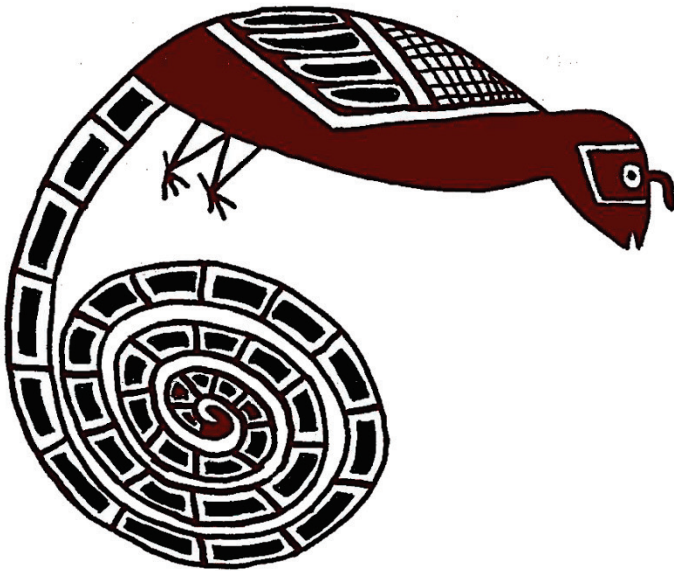


23rd Biennial Mogollon Archaeology Conference



October 8-10, 2026

**New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM**

**23rd Biennial
Mogollon Archaeology
Conference**

October 8-10, 2026



Sponsored by the

**Department of Anthropology and the
Anthropology Graduate Student Organization
New Mexico State University**

Thursday Evening October 8, 2026

New Mexico State University Museum

Opening Reception and Registration

6:15-8:15 PM



Kent Hall (1280 E. University Ave., Las Cruces, NM)
(Corner of Solano and University Ave)

Sponsored by

New Mexico State University Museum

Kelly Jenks, *Director*

Heather Para, *Curator*

Friday Morning (October 9, 2026)

Corbett Center NMSU

8:00 Registration

8:30 Opening Remarks William Walker, Conference Chair

Session 1:

8:45 **Ceramic Artifacts and Patterns from Excavations along Lake Roberts in the Sapillo Valley**

Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers and Alexander Kurota

9:05 **Identities of Children as Revealed by Mortuary Treatments: Comparisons of Contemporary Mimbres and Northern Mexico Populations**

Kathryn Baustian

9:25 **Reassessing Mimbres Cremation**

Sean G. Dolan

9:45 **Prehispanic Copper Artifacts Recovered from Five Mimbres Sites on the Gila National Forest**

Christopher Adams

10:05 Break

Session 2:

10:20 **Three Circle Phase Great Kivas as Anchors for Classic Mimbres and Terminal Classic Architecture at the Galaz Site in the Mimbres Valley**

Roger Anyon and Darrell Creel

10:40 **Great Kivas, Special Rooms, Ritual Differentiation, and Group Memberships at the Galaz Site in the Mimbres Valley**

Darrell Creel and Roger Anyon

11:00 **Final Abandonment of NAN Ranch Room 41/42 Suite: A Mimbres Kiva with Stories**

Harry J. Shafer

11:20 **NAN Ranch Project's Archaeological Investigations in Gavilan Canyon, 1982-1987**

Darrell Creel

11:40 **Selection of Conference for Following Conferences**

Lonnie C. Ludeman

11:50 End

Friday Afternoon (October 9, 2026)

Corbett Center NMSU

Session 3:

- 1:45 **Preliminary Results of the 2026 Excavations at Agape Acres, Mimbres Valley**
Fumi Arakawa, Lonnie Ludeman, Danielle Romero, Jacqueline Cowan, and JC Lansche
- 2:05 **Summary of the Agave Acres (LA19165) Ceramic Assemblage**
Danielle Romero
- 2:25 **Great Kivas and Community Connections: A Comparative Study of South Diamond Creek Pueblo and Twin Pines Village**
Dominick Lambert and Quinn Comprosky
- 2:45 **A Comparison of Faunal Remains from Two Georgetown Phase Sites in Relation to the Greater Mimbres-Mogollon Cultural Area**
Jacqueline Cowan
- 3:05 Break

Session 4:

- 3:20 **Ancient Immigrants at Point of Pines: Tusayan or Kayenta?**
Patrick D. Lyons
- 3:40 **Challenging Old Assumptions: A Reappraisal of Ancestral Pueblo Lifeways Along the Mogollon Rim**
Abraham Arnett
- 4:00 **Conversations in Clay: Intrasite Variability in Corrugated Ceramic Style at Three Salado Sites**
Annika Mayer, Nicole Lewis, and Stephen Uzzle
- 4:20 **Land Use and Settlement within the Upper Little Colorado River Region: A Synthesis of Recent Class III Surveys within the WEPJ Restoration Project Area near Springerville, Arizona**
Abigail R. Dockter, Emily DiBiase, and David Lewandowski
- 4:40 **Obsidian Procurement beyond the Mimbres River Valley: Insights from the West Baker Site**
Sean G. Dolan, Joseph M. Birkmann, M. Steven Shackley, and Patricia A. Gilman
- 5:00 End

Friday Evening (October 9, 2026)
La Posta Restaurant
2355 Calle De Guadalupe, Mesilla, NM

