NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF STATE ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE FORM HANDBOOK

VERSION VIII

-February 2023-

Update

The North Carolina Office of State Archaeology (OSA) has developed forms for recording historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. The forms provide a standardized method for recording site information in a format suitable for digital access and management. This guide outlines the basic procedures for recording archaeological sites with these forms by professional archaeologists operating through cultural resource management or academic research programs. In the following sections instructions are given for how to request permanent site numbers and how to fill out the appropriate forms.

Requesting Permanent Numbers

All archaeological sites identified as a result of field investigations receive a trinomial site number to be included on a completed OSA site form submitted for compliance review. Any artifacts to be curated with the OSA Research Center require an OSA-assigned accession number. Please make requests for site and/or accession numbers by email to site.numbers@ncdcr.gov. Questions about requests may be emailed or call 919-814-6558.

Please do not send partially completed site forms as a means of making a request. Completed site forms should be submitted after the requested site numbers and applicable accession numbers have been assigned.

When requesting state site numbers from the OSA, please provide the information below. It is helpful to provide this information in a table format, such as an Excel spreadsheet. The Site Number Request Table may be used as a template when submitting a request for permanent site numbers.

- Project or temporary site number for each site
- County in which the site is located
- Age of the site: prehistoric, historic, or both
- The sites for which an artifact accession number is being requested
- A topographic map(s) clearly noting site location(s) and boundaries, map name (i.e. quadrangle name), and county. If all sites legibly fit on a single map, one may be submitted for multiple sites.
- GIS information in the form of shapefiles (preferred), kmz/kml files, or the UTMs and datum for each site
  We request both a map and shapefiles to ensure the most accurate plotting of sites in our GIS record. If you choose to submit shapefiles or kmz/kml files, we do not require the submission of UTMs. Please review the following section for how to best submit GIS data when requesting site numbers.

Submitting GIS Data

When requesting permanent state site numbers, we recommend submitting GIS data for all sites. To reduce the errors in location accuracy we prefer receiving boundaries (i.e., polygons) of archaeological sites, surveyed areas and/or Areas of Potential Effect (APE). The following is guidance for ease in submitting appropriate GIS data to OSA.

- Please use WGS 1984 Web Mercator (auxiliary sphere). This is the projection used by OSA, but we will also accept NAD 1983 North Carolina State Plane (Feet) or NAD 1927 UTM Zones 16, 17, or 18 (site form still requires UTMs).
- Zip GIS data into one file for transmission. For example, whether you are submitting one shapefile or three shapefiles, there should be one zipped file submitted. Zipping shapefiles ensures that all associated files (.prj, .dbf, .shp, etc.) are included. Tables and maps do not need to be zipped with GIS data.
- Sites should be grouped into one shapefile of like feature type (e.g. sites recorded as polygons should be merged into one shapefile; sites recorded as points in another). This limits the amount of processing done by OSA staff.
- Do not merge dissimilar data (e.g. APEs with sites).
- Please identify the site(s) by including the temporary site number in the attribute table.
- Some email providers may not allow .zip files as attachments. If this is the case, rename the file extension by adding "_rename". Example: "sites.zip" becomes "sites.zip_rename".
- In addition to GIS data, we request a map of site locations to ensure that sites are accurately plotted when they are imported into our GIS record.

Which Form to Use

Currently there are two forms used by the Office of State Archaeology for the recording of site information.

Form VIII

This is a general-purpose form designed to record detailed site information for primary management and planning purposes. Form VIII should be used under the following conditions:

a. To record all previously unrecorded historic and prehistoric archaeological sites.
b. To record all site revisits or updates. Instances that fall into this category include but are not limited to subsurface testing and excavation at the site.

Cemetery Form

Designed to stand alone, the Cemetery Form is used to record all historic cemeteries that have been abandoned (without interment) for a minimum of 15 years. If the cemetery occurs in connection with a historic site complex or a prehistoric site, then Site Form VIII should be completed as well.

