



**SAN JUAN COUNTY
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION**
2023 Annual Report

November 15, 2023

Letter from the Board President..

To the San Juan County Museum Association membership,

Well, it has been quite a year for the Salmon Ruins family. Some things have changed, some things have been up, some things have been a bit down and some things have been completed. In other words, it's been a typical year. DCA has had another successful year, visitation at Salmon was a bit down, Site Stewards is thriving with quite a few new stewards added this year. The other exciting thing that has been completed this year is the stabilization project at the String House Ruin in Palluche Canyon. Thanks to all who were involved in that project. It has taken over a decade to bring it to completion from the time the dream began. One thing is for sure, we do not have a shortage of great people who are there to get every job done well. I want to express my appreciation for all those who contribute to making the San Juan County Museum Association, Salmon Ruins and the Northwest New Mexico Site Stewards a huge success!

Sincerely,
Kim Stradling
President of the Board
SJCMA



From the Executive Director...

Dear Board and Association Members:

Holy time flies “Batman”, I can’t believe that the FY 2023 is already behind us and we are moving on into FY 2024. The San Juan County Museum Association is doing well in our management role of operating the Salmon Ruins Museum. There have been challenges and that will always be the case for our organization in the greater context of the diverse programs with which we are involved. The museum’s visitation is down from the previous year, but our query of other cultural sites, e.g. Chaco and Aztec, indicate reduced visitation this year. The consulting firm, Division of Conservation Archaeology (DCA) is under new leadership and is doing very well in facilitating the energy resource development of the local economy. Our professional tours, Journey Into the Past, have been booming and maintaining even through the grueling heat of the summer. More about these programs will be detailed in this report.



Carlan Tapp photographs Clay Johnston, Ken Russell, Roy Dan, Kim Stradling and Larry Baker at the official post-stabilization visit to String House.

Of course, one of the big issues facing our organization is my scheduled retirement in January as Executive Director. The position has been advertised and we have received two applications and are waiting to see if more people apply. I am hoping that we get a “super” candidate, but if we do not get somebody to take over, rest assured that I will not leave the Association in the lurch for someone to “steer the ship”. After all, you don’t just leave the wheel house empty to sail off into the night. I have to share you a comment I made to Lyn Wharton when I was considering taking the position at Salmon Ruins. As some of you will recall, it was a time of turmoil and controversy in 1993 at Salmon Ruins. Lyn and I were working together at a private firm. I told her that I was considering the job and “was going to jump off a life raft onto a sinking ship”. Lyn jumped with me and that was 30 years ago. She just retired this summer as the Projects Manager of DCA.

Our organization is very fortunate to have a good, working Board of Directors. They have been great to work with for me as Executive Director and understand the needs of the SJCMA in all its various components. This includes variables related to our “Mission” such as preservation of the Salmon Ruins, education and outreach to the public, cultural resources management (DCA), archaeological research, stabilization of standing architecture at remote sites, site stewardship, and the relationship with local San Juan County government. The Board of Directors, staff, and I appreciate the continued support of our membership and “thank you” for helping us conserve and protect the archaeology, history and cultural resources of the Four Corners Region.

Best Regards,
Larry L. Baker
Executive Director

Northwest New Mexico Site Stewards – *Jonathan Kelly*

In 2023, the Northwest New Mexico Site Stewards so far have performed 362 site visits across 162 archaeology sites across San Juan and Rio Arriba Counties, 138 sites on BLM Surface, 1 Site on New Mexico Game and Fish, 17 Sites on State Land, and 6 Sites on Private land. The NWNMSS Site list was expanded to include the relocated Crow Canyon Message Panel and 4 panels in the Pilar, Caballo, and Pump Canyon area, 3 on BLM and 1 on State Land. We have had 39 out of 46 Stewards actively participating, have had 2 retire and mourn the passing of Vicky Ramakka who passed away this summer following a fight with cancer. NWNMSS welcomed 5 new Stewards, 2 trained in the Spring and 3 trained in the Fall and welcomed back 1 returning Steward.

