

THE BIG PICTURE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS AFTER THE PROJECT IS DONE

July 29, 2011 Jolene Smith Archaeological Prospection, Commercial Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Digital Archaeology, Science, Survey Anthropology, Archaeological field survey, Archaeological record, archaeologist, Archaeology, Archeological Society of Virginia, cellular telephone, consultant, CRM, cultural resource management, Department of Historic Resources, Geographic information system, Geographic Information Systems, GIS, Government, mobile phone/telecommunications towers, Records, State Historic Preservation Office, The Big Picture, United States, Virginia

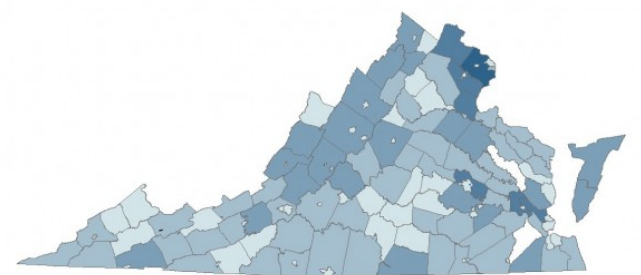
Greetings! I'm Jolene Smith. I work for the [Department of Historic Resources](#) in Virginia, USA. I decided to post on Day of Archaeology because I am most certainly not what most people would consider a "typical" archaeologist. I manage digital and paper records and mapping for nearly 43,000 recorded archaeological sites in Virginia through our government agency, which is also the State Historic Preservation Office.

Sometimes I miss being out in the field, but certainly not today. It's currently 100°F/38°C outside at lunch time, so I'm very happy in my air conditioned office cubicle.

My work so far today has been very heavy on GIS (Geographic Information Systems). I spent the morning creating a quick map showing the density of recorded sites in Virginia's counties for a publication of the [Archeological Society of Virginia](#) (our state's wonderful avocational archaeological organization). It's still a major work-in-progress, but I'm happy I was able to easily generate this data. The ASV hopes to use this info as a guide for where to conduct future archaeological surveys. With a little more work, I'll be able to clean up some errors, pretty it up, and label everything so the data will be easily understandable.

I spent much of the rest of the morning working on creating records for a large project conducted by a CRM (cultural resource management) consultant, making sure the GIS mapping is accurate and matches the information in our databases and in the printed site form records. Quality control is a big part of what I do. It's fundamental to remember that archaeology is inherently destructive, so it's critical to have good, clear records.

Here's what I have on tap for the rest of the day: I'll work with some more consultants to create records for new archaeological sites and add information to previously recorded sites. I'll also be responding to a few emails from members of the public interested in recording small cemeteries in our inventory. Then, I'll probably review a few archaeological projects that have been conducted at the future sites of mobile phone/telecommunications towers as part of [Section 106](#) compliance to make sure that there won't be impacts to important archaeological deposits. Quite a variety, isn't it?



Distribution of Recorded Archaeological Sites in Virginia (work-in-progress!)