Conference Banquet

6:15 PM No Host Cash Bar

6:30 PM Banquet

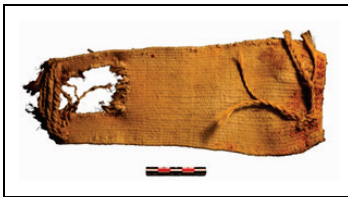
7:15 PM Invited Lecture

"Hot on the Heels of Leadership and Ritual Practice: Tracking Continuity, Change, and the Movement of Elite Footwear and Religious Practitioners Before, During, and After Chaco"

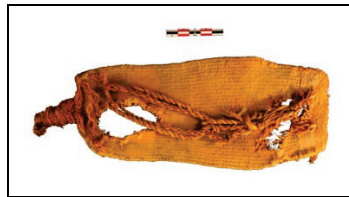
Benjamin A. Bellowado

Arizona State Museum

"Southwest archaeologists have increasingly recognized that transformations in religious practice were rooted in longer histories of continuity, even as new social and political arrangements emerged. This presentation examines these processes through twined yucca sandals, tracing changes in their construction and design from commonplace footwear to specialized regalia associated with religious practitioners."



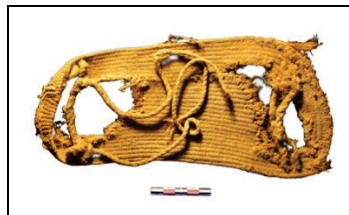
Basket Maker 2



Basket Maker 3 Early



Basketmaker 3 late



Pueblo 2 Late

Saturday Morning (October 10, 2026)

Corbett Center NMSU

Session 5:

9:00 Registration

9:15 **Salvage Archaeology and the Museum of New Mexico in Southwest New Mexico**

Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers

9:35 **Archaeology Southwest and a New Kind of Archaeological Field School in Reserve, New Mexico**

Stephen E. Nash and Karen Gust Schollmeyer

9:55 **Scarlet Macaws and Strontium Isotopes: Identifying Breeding or Management Locations in the Mogollon and Beyond**

*Amanda Semanko, Richard George, Patrick Lyons,
Frank C. Ramos, and Colin Omilanowski*

10:15 **Magic and Entomology Among the Mimbres**

Sammi Burke

10:35 Break

Session 6:

10:50 **The Apache Creek Highway Salvage Projects Revisited**

Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers and Regge N. Wiseman (OAS, posthumous)

11:10 **Dogs, Coyotes, and Turkeys from the Cañada Alamosa**

Sean G. Dolan and Karl W. Laumbach

11:30 **High-Altitude Shrine Site Located on the Eastern Black Range Mountains, Southwestern New Mexico**

Christopher Adams, Fumi Arakawa, Charles Haecker, and Belinda Mollard

11:50 **Considering Connections to the West: Patterns in Ceramic Procurement at the Cottonwood Spring Pueblo Community (LA 175)**

Tuesday Critz

12:10 End

Saturday Afternoon (October 10, 2026)

Corbett Center Auditorium NMSU

Session 7:

- 1:45 **Chronology of Jornada Style Iconography in Pictographs, Perishables, and Ceramic Designs**
Myles R. Miller, Karen Steelman, Lawrence L. Loendorf, and Michael Stowe
- 2:05 **Termination Pit Deposits in Jornada Villages**
Tim Graves, Myles R. Miller, Trevor Lea, and Mark Willis
- 2:25 **Jornada Mogollon and Early Historic Period Use of the Mares Rockshelter, Doña Ana County, New Mexico**
Robert J. Stokes
- 2:45 **Trash Talk: Examples of Archaeological Resources Attracting Modern Garbage in El Paso County, Texas**
Kelly D Rush
- 3:05 Break

Session 8:

- 3:20 **New Research on Old Lands: An investigation of Prehistoric Occupation at Fort Selden Historic Site**
Payton Szwaczkowski
- 3:40 **Rock-Art Studies in the Sierra de las Uvas, Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument, Doña Ana County, New Mexico**
Samuel S. Cason, Philip Leckman, Kimberley Babicz, Emmanuel Macias, and David Unruh
- 4:00 **Contextualizing San Miguel de Carnué: A Comparative Analysis of Eighteenth-Century Plazas in New Mexico**
Gabriel Field
- 4:20 **Influences via Ceramics: between Mimbres and Chihuahua 750-1425 C.E.**
R.G. Wakeland
- 4:40 End

Friday Morning (October 9, 2026)

Corbett Center Auditorium NMSU

Session 1

8:45

Ceramic Artifacts and Patterns from Excavations along Lake Roberts in the Sapillo Valley*Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers and Alexander Kurota*

Between October 2011 and January 2012, the Office of Contract Archeology (OCA) conducted data recovery operations at two sites along Lake Roberts in the Sapillo Valley for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. OCA employed a sample analysis strategy that resulted in the detailed analysis of 3,258 ceramic sherds and 23 partially reconstructible or complete vessels, most of which came from LA 47821, the Lake Roberts Site. The project offered an opportunity to investigate a far eastern Upper Gila Mimbres site that was likely seasonally occupied, clarify variability within corrugated pottery production techniques used by potters and propose terminology. We also offer the results of analysis of a smaller site that can provide insight on residential activities as compared with the larger Mimbres villages, such as NAN, Galaz, Swarts, and Mattocks, that predominate the existing literature. In this presentation, we provide an overview of the excavated sites, the analyzed ceramic assemblages, and our findings with respect to broader contributions in southwestern New Mexico archaeology.

