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Newsletter

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**JUNK ON THE TRUNK: TREES AND PERISHABLE WOOD
FEATURES IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD**

Erin Hegberg

**7:30 PM, Tuesday June 19, 2018
Albuquerque Museum of Art and History
2000 Mountain Road NW**

Many of us think of archaeology as “stones, bones, and pottery” research, and even archaeologists tend to keep their eyes on the ground, focusing on artifacts and what can be learned from excavations. When we look up, however, we may also note a range of modified tree features and built wooden structures. Modified trees are living features within the forest that can also tell us a great deal about human activities and landscape use in the more recent past. Aspen trees carved by shepherders and cattlemen across the American West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are much loved by local historians and tourists, but until recently, were often ignored by archaeologists as “too young” or having little data potential. The carvings are frequently graphically sexual, but can also contain poignant poetry, political commentary, and linguistic play. Single trees often provide researchers with names and hometowns of the carvers, and convenient precision dating carved right into the tree. A large sample of carved aspen can provide archaeologists and historians with information regarding land-use, historic grazing, literacy, ethnic identity, and even weather patterns from year to year. Many aspen trees have been carved repeatedly, forming a growing palimpsest from the early twentieth century to the present, reflecting different peoples’ interactions with the surrounding landscape. A sample of 277 carved aspen from the southern San Juan Mountains, and over 350 aspen carvings recorded in the Valles Caldera National Preserve will be used to demonstrate several types of historical research that can be done with this rich dataset.

Erin Hegberg is a PhD candidate at the University of New Mexico and a historical archaeologist with the Office of Contract Archeology. She has also worked for the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service in each of the Four Corners states. Erin’s dissertation research considers race and identity in New Mexico during the nineteenth century through an examination of local New Mexican ceramics and mass-produced products. However, through her day job she gets to record early twentieth century homesteads, coal mines, and, of course, pornographic aspen.

MINUTES OF THE ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

May 15, 2018

President Carol Chamberland called the meeting to order at 7:34 by welcoming everyone. She encouraged the audience to retire to the lobby after the meeting to enjoy snacks provided by Hayward Franklin and Ann Carson.

Meeting minutes: There being no corrections or additions to the minutes, they stand as published.

REPORTS

Vice President – Evan Kay: We have a full slate of speakers for this year.

Treasurer – John Guth: We are in alignment with the budget with a balance of \$6641 in the checking account. Thanks to Mary Raje, Membership Chair, for the job she did in rounding up renewals. AAS currently has 175 members. John reported that the annual meeting was a tremendous financial success with ASNM and host AAS each receiving \$2690 from the net profit.

Archives – Karen Armstrong: Carol read a report in Karen's absence. The group is currently working on 100 boxes of Chupadero Black-on-white pottery sherds from the Adam Ranch site near Corona, NM.

Rock Art – Dick Harris: The team usually works on Tuesdays but took today off. They finished a small site this month and used decorrelation stretch (“D stretch”) technology to bring out the features of faded pictographs.

Field Trips – Pat Harris: The next trip will be on July 21 to Forked Lightning Ruin near Pecos National Monument with signup at the next meeting. A show of hands interested in an overnight trip to Blackwater Draw National Historic Site indicated sufficient interest for her to make arrangements. Pat listed other ideas for several fall and winter adventures.

Pottery Southwest – Gretchen Obenauf: They are getting close to publication of the Spring issue.

Webmaster – Evan Kay: Dick Harris has offered to help, but Evan is still looking for an assistant. If you are interested please see him.

ONGOING BUSINESS

ASNM Annual Meeting: Carol congratulated co-chairs Nancy Woodworth and Ethan Ortega for “doing a bang up job” coordinating the meeting. She thanked Gretchen for the lineup of speakers, Pat Harris, Dick Harris, and John Guth for organizing the fieldtrips, handling registration, and money. Kym Campbell was acknowledged and thanked for providing publicity and graphics for the meeting including signage and name tags. Carol thanked everyone who helped to make the annual meeting a great success. The total number of registrants was 212. The 2018 ASNM annual volume, *Two Gentlemen of Chaco, Papers in Honor of Thomas C. Windes and Peter J. McKenna, Papers of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico Volume 44*, has been archived in the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center library where it can be accessed for research weekdays from 9-5.

SEMINARS

Tom Windes will provide a free seminar on dendrochronology on Saturday June 2 at the Hibben Center on the University of New Mexico campus. Sign up tonight after the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gretchen Obenauf asked for 10 volunteers to conduct an archaeological survey on Sunday, June 10 of Tinaja Pueblo for the Archaeological Conservancy. Sign up after the meeting.

