



Stewards for the Ancestors: Acting to Preserve & Protect Graves and Cemeteries

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SCIAA – USC
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South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology

- Founded in 1963 by the State of South Carolina, SCIAA is concerned with the teaching, research, and management of South Carolina's historic and prehistoric past as understood through terrestrial and underwater archaeology.



Office of the State Archaeologist

The Office of the State Archaeologist serves South Carolina by advancing archaeology to preserve the state's culture and heritage.

- we support South Carolina communities through several key activities.
- We advise the State Historic Preservation Office, other public agencies and private individuals on archaeological site protection, preservation, conservation and compliance-related activities.
- We provide expertise to the legislature
- We field a forensic archaeology recovery team to assist law enforcement and allied agencies.
- We receive and manage forms, reports, and archaeological collections.
- We coordinate burial preservation.
- We serve as the state's liaison to Native American tribal groups.
- We support the advancement of archaeology within the state, region, and nation.

State Archaeologist Contact Information



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So, how do we help?

- Consultation – indirect and direct
- On site analysis
 - Various search techniques including geophysics.
 - Ground Penetrating Radar, Bartington Gradiometer, Earth Resistivity, and drone photogrammetry.
- Excavation (under special circumstances)
- Fair witness to facts
- Professional opinion



Search and Geophysics

- Sometimes, no equipment is necessary.
- Subsidence occurs naturally as soils settle, coffins decay, vaults crumble, or can be accelerated – as in this instance – by torrential rains.

The features are usually much more subtle.



courtesy SWNS



Search and Geophysics

- Not all search techniques require expensive equipment or extensive training.
- For instance, \$12 tile probes can be very effective.



