

Summary of Educational Meeting  
Santa Fe National Forest Site Stewards  
January 10, 2007

An evening educational meeting was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2007, at the Stewart Udall Educational Building on Museum Hill, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Twenty-three site stewards and their guests attended.

Shelley Thompson introduced the guest speaker for the evening, Cherie Scheick, founder and director of Southwest Archaeological Consultants, a contract archaeological company based in Santa Fe. Her topic was entitled “Beneath These City Streets.”

Like many locales in the world, the land now named Santa Fe has been inhabited for centuries, and the remains of subsequent population groups overlie evidence of past human activities. City and county ordinances now require that archaeological investigations be conducted prior to and during construction activities on private property. Since construction projects often are limited in scope, e.g., water lines, only a portion of the subsurface occupation is revealed. Hence, the term “find” is applied rather than site.

Identifying each group’s structures and artifacts has resulted in an accumulation of reports by various authors through the years. Recognizing the need to assemble this information in an accessible form, Cherie and her staff created an **ArcView** database containing all the previous reports pertaining to survey, testing, monitoring, and excavation within the Santa Fe Historical District. All data are now entered and can be sorted by stratum and cultural period. Cherie presented a map of the collected data identified by cultural period that demonstrated the distribution of finds within the historical district.

Cherie discussed the stratification of cultural remains in Santa Fe. The now favored term “pre-Columbian” is used to identify cultural finds prior to contact and generally occur up to three feet below the present surface. Because of their depth, these remains are usually found during construction of parking garages or basements. Using the 1955 Wendorf and Reed classification system, the pre-Columbian period is generally divided into pre-ceramic or Archaic (to AD 600), Developmental (AD 600-1200), Coalition (AD 1200-1325), and Classic (AD 1325-1600).

Although no structures or artifacts specifically identified as Archaic have been found within the historic district, Archaic remains have been found in areas surrounding Santa Fe. Cherie feels there is no reason to doubt some Archaic occupation occurred within the historic district.

The earliest culturally identified finds date to the Developmental Period. A large concentration of structures and artifacts lying beneath Fort Marcy extends both east and west, and south to the Masonic temple, and also within the national cemetery. In general, Development Period remains lie on the terraces above the drainages.

Coalition Period finds tend to be more numerous because they simply were more of them and they generally occur nearer the present ground surface in most areas. Most such finds/sites are identified by Santa Fe B/W ceramics. Adolph Bandelier reported informants' oral histories that told of two pueblos existing on either side of the Santa Fe River: now beneath the Federal oval/Sweeney Center and the Mission of San Miguel. Pueblo residency was apparently fluid, and Spanish occupation took place during a period when these pueblos were not occupied. Many burials and ceramics occur along Johnson Street, as well as midden deposits that often had no stratigraphic differentiation. Screening all the midden deposits is the only way to determine individual cultural levels. Evidence suggests the principal attraction for both the Developmental and Coalition were the springs and marsh in the area.

Since they probably are closer to the surface than early remains, Classic Period remains tend to be the most disturbed within the historic district. Fewer finds and sites are reported, but these occur all over the city. The big village sites tend to be closer to the river than during the Coalition Period.

Even the fragmented and incomplete data have revealed shifts in settlement patterns. All pre-Columbian people no doubt utilized the spring as a water source, but it appears that through time, populations moved their structures closer to the spring/marsh/river.

Cherie described several individual projects that illustrated these settlement patterns during each cultural period. She identified research needs for future projects that will continue to fill out the data base. For example, these include a more precise local chronology; how the different periods relate to each other; an increased understanding of occupational patterns; identification of types of use and specific cultural behaviors; and recovery and identification of more faunal and botanical samples.

While her discussion featured pre-Columbian information, many historic artifacts and features have been documented as well.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Nancy Cell  
Secretary