Filling Out the Forms

When filling out either Form VIII or the Cemetery Form, it imperative that the information entered is both complete and accurate. This is particularly important since the forms are used for archival and research purposes. Please complete all fields with accurate information, as appropriate. Forms that do not contain adequate information will be returned for completion.

The following is a field-by-field guide to the types of information required to accurately fill out Archaeological Site Form VIII.

Project Information

1. STATE SITE NUMBER: This field is for the permanent site number assigned by the OSA, as the central site data repository (since January 1983). This should be filled in after permanent site numbers have been obtained from the OSA.
2. SITE NAME(S): Record any name by which the site may be known. If there are two or more site names, a semi-colon should be used to separate site names.
3. OTHER SITE #: This field primarily applies to site numbers assigned prior to 1983 by institutions or individuals other than the OSA. It is included on the form to allow cross-referencing between these earlier designations and current permanent site numbers.
4. INSTITUTION ASSIGNING: Please record the name of the institution reporting the site. The institution code field can be skipped.
5. PROJECT SITE #: Individual archaeologists may wish to identify sites by a specific project abbreviation or otherwise temporary designation. Assigning specific project numbers will allow retrieval of information about a particular project area with only a knowledge of the alphanumeric prefix. Example: A site recorded during a survey of Bladen Lakes State Forest may be assigned the number BL77-142 (Bladen Lakes, 1977, site no. 142); information on all sites recorded during that survey would be retrieved by calling for BL77 data.
6. SITE COMPONENT: Choose the appropriate period and setting from the drop-down menu; e.g., prehistoric or historic.
7. SITE REMAINS: Describes whether the remains are above or below ground. Choose from the drop-down menu.

Site Location Information

8. COUNTY: Enter the county name followed by the appropriate two letter abbreviation code (see Appendix A) to indicate the county where the site is located.

9. QUAD MAP and MAPCODE: This field can be skipped.
10. BODY OF WATER: If the site is an underwater resource, write in the name of the body of water in which it is situated (e.g., Beaufort Inlet).
11. COORDINATE SYSTEM and MAP UNITS: Choose from the drop-down menu.
12. MAP ZONE and MAP DATUM: Choose from drop-down menus the UTM zone (16, 17, or 18) and datum.
13. UTM EASTING and NORTHING: Record the UTM coordinates of the site being reported.
14. RECORDED WITH GPS? and GPS DATA POST-PROCESSED: Choose yes or no from the drop-down menu.
    ATTACH USGS MAP AND ANY ADDITIONAL SITE MAPS: Append at end of form.
15. DATE RECORDED: Use this space to record the MONTH, DAY, and YEAR on which the site was initially recorded, visited, or re-visited.
16. SITE RECORDED AS RESULT OF COMPLIANCE PROJECT: By checking the appropriate space, indicate if the site was recorded as a result of a compliance project.
17. ER #/CH #/GRANT # (OBTAIN FROM OSA): If the site was recorded as a result of a compliance or grant project, contact the OSA for an appropriate Environmental Review, Clearinghouse, or Grant number.
18. CODING DATE: Use this space to record the MONTH, DAY, and YEAR on which the site form was completed.
19. CURATION FACILITY: Indicate the name of the organization or institution where the artifacts from the site will be curated.
20. ACCESSION NUMBER(S): If applicable, indicate any accession or catalog number(s) assigned to artifacts recovered from the site by a particular curation facility. List accession numbers or ranges of numbers in historical order of assignment, if known.
21. ARTIFACT INVENTORY SHEET ATTACHED: Indicate if an artifact inventory sheet is included with the site form.
22. BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE NUMBER: Reserved for internal use by the OSA to be filled in with number assigned to report. Leave blank.
23. RECOMMENDATIONS: Choose the item(s) which best describes recommendations for further action or research at the site. If none of the listed items pertain to the site, choose OTHER and use the space provided in Item 91 for a brief explanation.