Carol Chamberland said that we will need a new venue for seminars after Dave Phillips retires. Please see Carol if you have a venue in mind that will accommodate 20 people.

Visitors were introduced: Joe Warren, an amateur historian and former employee of the United Nations, Bob Bergland, President of the Torrance County Archaeological Society and a newly-elected Trustee of ASNM, and Eric Cook, who is a photographer, and his friend Daniel, a new anthropology graduate.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

SPEAKER

Evan Kay introduced Christoher Merriman, PhD candidate at the University of New Mexico and recipient of the AAS Dudley King scholarship in 2015, to speak on his research of the Robert H. Weber collection of artifacts from the Northern Jornada del Muerto Paleoindian occupation in relation to the paleoenvironmental setting. Mr. Merriman provided the following synopsis of his talk.

Paleoclimate, Playas, and the Paleoindian Occupation of the Northern Jornada del Muerto

By Christopher W. Merriman

The Pleistocene-Holocene transition (~15,000–8000 BP) was a period of significant climate fluctuation, mass extinction, and human expansion into the New World. In general, the Bølling-Allerød was a period of global warming from 14,700–12,900 BP that was followed by a rapid shift to a near full glacial climate known as the Younger Dryas. The Younger Dryas lasted until 11,700 BP at which time there was an abrupt return to warming in the Early Holocene (11,700–8,200 BP). During the Bølling-Allerød, humans first colonized the Americas, most notably people known as Clovis (~13,650–12,750 BP) and the last of the megafauna were roaming the landscape. Within about 100 years of the onset of the Younger Dryas, roughly 35 genera of mammals were extinct and the Clovis projectile point complex had given way to the Folsom/Midland complex (12,760–11,760 BP) (successive Paleolithic cultures are identified by the types of projectile points they produced). The Plainview-Goshen complex begins at the end of the Younger Dryas around 12,150 BP and persists into the Early Holocene until about 11,350 BP, while the Cody complex (11,150–8,250 BP) is entirely within the Early Holocene. Recently, much attention has been given to the effects climate change – in particular the onset of the Younger Dryas – may, or may not, have had on Paleoindian hunter-gatherers

The Northern Jornada del Muerto in eastern Socorro County, New Mexico is a large structural basin west of the Rio Grande and east of the Oscura and San Andres Mountains. This desert grassland/scrubland contains several arroyo systems, numerous alluvial fan distributary channels, hundreds of playas (ephemeral lakes), and a handful of springs as well lithic raw materials. Sediment cores and stable isotope records from two playas in the Jornada del Muerto and speleothems (mineral deposits formed from groundwater within underground caverns) from caves in southeastern New Mexico indicate that there were abrupt transitions between the warm/dry Bølling-Allerød, the cool/wet Younger Dryas, and the highly variable Early Holocene. There is also an extensive Paleoindian occupation as represented by the extraordinary Robert H. Weber Collection. The Weber Collection contains roughly 800 well-documented and tightly-provenienced Paleoindian projectile points from dozens of sites throughout the Northern Jornada del Muerto, which allows for a big picture examination of Paleoindian occupation and the potential responses to climate change.

Hunter-gatherer subsistence patterns are intimately linked to the environment. In semi-arid environments like the Northern Jornada del Muerto, the scarcity of water significantly affects foragers' settlement and mobility. Increases or decreases in precipitation can have an immediate and significant effect on the spatial and temporal distribution of this critical resource. If climate change alters the structure or distribution of resources, hunter-gatherers should compensate by adjusting aspects of their subsistence strategies, including diet breadth, settlement choices, mobility patterns, and technological organization. Focusing on settlement patterns, this suggests that Paleoindian site location choices should track with changes in precipitation.

The relationship between the changing water supply and Paleoindian settlement patterns can be modeled using the diet breadth and patch choice models as templates. The models were adjusted for changes in precipitation

using the speleothem records from Fort Stanton Cave and Pink Panther Cave in southeastern New Mexico. The water supply model uses three factors, the area of the resources, the time to search for them, and the time to search within them, first to rank water sources based on their return rate and second to determine the optimal set of water sources that Paleoindians should have exploited. Briefly the results of the model indicate that 1) streams regardless of climatic conditions are top ranked, and 2) streams and playas would have always been included in optimal water supply. While these results alone cannot speak to responses to climate change, they do provide a starting point.

