Necessary

Some participants of the event felt that an ideal group makeup would consist of children. It is evident as to why children would be an ideal group, as grade-school experience can enable one to have positive opinions about archeology later in their life. One participant suggested that homeschooled children in particular should be the targeted audience of archeological volunteer events. Since most homeschooled children lack exposure to other individuals of their age, a volunteer event would be the perfect opportunity to expose them to a new field of study and socialize with one another. From my personal experience and the responses of the volunteers, archeology isn't a well-known nor taught field of study in Texas public education systems. By integrating archeology into school curriculums, students will receive more exposure to a dynamic way of fostering a closer relationship with their past and understanding human cultures and civilizations to this day. Now, it isn't easy to alter the framework for the curriculums taught in public education, which can explain the suggestion of one participant. One participant suggested that the volunteer events serve as an event that children can attend on field trips. By allowing children to attend these events as field trips, archeologists can expose children to a field of study they have never considered before. Since the volunteer events are free, the schools wouldn't have to worry too much about gathering the required funds for admission, such as if the children were to visit an aquarium, museum, or zoo. In terms of field trips, there are plenty of historic house museums and parks that conduct archeology programs for school groups at a discounted rate. Although, transportation and lunch costs will need to be considered for field trips.

Empowering Communities

Additionally, both participants of the volunteer event and survey viewed another benefit of involving the public in archeological efforts as fostering a deeper understanding and connection of one's legacy and culture. Responses from my anonymous online survey revealed that impacted members can gain a voice and raise awareness and provide unique insights to archeologists. In particular, artifact analysis is a great way to allow individuals to create a stronger connection with their past, as they are able to gain a physical understanding of how their culture came to be to this day. Essentially, individuals are able to create a sense of cultural identity for themselves. As an archeologist, my main duty is to preserve and protect cultural materials and sites. However, I know that I cannot do that on my own. I want individuals to understand the power they have when it comes to decision-making in archeological efforts.

When individuals were asked in the 2023 IPSOS poll what archeology was important to, two key groups they identified were their heritage and community. It is evident amongst fairly all of the individuals in the THC questionnaire, anonymous survey, and IPSOS polls that archeology serves to protect and empower communities. In a sense, archeology gives a voice to those who may be afraid to use it or can address a wider target audience.

In order to gather information and pinpoint what would continue to motivate individuals to participate and volunteer, I asked if they had any incentives in mind they would like to receive for their work. Nearly all of the volunteers said that coffee would suffice. Additionally, more than half of the participants agreed that stickers, pins, badges, and stamps in a volunteer passport book would be appreciated. It was clear that the participants were also included in physical incentives. However, in the responses for the survey, approximately 10 participants

decline incentives for their efforts. Those who provided a suggestion seemed to be interested in non-physical incentives, such as knowledge or awareness.

When participants at the event were asked if this was a program where each volunteer training session builds on one another, their end goals varied. One individual wanted to learn as much as they could, while others were focused on receiving hands-on training in the field. However, one individual's response stuck out to me. They responded stating that they want to "become a part of history." I was pleased to let them know that they are more than capable of becoming a part of history, whether or not they attend archeological volunteer events. I told them that if they continue to follow their passion for archeology and inform others of what the field of study entails, they are spreading the word and advocating for an underfunded study.

Increased Advocacy

One question that was not asked to the participants at the volunteer event was if they thought archeological volunteer efforts with the public could increase advocacy and funding. However, the responses to various questions displayed the public's enthusiasm to get the word out and encourage others to become involved. When asked if they had any recommendations on who to reach out to, the volunteers were happy to give suggestions. One participant suggested that the THC get in contact with educational outreach programs. Another participant said that social media platforms should post about the events but targeted towards different groups.

However, when participants of my anonymous online survey were asked what the benefits of the public's participation in public archeology would be, individuals identified funding as a vital aspect. One participant noted that a benefit would be increased funding for preserving and finding new sites, which is plausible. In addition, one participant noted that the

public could work alongside archeologists for fundraising, which would spread more awareness of getting others to volunteer.