Search and Geophysics

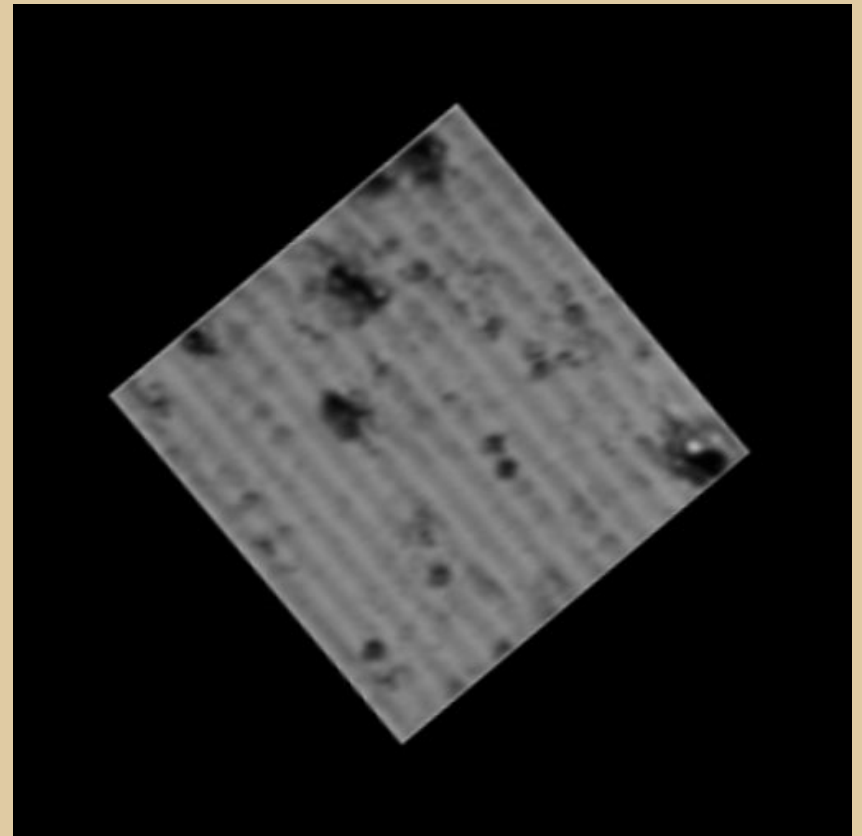
Earth Resistivity RM4



Search and Geophysics

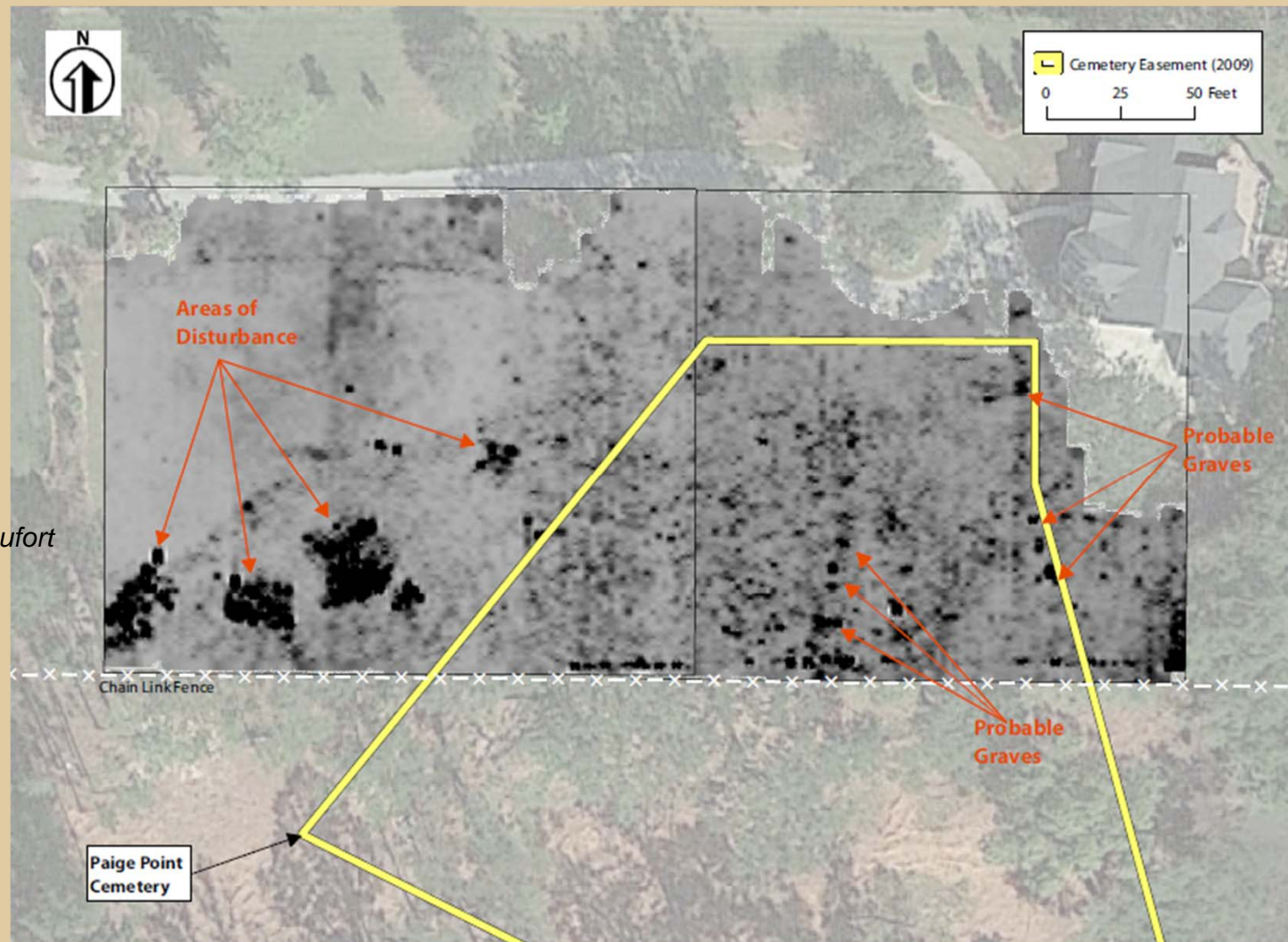
Bartington Gradiometer

- 20m x 20m survey area
- Unmarked burial ground in use since 18th c.
- Property had been repurposed as a park
- Descendants were convinced their loved ones were still there.
- They were correct.