Environmental Information

24. GEOGRAPHIC SITUATION: Choose the landform category that best identifies the topographic location of the site. If none of the indicated categories fit the site's location, please indicate by choosing OTHER. Definitions for the categories listed on the form are provided in Appendix B of this guide.
25. ELEVATION/DEPTH: Record the elevation of the site in feet or meters above mean sea level, or the depth at which the site is located, if underwater.
26. SLOPE PERCENT LOW/HIGH and SLOPE FACE DIRECTION: Percent slope may be calculated or obtained from NRCS soil data. Indicate the direction of the major downward slope at the site location.

27. SOIL/BOTTOM COMPOSITION (SCS TYPOLOGY): Note the soil composition category that best describes the soils present at the site location.
28. NRCS SOIL TYPE CODE: Record the specific soil type abbreviation and soil series name. This information may be obtained from U.S. Soil Conservation Service soils maps. If detailed maps are not available for the county where the site is located leave this space blank.
29. MODERN VEGETATION: Choose the category of vegetation currently covering the site. If none of the categories adequately describes the current site vegetation, please choose OTHER and describe the type of vegetation in the space provided.
30. DISTANCE TO WATER/FROM SHORE: Approximate distance (in meters) from site to nearest permanent water source, or to shore if underwater resource.
31. NEAREST PERMANENT WATER TYPE: Choose the type of permanent water that is nearest to the site and record the name of that water source when available. Use the OTHER category for situations not described by the categories listed. In the case of farm ponds, canals, and other man-made bodies of water, this field should be left blank. However, if the underlying original stream or water source can be identified from the USGS map then the original water type and distance should be coded.
32. DRAINAGE BASIN: Choose name from drop-down menu.
33. ESTIMATED SITE SIZE (m^2): Choose the category that best describes the maximum site area (in square meters).
34. GROUND VISIBILITY LOW/HIGH: Record the estimated percentage of ground surface visibility at the time the site was surveyed.
35. UNDERWATER VISIBILITY (FEET): Record visibility conditions when the underwater resource was visited.
36. SITE CONDITION: Choose the relevant categories of environmental factors at the site. If none of the categories listed adequately describes the site, use the OTHER category and the space provided to describe the site's condition.
37. PERCENT DESTROYED/DATE DESTROYED: Choose the estimated percentage of the site that has been destroyed and record the month and year in which the destruction occurred.
38. DESTRUCTION CAUSES: Choose the item or items which best describe destruction causes at the site. If none of the listed categories adequately describe the circumstances, then select OTHER and use the space provided for explanation. Additionally, if excavations have occurred at the site, they should be listed even if other types of site destruction have destroyed a greater portion of the site.

Investigations

39. COLLECTIONS MADE: Indicate if a surface collection was obtained for the site at the time of survey.
40. COLLECTION STRATEGY: Indicate the type of collection strategy used to obtain the surface materials from the site. If none of the listed categories adequately describes the methodology used, then select OTHER and use the space provided for explanation.
41. AREA COVERED IN CONTROLLED COLLECTION: Record the approximate area (in square meters) covered in any controlled collections of surface materials from the site.
42. TEST MADE: Indicate if subsurface tests were conducted to determine the presence or absence of subsurface cultural deposits.

43. TESTING METHODS: Indicate the type of subsurface testing used at the site. If none of the listed categories adequately describe the methodology used, then select OTHER and use the space provided for explanation.

44. EXCAVATION DATE and INSTITUTION EXCAVATING: Use these fields only for investigations utilizing test units. Indicate the MONTH and YEAR when excavations were conducted. Additionally, record the institution.

Prehistoric Site Information

45. CULTURAL COMPONENT(S): List in order of intensity the cultural components observed at the site. If additional space is needed for more than five (5) components, continue the list on the same line as the other values with codes separated by commas.