9:05

Identities of Children as Revealed by Mortuary Treatments: Comparisons of Contemporary Mimbres and Northern Mexico Populations*Kathryn Baustian*

Thousands of human mortuary features have been excavated from Mimbres Mogollon contexts dating to the 8th through 12th centuries AD, yet their meaning at the individual and community levels is quite incomplete. The variations and patterns in mortuary treatments of infants and children are even more unknown. Through an examination of published literature and site reports, skeletal indicators and mortuary treatments are beginning to shed light on elements of social identities of subadults buried in and near pithouse and pueblo rooms. These observations are then able to contribute to the interpretation of power dynamics within households and communities. This study highlights the mortuary features of a few Mimbres subadults to explore the variation in treatment of individuals and then compares them to contemporary communities in northern Mexico. Factors

such as grave placement and grave accompaniments such as pendants and jewelry among subadult burial in Chihuahua and Sonora reveal similarities to Mimbres children who may represent founding families within communities.

9:25

Reassessing Mimbres Cremation

Sean G. Dolan

Cremation was practiced in the Mimbres region between roughly CE 750 and 1450, but it was far less common than inhumation and has received limited archaeological attention. This presentation draws on my recently published study in *Kiva* (2026, 92[1]:55–89), updating the regional record and reassessing why cremation was used selectively before CE 1130 and why it increased afterward. Using an expanded inventory of known cremations, I evaluate practical, social, and ritual factors, including fuel cost, public mortuary placement, social distinction, spiritually dangerous transitions, and post-1130 social reorganization. The evidence indicates that cremation is best understood as a publicly structured mortuary technology that moved commemoration beyond the household and helped manage spiritually charged transitions at a broader social scale. Although fuel cost shaped feasibility, it does not fully explain the pattern. This study clarifies long-term change in Mimbres mortuary practice and demonstrates how fire, labor, ash, objects, and spatial placement helped communities negotiate death, memory, and belonging.

9:45

Prehispanic Copper Artifacts Recovered from Five Mimbres Sites on the Gila National Forest

Christopher Adams

This presentation will review five Mimbres sites that contain the highest number of prehispanic copper artifacts from the Gila National Forest. The five Mimbres sites include Twin Pines Village (LA75947), Gatton's Park Pueblo (LA11075), Hill Top Ruin (LA75046), Terry Canyon Village (LA104058 and the Three Bells Site (LA11512). All five Mimbres sites are located in the heart of the Mimbres Cultural area, and all of the sites have suffered a long history of pothunting on the Gila National Forest. A total of 64 prehispanic copper artifacts was recovered by the author using several different types of metal detectors. Three types of copper artifact types have been identified during this 17-year reconnaissance for prehispanic copper artifacts. The collection consists of 50 native copper nuggets, eight copper bells, two copper clapper stones, two worked fetishes, one worked piece of

copper and one copper ball. This paper highlights that the Mimbres Culture was exploiting native copper throughout A.D. 900 - A.D. 1130.

10.05 Break

Session 2

10:20

Three Circle Phase Great Kivas as Anchors for Classic Mimbres and Terminal Classic Architecture at the Galaz Site in the Mimbres Valley
Roger Anyon and Darrell Creel

Recent re-evaluation of records from the Southwest Museum and University of Minnesota excavations between 1927 and 1931 at the Galaz site in the Mimbres Valley reveal hitherto unrecognized architectural continuity in the North Room Cluster between approximately AD 880 and 1180. These three centuries of architectural continuity were established by the construction of two great kivas, GK 42A and GK 73, whose orientations dictated the orientations of succeeding layers of pueblo construction. We identify five major construction hinge points during this time frame. We believe the major roof support set into the southwest wall of GK 42A was left standing above ground level after the great kiva had been retired through burning and purposeful filling, and served as a ritually significant pivot point for later room constructions. Such a continuity of architectural and spatial organization from the Late Pithouse Period through the Classic Mimbres and Terminal Classic phases is, as far as we are aware, unique in the Mimbres World.

10:40

Great Kivas, Special Rooms, Ritual Differentiation, and Group Memberships at the Galaz Site in the Mimbres Valley
Darrell Creel and Roger Anyon

Recent re-evaluation of records from the Southwest Museum and University of Minnesota excavations between 1927 and 1931 at the Galaz site in the Mimbres Valley reveal previously unrecognized aspects of ritual differentiation and group memberships at the Galaz site over the three centuries between approximately AD 880 and 1180. Within the North Room Cluster these differentiations and memberships appear to remain essentially consistent throughout this time frame, indicating a continuity in social cohesion through the pithouse to pueblo transition and beyond the collapse of Classic Mimbres society. We show how great kivas frame later developments, including the construction and use of special rooms, and how certain material culture associates with certain architecture thus allowing us to infer ritual differentiation and group memberships. Our observations

allow us to take these inferences beyond the North Room Custer at Galaz during Classic Mimbres, and make comparisons to similar conclusions derived from recent reanalysis of the Cosgrove's 1920's excavations at the Swarts site.

11:00

Final Abandonment of NAN Ranch Room 41/42 Suite: A Mimbres Kiva with Stories

Harry J. Shafer

Core rooms often with dual hearth or vault features at NAN Ranch are interpreted as corporate kivas. Each of these rooms has special features that set them apart from habitation rooms such as wall niches, wall shelves, benches, unusual floor contents or large subfloor cemeteries. Room suite 41/42 contained most of those features but also interesting artifacts interpreted as being intentionally left as part of ritual closures events. One was a cervid skull and the other was a small bowl with a water skate motif. Ordinarily these items would be simply listed on the room's inventory in descriptive reports and compared with similar rooms. Here I propose that the artifacts may shed light on why they were left in the room and how the skate connects with a Zuni story in search of the Middle.