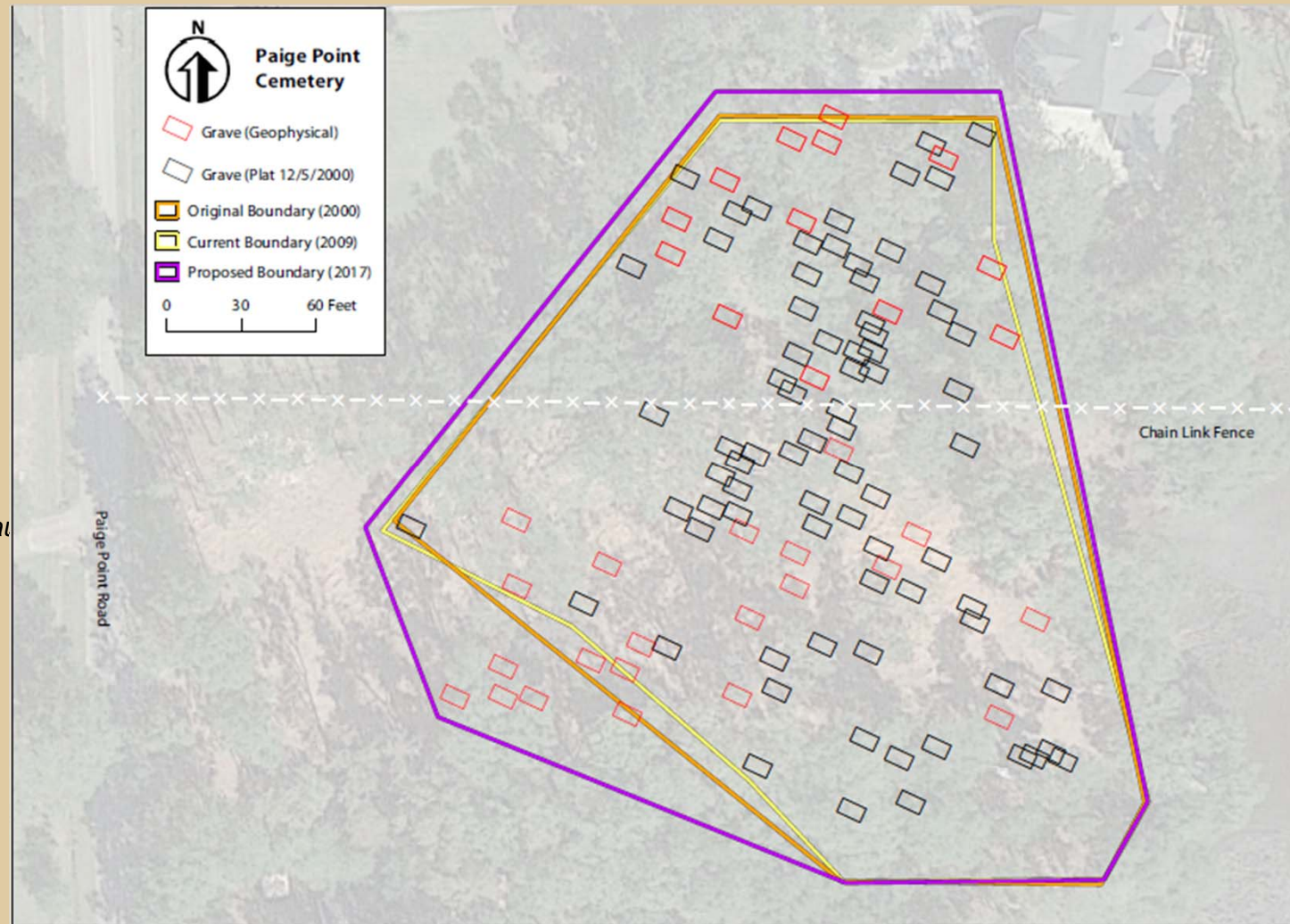
Search and Geophysics - Ground Penetrating Radar

Moore, I and J. Leader
*Geophysical Survey of the
Paige Point Cemetery, Beaufort
County, South Carolina*
Sept. 22, 2017



Search and Geophysics Ground Penetrating Radar

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Role Play



Grave exposed during drought is looted after internet forum is made aware of opportunity.

Narrative:

You have a burial issue and call my office for assistance. What happens next?



Role Play

Just the Facts Please.

1. What is your name and contact information?
2. How are you involved with the issue?
 - Are you a descendant? Neighbor? Or_____?
3. Is the burial/cemetery under threat?
4. Where is it located (street address, lat/long, and/or county tax map designation)?
 - The bane of existence is a lengthy description of turning right, left or going straight after what had been the Piggly Wiggly that burned down in 1950.



Role Play

Just the Facts Please.

5. If the burial/cemetery is under threat, briefly explain what the threat is.
 - Construction or development?
 - Borrow pit removal or dumping?
 - Looting or desecration?
 - Or?
6. Has an effort been made to contact:
 - The owner, or contractor, or city/town council etc. ?
7. In the case of looting or vandalism has a complaint been filed with Law enforcement?



Role Play

Just the Facts Please.

8. Have you taken any digital photos of the issue?

- Bless the person who put a decent camera on a cell phone...

There are additional questions, but you get the idea.



Role Play

Depending on what the answers are to the questions determines the response.

- Burials and cemeteries that are under threat are a high priority.
- Descendants have stronger standing when it comes to discussions with landowners, politicians, law enforcement etc.
- Solving burial or cemetery issues are almost never quickly done.
- The use of cemeteries or burials as a NIMBY tactic rarely work.

We take this seriously





Paige Point Dedication

September 24, 2020



Questions?

