



Texas -Tribal Nation Consultation Hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation

September 15th – 17th, 2020
Virtual Consultation Meeting
Abstracts

**Italicized = consultation topics vs. presentation topics*

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Programmatic Agreement

TxDOT is in the process of updating the Programmatic Agreement (PA) between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), TxDOT, the Texas State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding the implementation of transportation undertakings. The relevant proposed changes include Appendix 7, which outlines a new approach to documentation of project reviews in current right-of-way. This proposal intends to focus TxDOT's work on the most important aspects of archeological sites and cemeteries, while maintaining the same consultation procedures with tribes. TxDOT will discuss how this effort provides opportunities for more creative mitigation activities. Note that Appendix 3 of the PA are undertakings with no potential to cause effect.

Tribal Histories Project

Through a partnership with TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division and the Transportation Planning and Programming Divisions, this project was created to address Traditional Cultural Properties in future transportation planning. The project works with tribes to identify places and resources on the landscape that are of interest to tribes, and it also raises awareness about tribal history throughout the state. The *Tribal Texas: Native Voices of Vision* project includes research white papers and a publication documenting tribal influence on Texas culture, in addition to a Geographic Information Services (GIS) portal that maps such resources throughout the state. Mary Jo Galindo of Galindo Environmental Consulting, Kelley Russell and Ryan Fennell of Atkins, and representatives from the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe and Ysleta del Sur Pueblo will present the project, current resources and future participation efforts.

TxDOT 101

In this refresher presentation about TxDOT's archeological studies and consultation program, learn about the efficient use of the Geographic Information System (GIS) Early Tribal Coordination tool and how to gain real-time access to TxDOT projects with archeological sites. Participants will learn about TxDOT consultation program and will get access to a visual glossary that simplifies complex transportation project-related terms that can often cause confusion during the consultation process. Send us your questions about our consultation program prior to the presentation so we can aim to address them during this time.

Wednesday, Sept. 16

Traditional Cultural Properties

TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division and the Transportation Planning and Programming Division partnered to address Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) by creating and implementing the Tribal Texas: Native Voices of Vision project. For this session, TxDOT and Tribes will collaboratively explore issues/needs, constraints and opportunities for addressing planning-level and project-level procedures surrounding TCPs in Texas.

Upcoming Mitigation Projects

In past consultations, tribes have communicated desire to go beyond data recovery and technical reporting when mitigating sites. Tribes have asked for TxDOT to consider the creation of educational outreach programs about tribal history, issues and archeology. There are several opportunities for resolving adverse effects that are supplemental to data recovery on upcoming TxDOT projects. Please review the project fact sheets to learn more about upcoming projects.

Houston Museum of Natural Science

The Houston Museum of Natural Science features 16 permanent exhibitions, several online exhibitions, and even a few rotating special exhibitions. The museum currently holds the John P. McGovern Hall of the Americans, a permanent collection of artifacts from the indigenous cultures of North and South America. Dirk Van Tuerenhout, Curator of Anthropology, will discuss opportunities for tribal collaboration as the museum seeks to update archeological and anthropological exhibits. Join museum staff for a short virtual tour and the opportunity to provide input on upcoming exhibitions!

Thursday, Sept. 17

Burial Protocol

For the past few years, TxDOT worked with tribes on a draft MOA for inadvertent discoveries. TxDOT took input from the Tribal Advisory Board and also suggestions to look at Cavin Clark's Plan of Action for National Forest Service. TxDOT redrafted the document as a burial protocol to standardize procedures for the protection and appropriate treatment of sites where Native American burials occur. TxDOT and tribes will review a new version of the protocol for input, feedback and comment.

NAGPRA Update

TxDOT will provide a brief update on the status of the collections that will be repatriated to tribes, per the consultation meeting in February 2019.

Cadaver Dogs

TxDOT archeologists use many non-invasive techniques to strategically guide excavations in sensitive locations. In 2019, at tribes' requests, TxDOT consulted with the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS) for a number of archeological investigations to use "cadaver-sniffing" dogs on projects where burials are suspected. Hear from TxDOT archeologist Jennifer Anderson and Dr. Ben Alexander from FACTS about the process of working with cadaver dogs and their contributions on recent archeological projects throughout the state.

Current Mitigation: Paleoindian Exhibit

TxDOT is working with historic resources consultants and museum services consultant MuseWorks to create an exhibit and curriculum content for an exhibit on Paleoindians in Texas as mitigation for three prehistoric archeological sites in Starr County. The exhibit examines the roots of Texas history

through the lens of prehistoric peoples. While this exhibit was originally intended for physical display in the Texas Memorial Museum, team members have put the physical exhibition on hold and pivoted to create a virtual platform amid concerns surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. TxDOT will present current conceptual plans/themes and solicit feedback from tribes for use in an online and traveling exhibit that tribes can use.

Current Mitigation: Humanities Texas

Humanities Texas is non-profit, educational organization that seeks to improve the quality of classroom teaching, support libraries and museums, and create opportunities for lifelong learning. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, this organization strengthens Texas communities through a variety of programs including teacher workshops, grant opportunities, and traveling exhibitions that cover a wide range of topics. In this session, you will hear from Humanities Texas staff about their plans to partner with TxDOT to create a traveling exhibition as part of the Tribal Histories Project. You will also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the early stages of the exhibition's development.

Wildlife Crossings

With more than 80,000 miles of road in Texas, we are bound to meet a few interesting characters along the way. TxDOT built wildlife crossings on the road leading to the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge near South Padre Island. Between May 2018 and April 2019, 3,252 animals passed through all the wildlife crossing structures. The State Highway 100 project went above and beyond and used innovative, adaptive management approaches in the design of ramps, grated and piped wildlife guards, articulated mats, half bridge, wildlife crossing exits, and fencing foundation structures. Learn more about this endeavor and its continued success beyond the road from TxDOT's Natural Resources Management team.