11:20

NAN Ranch Project's Archaeological Investigations in Gavilan Canyon, 1982-1987

Darrell Creel

The NAN Ranch Project conducted survey and excavation in Gavilan Canyon during 1982-1987, but this work has been largely unanalyzed and reported until now. Excavations were focused on two sites in the upper reaches of the project area, with most being at a 15-20 room Classic site named Pueblo Vinegaroon. The results of the project indicate that occupation of the canyon was large episodic, and we believe that Late Pithouse and Classic period farmers occupied the areas near springs and cultivable floodplain during wet periods but abandoned those locations during droughts. We presume that Gavilan residents relocated to larger villages such as NAN Ranch and Swarts along the Mimbres River during drier intervals.

11:40

Selection of Conference for Following Conferences

Lonnie C. Ludeman

11:50 End

Friday Afternoon (October 9, 2026)

Corbett Center NMSU

Session 3

1:45

Preliminary Results of the 2026 Excavations at Agape Acres, Mimbres Valley*Fumi Arakawa, Lonnie Ludeman, Danielle Romero, Jacqueline Cowan, and JC Lansche*

A collaborative archaeological excavation project was conducted by Indiana University Bloomington (IUB) and Western New Mexico University (WNMU) at the Agape Acres site in the Mimbres Valley during the summer of 2026. This paper examines the excavation strategy, sampling methods, and principal accomplishments of the 2026 field season. As anticipated prior to excavation, the evidence indicates that Agape Acres was occupied during the post-Mimbres Classic period (after A.D. 1130). This interpretation is supported by the recovery of a diverse assemblage of ceramic types characteristic of the period, as well as architectural features that exhibit construction techniques distinct from those typically associated with the Classic Mimbres period. Together, the ceramic assemblage and architectural evidence provide important insights into patterns of cultural change in the Mimbres Valley following the decline of the Classic Mimbres tradition.

2:05

Summary of the Agave Acres (LA19165) Ceramic Assemblage*Danielle Romero*

The Summer 2026 field season saw the launch of the co-sponsored Western New Mexico University and Indiana University field school at the Agave Acres site (Agape Acres/LA19165). The Agave Acres site is a Black Mountain phase (AD 1150-1300) community roughly 700 meters south of the Swarts Ruin along the Mimbres River. Excavation during this first season focused along the eroding arroyo bank and across five excavation groups. The paper summarizes and highlights the ceramics assemblage from this past summer including collection strategy, types, and distribution. Although many seasons are still needed to fully understand the site, the results of this first year can be used in early discussions of site chronology, social organization, and identity/identity maintenance.

2:25

Great Kivas and Community Connections: A Comparative Study of South Diamond Creek Pueblo and Twin Pines Village

Dominick Lambert and Quinn Comprosky

This presentation compares architectural features and associated materials from Great Kivas at South Diamond Creek Pueblo and Twin Pines Village in the Gila National Forest. Drawing on excavation data from the Twin Pines Village Field School and records from South Diamond Creek, this presentation analyzes construction techniques, spatial organization, and associated artifacts. The comparative analysis examines how the contemporaneous use of these Georgetown Phase structures informs interpretations of interactions between the communities associated with both sites. In addition, the study incorporates 3D modeling and spatial documentation methods as accessible tools for recording these structures and enabling new spatial analyses of great kiva architecture. Together, these approaches provide a deeper understanding of how Mogollon great kivas structured community organization and regional connections.

2:45

A Comparison of Faunal Remains from Two Georgetown Phase Sites in Relation to the Greater Mimbres-Mogollon Cultural Area

Jacqueline Cowan

Intensive field school excavations conducted by Indiana University Bloomington (IUB) and New Mexico State University (NMSU) at Twin Pines Village in the Gila Wilderness of New Mexico concluded in 2025. The 2025 excavation project by IUB focused on the Georgetown Phase (AD 550–650) great kiva. Previous excavations at the nearby contemporaneous site of South Diamond Creek Pueblo revealed similarities in the use of animals for possible ceremonial purposes. Although archaeologists have identified the use of animals in ritual closure processes, the contexts of pithouses and great kivas have not been adequately addressed. Ritual closure involves the deposition of various items before structures are sometimes intentionally burned and their walls pushed inward. In this context, we argue that animals played roles as icons, possible interlocutors, and symbols in ritual closures. This case study can be compared with other sites in the Mimbres-Mogollon region and beyond to better understand these contexts.

3:05 Break

Session 4

3:20

Ancient Immigrants at Point of Pines: Tusayan or Kayenta?

Patrick D. Lyons

Point of Pines Pueblo (AZ W:10:50[ASM]) has long been at the center of discussions of ancient migrations in the U.S. Southwest. The site is often described as having yielded abundant and robust traces of immigrants from the Colorado Plateau who settled in an area long occupied by groups participating in the Mogollon cultural tradition. Unfortunately, a synthetic report on the site has yet to be published, and a point of controversy is whether the northerners who lived there were native to the Tusayan region or the Kayenta region. In this paper, I discuss the indicators of the presence of northern immigrants at Point of Pines Pueblo, I review the inferences of previous researchers regarding the origin of the newcomers, and I argue that people native to the Kayenta region settled at the site in the late 1200s. The key line of evidence that supports this conclusion is the fact that the Maverick Mountain Series pottery made at Point of Pines represents local production of pottery made in the Kayenta tradition (Tsegi Orange Ware) rather than the Tusayan tradition (Jeddito Orange Ware, Jeddito Yellow Ware, and Winslow Orange Ware).