Overall, I was pleased with the responses I received, because I could tell that the volunteers wanted to increase advocacy, whether that be by exposing children to archeology or reaching out to those who had no knowledge as to what archeology even entails.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The Public's Role in Public Archeology

Historically, accredited and professional archeologists have dominated the realm of archeology. The public was viewed as onlookers from the sidelines, soaking in the information that archeologists would reveal from the latest findings and excavations. However, in the 1970s, archeologists realized the public deserved to have a role as an active participant in archeological efforts.

However, there were limitations placed upon the public, hindering them from easily participating alongside archeologists. For instance, a lack of advertisement for public archeological efforts is persistent. The public is rarely notified of archeological conferences and public archeological volunteer events. If the public wants to get involved to help archeologists, it seems as if they must receive notice from word or mouth, or from individuals who have some prior exposure to archeology.

Additionally, most individuals are not even aware of their role in public archeology. Most of the general public is under the assumption that they are the consumers, while the archeologists are the active participants. Even when the public is aware of its role in public archeology, they are hesitant to participate, due to their lack of credentials. A lack of credentials makes the public feel as if it isn't qualified or possess the knowledge similar to working and professional archeologists. Time and expenses also serve as a limitation, as the general public may believe they need to pay to work alongside archeologists, or the limited time they are able to provide isn't valuable.

However, as an active participant in public archeological efforts, the public can serve numerous purposes. The benefits of motivating individuals to work alongside archeologists include an increase in shared knowledge, empowering the voices of communities, increased funding, and raising awareness. The mechanism of focusing on various perspectives and marginalized groups ties back into post-processualism, as public archeology values different viewpoints and interpretations. By using a post-processual framework, archeologists have an open mind when listening to local communities and personal stories.

The more individuals that join alongside archeologists, the more individuals become aware of archeology. Unfortunately, archeology isn't a well-known nor funded discipline of study. However, if more individuals were to receive exposure to archeology, especially at a young age, then people will understand what the work really entails, unlike the dangerous life that Indiana Jones portrays. Overall, public archeology encourages the public to foster a deeper connection with and understanding of the past, present, and future.

Comparison of Previous SAA Polls and Anonymous Survey Results

After conducting my anonymous online survey and comparing the results of the polls conducted by the SAA, I realized that the public is more interested in archeological efforts than I thought. Although only 56% of individuals were familiar with archeology according to the 2023 IPSOS poll, none of the respondents from my survey answered with "no" when asked if they were familiar with archeology. In the 2018 IPSOS poll, nearly 58% of Americans answered that they learn about archeology through classes and textbooks. It was evident in the results of my anonymous online survey that individuals did not make note of their exposure to archeology from classrooms, as responses showed that a lack of advertisement served as a

limitation for a lack of participation.

My review of the polls and surveys further suggested that individuals are open to the idea of learning more about archeology. Only two of the respondents from my online survey answered “no” when asked if they would like to participate in public archeological efforts. These results coincided with the results of the 2023 IPSOS poll, as roughly one in four Americans say they are not interested in archeology. Overall, I began to realize that the public’s interest in archeology is slowly growing.

Recommendations

In terms of the next steps, I do have the aspirations of setting up various ways that I can reach out to a wider audience, in regard to educating others about what archeology entails. I would like to work with the outreach department at my firm to see if I can visit schools or universities to educate individuals on how they can volunteer alongside archeologists. I believe that children and adolescents are the key target audience I would like to focus on, as they are the growing voice of our future.

Moving towards suggestions, the recommendations I propose firstly are to archeologists. In order to increase participation levels, archeologists need to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for the public. Archeologists need to strive to involve the public, especially at conferences and other archeological-related events. Archeologists should aim to partner up with local organizations, such as when environmental firms present at my local Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) during October for Texas Archeological Month.

Limited marketing and advertisement for public participation will lead archeologists to

ignore or hinder shared personal knowledge from impacted groups and individuals. There is no one truth in archeology, so archeologists need to continue to have an open mind. Therefore, archeologists should enhance their communication and outreach efforts. Archeologists can easily do so by uploading blogs, podcasts or videos to showcase the work that they have conducted.

Likewise, archeologists must strive to foster a connection with individuals at a young age, as limited exposure as a child will lead individuals to weaken their relationship with archeologists. Since archeology isn't a curriculum taught across most Texas educational institutions, archeologists should attempt to make volunteer events geared towards younger children. Event organization for public archeological efforts should be noted, as programs aimed at children should be tailored to that specific audience. In terms of public events, archeologists should aim to have a certain mix of participation and learning, such as encouraging the volunteers to work hand in hand with archeologists over coffee and participation awards.

