

Office of Archaeological Studies  
Education Outreach Program Summary: 2005-2011

New Mexico is a dynamic intersection of several unique settings that create a stimulating and challenging environment for education outreach. A review of some of these settings provides contextual background for strategies chosen by our Education Outreach Program for delivering the past to the public.

Fundamental to our concerns as archaeologists and a distinct advantage in communicating with our community is that New Mexico's rich archaeological heritage has long held a central position in American archaeology. This intellectual heritage began with the Archaeological Institute of America's sponsoring of Adolph Bandelier's pioneering archaeological and ethnological investigations in the 1880s. Nels Nelson established the methodological concept of stratigraphy during early work in the large Galisteo Basin pueblos, and A. V. Kidder utilized this new technique during the first large-scale excavation at Pecos Pueblo. The Clovis and Folsom sites in New Mexico provided the first convincing evidence for early humans associated with extinct Ice Age animals, demonstrating the great antiquity of the human presence on the continent.

The Antiquities Act arose out of concern for the protection and preservation of New Mexico sites that at the turn of the century were subject to pothunting and unsystematic excavation. Scientific investigation of Mimbres sites was just steps ahead of looting for profit, finally resulting in legislation for the protection of burials on both state and private lands. Systematic development of statewide site records was an early contribution of the Laboratory of Anthropology, and there are currently over 160,000 officially recorded sites in the New Mexico Cultural Resource Information System data base, one of the most effective site-management systems in the nation. In addition to providing scientific data for the professional community, several sites were among the first national monuments, and Chaco Canyon National Historical Park is a UNESCO world heritage site.

Our own archaeological program was already in place in 1954, when the New Mexico Bureau of Roads partnered with the Museum of New Mexico to form the first highway archaeology program in the country, long before there was any legal mandate to do so. The Laboratory of Anthropology brokered the return of Zuni war gods in a repatriation effort that predated NAGPRA, establishing a respectful precedent in consultations with the state's thriving sovereign tribal nations. In other words, as New Mexico archaeologists we have much to share with the communities of New Mexico that is derived from our own disciplinary history and the cultural history of our state's archaeological backyard.

New Mexico is ethnically diverse. Unlike many states that no longer have intact Native American communities, New Mexico is home to nineteen Pueblo groups, the Navajo Nation (the largest Native American tribe), and now three Apache tribes (with the recent designation of reservation land for the Fort Sill Apaches in Deming). Nearly all of these Native American groups are still living on traditional lands and practicing elements of their traditional cultures. They are in descendant relationships to much of New Mexico's archaeological record, both allowing and forcing us to see archaeological history as continuous with the present. This makes

varied cultural perspectives come alive in terms of languages, worldviews, religions, and the impacts of colonialism and forced acculturation. The concentration of traditional Native American groups creates a complicated web of NAGPRA issues, consultation, inter-tribal concerns, and cultural sensitivities that archaeologists may not directly experience while practicing their profession in states lacking traditional Native American communities. The history of anthropological and archaeological study has both created negative stereotypes that need to be overcome and provides a wealth of information that can be of use to Native American communities in their current efforts at cultural revival. New Mexico also has a strong Spanish-American community in which many families trace their roots back to the founding colonists of 1598. For their more than 400 years of history, archaeology is a necessary complement to a historical record that is largely bureaucratic or ecclesiastical. Many rural Anglo ranching families trace their backgrounds to the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1820s as well as later homesteads, along with a vibrant series of freed-slave communities.

New Mexico by land area is the fifth largest state, and the larger part of a day is needed to travel from border to border in either direction. An average of fifty miles of open space separates New Mexico's communities, and more than 60 percent of the population lives outside of the four largest cities. In turn, New Mexico is economically one of the poorest states and is near the bottom of national educational rankings. Most of the state's wealth, population, and cultural institutions such as museums are concentrated along the central Rio Grande corridor, including the towns of Taos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces, and such large distances and travel expenses make it difficult for many schools and families outside the corridor to visit cultural institutions.

The geographic scale and diverse and varied communities make for a complex and challenging archaeological outreach environment. New Mexico is also a very conservative state, where modern archaeology is often viewed as a hindrance to economic development by ranching, logging, mining, and oil and gas extraction interests. New Mexicans generally value their heritage, but archaeology is often the last priority in the competitive political economy. Although federal and state laws protect the archaeological resources, they are very much in need of continual positive representation. This is also true in relation to the vast expanses of private rangeland. Gaining access to archaeological resources on private land can only benefit from outreach activities that can correct years of negative views of government interference with private property and misconceptions of archaeologists and museums that are often held by the ranching community.