3:40

Challenging Old Assumptions: A Reappraisal of Ancestral Pueblo Lifeways Along the Mogollon Rim

Abraham Arnett

The Mogollon Rim and Silver Creek Drainage area of the Southwest Cibola Region has been intensively studied by various institutions including early explorers, museums, universities, and cultural resource management firms over the past 150 years. Although the quality of those studies varies, and numerous questions remain, the results indicate subtle but distinct differences in Ancestral Pueblo social organization within the region, including changes in population demographics, farming techniques, population movements across the southwest, ceramic production and distribution, settlement patterns, the influence of Chaco Canyon, and connections to both the Kayenta to the north and the Hohokam to the south. The presentation reevaluates previous inferences by scholars and highlights the resilience of the Ancestral Pueblo people of the Mogollon Rim and Silver Creek Drainage area amidst sweeping changes across the southern Colorado Plateau and beyond between about 200 and 1450 CE.

4:00

Conversations in Clay: Intrasite Variability in Corrugated Ceramic Style at Three Salado Sites

Annika Mayer, Nicole Lewis, and Stephen Uzzle

Field classifications of corrugated wares often overlook tremendous variation in style. This paper proposes that the technological style exhibited in corrugated wares conveys important information about the identity of potters and social organization. In Salado sites representing a coalescence of local Mogollon and Kayenta migrant communities, patterns of intrasite variability in utility wares may manifest differently than those displayed by other aspects of material culture. This project presents an analysis of Archaeology Southwest's corrugated ceramic collections from the Dinwiddie, 3-Up, and Gila River Farm sites in southwestern New Mexico, and approaches these artifacts as rich cultural texts which transcend traditional definitions of utility wares.

4:20

Land Use and Settlement within the Upper Little Colorado River Region: A Synthesis of Recent Class III Surveys within the WEPJ Restoration Project Area near Springerville, Arizona

Abigail R. Dockter, Emily DiBiase, and David Lewandowski

Logan Simpson recently completed a 2,291-acre survey for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests as part of the multi-year phased WEPJ Restoration Project near Springerville, Arizona. The survey resulted in documentation of previously and newly recorded prehistoric artifact scatters, habitation sites, and isolates. Sites documented during the survey include Basketmaker/Pueblo I artifact scatters, habitation sites and activities areas spanning the Pueblo II through Early Pueblo IV, and the Indian Tank Ruin, a masonry pueblo and possible great kiva site that was contemporaneous with nearby Rudd Creek Pueblo and Coyote Creek Pueblo. The distribution of these sites, and of diagnostic isolates from earlier periods, demonstrate changes in land use and settlement patterns from the Middle Archaic through Early Pueblo IV within the project area. These observations, complementing previous work in the area, contribute to our understanding of the prehistoric period within the Upper Little Colorado River Valley and have the potential to inform ongoing management efforts and future cultural resources surveys in the WEPJ Restoration Project area.

4:40

Obsidian Procurement beyond the Mimbres River Valley: Insights from the West Baker Site *Sean G. Dolan, Joseph M. Birkmann, M. Steven Shackley, and Patricia A. Gilman*

West Baker is a Classic Mimbres period (CE 1000-1130) habitation site in Hidalgo County, New Mexico, located southwest of the core Mimbres River Valley. This setting raises an important question: how did people on the margins of the Mimbres world participate in social, economic, and ceremonial networks? Recent research indicates that West Baker residents were part of the broader Mimbres tradition, yet distance from the core may have shaped the raw materials they used, the relationships they maintained, and the practices they developed. Obsidian sourcing with X-ray fluorescence spectrometry can identify which obsidian sources people used to make stone tools, making it a useful line of evidence for investigating interaction and exchange. Using this approach, we discuss whether West Baker residents participated in the same obsidian procurement networks as communities in the Mimbres River Valley. Analysis of 39 obsidian artifacts, including projectile points and debitage, indicates that most of the assemblage derives from a newly documented source near the site that was uncommonly used elsewhere in the region. We compare these results with regional obsidian studies to better understand how Classic period communities beyond the core used local resources, maintained connections, and interacted across the broader region.

5:00 End

Friday Evening (October 9, 2026)

La Posta, Mesilla

7:15 PM

Hot on the Heels of Leadership and Ritual Practice: Tracking Continuity, Change, and the Movement of Elite Footwear and Religious Practitioners Before, During, and After Chaco*Benjamin A. Bellorado**Arizona State Museum*

Southwest archaeologists have increasingly recognized that transformations in religious practice were rooted in longer histories of continuity, even as new social and political arrangements emerged. This presentation examines these processes through twined yucca sandals, tracing changes in their construction and design from commonplace footwear to specialized regalia associated with religious practitioners. Building on evidence for the development of new social organizations during the emergence of the Chaco regional system, I use select sandal attributes and sandal iconography in other media to identify community affiliations, reconstruct the movements of prominent matriline and the establishment of restricted sodalities, and trace changing ceremonial relationships between communities before, during, and after Chaco.