In the spring it was noticed that the doorway lintel on the Foothold Pueblito that had been loose had fallen and initially lost, it was eventually found and recovered by the Site Stewards and is awaiting reinstallation. A site visit in May to the Blanco Star Panel found that the Ye’i panel that fell in 2022 had suffered additional damage from additional rock fall and has deteriorated to the point where only a small part of the petroglyph is still visible, if turned over. A Northwest New Mexico Site Stewards Private Invitation Only Group has been created on Facebook to offer Stewards a place to digitally share

announcements, insights and field conditions with other Stewards that join, the Group is still in the starting phase with currently around 8 Stewards joined to the group.



Fallen Blanco Star Panel Ye'i before the fall in 2021,



and after in 2022.

Programs and Accomplishments of 2023 – *Larry L. Baker*

I am fortunate to have retained key personnel on staff, both in the museum and Division of Conservation Archaeology (DCA). Somebody who doesn't get enough recognition is our Business Manager, Brandi Amarilla, who keeps all elements of the financial operations under control. The Maintenance Department, which consists of one man, Melvin Dennison, keep the grounds looking good. Tori Myers, Curator, Education Coordinator, and DCA Ceramic Specialist, wears her many hats very well, especially as the tour leader of our Journey into the Past tour programs. As mentioned earlier, Lyn Wharton has retired and Sarah Morgan has taken over as DCA Projects Manager. Jason Meininger, Supervisory Archaeologist, has assisted Sarah in her new role and kept pace with field work and coordinating specific projects. Hans Freuden has taken on a new series of tasks with computer mapping and GPS. I am delighted to note that we have four Navajo archaeologists working on staff including: Patrick Alfred, Anthony Tahe, Leonard Yazzie, and Leta Yazzie.

NAGPRA

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed into law in 1990 and has been amended several times since the initial legislation. The law governs consultation, repatriation and reburial of Native American human remains, associated funerary objects, and artifacts related to cultural patrimony. The Salmon Ruins Museum had previously held such collections from excavations at Salmon Ruins in the 1970s as well as curated materials from data recovery projects by DCA, donations from private lands, and in some cases, unknown sources. The Salmon Ruins NAGPRA

governed collections for which the SJCMA maintained legal “authority” and physical “custody” were reburied in 2021 following the transfer of control to the Hopi Tribe. This included the reinternment of 194 individuals designated as “unaffiliated” and 9,635 funerary objects. A single Navajo individual was reinterred later that same year following consultation with the Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department.

For Salmon Ruins, the involvement in the NAGPRA process is not complete and remains ongoing due to “custody”, actual physical possession, of three Navajo and four Prehistoric Pueblo individuals under the “authority” of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These sets of remains were recovered from lands under the jurisdiction of the BLM and consequently, they are the stewards of these collections. The ED and Curator, Tori Myers, will be discussing the ultimate repatriation and dispensation of these individuals and associated funerary objects. It is hoped that resolution of this final NAGPRA issue will be done by the end of the year.

DIVISION OF CONSERVATION ARCHAEOLOGY (DCA)



General cultural resource management work has remained strong over the past year. Oil and gas clearance surveys as well as construction phase monitoring have been primarily concentrated in the Lybrook area, south of Bloomfield. A major contract was awarded DCA for a Forest Service survey in the Masteñas Peak area of the Carson National Forest. This is a major coup in bidding against other archaeological consulting firms due to the scope, size and respective pricing of the project, which will continue into 2024. Supervisory Archaeologist, Jason Meininger and Projects Manager, Sarah Morgan, are responsible for developing the bid submittal and should be commended for their success in the award of this project.

Steep slopes and beautiful scenery are part of working on the Carson National Forest.

As mentioned earlier in the report, Lyn Wharton retired from DCA after 30 years. Sarah Morgan has taken over her position as Projects Manager with the assistance of Supervisory Archaeologist, Jason Meininger. Although both share in administrative duties, both are also involved in undertaking fieldwork. DCA has a field and laboratory staff of five archaeologists. This includes Supervisory Archaeologist, Patrick Alfred and Assistant Archaeologists Leonard Yazzie, Anthony Tahe, and Hans Freuden. Leta Yazzie has also been conducting field work as well as undertaking clerical/administrative tasks. Leta and Leonard Yazzie have also been involved in conducting ethnographic interviews, as DCA has been designated the principal firm to participate in ethnographic inquiries.



