

PA SHPO/State Museum of PA  
Instructions for Recording Archaeological Sites in Pennsylvania

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**These instructions will teach users about recording new sites and updating sites with the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS).**

**The document summarizes the procedures for submitting a PASS record, obtaining a site number, and updating previously-recorded sites. We also offer tips and tricks for completing different parts of the site record.**

## Introduction

To record or update an archaeological site in Pennsylvania, you must submit a Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS) form to the CRGIS staff at the PA SHPO.

Once the site information has been reviewed, a new site number will be assigned, or it will be added as an update to a previously-recorded site. The Smithsonian trinomial site number will be used to reference the site in CRGIS, and it is used when cataloging collections.

Many of the fields in the PASS form are self-explanatory. Others are described in the following pages, along with references and tips to help you complete them. Frequently, one of the choices of answers is “Unknown” so we request that you check that box when appropriate rather than leaving it blank. Not all fields are required to be completed to produce a site record. In general, only complete the sections you are comfortable filling out. What we really need is to know what you found and where you found it. The more sections that you can complete, though, the more useful your information will be. Written descriptions and pictures or drawings can be attached. These attachments will be added to the CRGIS site records. Maps and attachments that include sensitive site location information will not be accessible to public users.

In this 2018 revision, we are re-introducing an abbreviated version of the PASS form that can be used by avocational archaeologists, historical societies, and **other non-professional groups** that are interested in recording archaeological resources. This Condensed Collector Form focuses on capturing the information that is most crucial for recording a site, and does not include lengthy tables for specific artifact and feature types. If you are unsure whether you should use the full or condensed PASS form, please contact the CRGIS staff at [RA-CRGIS@pa.gov](mailto:RA-CRGIS@pa.gov).

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Office of Equal Opportunity  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Projects

In addition to the standard paper or pdf PASS form, registered CRGIS users now have the option to submit new archaeological sites and isolated finds/non-site collections using the CRGIS data entry website. Sites submitted via CRGIS data entry will undergo the same review and site assignment procedures as before. The main difference is that the record will be immediately available in CRGIS once it has been published and mapped by CRGIS staff, without the delay of re-typing the data.

At present, CRGIS data entry can only be used to submit **new archaeological sites and isolated finds/non-site collections**; updates to previously-recorded sites must be submitted using the revised paper or pdf PASS form. **The Condensed Collector Form cannot be used for CRM projects.**

The CRGIS data entry interface contains the same fields and selections as the traditional PASS form, but with a few differences in how the data are structured. For detailed instructions on data entry and standardized formatting, please contact the CRGIS staff.

Site records completed as part of environmental review projects **must be completely filled out or they will be returned.** If an archaeological site is submitted through CRGIS data entry, then it is not necessary to also complete a form, and you will not need to insert a PASS form in the report.

Another change under this 2018 revision involves the Administrative Information page, which contains confidential information about the form's preparers, landowners, and informants. To protect this information, we have separated the administrative page from the rest of the form. The administrative page must be kept as a separate document, and it only needs to be submitted to CRGIS staff when the site is initially recorded, or when any site updates are documented.

**Administrative pages should never be included in reports.**

## Completing the PASS Form

### Identification and Location

#### Site Name

Select a name that can easily be associated with the site such as a historical or physical landmark, the name of a farm, or the surname of the property owner. Historical and physical landmarks are preferred. Common surnames or stream names have the potential for being duplicated at other sites, thus causing confusion. Do not include the word "Site" as part of the name.

#### Site Number

If you are filing an update for a site and know the number put it here. If you don't know its number, or it's a new site, leave this blank or write in just the state and county part of the number (i.e. 36SO).

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### Published References

Are there any published references concerning the site? This can include journal articles, websites, books, or historical documents.

### Site Traits

#### Site Area

Estimate how long and wide the site is and then multiply to find the area. We record in square meters. If you measure in square feet, multiply by 0.09 to get square meters. Tell us whether you measured the site size in the field, on a map, or using GIS software.

#### Stratified

Some sites have multiple layers of occupation within the soil, particularly river bank sites and rockshelter sites. Stratification usually can only be determined by a test excavation or some other freshly exposed cross section of a site's soil layers.

#### Site Discovery Method

How was the site originally discovered: through systematic shovel testing, or by finding a stone foundation on a walk in the woods? Use this field to record one method for how the site was first discovered. Additional testing or excavation methods can be included in the comments.

#### Site Type

Select the site type(s) that best represent the site. Multi-component or multi-function sites can have multiple site types, such as a historic farmstead that overlies a pre-contact lithic reduction site, or a historic industrial complex that also includes a domestic component. If you think that more explanation is needed, use the comments section or include a narrative attachment.