46. SITE FUNCTION(S): Choose the category or categories that best describe the site functions.

47. MIDDEN: Indicate the presence or absence of midden deposits at the site.

48. LITHICS: Check the categories of lithic artifacts recovered from the site. If none of the categories adequately describe the artifacts, then select OTHER and describe in Item 96.

49. TOOL TYPES AND FREQUENCIES: Check the categories of tool types and indicate how many of each type were recovered from the site. If none of the categories adequately describe the artifacts, then select OTHER and describe in Item 96.

50. OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: Check any miscellaneous items or samples categories other than ceramics that were recovered from the site. If none of the listed categories apply, then select OTHER and describe in Item 96.

51-53. INDICATE COMBINATIONS OF CERAMICS: These three fields are used to describe categories of prehistoric ceramics recovered from the site. Use Items 51 and 52 to record the temper and surface treatment of a ceramic category (e.g., sand tempered simple-stamped), and Item 53 to record a type name if applicable.

Historic Site Information

54. PERIOD OF OCCUPATION BEGIN/END: Indicate the general beginning and ending periods of the site's occupation.

55. REFINED DATES OF OCCUPATION: Use the space provided to record refined dates of occupation for the site.

56. HISTORIC AFFILIATION: Choose the cultural and ethnic affiliation categories that best describe the site. If none of the categories listed adequately describe the site.

57. HISTORIC DEFINITION: Choose the categories of historic site functions provided on the site form that best describe or define the main structure at the site.

58. SITE TYPE/FEATURE: Chose categories that best describe the overall definition of the site.

Vessel Information

Complete this section only if response to Item 58 is WATER VESSEL.

Historic Artifacts

77.-86. HISTORIC ARTIFACT GROUPS: Indicate the presence of artifact categories within each of the listed Artifact Groups. If none of the categories for a given group sufficiently describe artifacts recovered from the site, then select OTHER and describe them in Item 96. The definitions and categories listed are based on those defined in South's (1977) *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology*.

87. TEMPORALLY DIAGNOSTIC ARTIFACTS: Indicate if temporally diagnostic artifacts are present in the assemblage.

Comments

88. OWNER/TENANT INFORMATION: Record the name(s) and address(es) of the property owner or individual(s) who informed the archaeologist of the site's existence, or the individual(s) who lease the property from the landowner listed above.

89. DIRECTIONS TO SITE: Provide a brief narrative describing route to site using estimated distances and referencing roadways, waterways, and landmarks as applicable.

90. RESEARCH POTENTIAL: In the space provided, and if necessary on an additional page, evaluate as succinctly as possible the research potential of the site in terms of general and specific problems of archaeological and anthropological method and theory. National Register of Historic Places criteria of significance may or may not be of relevance.

91. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS: Use the space provided to record a more detailed but succinct explanation of the recommendations listed in Item 23.

92. EXACAVATION RESULTS: Use only for investigations utilizing formal test units. Indicate test unit size, placement, and number, and briefly summarize findings.

93. EXPLANATION OF IMPACTS: Briefly describe environmental and artificial impacts to the site.

94. TESTING RESULTS: Briefly summarize the results of any subsurface tests conducted at the site. Indicate the total number of tests and number of positive tests.

95. FEATURE DESCRIPTION: Give a brief description any prehistoric features identified.

96. OTHER IMPORTANT ARTIFACT TYPES: Describe any historic artifacts not listed in Items 77-86.

97. HISTORIC CERAMIC TYPES: Identify historic ceramic types collected from site.

98. HISTORIC SITE DESCRIPTION: Give a brief description of the site and any features observed.

99. COMMENTS: Use the space provided to record any additional or miscellaneous information about the site.

Office of State Archaeology Use Only

100. NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS: OSA USE ONLY. Archaeological sites reported during Section 106 or similar compliance-related projects will be evaluated in accordance with appropriate criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Investigators must include NRHP significance recommendations in reports; final determinations will be entered in the state site inventory by OSA personnel. For further reference see: *National Register Bulletin 15*: "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (National Park Service).

