TEN YEARS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WATER CANYON PALEOINDIAN SITE IN NEW MEXICO

Robert Dello-Russo, PhD

7:30 PM, Tuesday January 16, 2017
Albuquerque Museum of Art and History
2000 Mountain Road NW

The discovery of the Water Canyon Paleoindian site has opened a new window into our understanding of the early human occupation of the Southwest in general and New Mexico in particular. Interdisciplinary research at the site, since 2008, has included not only archaeological studies but also investigations of an extensive fossil wetland (or “black mat”) where proxy data have been collected for paleoenvironmental reconstruction, paleoclimatic research and landform evolution during the late Pleistocene-early Holocene transition (ca. 13,000 to 8,000 years ago). The site is characterized by a high degree of integrity, stratified deposits, evidence for Clovis, Folsom, Cody/Firstview, Allen-Frederick, and other late Paleoindian and Archaic components, three *Bison antiquus* bone beds, open-air processing areas, and a potential for additional buried Folsom, Clovis and, possibly, pre-Clovis materials. Together, these attributes make this site unique west of the Pecos River in New Mexico.

Dr. Dello-Russo has more than 30 years of experience in the archaeology of the American Southwest, the Pacific Northwest, the northern Great Basin and the Rocky Mountains, including special interests in the Paleoindians of western North America, geoarchaeology, rock shelter archaeology, lithic sourcing and technology, and paleoclimatic/paleoenvironmental reconstructions. He received a BA from Bucknell University and both an MA and a PhD from the University of New Mexico. He created the Section 106 compliance program for the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish and later became the Deputy Director of the New Mexico Office of Archaeological Studies, Department of Cultural Affairs in Santa Fe. Currently, he is the Director at the Office of Contract Archaeology at the University of New Mexico, where he also serves as a Research Associate Professor. Since 2008, he has been the Principal Investigator for interdisciplinary research at the multi-component Water Canyon Paleoindian site in west-central New Mexico.

AAS DUES FOR 2018 ARE NOW PAYABLE

If you have not already done so, please fill out the attached membership renewal form and mail it with your check to Treasurer, Albuquerque Archaeological Society, PO Box 4029, Albuquerque NM 87196, or bring both to the meeting. Don’t be shy about showing interest in working with a committee or serving on the Board. Wider membership participation is needed and encouraged.
President Carol Chamberland convened the meeting at 7:07 PM following the potluck supper.

**Refreshments:** All were invited to stay after the meeting for the potluck desserts.

**Meeting minutes** for November 17, 2017 were approved and stand as published.

**REPORTS**

**Treasurer – John Guth** reported that the checking account balance is $6335.00. He thanked the folks who have renewed regular memberships and those who paid for sustaining memberships.

**Newsletter – Helen Crotty** thanked Carol Toffaleti for volunteering to be the new proofreader for the Newsletter.

**Archiving Group – Karen Armstrong** stated that the lab work is closed for the season.

**Membership – Mary Raje** encouraged everyone to renew their memberships and to give their dues to John Guth.

**Rock Art – Carol Chamberland** said that the rock art group went out every Tuesday this month and that some days were delightful and some cold. She stated that the group has now recorded BLM sites for nine years.

**Field Trips – Pat Harris** reported that she has a list of proposed trips for 2018 which includes two “overnights.”

**Pottery Southwest:** The publication is looking for a new editor to replace Patricia Lee, who has resigned. Carol asked those who are interested in the position to contact either her, Hayward Franklin, or Gretchen Obenauf.

**ONGOING BUSINESS**

**Elections for 2018 officers:** Helen Crotty temporarily presided for the vote. She asked for a motion that the nominations for the 2018 slate of officers be closed. A motion was made and seconded. Helen asked for a vote by acclamation for the slate and it passed unanimously. The 2018 officers were introduced: President, Carol Chamberland; First Vice President, Gretchen Obenauf; Second Vice President, Evan Kay; Secretary, Ginger Foerster; Treasurer, John Guth; and Directors-at-Large, Cindy Carson and Maggie Knight.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Seminars:** Chris Turnbow will present a class on lithics on January 27, 2018 from 9 am to 12 pm at the Hibben Center on the UNM campus. Interested parties were encouraged to sign up after the meeting.

**ASNM Annual Meeting:** Nancy Woodworth announced that Evan Kay will be entering information about the May 4–6, 2018 meeting on the AAS website. People are already requesting to register.

**ASNM Honorees for 2019:** Hayward Franklin asked for nominations for honorees for the Archaeological Society of New Mexico’s Volume of Collected Papers for 2019. The 2018 honorees are Tom Windes and Peter McKenna. Please contact Hayward by January 15 with nominations along with a brief list of the reasons for the nomination.

The business portion of the meeting concluded at 7:20 PM.

**SPEAKERS**

Gretchen introduced short talks by AAS members about archaeological sites visited this year: Bob Julyan on Neolithic England; Steve Patchett on African wildlife and a hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro; Helen Crotty on Mississippian artifacts seen on an Archaeological Conservancy tour of the Cahokia Mounds; Carol Chamberland about her experiences as Artist in Residence at Mesa Verde National Park; and Dick Harris on Stone Spirits and Petroglyphs.