To increase engagement, if archeologists can, they should visit educational institutions to inform and raise awareness of topics pertaining to archeology or anthropology. I have a coworker who gave a presentation about CRM to prospective students at his alma mater, where he talked about the work he does. After he gave the presentation, prospective students reached out to him with further questions and inquiries regarding if the company we work at is hiring. It is very important that us archeologists take the initiative to put ourselves out there, as students may not get the exposure they need to learn about public archeology.

Another great mechanism of increasing engagement is by developing interactive tours

of museums or historical sites. Interactive tours can appeal to a large audience, as participants can access these educational platforms across various devices, such as phones, tablets or computers. If individuals are able to participate in public archeological efforts in the comfort of their own home, then they could help spread the word.

Moving back to the discussion of advertisement, effective publicity for public events should be a high priority for archeologists. Archeologists need to remind themselves that although they find the work they do interesting, they need to provide volunteers with reasons as to why they should join. There are a handful of reasons as to why volunteers should attend archeological events, such as the event being free, expanding one's knowledge, and building a sense of community within the volunteer groups.

Lastly, I have recommendations for the public. In order for archeologists to continue their work, they need the support of the public. Archeology is not a well-known field of study, which can lead to a lack of funds for developing public volunteer events. Therefore, fundraising can have a positive impact on archeologists, such as crowdfunding. If individuals were to develop fundraisers on platforms such as GoFundMe and show the impact that archeological work has on communities, then it is probable individuals will be willing to donate.

If individuals have any interest in archeology, they should reach out to archeological societies to see how they can get involved or search archeological events happening nearby through the internet or social media. Individuals should know that they can get involved from the comfort of their couch, as volunteer tasks are available to them on various platforms. Data entry and archival review are free tasks that individuals can conduct without worrying about leaving their home. The public should also try to support and visit archeological sites and

museums. At one of their visits, they might even be able to make a connection with someone who can point them in the right direction, in terms of volunteering for public archeological events.

Although archeologists can benefit from fundraisers, the public should know that it is not expected to pay at public archeological events. The purpose of these events is to provide individuals with knowledge, with no monetary value attached. Most of public archeological efforts are family-friendly, so families shouldn't be discouraged by fear of how much it would cost to attend the volunteer events.

Additionally, lack of credentials or knowledge of archeology should never serve as a limitation. In fact, most public archeological events are geared towards individuals who have no prior knowledge or lack expertise in archeological topics. The purpose of these volunteer events is to provide you with a new experience and help you expand your knowledge on archeology.

Overall, archeologists can make public archeology effective when they center the role of the public from the start. They need to make research and efforts accessible for participants of all ages, to build strong and long-term relationships when showcasing their work. It's important for the public to realize that these relationships can build a sense of trust between archeologists and local communities. In summary, archeology is a welcoming field of study, happy to encourage the power of the people.

Appendix A: IRB Exemption



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DATE: February 19, 2025

TO: Nina Diaz
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [2278904-1] Power to the People: The Community's Role in Public Archeology

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: February 19, 2025

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category #45CFR46.104(d)(2)(i-ii).

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or irb@umd.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

Appendix B: THC Event Seminar Responses

Question	Response
1. What brought you here today?	Roommate
	Previous volunteer experience
	Steward archeologist at the THC
	Interested in the curation process and socializing with others interested in archeology
	Like historic archeology and have prior experience
	Direct contact with an archeologist who works for the THC
	Sounded like an interesting program
	Interested after seeing archeology in mass media
	Interested in archeology and have respect for the work archeologists conduct
	Education
2. What topics would you be interested in learning about?	How interpreters can use the collections for exhibits
	Fieldwork and lab work
	Photography and conservation processes
	Labeling, writing for analysis, and temper analysis
	Faunal identification, want exposure to human vs. faunal remains, different types of slips for ceramics
	Glassware analysis
	Soil flotation and pollen analysis
	Site work (excavation level work) and site documentation (digital input)
	Human connection
	Curation processes