101-107. OSA USE ONLY

Appendix A: North Carolina County Name Abbreviations

Alamance	AM
Alexander	AX
Alleghany	AL
Anson	AN
Ashe	AH
Avery	AV
Beaufort	BF
Bertie	BR
Bladen	BL
Brunswick	BW
Buncombe	BN
Burke	BK
Cabarrus	CA
Caldwell	CW
Camden	CM
Carteret	CR
Caswell	CS
Catawba	CT
Chatham	CH
Cherokee	CE
Chowan	CO
Clay	CY
Cleveland	CL
Columbus	CB
Craven	CV

Cumberland	CD
Currituck	CK
Dare	DR
Davidson	DV
Davie	DE
Duplin	DP
Durham	DH
Edgecombe	ED
Forsyth	FY
Franklin	FK
Gaston	GS
Gates	GA
Graham	GH
Granville	GV
Greene	GR
Guilford	GF
Halifax	HX
Harnett	HT
Haywood	HW
Henderson	HN
Hertford	HF
Hoke	HK
Hyde	HY
Iredell	ID
Jackson	JK

Johnston	JT
Jones	JN
Lee	LE
Lenoir	LR
Lincoln	LN
Macon	MA
Madison	MD
Martin	MT
McDowell	MC
Mecklenburg	MK
Mitchell	ML
Montgomery	MG
Moore	MR
Nash	NS
New Hanover	NH
Northampton	NP
Onslow	ON
Orange	OR
Pamlico	PM
Pasquotank	PK
Pender	PD
Perquimans	PQ
Person	PR
Pitt	PT
Polk	PL

Randolph	RD
Richmond	RH
Robeson	RB
Rockingham	RK
Rowan	RW
Rutherford	RF
Sampson	SP
Scotland	SC
Stanly	ST
Stokes	SK
Surry	SR
Swain	SW
Transylvania	TV
Tyrrell	TY
Union	UN
Vance	VN
Wake	WA
Warren	WR
Washington	WH
Watauga	WT
Wayne	WY
Wilkes	WK
Wilson	WL
Yadkin	YD
Yancey	YC

Appendix B: Topographic Situation Definitions

Listed below are definitions for the topographic situation categories used in Item 22, on page 2 of Archaeological Site Form V. These definitions have been drawn primarily from the American Geological Institute's 1972 edition of the "Glossary of Geology."

1. **Undifferentiated floodplain**: A surface (expanse) or strip of relatively level land adjacent to a stream or river.
2. **Terrace remnant on floodplain**: Section of an ancient dissected terrace now incorporated or surrounded by the present floodplain. These terrace remnants generally will have a cross-section featuring one steep face articulating in a sharp angle with the gently sloped back slope (wedge shaped).
3. **Low rise on floodplain**: Any major projection in a floodplain which is not a terrace or levee remnant. Examples would include elevated meander scars, former islands from ancient channels, and rock outcrops.
4. **Natural levee**: A long, broad, low ridge or embankment of sand and silt, built up by a stream on its floodplain and channel banks. A typical cross-section would include a steep face or bank on the stream side of the levee and a gentle backslope which grades into the floodplain surface.
5. **Levee remnant**: A dissected remnant of levee occurring near an existent or ancient stream channel. Such remains may or may not be in a floodplain. An example would be a former natural levee along a stream which has been segmented by flood erosion.
6. **1st terrace**: The first level surface in a stream valley above (if existent) the floodplain and more or less parallel to the stream channel. The first terrace may represent the only terrace or may be the lowest (in elevation) of a series of terraces in a stream valley.
7. **2nd terrace**: Terrace, as described above, which exists above the 1st terrace and below the third terrace.
8. **3rd terrace**: Terrace, as described above, which exists above both the 1st and 2nd terraces. Should there be more than three terraces (e.g., 4th terrace, 5th terrace) they should be coded as 3rd terrace and not 4th or 5th.
9. **Sand dune**: A low mound, ridge, band, or hill of loose sand piled or heaped up by the wind, commonly found along seashores and more rarely along the borders of large lakes or river valleys.
10. **Upland or talus slope**: An often steep, concave slope formed by the accumulation of loose rock fragments and soil (generally) at the base of a cliff or steep slope. This may be referred to as the foot of a mountain - the integration of a mountain or hill with the surrounding topography.
11. **Upland flats**: Also called upland plains. These consist of a relatively level area of land lying in the inland areas of North Carolina.
12. **Hill or ridgetop**: A hill is defined as a natural elevation of the land surface rising rather prominently above the surrounding land, usually of limited extent and having a well-defined outline (rounded rather than peaked or rugged) and is generally considered to be less than 300 meters (1000 feet) from base to summit. A ridgetop refers to the top of a long, narrow elevation of the earth's surface

