

Sent: Friday, October 10, 2014 3:05 PM

Subject: Jeff Durst visits site of Ft. Velasco

All:

For your information - Jeff Durst of the Texas Historical Commission was in town on Thursday evening to give a talk at the County Historical Museum about Champ d'Aisle (a short-lived French colony on the Trinity River in 1819, thought to be near Liberty TX, but exact whereabouts have been lost to history). After this meeting, Jeff asked whether he could see the Surfside location of Ft. Velasco, so we made plans to see it at first light the next morning, since he had to return to Austin that morning. Lou Golish was also present at the meeting, and we three also visited the site this morning from about 7-8am.

Jeff indicated that ground-penetrating radar and a magnetometer survey would be two important tools to use, but he did not recommend a soil conductivity survey. He said that it is important to have the soil as flat as possible for these tests. Consequently, I will see to it that the design of the survey includes sufficient funds to move aside the dirt piles and also to scrape the surface as flat as possible, to be done just prior to the survey. CTC will cover these costs. Jeff also indicated that modest hand excavations (called "shovel tests") and also trenching (with a backhoe) might also be important parts of the "survey".

He also indicated that the Archaeological section of the THC would be the one to work with us on the survey, but the Architectural section of THC would also make comment on the actual design of the replica fort. So, it sounds like we have a natural and important ally in that division, to ask for advice early-on about details of replica construction. The report that Peggy and I are working on is the first step in beginning this discussion with both sections of THC.

Best Regards,
Chris Kneupper