<p>3. What is your level of interest in a monthly volunteer program? Is a series of training that would build on each other something you could commit to?</p>	Very interested
	Yes I am interested
	I have interest
	Once a month commitment is doable
	Yes I am very interested
	Yes I can commit to that
	Highly interested
	Interested; Hands on training
	Have interest; Advocational archeology
	Interested
<p>4. What would keep you from being involved?</p>	Commute
	Varies on the topic
	Traveling; Handi-cap
	Commute, time of day (work as a teacher)
	Disorganization (this event was very organized)
	Season (summer is too hot)
	Lack of communication with archeological groups, PSAs becoming less popular
	Not everybody uses Facebook for getting nieces out, leave out the “dirty work” in reality
	Lack of advertising
<p>5. What do you think are the best days and times to schedule volunteer trainings and volunteer sessions? How long should the workshops be? What about the length of the full program?</p>	3-4 hours (take into account the commute; Saturdays)
	Saturdays and Sundays
	10 AM start time; Weekends
	Weekends; 3-4 hours, develop buddy system to increase more exposure
	Weekends; 3-4 hours
	Weekends

6. Do you have recommendations on who to reach out to?	Social media platforms oriented towards different groups
	Archeology clubs
	Point of contact on the THC, educational outreach programs
	Proper PR, schools
7. Volunteer programs have issues with being one-sided - what would help balance those scales? What benefits would you like to see to make you feel involved? What do you think would encouraged others to be involved?	You need the passion
	Word of mouth doesn't encourage outsiders, you need to encourage younger people
	Talk to people who have been here before
	Advertisement
	Word of mouth, homeschooled kids could benefit from events, reach out to community colleges, reach out to Anthropology students
	Educational outreach programs
	Speakers during classes, welcoming staff
	Field trips
8. What are ways that you would like your work to be recognized? Do you have suggested incentives?	Pins, stickers, badges (help increase experience exposure)
	Pins, stickers, volunteer passport book
	Coffee
	Coffee
	Stewards newsletter
	Pin, badge, whoever you're working with to say thank you
	Stickers
	Volunteer passport book

<p>9. What would be a good group size for this project? What would the group make-up look like (trained volunteers only, newcomers, children, etc.)?</p>	No children, ages 12 and up, work geared towards children
	No children, only newcomers with passion, highschoolers could get exposure
	Difficult for kids
	Highschoolers (home-schooler), newcomers and trained volunteers only, ages 10-12
	No children
	No children
	Different sections (children and adults)
	Orientation for newcomers
	Mix of everyone, need someone with authority
<p>10. If this was a program where each volunteer training session builds on one another, what would an end goal look like to you?</p>	Learn as much as you can
	Gratifying
	Exhibition (recognition for volunteers), advertisement
	Shown work in a report, tell a story from start to finish
	Take a part of the whole process
	Became a part of history
	Hands-on work in the physical field
	Fieldwork
	Start in the first process to the end (fieldwork to lab work), set up buddy system with experiences mentor
<p>11. Do you have any other comments, questions, or suggestions?</p>	More times at the stations would be nice
	4 hours
	Very organized and very fun
	Good to have objectives designated
	Knew what was expected of ourselves
	Promotes socializing and forming connections

Appendix C: THC Event Station Guides

Station 1: Rough Sorting

At this station, your main goal will be to take a close look at the historic ceramics in the artifact bags. The goal within this station is to separate artifacts into three broad categories that can be analyzed separately later. A new temporary lab label will be created for the new categories within one artifact bag.

The artifact categories are as listed:

- 1) Diagnostic Artifact - An artifact that can be dated to a particular time, cultural group, or illustrate a specific design/technique/type (notify your lab supervisor if identified)
 - Rim sherds
 - Neck sherds
 - Sherds with handles
 - Base sherds
 - Decorated sherds
- 2) Semi-Diagnostic Artifact - An artifact that may illustrate a specific design/technique that can be used to date it to a particular time or cultural group (notify your lab supervisor if identified)
- 3) Non-Diagnostic Artifact - An artifact that lacks design/technique traits used to date to a time period or cultural group

STEPS:

1. **First, grab one artifact bag. You will be working with one artifact bag at a time.**
2. **Empty out all of the contents of the bag in a careful manner (Some historic ceramics can be fragile!)**
3. **Count the number of artifacts in the bag and check this count against the label.**
4. **Please make sure the lab count reflects the field count (the count listed on the label). If you notice any discrepancies or differences, please let a lab supervisor know.**
5. **Once the counts and other information have been checked, it is time to start the “rough sorting” process!**
6. **As described above, there will be three categories you can separate the artifacts into: Diagnostic, Semi-Diagnostic, and Non-Diagnostic**
7. **Take a general look at the historic ceramics to see if you notice any specific designs or techniques.**
8. **Using the printed guides provided at your station, pay closer attention to color, designs, and texture.**
9. **If you notice any features or characteristics on the historic ceramics that stick out to you, ask a lab supervisor for additional assistance.**
10. **Begin to group the artifacts from your one artifact bag into the rough sorting categories.**

11. If you are unable to identify any characteristics that would lead you to identify the historic ceramics as “diagnostic,” that is okay!
12. If you have more than one category after rough sorting, then you will make a new temporary label for the artifacts.
13. Make a new temporary lab label for your roughly sorted artifacts with the new information from sorting (along with the information that was on the original label).

Old Label Example:

Field Specimen 10
Site 1234
Date: 8/20/2024
Count: 12

New Labels Example:

Field Specimen
Site 1234
Date: 8/20/2024
Count: 2
Diagnostic

Field Specimen
Site 1234
Date: 8/20/2024
Count: 10
Non-Diagnostic

14. Once the artifacts have been assigned a new temporary lab label, go ahead and place the artifacts in a new ziploc bag with their new label.
15. Lastly, if you have more than one category after rough sorting, place the two new bags with the new temporary lab labels in each bag, into one big bag.
16. Now that you have separated the artifact(s) into categories (if applicable) and placed them back in their correct bag, you can repeat the steps for your next artifact bag!

At the end of this activity, there will be a large amount of new ziploc bags with historic ceramics. Please make sure that you place the new temporary lab label in the new ziploc bags.

Station 2: Lights! Camera! Action!

At this station, your main goal is to photograph artifacts. By taking photographs of artifacts, we can record in close detail the appearance and design of an artifact, along with sharing our findings with other archaeologists and the public.

Most artifacts that will be photographed are diagnostic artifacts. However, it is also a great idea to take photographs of semi-diagnostic and non-diagnostic. This will allow us to gain a bigger picture of the historic ceramic collection we are working with.

The artifact categories are as listed:

- 1) Diagnostic Artifact - An artifact that can be dated to a particular time, cultural group, or illustrate a specific design/technique/type (notify your lab supervisor if identified)
 - Rim sherds
 - Neck sherds
 - Sherds with handles
 - Base sherds
 - Decorated sherds
- 2) Semi-Diagnostic Artifact - An artifact that may illustrate a specific design/technique that can be used to date it to a particular time or cultural group (notify your lab supervisor if identified)
- 3) Non-Diagnostic Artifact - An artifact that lacks design/technique traits used to date to a time period or cultural group

STEPS:

1. **First, grab one artifact bag. You will be working with one artifact bag at a time.**
2. **Empty out all of the contents of the bag in a careful manner (Some historic ceramics can be fragile!)**
3. **Carefully orient/place down the artifacts in the backdrop photograph booth where they are all individually visible.**
4. **Grab a scale bar that is relative to the size of the artifact(s).**
5. **If you are working with multiple artifacts being photographed, then you may place a large scale horizontally to take an overview photograph of the historic ceramics.**
6. **To ensure you know what artifacts you are taking a photograph of, place the label close to the artifact(s) (It's a good idea to place the label below the scale bar).**

7. **By placing the artifact label within the camera frame, the individual who analyses the photographs later can identify which artifact was photographed (They can crop the label from the photograph later on).**
8. **Make sure that when you are placing the artifacts in the frame, there aren't any glares and that the camera is focused.**
9. **If you take a photograph that is blurry, try again for a clearer shot!**
10. **Ideally, we would like a photograph of the front and back of the artifact(s).**
11. **Take one photograph of the front of the artifact(s).**
12. **Flip the artifact(s) and take another photograph.**
13. **Optional: For a third photograph, you can take a photo of the side of a historic ceramic to get details of the temper and thickness (We want as much detail as we can get in a photograph).**
14. **If there is a diagnostic feature (ex: maker's mark or design) on a historic ceramic, try to get as close as you can to snap a clear photograph.**
15. **Once you have taken your photographs and are pleased with the results, place the label back in the artifact bag with the artifact(s) carefully.**
16. **Now that you have photographed the artifact(s) and placed them back in their correct bag, you can repeat the steps for your next artifact bag!**

Station 3: Checking Against Paper Inventory

At this station, your main goal is to check the artifacts against the paper inventory. The purpose of checking against the paper inventory is to ensure that there aren't any missing artifacts / notate any inconsistencies.