Respectfully submitted,

_Ginger Foerster, Secretary_
Over the last few months, research at the Ancestral/Colonial Piro pueblo of Tzelaqui/Sevilleta has moved up a few notches. In October, testing of a faint circular depression tentatively identified as a possible kiva (Kiva 2) revealed just that – a circular kiva about 6 to 7 meters in diameter. Initial testing proceeded slowly, as the actual kiva remains were buried under a deeply stratified midden deposit with more than 30 layers and lenses, many of which contained seventeenth-century ceramics and an impressive assemblage of introduced domestic fauna (cows, sheep, and goats). Ultimately, the kiva floor was encountered at 2.06 meters below the surface (Figures 1, 2).

Luckily, the tested segment included several of the main kiva features: ventilator shaft, ladder impressions, deflector wall, ash pit, fire box, and five anchor holes for a weaving loom (Figure 3).

The kiva had been destroyed in a structure fire; the burnt roof was found as a dense layer of charred beam and matting fragments just atop the adobe floor. Two AMS $^{14}$C samples of burnt sacatón stems indicate a construction date in the mid- to later 1500s. Due to the fire, the kiva walls are in bad shape but in a few places layers of adobe plaster remain. Fragments of six layers were counted, including one (Layer 2) with remains of linear wall decoration in ochre to reddish paint (Figure 4).

The limited number of plaster layers suggests that Kiva 2 was not in use for very long before its destruction. Unfortunately, no diagnostic artifacts have been recovered from the kiva floor so far, which means the date of destruction remains unknown. It is tempting, however, to see the end of the kiva in conjunction with the establishment at the pueblo of the Franciscan mission of San Luis de Obispo in 1627/28. On the other hand, the ruins of this mission are very small and historical records describe it mostly as a visita to the mission at Pilabó/Socorro (founded in 1626). In other words, the Sevilleta mission for
the most part was not permanently staffed, which means spiritual “control” by Franciscan missionaries was probably just sporadic. As more of the kiva floor gets exposed, there is hope that perhaps some diagnostic artifacts may yet be encountered at or near floor level.

Although the context of the kiva’s destruction is unclear, it should be noted that there are more than 150 *malla* (chain mail armor) links (many still connected) and lead munitions scattered along the west and southwest periphery of Kiva 2. These are part of a current site assemblage of more than 600 metal artifacts, most of them military-related (armor, shot, boot nails, etc.). As not all parts of the pueblo have yet been examined with equal intensity with the metal detector, it is a bit premature to draw conclusions as to the meaning of the spatial patterning of artifacts. That said, several very dense clusters of differing object composition are already apparent, including the densest one between Kiva 2 and the nearest room block. Over the coming months, as weather permits, work on the kiva will continue, as will metal-detecting and wall-tracing and mapping of various structures, including the *visita* mission of San Luis Obispo and a large, yet unidentified but possibly fortified, Spanish compound at the center of the pueblo. Se continúan las aventuras y desventuras… A volar!

[Ed: Michael welcomes volunteers at the dig. Contact him at michael.bletzer@gmail.com if you are interested in participating. The next session is scheduled for Sunday, January 14, weather permitting.]

**Figure 3.** From back to front are ventilator shaft, (hidden behind deflector), deflector, ash pit, fire box, possible hatch cover fragment, ladder holes, and five loom anchor holes.

**Figure 4.** Tom O’Laughlin points out painted lines on Layer 2 of the plastered kiva wall.

**LITHICS SEMINAR SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 27, 2018 IS FULL**

The Lithics Seminar to be conducted by Chris Turnbow on Saturday, January 27 from 9 am to noon at the Hibben Center on the UNM campus is full, but current AAS members may sign up for the waiting list at the January meeting or online at info@albarchaeology.org.
ASNM ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN ALBUQUERQUE MAY 4–6, 2018

The Archaeological Society of New Mexico’s Annual Meeting will be held May 4–6, 2018 at the Nativo Lodge on northbound Pan American Freeway in Albuquerque and hosted by the Albuquerque Archaeological Society, co-chaired by Nancy Woodworth and Ethan Ortega. The theme is “Chaco Culture: In and Out of the Canyon” recognizing ASNM’s 2018 Honorees (and AAS members) Tom Windes and Pete McKenna. Visit the AAS or ASNM websites (see below) for more information, registration forms, and the call for papers. Registration online will not be available. To reserve a room online at the Nativo Lodge one must use the code “ASNM Annual Meeting 2018” for a reduced room rate. Or call 866-505-7829 or 505-798-4300.

CALENDAR CHECK

Conference

ASNM Annual Meeting May 4–6, 2018 at the Nativo Lodge in Albuquerque. More information, registration form, and call for papers at abqarchaeology.org or newmexico-archaeology.org.

ALBUQUERQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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☐ Assist Membership chair with display and signups at archaeological events;
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☐ Laboratory (assist with Hibben Center archival work);
☐ AAS Newsletter editorial assistant/trainee;
☐ AAS 50th Anniversary Volume Editor, assistant, researcher;
☐ Board of Directors and position desired;
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Mail the printed form and your membership dues check (payable to the Albuquerque Archaeological Society or AAS) to:

Treasurer, Albuquerque Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 4029
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Questions about Membership? (address or email changes, current dues verification, etc.): Email info@abqarchaeology.org

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