



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

February 7, 2024

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For immediate release:

WELCOMING ARKANSAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY AS LOCAL CONTEXTS' FIRST SUBSCRIBER

Celebrating first subscriber and inviting more to join

Happy New Year!

At Local Contexts, one of the organization's big goals is to transform into a sustainably-supported organization to [support the multi-generational work of Indigenous data sovereignty](#). A core part of Local Contexts' strategy in 2024 is to launch Local Contexts Hub subscriptions and onboard partners into the program.

First Subscribing Organization

Local Contexts welcomes the [Arkansas Archeological Survey](#) (ARAS) as its first subscribing organization. The ARAS has shown dedication and commitment to the adoption of Local Contexts Traditional Knowledge and Biocultural Labels and engagement with Indigenous communities in their region.

From Local Contexts Executive Director Stephany RunningHawk Johnson: "We thank Director Alex Barker for taking the plunge and his patience as we worked through aspects of the subscriptions process. The Local Contexts Traditional Knowledge and Biocultural Labels and Notices provide institutions a way to meet their obligations around Indigenous data sovereignty, and I am thrilled the Arkansas Archeological Survey has taken these steps with us!"

ARAS is the designated repository for archeological collections and site data for Arkansas, managing information on more than 50,000 archeological sites, 8,000 projects, and millions of objects. The Survey has embarked on a long-term inventoring and digitization initiative across all its collections from its Coordinating Office in Fayetteville to all ten of its research stations across the state. Its goal is a comprehensive approach to archeological informatics.

“Notices are one way for us to acknowledge that we hold collections reflecting and embodying the traditional knowledge of descendant communities,” according to Barker. “Notices make clear we’d like to work with those communities to communicate whatever meanings and significance they deem important and decide is appropriate for us to share.”

ARAS wants to emphasize that for US Native Nations, direct consultation is of paramount importance. The use of the Local Contexts Notices will be an additional set of conventions used to acknowledge the Survey’s role as stewards of cultural heritage, and the Labels would denote collections-related information shared by those Nations and communities, if they choose to do so. This does not replace regular consultation on Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Section 106, site disturbance, or other heritage-related policies or issues.

Local Contexts Subscriptions Launched

Local Contexts is pleased to announce the release of our [flexible subscription model](#) and updated subscription agreements that better support the range of organizations that work with the Hub, from universities to museums to government agencies. More information will be shared with Hub users in the coming months regarding the subscription process.

Over the last year, Local Contexts has been in conversation with a number of organizations about its subscription model. Local Contexts focused on cost models that make it easier for individuals and institutions to become subscribers, and have added options to modify subscriptions as their use of the Hub evolves.

Local Contexts wishes to thank its partners for their thoughtfulness during these consultations, and commit to continue to listen and evolve its infrastructure to support the needs of our communities in furtherance of [our mission](#).

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About ARAS: The Arkansas Archeological Survey is a unit of the University of Arkansas System. The Survey’s Mission is to study Arkansas’ past, to preserve and manage information about archeological sites, and to share what we learn with the people of Arkansas. We invite members of the public to help discover and record information about archeological sites in Arkansas. For more information, please visit <https://archeology.uark.edu/>.

About Local Contexts: Local Contexts is a non-profit organization that supports Indigenous communities with tools that can reassert cultural authority in heritage collections and data. The primary objectives of Local Contexts are to enhance and legitimize locally based decision-making and Indigenous governance frameworks for determining ownership, access, and culturally appropriate conditions for sharing historical, contemporary, and future collections

of cultural heritage and Indigenous data. The Local Contexts Hub began development in 2019 as a way to enable the customization of Labels and the application of Notices directly to Indigenous data and collections. The Hub works in tandem with already existing information/collections management systems and tools. The Hub generates Labels and Notices (with permanent identifiers) so these can be added to already existing catalog and collections management systems. For more information, please visit <https://localcontexts.org/>.