### Chronology

Within the Chronology table, select the eras or cultural periods for when the site may have been used, if known. It is better to be general than inaccurate. Use the frequency column to indicate what percentage of the site can be associated with that period, or write "Present" if the frequency is unknown. The basis column lets you tell us how you determined the chronology, whether it was from diagnostic artifacts, feature types, or historical research.

### Features

Use this section to indicate what features, if any, were identified on the site. If you have a feature type that is not included on the list, please describe it in the comments section.

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## Artifacts

The tables on the form represent the fields that can be entered into our database. They summarize and categorize the artifact inventory. In addition to completing these sections, you must also attach a full artifact catalog.

There are many web resources that can help you identify artifacts. Below are a few, but many others exist:

- Projectile Point Identification Guide: <http://www.projectilepoints.net/>
- Ohio Point Types: <http://www.oplin.org/point/index.html>
- Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland: <http://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/Index.htm>
- Historic Glass Bottle Identification and Information Website: <https://sha.org/bottle/>

## Lithic Material

If you have flakes and stone tools from the site, indicate the different types of stone that they are made of. If you don't know specific lithic sources, just list general descriptions of color and texture in the comments. The frequency column should be used to indicate what percentage of the artifacts are made from each material.

## Pre-Contact Artifacts

This section contains tables in which you can identify the projectile points, ceramics, and other pre-contact artifact types present on the site.

### *Projectile Points*

Provide information about the projectile point types present on the site. Include counts by material type if you have multiple point types with different materials. If you have conducted analysis/identification of diagnostic points, indicate the chronological placement and diagnostic point type within this table, and attach photographs or drawings of the diagnostic artifacts to the form.

These diagnostic point types are currently listed in CRGIS and may be entered in the PASS form:

### Paleoindian Points

*Pre-Clovis*

*Clovis*

*Mid-Paleo (Folsom)*

*Late Paleo (Plano)*

*Hardaway-Dalton*

*Fluted Point*

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Early Archaic Points

*Palmer*  
*Kirk Corner-notched*  
*St. Charles*  
*Thebes*  
*Charleston*

Middle Archaic Points

*Bifurcate Points*  
*Brewerton*  
*Middle Archaic Notched/Stemmed Points*  
*MacCorkle*  
*Saint Albans*  
*LeCroy*  
*Lamoka*  
*Otter Creek*  
*Kanawha/Stanly/Neville*  
*Kirk Stemmed*  
*Vosburg*

Late Archaic Points

*Bare Island*  
*Chesser Notched*  
*Piedmont Tradition*  
*Laurentian Tradition*  
*Kiski Notched*  
*Steubenville*  
*Triangles (Late Archaic)*  
*Transitional Tradition*  
*Koens Crispin/Savannah River*  
*Genesee Points*  
*Broadspears*  
*Lehigh/Snook Kill*  
*Perkiomen*  
*Poplar Island*  
*Rossville*  
*Susquehanna*

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Early Woodland Points

*Adena (Stemmed)*

*Meadowood*

*Helgramite*

*Orient*

*Middle Woodland Points*

*Raccoon Notched*

*Snyders*

*Basal Notched*

*Jacks Reef*

*Levanna*

*Steubenville/Fox Creek*

Late Woodland Points

*Triangles (Late Woodland)*

*Madison*

*Proto Historic Points*

*Triangles (Proto Historic)*

Ceramics

Provide information about the pre-contact ceramics present on the site. List the temper, and include counts by temper if there are multiple tempers for the same ceramic type. If you have conducted analysis/identification of diagnostic ceramic artifacts, indicate the ceramic type within this table and attach photographs or drawings of the diagnostic artifacts to this form.

These pre-contact pottery types are currently listed in CRGIS and may be entered in the PASS form:

Early Woodland Ceramics

*Accokeek Creek Ware*

*Adena Plain*

*Grit Tempered Flat Bottom*

*Half-Moon Cordmarked*

*Interior-Exterior Cordmarked Small Temper-Conical/Globular*

*Mary Creek*

*Steatite Tempered*

*Vinette I (Interior-Exterior Cordmarked Large Temper-Conical/Globular)*

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Middle Woodland/Middle to Late Woodland Ohio Valley Ceramics

