Adobe—clay soil used to plaster walls and make bricks

Ancestral Puebloans—people who lived in the Four Corners area (where AZ, NM, CO, and UT come together) from about AD 1 to about AD 1200; also known by the Navajo name “Anasazi”

Archaeology—the science that studies past cultures by looking at the things they left behind

Artifacts—things made or used by people in their daily lives

Atlatl—a device used by many ancient peoples to amplify spear-throwing force and distance

Awl—a pointed wood, bone, or metal hand tool used for making holes in leather, baskets, cloth, or wood

Basketmakers—an early Native American group (around AD 500) named for their skill in basket making

Corrugated pottery—pottery with rows of surface indentations, used for cooking and storage

Dehydrated—to have lost water and dried out

Dendrochronology—dating wood by comparing its tree rings with samples of known age

Drought—a long period with little or no rain

Excavation—uncovering buried objects from the past by carefully planned digging of a site

Foot drum—rectangular pit covered with boards in a floor. Produces a deep drum-like sound when danced on.

Groundstone—stone tools shaped by pecking and/or grinding, used for pulverizing or grinding seeds, other plant parts, and colored pigments

Hogan—circular (or polyhedral) Navajo shelter, with log or stone walls, and a log roof covered with soil

Interpretations—using archaeological information collected from surveys and excavations to reconstruct what may have happened in the past

Kiln—a structure for heating clay vessels till they become hard

Kiva—a round or square, underground room used for cooking, eating, sleeping, and religious ceremonies

Latillas—small poles laid across roof beams (vigas) to form the ceiling of a Pueblo house

Lithics—stone tools with sharp edges, formed by chipping or percussion

Mano—a hand-held stone used to grind corn and seeds

Mesa—a land form that has a flat top and steep sides

Metate—a flat or trough-shaped stone slab used in grinding corn
Midden—a trash heap

Obsidian—black glass-like rock formed from volcanic lava

Petroglyph—a picture carved into rock

Pictograph—a picture painted on rock

Potsherd—a broken piece of pottery

Projectile point—a stone, bone, or metal tip to a wood or reed-grass arrow or spear

Rincon—a small side canyon

Screen—to sift dirt to look for small artifacts

Sipapu—a small hole in the floor of a kiva where spirit ancestors emerge from an earlier underground world

Survey—Information about the distribution of past human activities, gained by walking systematically across the landscape

Vigas—roof beams

M. Toll, Oct 28, 2014