Saturday Morning (October 10, 2026)

Corbett Center Auditorium NMSU

Session 5

9:00 Registration

9:15 Salvage Archaeology and the Museum of New Mexico in Southwest New Mexico*Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers*

Historical narratives for archaeological investigations in southwestern New Mexico commonly emphasize key early academic-led projects (by University of Minnesota, Beloit University, Peabody Museum at Harvard University, and Field Museum) and the slightly more recent survey and excavation projects undertaken by, or subsequently led by members of, the Mimbres Foundation. In fact, one could reasonably characterize twentieth, and even twenty-first (so far), century Mimbres archaeology as predominately academic in composition and objectives. This contrasts with nearly the entire rest of the Southwest, where cultural resource management (CRM) projects, publications (albeit not necessarily in journals read by academic-positioned archaeologists), and interpretations have vastly outpaced that of their colleagues. If one takes a larger view of southwestern New Mexico, one finds that there are 100 CRM projects alone undertaken by a single institution that have made significant, yet underappreciated and often unacknowledged contributions to our understanding of past lifeways and patterning for this part of the state. This presentation summarizes the Museum of New Mexico's extensive work throughout southwest New Mexico and highlights key contributions to our collective understanding while also assessing it as a proxy for changing patterns in CRM and the Museum's role throughout the state.

9:35

Archaeology Southwest and a New Kind of Archaeological FieldSchool in Reserve, New Mexico*Stephen E. Nash and Karen Gust Schollmeyer*

Archaeology Southwest is planning a new archaeological field school based in Reserve, New Mexico, in June, 2027. Rather than excavate solely to answer a specific research question, we will lead students through a multifaceted program that prepares them for archaeological work beyond the academy and without making substantial, unnecessary impacts on undisturbed sites. Our plan is to (re-)excavate previously excavated rooms and sites, most of which were never backfilled. We will document, stabilize, and backfill those rooms. We will analyze the previously excavated collections curated at the Field Museum and other institutions to teach

students about the use of legacy collections and archives. We will teach students about cyberSW and other databases, digital curation, and possibly remote sensing. We will include a survey component. We will teach students our Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded Archaeological Resources Protection Act curriculum focused on looting documentation and prosecution. We will work in full collaboration with the Pueblo of Zuni, other Tribal Nations, and the US Forest Service. We hope to work in collaboration with cultural resource management firms. Our goal is to create a school-to-workforce pipeline of students better prepared for long-term employment in archaeology across the region.

9:55

Scarlet Macaws and Strontium Isotopes: Identifying Breeding or Management Locations in the Mogollon and Beyond

Amanda Semanko, Richard George, Patrick Lyons, Frank C. Ramos, and Colin Omilanowski

Recent studies on domestic turkeys (*Meleagris gallapavo*) and exotic scarlet macaws (*Ara macao cyanoptera*) raise new questions about how prehistoric communities in the American Southwest maintained local avian management practices, developed breeding regimes, and fostered trade networks. While strontium isotopic ($87\text{Sr}/86\text{Sr}$) analysis can define local and non-local birds, the lack of localized biogenic strontium baseline studies across the region currently makes pinpointing the origins impractical. Here we present results from robust strontium isotope analyses incorporating tooth enamel or bone from over 115 small mammals recovered from 31 archaeological sites around the Mogollon region. Because strontium isotopes from bone and tooth samples can be used as proxies for local geological signatures, these data help characterize biogenic strontium variability at each site. Our study defines strontium isotope baselines for a largely understudied portion of southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona, identifying likely breeding or long-term management locations of 28 macaws from 7 sites. This strontium isotopic baseline study will facilitate ongoing research through much of the Mogollon culture area and lay the foundation for future isotopic studies.

10:15

Magic and Entomology Among the Mimbres

Sammi Burke

Classic Mimbres Black on White ceramics frequently depict insects to harness spiritual power through imitative magic. By creating depictions of insects on ceramic vessels, the Mimbres use this spiritual power to ensure

fertility, successful reproduction, and prosperous lifecycles of human and nonhuman beings. In this paper I will focus on pollinating insects and their role in Mimbres cosmology and ecology. Southwestern ethnography and oral traditions demonstrate important ritual roles for insects and how they participate in magical technologies. When combined with entomological knowledge we can gain insights into the central importance of Mimbres insects.

10:35 Break

Session 6:

10:50

The Apache Creek Highway Salvage Projects Revisited

Thatcher Seltzer-Rogers and Regge N. Wiseman (OAS, posthumous)

Between 1968-1971, the New Mexico State Highway Department contracted the Museum of New Mexico's Archaeology Division (now OAS) to conduct two separate salvage excavation projects at 19 sites, mostly Reserve and Tularosa phase pueblos, along Apache Creek in Catron County. As was commonplace at the time, funding was only available to conduct the fieldwork and author preliminary end of fieldwork reports. In his retirement some 30 years later, Regge Wiseman, who had participated in one of the two projects in 1971, revisited the unanalyzed materials to produce a more holistic report of value to current and successive archaeologists. Prior to his passing in 2022, over analysis of sherds for various projects, Regge requested that I, a graduate student at the time, assist in this endeavor once I had finished my dissertation. This presentation presents a summary of the salvage excavation projects as well as Regge's preliminary report with additional information from more recent investigations and my own interpretations.

11:10

Dogs, Coyotes, and Turkeys from the Cañada Alamosa

Sean G. Dolan and Karl W. Laumbach

Wild and domestic animals were active parts of daily and ceremonial life in the prehispanic United States Southwest, but identifying animals as wild or domestic does not explain how they lived with people. Dogs and turkeys were the only domestic animals, yet wild coyotes and wild turkeys could also consume C4 maize-based foods and be buried in comparable contexts. This overlap matters because archaeological interpretations often use diet, context, or taxonomy to infer management, even though each line of evidence may reflect different kinds of human-animal relationships. This study examines canids and turkeys from Victorio and Pinnacle in the

Cañada Alamosa of New Mexico, dating to ca. CE 600–1350. Using isotopes, mitochondrial DNA, and archaeological context, we evaluate diet, biological identity, and relationships with people. By bringing together animals usually studied separately, this article contributes to North American zooarchaeology by showing how biomolecular and contextual evidence can reconstruct multispecies histories that wild/domestic categories alone obscure.