*Abbott Farm Series*

*Grit Tempered Exterior Cordmarked-Conical/Globular*

*Grit Tempered Net Impressed-Conical/Globular*

*Point Peninsula Series*

*Shell Tempered Net Impressed-Conical/Globular*

*Watson Cord Marked*

Late Woodland Ceramics

*Blue Rock Valanced*

*Chance Series*

*Chautauqua Cordmarked*

*Clemson Island/Princess Point Series*

*Early Ontario Iroquois*

*Erie Series*

*Funk Incised*

*Keyser Cordmarked*

*Lancaster Incised*

*Mahoning Cord Marked*

*McFate Incised*

*McFate/Quiggle Undifferentiated*

*Meade Island Series*

*Minguannan Series*

*Monongahela (Undifferentiated)*

*Monongahela Cordmarked-Late Woodland*

*Monongahela Incised*

*Monongahela Plain*

*Monongahela Somerset Phase*

*Oak Hill Series*

*Overpeck*

*Owasco Series*

*Page Cordmarked*

*Potomac Creek Cord Impressed*

*Proto-Susquehannock*

*Quiggle Incised*

*Richmond Incised*

*Schultz Incised*

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Late Woodland Ceramics (cont'd)

*Shenks Ferry (Undifferentiated)*  
*Shenks Ferry Cordmarked*  
*Shenks Ferry Incised (Blue Rock Phase)*  
*Shenks Ferry Incised (Stewart Phase)*  
*Shepard Cordmarked*  
*Strickler Cordmarked*  
*Susquehannock (Undifferentiated)*  
*Townsend*  
*Townsend/Overpeck Series*  
*Tribal Series*  
*Washington Boro Incised*  
*Whittlesey*  
*Wyoming Valley Series*

### Historic Artifacts

Because a comprehensive list of historic diagnostic artifacts would be too long to fit in the PASS form, the historic artifacts section was changed to eliminate the brief list of historic diagnostics that appeared in the previous version. At the same time, the artifact category matrix was expanded to include more functional categories that draw on the [Sonoma Historic Artifact Research Database \(SHARD\)](#) classification system.

This type of table is helpful for historic sites as many artifacts, such as glass, can have multiple functions. You may, for example, have both bottle glass (domestic – food storage) and window glass (structural – building materials). These two types tell us different things about the site, so it is helpful if you designate them as domestic or structural.

Within the table, enter the total number of artifacts in each functional and material group under the “Total” columns (Ceramic – Total, Geological – Total). Next to each material column is a “Diagnostic” column that should be used to enter the number of diagnostic artifacts under each functional and material group. Because artifact collections for historic sites can be very diverse, and this matrix only accounts for the most common artifact types, be sure to attach a complete artifact inventory to the PASS form.

### Physical Data and Site Condition

Any of this material that cannot be observed on site is optional, but the more you can fill out, the more useful your data will be. It is also interesting to see how your location fits into its surrounding environment.

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### Soil Type

Soil mapping unit designations are available for most counties on the CRGIS. The [USDA Web Soil Survey](#) also contains soil mapping units and detailed soil descriptions through an interactive GIS website.

### Site Elevation

Brown lines on USGS topo maps mark elevation contours above mean sea level in feet or meters. The unit of measure and the contour interval can be found at the bottom of the map. The thicker brown lines are called index contours. Thin brown lines are called intermediate contours. Find the closest thick brown line to your site. Follow that line until you find the number that represents its elevation. Count the number of thin brown lines between the thick line and the location of your site. Add the maps contour interval to the elevation for every thin line counted if the site is uphill from the thick line. Subtract the maps contour interval if it is downhill. If you are using the quad maps from any online source, including the CRGIS, the map information may not be visible. You can count contour lines between index lines to determine the interval. If there are 5 lines between indices, then it is a 20-foot contour map. We record elevation in feet because the most available topo maps are in feet. All other measurements are in meters.

### Slope and Aspect

Slope is usually measured as a percentage of elevation change over distance. A 20-foot change in elevation over 500 feet of distance equals 4% slope, ( $20/500=.04$ ). A general slope description can be determined by using a Soil Survey Book, and some GIS layers include slope and aspect calculations. Indicate the downhill direction of the slope, such as west or northeast. Tell us whether you measured it on the ground, used the soil data or map to estimate slope, or used GIS data.

### Bedrock

The most readily available way to determine the geologic name of the bedrock underlying a site is to visit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resource (DCNR) [PAGEODE](#) website. You may also use the Atlas of Preliminary Geologic Quadrangle Maps of Pennsylvania (Map 61), which can be found by browsing “Maps” within the [PAGEODE](#) Publication Search.

### Physiographic Province

Physiographic provinces are large regions of similar topography. Each province is further subdivided into sections. This information can be obtained within CRGIS. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources also provides an excellent description of each physiographic province and section in DCNR Map 13, Physiographic Provinces of Pennsylvania. This can be downloaded from [PAGEODE](#) by using the Publication Search.

### Immediate Vegetation

What kind of vegetation is covering the site? Open fields (what kind of crops), pasture land, woodlands (avg. size of trees, undergrowth thickness). We have a set list of possibilities, but give us a description and we will fit it into the list.

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### Disturbance

List both man-made and natural threats, such as excavation, construction, erosion, and rodent borrowing.

