

43,847 SITES AND COUNTING...

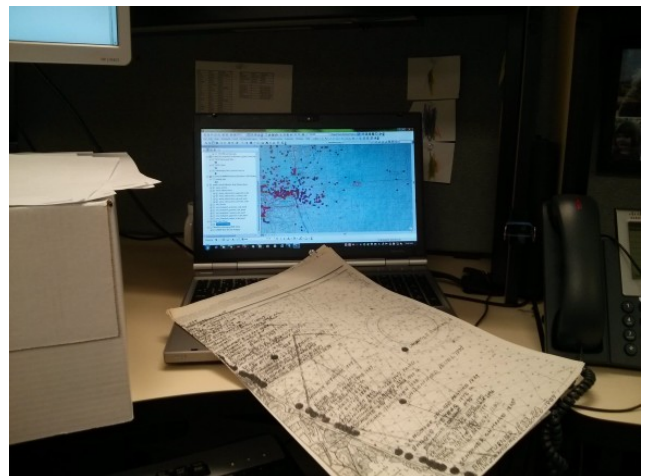
July 24, 2015 Jolene Smith Archives, Commercial Archaeology, Digital Archaeology, Explore Posts cultural resource management, database, GIS, Records, Research

Hi! I'm Jolene Smith. I manage all of the archaeological data for the Commonwealth of Virginia at the [Virginia Department of Historic Resources](#). We've got nearly 44,000 sites in our inventory, with more being added every day. While most of my time is spent in front of a computer and not in the dirt, what I do is no less important. It's about the follow-through. It's taking the data produced by the destructive act of removing artifacts and features from their context in the soil and making sure it is safe, accessible, and useful. It's about making connections. Here's a day in my life.

8:30 AM: The day is off to a pretty unremarkable start, answering emails, listening to voicemails, and doing a little bit of record cleanup for sites in an ongoing sewer line project. Mostly meeting time-sensitive miscellaneous needs from folks inside and outside the agency.

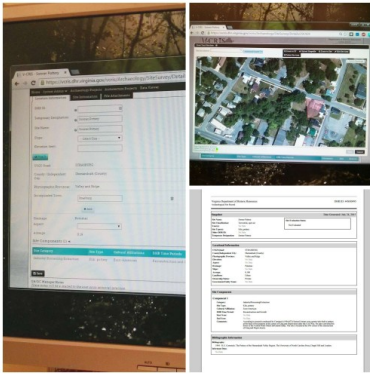
Being the contact for archaeological records across Virginia, I get A LOT of emails and it's a constant struggle to stay on top of everything. Our fancy new historic resources inventory application, [VCRIS](#), is even based on auto-emails. I'm madly in love with email filters. The only way I survive is by a complicated system of auto-filing, color coded categories, etc.

10:30: My days are often punctuated by fun rabbit holes. This morning's interesting task was to compare a recently received report on underwater archaeological survey with data we've collected from all over about historic shipwrecks, obstructions recorded by [NOAA](#), and from other sources. Depending on what I find, I may decide to assign archaeological site numbers to some of the wrecks recently investigated, even though they may be a bit beyond state waters. This way, we can make sure all of this great historical research and archaeology can be connected to a site on the ground (or, in the water, as the case may be). 99% of my job deals with terrestrial sites archaeology, so this diversion is a treat.



Trying to cross reference data about some potential shipwrecks.

