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The Texas Historical Commission and the Caddo Nation Tribal Council Continue to Collaborate on Plans

AUSTIN, Texas — Through their collaborative stewardship of Caddo Mounds State Historic Site (SHS) operations, the Caddo Nation Tribal Council (Caddo Nation) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC) announce the achievement of several significant milestones in their ongoing partnership efforts to protect and enhance the cultural heritage of Caddo Mounds SHS.

“Through consistent teamwork and open communication, we are pleased to share that our collaborative efforts have yielded significant progress, moving us closer to our shared goal of honoring and elevating the cultural significance of Caddo Mounds,” said Chairman Bobby Gonzalez, Caddo Nation.

Plans are advancing for an on-site education center that will allow for an expansion of cultural and educational programming. The plan for the center includes a flexible indoor space and a covered outdoor space for larger events. It will enable the site to broaden its offering of cultural programs including traditional Caddo dances, youth activities, foodways, arts and crafts demonstrations, lectures, workshops, as well as artists in residence.

“The THC is dedicated to working with Caddo Nation to preserve, interpret, and safeguard this sacred site that is so significant to Texas history,” said THC Executive Director Joseph Bell. “Widely considered among the first citizens of Texas, the Caddo people are an indispensable part of the story of Texas. Our state name, Texas, is derived from the Caddo people.”

An additional noteworthy partnership development is the inclusion of a repatriation center that will support Caddo Nation’s ongoing work under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The center will assist with the repatriation of Caddo cultural items and ancestors recovered from previous archeological excavations. “Repatriating our ancestors is a sacred duty, said Chairman Gonzalez. “We are working tirelessly to ensure that they are laid to rest with respect and dignity in keeping with our cultural ways.”

Caddo Nation and THC representatives continue to meet regularly at the historic site near Alto, Texas as well as at the headquarters of the Caddo Nation in Binger, Oklahoma. In addition to an operations plan, leaders are moving forward with the creation of a comprehensive landscape

management plan that more fully integrates indigenous land stewardship practices as well as protects and restores Native plants and vegetation.

“Our partnership brings us together as co-stewards of a sacred site through collaborative planning, management, and preservation there,” said Bell. “The THC fully appreciates the needed cultural perspectives we are gaining in our relationship with the Caddo Nation.”

Caddo Mounds SHS is part of Caddo Nation’s ancestral homelands. It holds cultural resources of the Tribe requiring active management to safeguard it for future generations. Established as a village and ceremonial center more than 1,200 years ago by ancestral Caddo, it is the site of three earthen mounds still considered sacred to the Caddo Nation. The THC built and currently manages a visitor center with exhibits highlighting the history and everyday life of the Caddo people.

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About the Texas Historical Commission

The Texas Historical Commission is the state's official historic preservation agency. It preserves, operates, and manages 42 state historic sites, the Texas Heritage Trails Program, Texas Main Street Program, Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, and many more heritage tourism and historic preservation initiatives across the state. The Texas Historical Commission's mission is to protect and preserve the state’s historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations. For more information, visit thc.texas.gov.