Finally, time for science and history is becoming increasingly rare and precious in the public school experience as teaching centers more and more around testing. This is especially true in the current political environment, where teacher performance, pay, and school resources are directly tied to the measure of student testing performance. It is becoming harder to schedule archaeological school programs in this performance-based environment, which is narrowly focused around reading and math. Also, continuing to push for an archaeological experience in schools is extremely important in a climate where evolution is increasingly challenged by creationism, and Paleoindian dates are challenged by fifth graders who are already convinced that the earth was created in 4004 BC.

These are the challenges we encounter in pressing forward with education outreach in New Mexico. In light of these contexts, we have developed several successful strategies for bringing archaeology to the public. First, the emphasis of our program has been engaging the public through direct interactions with archaeologists. We have found that these direct interactions provide the most powerful, flexible, and inspirational experiences given New Mexico's rich and varied cultural background. Archaeologists can adapt the presentation to the immediate needs of the audience and respond creatively to the many challenging questions that arise. Second, our program emphasizes statewide coverage. We feel that it is important to take the archaeological story across the state to as many varied and often underserved and remote venues as possible. Many schools and rural communities simply will not receive the archaeological experience in any other way. We make a concerted effort to provide at least one venue in every county on an annual rotation. Third, we have found that artifact displays and craft demonstrations provide unique hands-on opportunities for learning about New Mexico archaeology, technology, and prehistoric lifeways. The artifacts and demonstrations serve as "hooks" to inspire curiosity about the past and open windows on a wide range of archaeological questions. The attached tables and maps summarize the range and types of OAS education outreach activities across the state of New Mexico. We have had direct face-to-face encounters with over 50,000 New Mexicans since 2004 and are proud to have served venues in all of New Mexico's thirty-three counties annually for the last three fiscal years (maps for FY10 and FY11 are attached). Detailed breakdowns of our programming for the last three calendar years are also attached to illustrate these activities, the range of venues, and the number of individuals involved.

### New Mexico Lifeways

The starting points of many of our statewide outreach efforts are hands-on artifact displays and craft demonstrations. These serve as flexible touchstones for learning about New Mexico archaeology, technology, and prehistoric lifeways, and are easily adapted to a wide range of venues and audiences. We have accumulated a range of actual and replicated artifact categories for show-and-tell interactions with school groups and the public. Artifacts are arranged along a time-line encompassing the Paleoindian/Archaic, Pueblo, Spanish-Colonial, and Territorial periods. These collections reflect both the multicultural matrix of New Mexico and its extreme time depth. Patrons are always excited to actually be able to touch artifacts, and the use of expendable replicas adds a sensory dimension to the learning experience. Teachers find historic Spanish- and Territorial-period artifacts a complement to history as presented in the textbooks. The artifacts elicit questions from the audience and allow the archaeologist to ask questions of the audience, opening a dialog that can then move through a wide range of topics. Complementing the artifacts are craft demonstrations on the production of yucca cordage and rope, yucca sandals, and turkey feather blankets, and occasionally on pottery and flintknapping. These demonstrations develop appreciation for the skills practiced by prehistoric families and emphasize the irony that even such basic technologies are foreign to our modern society.

This format is appropriate for a wide range of venues and audiences, including schools of all grades, regional fairs of all sizes, and libraries. The material also supports more directed education programs such as those conducted by docents or Native American elders and youth. We have found that the dual approach of lifeway artifacts and craft demonstrations is particularly effective with audiences that are not already self-selected for their interest in archaeology.

Hunters and members of the armed forces may not have an interest in archaeology, but they are often attracted by the bows and spears and to the concept of “survivalism.” This widespread interest in weaponry leads to a discussion of technology change through time, and before they know it, they are learning archaeology. Similarly, Native Americans at various events are attracted to the bows, which they still experience in their lives. However, they may never have seen an atlatl or learned that this implement was an important piece of hunting gear before the bow, or how their ancestors once produced string from the yucca plant. Again, they begin to learn about archaeology through the hands-on experience with artifacts and craft demonstrations. Ultimately, these encounters can lead to more central archaeological issues such as the fragile and finite number of archaeological sites and the need for their preservation and protection.