In addition, the new edits that you make on the paper inventory will reflect the changes made in the rough sorting station.

For example, if an artifact bag has 10 historic ceramics, and was separated into 2 categories, it needs to be notated in the updated inventory that there are now 2 categories, and the counts have been separated into 2 categories.

- 1) First, grab one artifact bag. You will be working with one artifact bag at a time.**
- 2) If the artifact bag has multiple smaller bags (result of separating field specimen bag into multiple categories from rough sorting), work with one small bag at a time.**
- 3) Empty out all of the contents of the bag in a careful manner (Some historic ceramics can be fragile!)**
- 4) Check the information on the label against the information in the field specimen inventory.
(Columns you will go through to check against the label)**
- 5) If there are new categories made from the rough sorting station, notate the new categories with a red pen.**
- 6) Next, notate the new counts with a red pen.**
- 7) Then, notate the change in weights with a red pen.**
- 8) In order to update the weights, use a scale bar to measure the weights to the nearest tenth.**
- 9) If the counts are different and there were no new categories made, make the necessary correction with a red pen.**
- 10) If the paper inventory matches the count and other information on the field specimen label, highlight the row on the paper inventory with a yellow highlighter.**
- 11) Once you are done checking the artifacts against the paper inventory, carefully place them back into the ziploc bag.**
- 12) Now that you have checked the artifact(s) against the paper inventory and placed them back in their correct bag, you can repeat the steps for your next artifact bag!**

Appendix D: Anonymous Online Survey Responses

Request for Consent: By [clicking 'I agree'], you indicate that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read the attached consent form in the recruitment email or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

I agree

1. What is your age?

2. What is your occupation?

54 Paralegal
27 Media supervisor

27 HIV prevention specialist

25 Teacher
26 Media Planner

59 Insurance executive

53 college professor
80 retired

82 professor emeritus

25 Paralegal

54 Attorney
27 Administrative assistant

25 Background Analyst
51 Demolition and Waste Removal
57 teacher
74 Psychologist
63 Retired dental hygienist
27 Paralegal

3. Are you familiar with archeology (the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains)?

Yes
Somewhat

Yes
Somewhat
Somewhat

Yes

Somewhat
Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes
Somewhat

Yes
Somewhat
Somewhat
Somewhat
Somewhat
Yes

4. Are you familiar with public archeology (engaging the public in archeology through lectures, interpretive signs, or tours of sites and excavations)?

5. Were you aware that the public has a role in public archeology, and not just the archeologists?

Yes	Somewhat
Somewhat	Somewhat
Yes	No
No	Somewhat
Somewhat	No
Yes	Yes
Somewhat	Somewhat
Somewhat	Somewhat
Yes	Somewhat
Somewhat	No
Somewhat	No
No	No
Somewhat	No
No	No
Somewhat	No
No	No
Somewhat	Yes

6. What do you think are the limitations for the public participating in public archeology?

I think generally speaking that the public doesn't really understand what archeology is
Limited word of mouth/marketing

I believe a limitation is respecting sites, the public would need some sort of monitoring system.

The main limitation is the public's lack of general knowledge about archeology. This could be a possible risk of ruining the preservation process of specific items that could be collected & identified for historical means. There could also be a risk from the public's lack of knowledge over specific laws relating to archeology. This may result in an issue that would hinder the process of collecting the "historical evidence" that is found. This correlates especially for the people who often "collect" items they think are free game, they might not know that it's important data for archeologists.

Lack of awareness

Time. Expense. Lack of understanding of the impact of specific archeological projects on an individual's culture or history.

Lack of formal training could be a limitation as well as ensuring ethical consideration for respecting the rights of indigenous communities. I would think funding could be a potential limitation as well.