11:00: Time for site numbers. Some background: every officially recorded site in the U.S. gets a [Smithsonian Trinomial](#) site number. In Virginia, site numbers look like this: 44AB1234. The "44" represents Virginia (44th in the alphabet back when the system was developed), the next two letters are

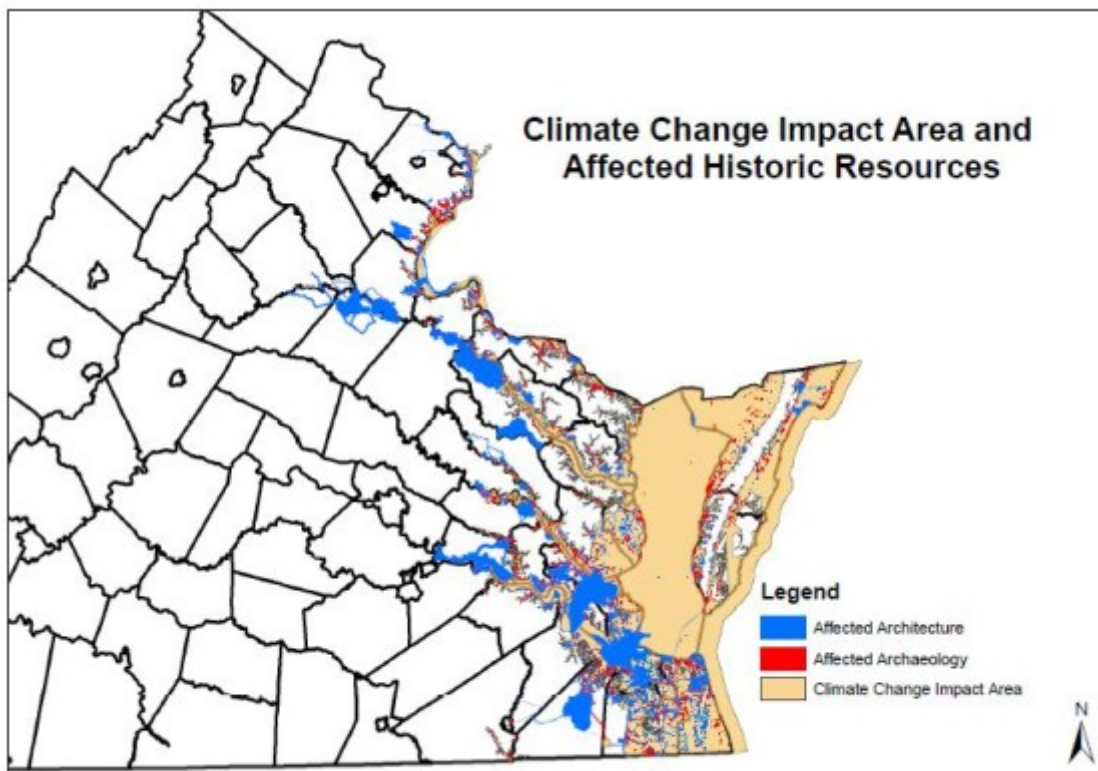


an abbreviation for the appropriate county, and the four digits at the end represent sites within that county. We manage all of our site numbers (and associated information) in VCRIS. Today I assigned a number to the Sonner Pottery in Shenandoah County, a late-19th century kiln recorded by DHR Northern Region Archaeologist Bob Jolley. Usually I've got quite a few site numbers in my queue, but this is it for today.

I use VCRIS to assign site numbers. This is a 19th century pottery.

1:00: I work for the government. There's a whole lot of **bean counting** involved. Sometimes we're reporting on pretty boring performance measures, but there's one pile of said beans that's very

important. We've prioritized archaeological and architectural survey in what we call "Climate Change Impact Areas." I used GIS to combine data on areas inundated with a 5' sea level rise with areas impacted by Category 4 hurricane storm surge. We've defined a targeted area on which to focus effort moving forward, not to show how much of Virginia will be underwater in x years. All the same, the resulting area is BIG and scary. Around 10% of all recorded archaeological sites in Virginia are within this area. Today's task is to track all of the newly identified and revisited archaeological sites and architecture resources in the past 12 months to make sure we're hitting our larger survey target. We are, thanks in large part to **Hurricane Sandy** grant projects and **Threatened Sites Fund** projects. This is sobering from start to finish, but increased survey is a good thing.



Created by: J. Smith September 19, 2014



Virginia's Climate Change Impact Area

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