These hands-on artifacts and replicas are frequently borrowed and utilized by archaeologists in other institutions such as the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division. We have also collaborated with video producers for WBGH, National Geographic, PBS, and private ventures, loaning or renting replicas (and creating props to their specifications) that are returned to the Education Outreach Program after filming. Similarly, our background in creating credible replicas was used in collaboration with Friends of Archaeology volunteers to produce portions of the New Mexico History Museum’s “Pueblo Revolt” exhibit. The exhibit design called for 300 arrows to be hung from the ceiling for dramatic effect. We solicited symbolic arrows from New Mexico tribes and then worked with the volunteers to create the remainder of the arrows in the variety of archaeological and ethnographic styles that represent New Mexico as a whole.

### Roads to the Past Highway Map

OAS staff was approached by High Desert Field Guides to develop educational content for a tourist map of archaeological destinations (sites and museums) in New Mexico. The collaboration was carried out through the Friends of Archaeology so that any proceeds from map sales could then be applied to support the education program. Copies of the map are included in this nomination packet. The intent was to guide visitors and residents alike to the publicly accessible, interpreted, and monitored archaeological sites, as well as providing background that would help map users literally “connect the dots” in terms of putting the individual sites into a statewide context of culture history. At the statewide scale, climate and regional traditions are important contexts for understanding how the individual sites are related in time and in interaction.

### Institutional Collaborations

The OAS has taken an ongoing role in support of the education efforts of other institutions and cultural programs across the state. OAS staff provide formal docent training, demonstrations, and public lectures for the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, New Mexico History Museum, Palace of the Governors, New Mexico State Monuments, Maxwell Museum of Anthropology (UNM), Eastern New Mexico University, Archaeological Institute of America (Santa Fe chapter), State Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Transportation, Southwest Seminars, the Poeh Arts Program (Pojoaque Pueblo), the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, and numerous libraries and local museums. Dean Wilson of the OAS staff has embarked

on a long-term program of training Site Watch stewards in pottery identification, enlisting them in systematic site descriptions (noncollection surface observations) as part of their training and to implement research and management goals for sites.

The OAS website ([nmarchaeology.org](http://nmarchaeology.org)) has attracted national partnerships such as a joint venture with Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth (CTY). CTY requested that we design a multiday archaeological education experience for their families, incorporating site visits, lifeways presentations, and hands-on opportunities with various technologies.

Our long-term outreach experience with New Mexico's multiple audiences allowed us to contribute several threads of discussion during the recent Delphi Survey by the University of Montana and the BLM's Project Archaeology, which was gathering information from national outreach participants about using archaeology as a medium for presenting science inquiry skills to students and underserved audiences such as Blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics.

Perhaps our most important, although low-key, collaborations have been with Native American groups. We have provided support for the Keres language program at Cochiti Pueblo and for a similar program at Santa Ana Pueblo. In addition to delivering standard lifeway presentations, we have been asked to teach what we know (archaeological knowledge and yucca and pottery skills) to elder tribal members who in turn taught the youth of the pueblos in their native language. The intent is for our role to be transitory, leading to a self-sustaining program within the tribe.

#### Collaborations with the Museum of New Mexico Foundation Friends of Archaeology

The Friends of Archaeology (FOA) was established as both a fundraising and a consciousness-raising organization in support of OAS research and education activities. FOA is known as a "blue collar" group within the foundation, requiring interest but no special fees for member participation. We provide content and editorial support for a quarterly newsletter, *New Mexico Archaeology*, to the more than 500 members of FOA (four examples are included in the nomination). The newsletter allows the staff to present excavation results and a wide range of topics to the public.

OAS and FOA periodically develop formal lecture series on various archaeological topics and themes. We mix local and national speakers to present lectures on consecutive weeks, usually in the winter. Recent subjects have included "The Cycle of Cosmic Catastrophes in Civilization" (2008), "Dr. Edgar Hewett's Archaeological Legacy" (2009), "Conflicts of Great Southwest Cultures" (2010), and "Archaeology and Women in the Southwest" (2011).

Again through the Friends of Archaeology, the OAS offers a variety of one- to three-day educational tours to New Mexico archaeological and historic sites (see descriptions in the newsletters). The OAS designs the tours to educate the public about the rich heritage of New Mexico and proper site etiquette. We also help arrange tours of privately owned ancestral sites for Native American elders, religious specialists, and students. These tours have been educational for Native groups who were able to visit and experience sites that in many cases have only been recalled in oral tradition.