More scenes from the typical DCA workday.

Under the auspices of DCA, a structural stabilization project of the Navajo Defensive Site known as String House, aka Twine House, was completed during the summer. Located in Palluche Canyon, the extant sandstone masonry of the three-room structure exhibited extensive loss of mortar in the joints between semi-regular coursing. The project was funded by a private donation from Roy and Patricia Dan of Albuquerque. Logistics into the site's location was problematic and required the transportation of equipment and materials, primarily water for mortar mixing, up an arroyo that allowed the crew to transport the necessary "tools of the trade" less distance. Transportation was facilitated by Jeff Houser with his side-by-side all terrain vehicle. Videographer Carlan Tapp filmed various elements of the project and a documentary video can be seen on YouTube entitled "Dinetah".

Reports from the Woman behind the Curtain - *Tori Myers*

Has anyone figured out how to clone themselves so they can accomplish twice as much in the same amount of time? Anyone? I'm sure that Star Trek promised we'd have the technology by now... Well if not, I guess I'd better tell you what I've been up to all year with only one of me!

EDUCATION

We are looking forward to the long-overdue publication of our official newsletter, *The Outlier*, in the spring. The Site Stewards also want to publish their occasional newsletter, *The Monitor*, given a wide variety of activities and new stewards in 2023. As it has become clear that the winter season is the only opportunity I have to work on items like newsletters, this will be a priority for 2024, but will require some input from organizers and participants. A version that I had prepared for March of 2023 will give us a starting place, and I am emphatic about getting the other contributors to do their part this year!

Summer Solstice was celebrated this year with a sunrise tour at 7 AM on June 21, which fell on a Wednesday, with 16 participants. The tour was advertised on our websites and Facebook, which have been a good way to reach people, and was conducted by Larry and Brooks Marshall. Online communication has been extremely important this past year. Many visitors have enjoyed adding photos to our Google My Business page. Unfortunately our experiment with operating the gift shop online did not work out, and will probably require the input of an IT professional.



One of our large-group tours entering the small kiva at Marker 10.

I was disappointed that we had no requests to visit classrooms in 2023. I did give a tour of Salmon Ruins to a group of adults from Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in April and a group of 40 children from Ignacio Middle School in May. In September, I gave a tour of Salmon Ruins to a group of 24 adults with the Archaeological Conservancy who were supposed to meet me in Chaco, but arrived a day after the most severe flood of the year and the park was closed. A few days later, I entertained the Grand Circle Travel Group with a guided tour of both Salmon and Aztec Ruins, and had an important discussion with their board members about becoming a member of the group. In October, a non-profit group called Dig Deep visited the Navajo Nation to install closed water systems in houses on the reservation without electricity or running water, and ended their visit in the region with a guided tour of Salmon Ruins. These opportunities for outreach are extremely important and offer us not only the chance to educate the public but also to demonstrate who we are and what we do for potential donors in need of a non-profit to support. I also did a brief Arches and Archaeology tour with the City of Aztec's photographer for advertising and promotional purposes in February that could develop into important opportunities for advertising with other local activities or organizations.

JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

When you have friends or family visit, do they ever ask what there is to do around here? Do you tell them about our archaeology tours that go to places they would not be able to find on their own? The museum is so fortunate to have this rare and unique opportunity to educate the public about what we do and how it all works. Visitors regularly express how excited they are to finally be able to ask questions of a guide who actually knows about the cultures, details, and research of the area. A total of 81 tours were booked this year, with 12 cancellations. While we don't know the reason for some of these, most were due to illness or injury while traveling, and came with promises to reschedule next year. Tours were conducted to Chaco (60 times), Bisti (2 times), Dinetah (3 times), and Salmon/Aztec (4 times). Several tours were with returning visitors who have visited other places with us in the past. Tours remained busy through all of October with 3 or even 4 tours booked each week! Fortunately (for me) there was a break in part of July and August, when it was over 100 degrees almost every day, when requests stopped. Several tours were also cancelled at the last minute due to completely unexpected storms and flooding in August and September, resulting in quite impressive photos from the places we like to visit.