In the Northern Jornada del Muerto, much of the response to climate change revolves around playas. Compared to streams, they have small areas and limited catchments and they are less likely to have water. However, because playas are common, typically clustered, and easily searched, they are low cost with potentially large benefits. Thus, as precipitation and playa productivity increased during the Younger Dryas, so, too, should the association between Paleoindian sites and playas. This pattern is borne out by the spatial distribution of Paleoindian projectile points. Of the 313 Clovis points, 15 percent are associated with a playa; 48 percent of the 324 Folsom and Midland points had a playa as the closest water source; 40 percent of the 54 Plainview points and 47 percent of the 93 Cody points were associated with playas.

In sum, local and regional paleoclimate records indicate that the Pleistocene-Holocene transition climate change was quite similar to the North Atlantic case. A cooler/wetter Younger Dryas climate and wet and dry periods in the Early Holocene increased the productivity of playas. Paleoindians responded to this shift in the resource base by adjusting their settlement strategies to include more playas in the foraging itinerary.

SIGNUP FOR JULY 21 FORKED LIGHTNING PUEBLO FIELD TRIP AT JUNE MEETING AND FOR OCTOBER 13-14 BLACKWATER DRAW TRIP AT SEPTEMBER MEETING

Pat Harris, Field Trip Chair, announces that the next scheduled field trip is on July 21, to Forked Lightning Pueblo ruin at the Pecos National Monument. It will be an early morning departure, and the visit will be in the cool of the morning. Twenty current AAS members can attend. There's a short walk on a road and across Glorieta Creek (Pat is checking about the condition) to reach the pueblo. Signup, including the \$10 signup fee, will be at the June meeting.

An overnight trip to Portales and the Blackwater Draw National Historic Landmark is scheduled for October 13–14. A visit to the new Blackwater Draw Museum will be led by curator Jenna Domeischel, followed by a tour of the site with Dr. Brendon Asher, Director of Blackwater Draw. After that, people can visit the Roosevelt County Historical Museum and/or Rocks and Minerals at the Geology Museum located on the campus of Eastern New Mexico University. On the return trip, a stop is planned at the Fort Sumner Historic Site in Ft. Sumner, New Mexico for a tour of Bosque Redondo. Signup will be at the September meeting, along with the \$10 signup fee. More detailed information to come later.

MESA PRIETA PETROGLYPH PROJECT ADDS NEW EVENTS AND TOURS

The Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization and an ASNM affiliate, has announced a few new events and tours. They are introducing Public Tours of the Wells Petroglyph Preserve on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 8:30 am at \$35 per person. On the last Tuesday of each month they are offering Petroglyph Project Talks at the Northern Rio Grande Heritage Area Center (formerly the Oñate Monument and Visitor's Center, 848 New Mexico 68 in Alcalde). June 26 is Scott Ortman on "Rethinking Seventeenth Century New Mexico." Suggested donation of \$5.00. More information at tours@mesaprietapetroglyphs.org.

The MPPP 2018 fundraiser will feature Gary Farmer and the Troublemakers and a special performance by the Lightning Boy Foundation Hoop Dancers at the Shadeh Nightclub at Buffalo Thunder Resort Sunday, September 16th, beginning at 4:00 PM. More information from jennifer@mesaprietapetroglyphs.org or at 505-852-1351. All proceeds benefit Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project and help them to achieve their three goals: 1) to scientifically record an estimated 100,000 petroglyphs on Mesa Prieta; 2) to educate the community with tours, lectures and curriculum in local schools; and 3) to protect and preserve this endangered landscape for future generations.

CALENDAR CHECK

Conferences

Pecos Conference August 9–12 at the Hotshot Camp in the Kaibab National Forest about 10 miles outside of Flagstaff, Arizona. More information and online registration available at pecosconference.org.

Sapawe Conference “From Sapawe to Casitas” September 7–9, El Rito Campus, Northern New Mexico College. Free and open to the public, but advance registration required. **Register after July 1** at elritolibrary.org or call (575) 581-4608.

Mogollon Conference October 11–13 at Corbett Center, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces. Call for papers on the archaeology of the Mogollon region. Deadline for submissions August 1. See the website [<lonjul.net/mog2018/>](http://lonjul.net/mog2018/) for details.

New Mexico Archeological Council Fall Conference “The Archaic Period,” November 10 at the Hibben Center, UNM Campus. Call for papers.

ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 4029, Albuquerque, NM 87196

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