

Summary of SFNF Site Steward Educational Meeting March 8, 2006

An evening educational meeting was held on Wednesday, March 8, 2006, at Dominic's in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Twenty-one site stewards and their guests attended.

Announcements

Shelley Thompson asked the group to consider the following options for the May educational meeting: meet at Dominic's, **or** meet at the education room at the Center for Museum Resources (Stuart Udall Center) for brown bag or potluck.

Nancy Cella announced that the 2006 Pecos Conference will be hosted by Salmon Ruin Museum on August 10-13, and held at Elk Mountain Park near Navajo Lake.

Mike Bremer introduced the guest speaker, Brent Abel, Pecos/Las Vegas District Archaeologist. Brent has worked for the Forest Service for 19 years, all in the Pecos district.

Cultural History of the Pecos/Las Vegas Resource Area.

The prehistoric and use of the Pecos district is complex and begins, like many areas of the Southwest, with the Paleo-Indian period about 11,000 BC. The principal features of the area's varied geography include the Sangre de Christo Mountains, the Pecos Wilderness, Glorieta and Anton Chico mesas, Hermit Peak, Starvation Peak, the Pecos River, and linking rolling hills and plains. These features host a variety of vegetation types that include grasslands, pinyon/juniper, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, spruce/fir, and subalpine tundra. Elevation ranges from 5500 feet in the Anton Chico area to 13,000 feet in the Pecos Wilderness. The Pecos River rises in the northern mountains and flows generally southeast through the area.

This variety of ecozones hosts floral and faunal resources important to any human group that utilize different areas during different seasons of the year. That the human use of the area is complex is not surprising, given its location between the Rio Grande valley to the west and the plains to the east. These transition zones are valuable to human groups that depend on natural resources for their subsistence since they host a seasonal array of plants and animals.

Kidder (1962) devised a comprehensive summary of Southwestern archaeology as of the early 1920s that was primarily based on ceramic traits. His work at Pecos Pueblo served as basis for much of this ceramic type classification. The Pecos Classification framework is still in use, although much modified and refined by subsequent field data.

Surveys and excavations over the broader Southwest have provided a framework in which to place cultural remains associated with the Paleo-Indian period. Artifacts usually include large, lanceolate spear points that date to between 9,500 BC to 6,000 BC; isolated Clovis, Folsom and Eden points have been found in the area as well as undiagnostic lithic scatters. More cultural remains indicating this early occupation are more frequently found on the grasslands on the eastern plains, where large now-extinct fauna were found. Isolated points found in the western and central areas may represent carried-in artifacts by subsequent occupants, as represented by the base of an Eden point found at a high-elevation Archaic site in the Pecos Wilderness.

The preceramic Archaic period also spanned thousands of years, roughly between 6,000 BC to AD 250. Because large game animals had become extinct during the latter portion of the Paleo-Indian period (as a consequence of a warmer, drier climate and hunting of large animals that replace their numbers slowly and who were unacquainted with humans), more reliance was based on medium to small sized game, plant resources. Lithic scatters are the predominant site type identified as Archaic, and may include hearths and/or ground stone artifacts. Early Archaic groups hunted bison and other smaller game, and by AD 200, the cultural remains included evidence of corn, pottery and the bow and arrow. Stemmed, side- and corner-notched projected points are associated with Archaic period. Two unique horizontal petroglyph sites on Glorieta Mesa have been dated to the early to middle Archaic and may have astronomical and/or ceremonial implications.

Sites dating to the Basket Maker period (AD 1-500/700) in the Pecos district are few and have been recorded in the El Pueblo area and on Glorieta Mesa, although the period has been well described based on evidence from more securely dated sites elsewhere in the Southwest. Reflecting an increase in moisture during this period, settlement patterns changed to strategically placed sites that provided more centralized access to hunting, foraging and planting areas, with features associated with food preparation (ground stone) and storage (slab-lined pits), as well as plain gray ware pottery.

During this time frame, evidence has been found in the Pecos district of Plains Woodland groups, who also used the area between AD 250-1000. Distinctive projectile points and ceramics associated with groups farther east identify sites in the Anton Chico area and the foothills of the Sangre de Christos. Subsistence patterns are similar to early Puebloan groups, and reflect farming, hunting and foraging. Later (AD 1000-1550) groups associated with the Plains Woodland tradition have been recorded in the Las Vegas and Anton Chico areas, the upper portions of the Pecos drainage, and one site on the Pecos National Historic Park.

A pithouse village near the Pecos Pueblo was occupied ca. AD 800, and represents the first known sedentary community. This site dates to the Developmental (AD 600-1200)/Pueblo I/Pueblo II (AD 700-900/AD 700-1100) period. Corn was grown, and evidence of the use of wild plants, mule deer and antelope was found in excavated pithouses. Agricultural fields have been found on the lower terraces above Glorieta Creek.