DONATIONS

Donated items come to us in many forms. Books for the library are one of the most common, and include some really interesting and obscure items that are long out of print and would be prohibitively expensive for us to purchase on our own. Jewelry and art of various kinds are another type of donation. These are intended for the gift shop, and often are sold immediately after being put on the shelf. Other items are of the type or quality that they are destined for storage and plans for display.

In January, we took in a large donation of modern-made Acoma pottery, Navajo rugs, and various other Native American craft items from the estate of Steve Long. The items are in exceptional condition, and many have already found their place in the gift shop or added to our curated materials for use in displays of the future.



Part of the Steve Long Donation

In March, a small donation of a Pueblo IV broken vessel, mano and assorted sherds was mailed to us from a lady in California. Her friend is related to a land-grant family in NM and the artifacts were recovered at some point in the past from that property.

In August, we received a small collection in the mail from a family in Michigan.

These items were collected at least 70 years ago (c. 1950s) when a family member lived in the 4-Corners region. They tried to donate the items to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, who suggested that they call us at Salmon Ruins. We do have a few similar items, and a display featuring these and other miniature vessels will be fun to put together.

The “Michigan Miniatures” collection

In September, a temporary accession was made of the doorway lintel from Foothold Ruin, a Navajo Pueblito which is under watch by our Northwest New Mexico Site Stewards volunteers. This wooden log, including the associated soil sample



which is the remnants of mud mortar, will hopefully be replaced and mudded safely back in place soon.

Other important donations include a variety of items to be sold in the gift shop, bringing in a source of income that we don't have to purchase first. Many board members and organization members, as well as sometimes people we don't know, support us regularly with donations for either the library or the gift shop. It may not seem like much, but your donations are appreciated and they really make a difference! Keep them coming in whatever form pleases you most.

RESEARCH

An important and necessary stabilization project took place at a small Navajo Pueblito called Twine House (sometimes alternatively named String House in previous literature). During the site update, we collected a sample of a string identified in 1998 by the Dendrochronology Team as potentially original to the site's construction. This item is curated in our collection and we look forward to having it tested. The location of Twine House is quite difficult to get to and is located close to many other well-known Navajo sites in Palluche Canyon, including caves and other Pueblitos nearby. Sadly, there are many other sites in the area in similar states of deterioration, and just as that project was ending, a site steward brought in a log that had fallen out of the doorframe of Foothold Ruin in the same canyon. We hope to continue work in these and other sites that are in need of special care, if we can find a source of funding to support the work! Special mention is due to Roy and Patty Dan for their monetary donation that supported this project.



Roy Dan contemplating the completed stabilization work at Twine House.

Filling in the gaps in the database has been progressing, but it is terribly slow and tedious work. It is so important to get an accurate list of where things are, but frustrating that it takes a long time and that no one wants to help. We do want people to do research here, and most importantly, when they ask for an item, we had better know where it is and be able to produce it! We participated in a fascinating project for a doctoral dissertation about identifying mineral specimens used for paint. This research included several hundred samples from our collections, all of which had to be photographed and numbered before they could be borrowed, but in the end it was a success! We look forward to articles by Kelsey Hanson about her research with minerals at Pueblo II and III sites, including Salmon Ruins.

Melvin and the DCA crew spent a lot of time and hard work building me new shelves for the storage buildings where we repaired the roofs last year, so that we have a much larger storage space to organize and preserve the materials from the Salmon Ruins excavations. These mundane projects are not glamorous or the sort of thing that makes the newspaper, but they are so important to the everyday function of a museum facility like ours and they make the work that has to take place so much more effective and efficient!

FUNDRAISING



Also related to tours and tourism in the region, the Four Corners Museum Network resumed meetings last year. This is an extremely important outlet for unsupported local organizations who don't have the means to advertise to help one another publicize. Membership fees are extremely small, \$25 per year, and go to funding a brochure that provides a short description of each place and their relative locations on a 4-corners map to help promote visitation while people are doing other activities nearby. This winter, yours truly will be designing the brochure since none of the other members have stepped up, and it will be ready for publication and distribution by March of 2024. I have also created a Facebook page for the 4CMN and am working on a website for them through Tech Soup (free and reduced costs for Non-profits).