## Climate Change

A frequent request for adult-audience formal lecture presentations has been the subject of climate change. The issue of global warming and carbon dioxide has polarized the conservative-liberal population of New Mexico to the extent that neither side is listening to the points of the other, regardless of scientific validity. We have found that the history of past human adaptation in the state is a neutral way of opening a dialog on questions of economic and social stability and sustainability in the face of demonstrable climate change. Sustainability is a positive value with both liberal audiences concerned about energy and water and conservative ranchers who want to see their values and way of life continue in the next generation. Removing the politically divisive issue of cause from the equation, we have been able to use the past effects of climate change as an introduction to discussions of what our society needs to consider in order to ensure that our values are supported and maintained.

## Publications

The emphasis of the OAS Education Outreach program has been engaging the public through direct interaction with archaeologists rather than through written materials. However, in addition to the FOA newsletter, OAS staff contributes popular articles in *El Palacio*, the magazine of the Museum of New Mexico (one example is included in the nomination packet). We also provide expert resources to authors (in exchange for a cup of coffee) who write popular books on topics with archaeological content. Since our last award nomination, OAS staff members have been significant sources for Lucy Lippard's award-winning history of the Galisteo Basin, *Down Country: The Tano of the Galisteo Basin, 1250–1782*. Additional research support was provided for William deBuys's *A Great Aridness: Climate Change and the Future of the Southwest*. Jason Shapiro requested that OAS staff as a whole review and comment on his final draft of *Before Santa Fe: Archaeology of the City Different* (2008), a popular and textbook synthesis of the archaeology of northern New Mexico.

## Outreach Highlights

*Socorro School and Festival of the Cranes:* One of Chuck Hannaford's most memorable moments in education outreach was presenting a program to a Socorro grade school and having a young Navajo boy from the nearby Alamo Navajo Reservation show interest in the atlatl. He returned the next day to our program at the Festival of the Cranes and brought his entire extended family. He presented the story of the atlatl to them in Navajo, and they all went on to experience the other artifacts and craft demonstrations.

*Tularosa Elementary School:* After a presentation of our hands-on artifact display, a young Apache girl and boy came up to Chuck saying that they liked the artifacts. They wanted to know if he had ever heard of Victorio and Geronimo, their great grandparents. They were just learning about New Mexico history in the fifth grade, and this was the first time they understood the importance of their personal connections.

*Gallup Library:* Patronage of the Gallup library is more than 90 percent from the local Navajo and Zuni tribes. Presenting an archaeology hands-on exhibit in this context was a challenging venue. A forty-year-old Navajo patron was greatly inspired by the range of artifacts and talked for over an hour. He left saying, “This stuff is great, it is really Old School.”

*Folsom:* Folsom is a rural New Mexico town and the home of the poor and rundown Folsom Museum, honoring the find of the original Folsom point. We presented our lifeways program as part of a joint venture with the museum’s branding party, in which surrounding ranchers brought in their brands and branded the fence of the museum. The branding attracted the ranchers when they would have ordinarily not heeded an advertisement for an archaeology event alone, and they were encouraged to bring in artifacts for identification. The ranchers brought in a number of Folsom points they had found, and in the process they learned about archaeology and the broader culture historical context of the area.

*Festival of the Cranes and Indian Pueblo Cultural Center:* A young Isleta Pueblo man came by the outreach program at the Festival of the Cranes by accident and was fascinated by the yucca fiber demonstration. Two years later we received this e-mail as part of an invitation to do a program at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center: “My name is Louie Garcia, Pueblo fiber artist and president of the newly formed New Mexico Pueblo Fiber Arts Guild. I met you a few years ago at the festival of the cranes in Socorro. I still have the yucca cordage you gave me and I have been using ever since in the Pueblo weaving classes that I teach at IPCC. . . . What I learned from you that one weekend in Socorro inspired me to reach further back in my talent as a Pueblo weaver. I am now growing my own cotton to spin and weave kilts and belts. . . . It would be great to see you again and chat about Pueblo textiles.”

*Ramah Navajo:* When the community of Ramah requested a program, we sent down three of our junior staff: an Anglo flintknapper; Mary Weahkee (Comanche–Santa Clara), to demonstrate yucca weaving; and Lynette Etsitty (Navajo), to demonstrate basketry. They worked with both students and elders, and by the end of the program, Mary had been embraced by the community. From the depths of oral tradition came this story: a young Santa Clara woman had saved the band (into which she had been captured years before) from pursuit by Mexican soldiers. Running across the desert had worn through the band’s leather moccasins, and she taught them how to quickly make yucca-leaf sandals. By wearing the sandals, they were able to escape their pursuers. Now, in modern times, Mary, another Santa Clara woman, had come to Ramah to show them how to make yucca-leaf sandals. The elders saw this as a special gift, along with a chance to repeat a portion of their history for the young people in attendance.