### Water Drainage Area Information

Any of this material that cannot be observed on site is optional, but the more you can fill out, the more useful your data will be. The measurements are all more accurate done on site, though, so please fill in those as completely as possible.

### Watershed Data

The easiest way to get the SUBBASIN and WATERSHED information is on the CRGIS. Make sure the watersheds layer is turned on, then click on the area of the map where your site is located. This will bring up a Layer Information box on the right-hand side of the map with a summary of the watershed information. You will need the Basin Name and Watershed fields to complete the form. Major and minor streams can be determined from the topo map. Major streams are generally the ones that drains the entire shed.

### Nearest Water, etc.

Rivers, streams, lakes, springs, wells for historic sites, etc. can be used. Tell us the distances to the nearest point on the water source, the elevation at that point, and the type of water that it represents (i.e. spring, extinct, intermittent, or perennial stream, bog, lake, bay, or pingo).

Stream order is more complicated to calculate. If you are using a GIS system, a useful layer is the 1998 Networked Streams of Pennsylvania, available through [PASDA](#). If you can download the shapefile, the attributes contain the watershed, name of stream, and Strahler order. In the web preview, you will only get the name of the stream.

If you are not using GIS, you can use the topo maps to calculate order. Order is calculated based on permanent water (not extinct or intermittent). The first water from the source is order 1. Once two streams of the same order combine, the order is increased. So, two first order streams converge at a confluence to make a 2nd, but a 1st order entering an existing 2nd order does not change it to a higher order.

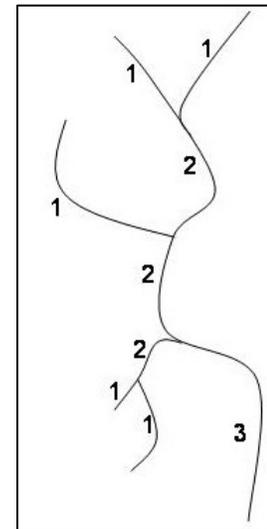


Figure 1: This illustration shows a network of streams as lines and the order is indicated by the numbers 1, 2, and 3 to indicate the Order 1 streams and so on.

### Comments and Attachments

We encourage as many attachments and comments as you need to make your information clear. Brief comments added to the form will be copied into CRGIS, whereas longer comments can be included in a narrative attachment. Certain attachment types are required to register a site. These are: Administrative Information page, topographic map showing site location and boundaries, a minimum site narrative or description, and an artifact inventory. Other attachment types are

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conditional, such as historic mapping for historic sites, or testing maps if the site was recorded as part of a CRM project. Optional attachments types listed on the form are always encouraged, but not required.

### Administrative Information

Most of the items on the Administrative Information page are confidential, so they are located on a separate form that should only be sent to the SHPO whenever a site is initially recorded *and* when a new update form is submitted. Please do not include this information in CRM reports, and do not print it on the back side of a form page.

### Location

There are several ways that you can indicate the location of your site, but a map is always required. It can be a portion of the CRGIS with the site boundaries outlined. Please indicate more than just a dot. Some good sources of online maps include the CRGIS, [USGS National Map Viewer](#), and [PASDA](#).

In addition to providing a map, you may include UTM or Latitude/Longitude coordinates. UTM coordinates can be calculated from a full-sized 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle, or they can be obtained through a GIS calculation. In CRGIS, the Measure Tool can be used to obtain Lat/Long coordinates. These can also come from phone-based GPS readings taken at the site.

Use the Source of Location Data field to provide the source information for your location data. If you used a paper quad map, list the map year, or if you obtained a digital topo quad, include the website from which you downloaded the map or spatial layer.

### Owner, Address

**Remember!** Ask the landowner's permission before you collect artifacts on private property. It is a violation of state law to collect artifacts on state lands and a violation of federal law to collect artifacts on federal lands.

If you know the tax parcel data, we encourage including that information. A county Land Atlas or Plat Book can be very useful for determining land ownership. Local Ag Extension offices often have the latest edition available for purchase and several counties have this information online. Because this information changes, please include the date of the resource from which you obtained the information.

### Collection Locations

List any details concerning the location and ownership of any know artifact collections from the site. This can be collectors' names or institutions.

### Informants

The identities of persons providing information about sites will be protected.

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**Criteria for National Register Inclusion**

List any reasons why the site should be considered for listing on the [National Register of Historic Places](#).

**Submitted By**

Don't forget to include your SPA chapter affiliation. This information is kept confidential.

**Completed PASS forms should be sent to:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
Commonwealth Keystone Bldg, 2nd Floor  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093

**Questions?** Please contact us via email at [RA-CRGIS@pa.gov](mailto:RA-CRGIS@pa.gov).

**Thank you for helping us record and preserve Pennsylvania's archaeological record!**