11:30

High-Altitude Shrine Site Located on the Eastern Black Range Mountains, Southwestern New Mexico

Christopher Adams, Fumi Arakawa, Charles Haecker, and Belinda Mollard

High-altitude shrine sites in the American Southwest represent significant intersections of ritual activities, material culture, and landscape use, often extending over thousands of years. This paper focuses on a recently documented site located on private land, notable for its dry-stacked architecture, a variety of lithic, ceramic and historic artifacts, along with several petroglyphs that suggest long-term, ritual, continuity and reuse of the landscape. Several particular noteworthy artifacts include a transitional Paleoindian point fragment, prehistoric pottery sherds, Apache pottery and two Spanish hammered copper coins. These findings suggests a longstanding tradition of ritual activities from prehistoric to historic periods and highlights the recurring use of this landscape over time. The Architectural features, often constructed in precarious or symbolically significant locations, are interpreted as shrines or ceremonial loci. Some of the rocks features may be due to the result of Spanish and/or Apache visitation. Rock art provides iconographic evidence of ritual practices and cultural expression. Through an interdisciplinary analysis that incorporates archaeology, ethnohistory, historical record, and landscape theory, this paper highlights the importance of elevation, visibility, and cultural memory in the creation and maintenance of sacred spaces in arid mountainous environments.

11:50

Considering Connections to the West: Patterns in Ceramic Procurement at the Cottonwood Spring Pueblo Community (LA 175)

Tuesday Critz

Recently, much research regarding the Cottonwood Spring Pueblo Community (LA 175) has centered around migration and connections between communities near Cottonwood Draw and peoples living in the Sierra Blanca region to the northeast. However, recent neutron activation

analysis (NAA) data have shed light on additional relationships to the west and northwest. The second most abundant ceramic type in both Areas A and E at the Cottonwood Community is Seco Corrugated. This utility ware has several production locales including within the vicinity of both Caballo Lake and the Black Range. Both areas at Cottonwood demonstrated very different procurement patterns and thus differing relationships with potting communities. In this paper, I shift gears and look to the west and explore the implications of these data.

12:10 end

Saturday Afternoon (October 10, 2026)

Corbett Center Auditorium NMSU

Session 7:

1:45

Chronology of Jornada Style Iconography in Pictographs, Perishables, and Ceramic Designs

Myles R. Miller, Karen Steelman, Lawrence L. Loendorf, and Michael Stowe

Determining the age of rock art styles and motifs has long been one of the most vexing and irresolvable problems in rock art research. Using plasma oxidation extraction of organic carbon from paints, 22 AMS radiocarbon dates were obtained directly from 19 Jornada Style pictographs in the San Andres Mountains of White Sands Missile Range and Hueco Tanks. Dated elements include nine faces/masks, four Goggle-eye entities, three stepped-frets, and three zoomorphs. Paired dates were obtained from three elements to check for consistency. While there is minor variation among motifs, the individual and collective Bayesian phase models indicate the Jornada Style appeared between AD 600 and 880 (95.4% CI) or 770 to 880 (68.3% CI). This dating of the appearance of the Jornada Style is linked to changes across the Jornada region revealed through a substantive body of chronometric, architectural, settlement pattern, and technological studies. However, we confront a fundamental conundrum - the dated elements and their sophisticated appearance are older than the appearance of similar images on ceramics and other media across much of the Southwest, including the neighboring Mimbres Valley. We review several interpretive paths to contextualize the modeled time frame for the appearance of the Jornada Style.

2:05 Termination Pit Deposits in Jornada Villages

Tim Graves, Myles R. Miller, Trevor Lea, and Mark Willis

In 1937, Mailyn Moore and Frances Wheat of the El Paso Archaeological Society encountered an unusual deposit of vessels and artifacts in the eastern Hueco Bolson a few miles northeast of El Paso, Texas. The deposit consisted of five whole ceramic vessels placed over twelve intentionally broken vessels, along with 3 stone balls, 7 other shaped stone items, and over 7,500 beads and pendants of shell and turquoise. Over the next 70 years several less elaborate examples of such features were encountered by avocationalists and collectors but few were described in detail. Since 2009, three such deposits, found in clearly defined pits, have been investigated through controlled excavations, including two discoveries over the past two years. Similarities among the contents and structured arrangements of vessels and objects in these pit features, including nested vessels, stone balls, and ornaments, confirm that they were not utilitarian features or caches but rather served a specialized function in the social life of the inhabitants. This paper reviews the structure of the pits and the artifacts recovered from them, and we examine their likely role as termination pits associated with the closure of clusters of pithouses within the village.

2:25

Jornada Mogollon and Early Historic Period Use of the Mares Rockshelter, Doña Ana County, New Mexico

Robert J. Stokes

In the summer of 2021, Eastern New Mexico University under the direction of Robert Stokes conducted test excavations at the Mares Rockshelter for a damage assessment study. The small rockshelter was heavily vandalized and the primary project goal was to assess the damaged areas for loss of data and determine if significant intact deposits remained. The site is located between Hatch and Doña Ana in Doña Ana County and is part of the Broad Canyon property owned by New Mexico State Parks, who requested the site damage assessment. The summer field school demonstrated that the site was badly damaged, but areas of somewhat intact deposits remained around the potholes, and likely below the bottom depth of the deepest hole. Surprisingly, based on the initial surface inspection, the deposits were filled with chipped stone and tools, ceramics, faunal remains, perishable and domesticated plant food remains, and items of likely ceremonial use. The entire collection was recently fully analyzed, including obtaining four radiocarbon sample dates, and the results are reported here. Insights gained regarding the periods of occupation, primarily Jornada Mogollon and Manso or Apache and changing site use are presented here.