Lack for knowledge and information regarding opportunities for participation

Awareness of opportunities and proximity to sites and lack of encouragement from professionals in the field

Understanding of the terminology and theories exclusive to archeology.

Access to sites for tours and excavation. Also knowledge of what public archeology is.
Safety and precautions would be a cause for concern with the participation of the public.

Not knowing how or where to get involved, not knowing the benefits of participating, lack of education on archaeology in general, not knowing that public participation was even an option

I think the limitations would be a concern for theft of artifacts.

Not sure

Life is busy!

Not sure

Limitations for the public participating in public archeology may be lack of expertise

7. What do you think are the benefits for the public participating in public archeology?

I think history is taken for granted and a lot is lost because people don't care. Public participation would help ensure that we take responsibility for our part in history, educate the public and show the importance of preservation.

Heightened knowledge regarding the topic

Benefits would include and increase in interest to archaeology, potentially more funds for preserving + finding new sites, and increase public knowledge on artifacts and history.

Members of the public could become educated on archaeological processes, and possibly help to preserve areas that need to be assessed by archeologists. If more people are educated, the benefit of preserving areas becomes greater.

Knowledge in history

Members of impacted groups gain a voice in how their culture is memorialized. They can also share information relevant to their culture that may be beyond the experience or understanding of the professionals working on a specific project.

More people could connect with and learn from the history of indigenous peoples, cultures, etc. Appreciating and preserving cultural heritage would be an important outcome.

Increase in historical awareness

Unique insights from non-professionals, greater public support for projects, more interest in seeking local opportunities

Knowledge is power, and it doesn't hurt to learn about and be exposed to different disciplines even if they don't practice or apply it themselves in their day-to-day lives.

Learning about history and the development of humankind. It would give people a better understanding of the world and modern man's place in history.

More exposure and participation would lead to more involvement and awareness.

A deeper understanding of history and different cultures, being more in touch with the world, could be a cool hobby for people, potentially could encourage people to advocate for different environmental protections

The benefits could be more help in excavating the grounds.

Sharing knowledge about history, learning to appreciate the past

Stimulation, we learn through human history.

More knowledge of our history

Some benefits may be increased community engagement and public awareness

8. How do you think the public can help archeologists in public archeology?

Hopefully thoughtful questions will inspire avenues of research or preservation that weren't originally undertaken.

Assist with personal knowledge certain guests/public members may have

Spread information on events, classes and such being held. Creating a sense of community in public archeology would be a great help.

The public can help by preserving areas and abiding by any laws that protect artifacts in their original state.
Spreading information and resources

By sharing specific cultural information that may not be understood by the professionals. By having a voice in how their culture is represented and preserved.

Volunteer efforts, fund raising, and education could be ways that the public could help.

Increased participations and visitation of archeological sites as well as providing feedback on visited sites

Support funding, publicize local projects, influence local government support

I'm not sure. I don't think most people understand what exactly archeology is beyond, "dinosaurs."

By providing what types of archeology they would be interested in learning about. Also through dialogue it can teach archeologists where the gaps are in the public's knowledge.

The public could inform the archeologists of historical findings and or landmarks that could lead to so much

Providing perspectives from people that don't have a deep understanding of archeology the way archeologists do, giving insight on what the average person would care about regarding archeology, sharing information with other people about public archeology

The public can help by providing historical information, such previous owners of land and their relation to the land.

Attend lectures

Engage in participation; contribute; attend events.

Allow them to do their job. Possibly assist if needed.

Public can help by volunteering their time or knowledge

9. Are there incentives that you would like to receive for participating in public archeology, if yes, then what incentives? If no, respond "N/A" please.

N/A

N/A

n/a

N/A

N/a

N/A

N/A

Broader publication regarding opportunities to visit sites and learn

Community based programs

I like learning new things

I think access to more sites for tours and exploration.

N/A

N/A, I think it would be incentive enough to get to participate and learn

N/A

N/A

Awareness through communication of events would help.

Knowing what they are finding would be satisfying.

Maybe some type of certification/recognition

10. Would you be interested in participating in public archeological efforts (volunteer events, field schools, excavation sites, museums, etc.)?

Yes

Yes

Somewhat

No

No

Yes

Somewhat

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

No

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

Somewhat

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