A population increase occurred during the Coalition (AD 1200-1325)/Pueblo III (AD 1100-1300) period. The economic base continued to be farming, hunting and gathering. Recorded sites included Tecolote Pueblo, the Tinsley site, a site in the Pecos Wilderness, and field houses along Glorieta Creek. By the late 1200s, however, drought emptied the region of human populations, and left large areas east of the Rocky Mountains east to Texas and Oklahoma unpopulated.

The Classic (AD 1325-1600)/Pueblo IV (AD 1300-1600) period evidenced an increase of population, and the establishment of large multi-storied communities that included Pecos Pueblo, Arrowhead Ruin, Loma Lothrop and Rowe. By 1450, only Pecos Pueblo was occupied, and appears to represent a consolidation of population groups, perhaps for defense inspired by raids by Plains Indians. The Pecos Pueblo becomes a trade center by AD 1450, representing a lively interaction between Plains and Rio Grande populations. The Commisary Creek pictographs at a rock shelter dated to this period, and there is a 20-acre artifact scatter at 12,000 feet that represents hundreds of years of occupation related to elk hunting, including use during the Classic period.

During the Plains Nomad (AD 1500-1900) period, various nomadic groups primarily hunting bison included Athabascan, Kiowa, Comanche, Caddoan speakers. Some constructed small pueblos, stone

circles, and hunting blinds, and produced micaceous pottery. In AD 1541, Coronado visited Pecos Pueblo, and by 1581-82, the Pecos inhabitants began leaving. Subsequent years saw an ebb and flow of Spanish, Puebloan and Plains groups throughout the region, as each competed for control and use of natural resources during recurring periods of drought and moisture. Notable highlights: the mission at Pecos was constructed by 1620, Apaches allied with Pecos occupants drove out the Spanish and destroyed the mission during the revolt of 1680, the Spanish returned in 1692, reconstructed the mission and settlement by Spanish began in the Pecos River valley. Comanche and Apache groups returned in the early 18th century, most of the adult males at Pecos were killed during an ambush in 1750, and a smallpox epidemic in 1788 left the Pecos population at 180. Spanish land grants in the area during the 1790s increased settlement, and by the early 19th century Hispanic families were scattered throughout the river valley. The village of Pecos (Cienega de los Pecos) was settled in 1824, and by 1838 the 17 Pecos Pueblo survivors moved to Jemez Pueblo, the only other Towa-speaking village.

The 19th century is well documented in the Pecos/Las Vegas. The Santa Fe Trail opened in 1822, which encouraged further settlement, commerce, and cattle and sheep ranching; more Spanish land grants were established between 1821 and 1846; the Jicarilla Apache remained in the area in the 1860s and 1870s; the U.S. Congress created the territory of New Mexico in 1850; the Civil War battle at Glorieta Pass occurred in 1862; mineral prospecting (mica, copper, gold, zinc) began in the 1870s, the railroad through the area was completed in 1879; the Anton Chico Hacienda was occupied from the 1870s through the 1930s and served as a way point for transporting livestock and supplies to the railroad for markets; logging intensified for general construction as well as railroad ties (12 million board feet were removed); and at the end of the century, tourists began arriving at various dude ranches and resorts.

Reflecting a general public acknowledgement of the dwindling amount of forest lands, the Pecos River Forest Reserve (now most of the Pecos Wilderness) was established in 1892; in 1908 it became the Pecos National Forest, and by 1915, the Jemez and Pecos national forests were combined to become the Santa Fe National Forest. The 26,000 acre-Anton Chico Land Grant became public domain in 1939 after its sale to a private company in 1930; it became Forest Service land in 1947. Workers in a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Glorieta constructed campgrounds, administrative sites, bridge abutments and culverts, and other facilities in the 1930s. The Terrero Mine operated from 1925 to 1937, was a large producer of zinc, gold, lead and silver, and for over 12 years operated the longest tramway in the world. The Glorieta Baldy Fire Lookout was constructed in the 1940s.

Many thanks go to Brent for providing photocopies of his excellent comprehensive presentation, which included a list of references. The written record greatly enhanced this summary.

Subsequent educational meeting topics will be: **April 12** – Archaeology and Botany (Glenna Dean); **May 10** – Overview of Jemez Sites and Archaeology. The **September 13** meeting will feature a presentation of the Caja del Rio Sites and Archaeology. Site stewards are reminded to contact Shelley Thompson with their preference for a potluck or brown bag on May 10 at the education building at Museum Hill, or a return to Dominic's.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Nancy Cella