2:45

Trash Talk: Examples of Archaeological Resources Attracting Modern Garbage in El Paso County, Texas

Kelly D Rush

This paper discusses a few archaeological sites in El Paso County, Texas, that illustrate the Trash Magnet Effect: the process by which illegal garbage dump sites form and grow. The sites include prehistoric Pueblo and pithouse village sites currently being excavated by Versar Inc. as part of the Texas Department of Transportation's ongoing Northeast Expressway project, as well as a historic site in far east El Paso County known locally as Stone House, which has long served as a venue for illegal dumping, plinking, and desert parties. I present evidence of modern trash discarded directly atop archaeological features and examine how the presence of archaeological deposits influences the formation of illegal dump sites. I further consider whether surface garbage dumps can reliably predict subsurface archaeological deposits.

3:05 Break

Session 8

3:20

New Research on Old Lands: An investigation of Prehistoric Occupation at Fort Selden Historic Site

Payton Szwaczkowski

Since its declaration as a State Monument in 1973, Fort Selden Historic Site has heavily focused its research and interpretation on the 19th century military occupation from 1865-1891. While archaeological investigations completed from the 1970s through the 1990s occasionally encountered prehistoric contexts, these projects prioritized historic military components; consequently, the only prehistoric excavation conducted during this era yielded minimal documentation. This paper introduces new research on behalf of Fort Selden, aimed at systematically investigating the site's prehistoric Jornada Mogollon occupation. By locating, consolidating, and re-analyzing archaeological surveys from these early excavations, along with analyzing previously documented ceramics in comparison to currently present ceramic assemblages, this project seeks to highlight the prehistory that took place on the same landscape that would later become a state historic site. Future research is planned to investigate how Jornada Mogollon sites at Fort Selden fit into broader regional frameworks, shedding light on complex socioeconomic behaviors such as interregional trade with other Mogollon regions.

3:40

Rock-Art Studies in the Sierra de las Uvas, Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument, Doña Ana County, New Mexico

Samuel S. Cason, Philip Leckman, Kimberley Babicz, Emmanuel Macias, and David Unruh

In 2023, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contracted Statistical Research, Inc. (SRI) to document 14 sites with rock art imagery in the Sierra de las Uvas within the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument in southern New Mexico. Fieldwork was conducted in 2024 and 2025. SRI relocated 13 of the sites and documented 63 panels and 288 individual elements. Imagery includes abstract designs (many of which are attributed to the Archaic period), Jornada-style motifs including mythical characters (e.g., goggle-eye figures), and 19 images that are likely associated with Apache cosmological figures—Gaan or Mountain Spirits. A spatial analysis characterizes the sites and project area in relation to their natural settings in a sky-island landscape. It also examines the distribution elements associated with different time periods and cultural affiliations with an emphasis on panel viewsheds and intervisibility. A central component of the project was tribal participation. Members of four descendant communities visited the sites with SRI and BLM project proponents and shared their perspectives and reflections about the sites, rock images, and the landscape in which they are embedded.

4:00

Contextualizing San Miguel de Carnué: A Comparative Analysis of Eighteenth-Century Plazas in New Mexico

Gabriel Field

In Spanish colonial New Mexico during the eighteenth century, land grants and their communities played an essential part of defending the colonial frontier. Many “Genízaro” people applied for these land grants and settled these dangerous peripheral lands in order to increase their status and improve their livelihood. New settlement patterns emerged, including the fortified “plaza” settlement, which is the focus of this paper. This research begins with San Miguel de Carnué (LA 12924), a plaza established to protect the colonial villa of Albuquerque from Comanches living in the east. I compare San Miguel with 16 other eighteenth-century plaza sites to learn more about how it was organized, why, and where it fits within the pattern of frontier land grant plazas. I create a typology of small, medium, and large plaza sites, which reveals shifts in their organization over time and improves our understanding of Genízaro architecture. I argue that San Miguel fits the general pattern of small plaza sites, and hypothesize that it s

was one of multiple colonial settlements that once existed in the 1763 Cañón de Carnué Land Grant.

4:20

Influences via Ceramics: between Mimbres and Chihuahua 750-1425 C.E.

R.G. Wakeland

Recent literature has factored ceramics into evaluations of inter-regional relationships between northern Chihuahua and the USA Southwest. Patterns of consumerism of choice indicate acceptance or rejection of identities and agency, influence, and control among sites. I apply this theory to four sites in New Mexico and one in Chihuahua, Mexico. Here, trade wares consist of Chihuahua polychrome sherds (1100-1425 C.E.) laid in situ with Mimbres black-on-white (750-1200s C.E.): Pigpen Creek, Alamo Hueco, Double Adobe Creek (Hidalgo County), Dry Lake #1 (Otero County), and Villa Ahumada, Chihuahua, Mexico. Rather than a north-south split pivoting on Paquimé control, the inquiry suggests combined, meshing identities. Contributing are Mimbres, Paquimé, Huérigos, and Carretas locales. Ceramic styles indicate adoption of and/or resistance to political power structures and beliefs according to dynamics at each ceramic source. Images from the Hearst Museum, Museum of New Mexico, and Museum of Northern Cultures, National Institute of Archaeology and History, Chihuahua, Mexico (INAH) illustrate.

4:40 End