usually with steep sides, occurring either as an independent hill or as part of a larger mountain or hill. A steep-sided upland between valleys or a valley and mountain (hill) is also defined as a ridge.

13. **Saddle (between ridge or hilltops)**: A level ridge connecting two higher elevations. A saddle typically is a small flat area with two upslopes in opposite directions and two downslopes at right angles to the upslopes.
14. **Stream confluences**: A place adjacent to the meeting of two or more streams. Should a site be located within 200 meters (656 feet) of a stream confluence, it should be coded as such (14) regardless of other topographic features on which the site is located.
15. **Terrace face**: The steep slope between the floodplain and terrace or between terraces. Sites once on the terrace may be found exposed on the terrace face, or sites buried within a terrace may be exposed by the erosion of a terrace edge.
16. **Hammock**: A fertile area of deep humus - rich soil - gently covered by hardwood vegetation, often rising slightly above a plain, swamp, or saltwater marsh. Also called a Hummock.
17. **Beach**: A gently sloping zone, typically with a concave profile of unconsolidated material (generally sand) that extends inward from the low water line to the place where there is a definite change in the material or physiography, as sand dunes or cliffs. Beaches are associated with bodies of water large enough to have waves and/or tides.
18. **Rock shelter**: An area protected by a ledge of overhanging rock. Typically, such shelters are the result of undercutting erosion of a limestone or sandstone cliff or bluff face.
19. **Island**: A tract of land completely surrounded by water such as an ocean, sea, lake, or stream.
20. **Fan (note whether colluvial or alluvial)**: A gently sloping fan-shaped mass of detritus, formed commonly at a place where there is a notable decrease in gradient (e.g., the intersection of a cliff and floodplain). An alluvial fan is stream deposited, and a colluvial fan is formed from rocks and soil eroded from a narrow portion of a cliff face.
21. **Toe slope/ridge toe**: A toe-shaped extension from the crest or side of a hill or other highland surface. Typically, a ridge toe divides two drainages, however minor. Ridge toes are also called spurs.
22. **Cave**: A naturally formed, subterranean open area or chamber, or series of chambers.
23. **Bluff**: A high bank or bold headland with a broad precipitous, almost perpendicular, sometimes rounded cliff face overlooking a plain or a body of water, especially on the outside of a stream meander.
24. **Cove**: A small, straight valley extending into a mountain or down a mountainside. A term used in the southern Appalachian Mountains for a relatively level area sheltered by hills or mountains.
25. **River shore**: A narrow strip of unconsolidated sediments (i.e., sand or silt) immediately adjacent to a stream; usually nonvegetated.
26. **Stream bank**: The sloping margin of a stream, serving to confine the water to its normal channel.
27. **Bench**: A small terrace or step-like ledge breaking the continuity of a slope; an eroded bedrock surface between valley walls.

99. **Other**: Please describe the situation coded as Other in detail in the space provided.