Another long-lapsed fundraiser for our museum was revived this year, our Mata Ortiz Pottery Show. This much-awaited annual event has always taken place on a weekday between noon and 5pm, which posed a huge problem in generating local shoppers because people who worked were unable to attend. This year, Brandi and I were finally able to convince Oralia Lopez to bring her pieces on a Friday afternoon so that we could host a reception after-hours on Friday night, then have sales continue all day Saturday. The event was a great success, and brought in a big boost for the museum as we go into our slow season. If you didn't make it, you really missed an opportunity to see some amazing art and purchase unique gifts at unbelievable prices! All of our advertising and reception costs were paid for and we had a good profit above that. We plan to continue hosting this event every year and I hope to see much more participation by our members in the future, given that it directly supports our mission and income.

As the year transitions to the 2024 Fiscal Year (always confusing since we are still very much in 2023!) we are gearing up for the Annual Arts and Crafts Fair at McGee Park. This year the Big Day is December 2 and we will be relying on all the Board Members to attend and help, even if it's just as a shopper, and at the very least to please encourage all of your local friends and relatives to attend that

day. This is always a great opportunity to pick up special gifts for the holiday season, as well as a fun way to find out about local artists who you might want to support throughout the year. Last year the craft fair was sold out and had great weather, so nearly all the vendors showed up. We had a great variety of items including fine art, jewelry, candy, skin care, blankets, decorations, jelly, biscochitos, hats, etc! This year we are well on our way to having a sold-out show, and we are very excited for the event!

VOLUNTEERS

Sadly we have discovered, as have many other museums around the country, that it is quite difficult to find skilled volunteers and even harder to keep them active and engaged! Joel Mayer – you know him, he’s on the board – has been a light in the little dark world of trying to get volunteer assistance! Joel now knows the collection of historical photographs, family histories, newspaper clippings and strange and exciting historical events in San Juan County better than anyone else in town! His work with this very complicated and difficult task has helped to organize a section of the library that has been neglected for a long time. Now, Joel is the expert to whom we turn when a patron comes in looking for genealogy, local history, or special requests.

We also want to recognize the important contributions of Jeff Houser, a long-time personal friend of Larry’s. Jeff has spent much of his life operating heavy equipment in the oil fields of San Juan and Rio Arriba counties, where he often blades the deeply rutted roads after bad weather, or helps pull unlucky vehicles out of ditches. He was, for a number of years, our emergency contact if we were working on the Carson National Forest and needed help. This year, Jeff donated his Razor 4x4 to help move equipment up and down the arroyo for the stabilization project at String House, and then ensured that everyone who needed a ride from the parking area was also taken care of, so that site stewards and board members could participate even if they had limited mobility. Jeff Houser is our Volunteer of the Year, and we hope he knows how important we think he is!



ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

For as long as archaeology has existed, there has been a recognized relationship between the study and interest in ancient cultures and the role of art. Many early researchers filled their notes with sketches of the location, and the use of photography has been invaluable in capturing and documenting artifacts as well as architecture. We've shown you, in past publications, examples of photos taken by Ken Russell, Jonathan Kelly, Ron Hunt, and other board members, volunteers and friends that we found impressive and wanted to share. Now I am thrilled to present (with minimal cropping) a photo by Mickey Ginn of Foothold Ruin that we think belongs in a professional frame on the wall of any quality art gallery in Santa Fe. Mickey, we sure hope you enter some contests, or at least the County Fair!



2023 Donors

\$15 - \$99

Mr. Allred
Luanne Crow
Jon Uncapher
EJ Hiadusek
Mr. Tellman
Rita Kantarowski
Mary Hayes
Dave & Ann Salmon
John & Molly Renner
Trudy Farrell
Huth Family
Penny Whitten
Jo Anderson
Ronald & Gloria Avery
Anonymous by mail
Andrea Greenaker

\$100 - \$999

Meredith Matthews
Bill & Nancy Cella
Mickey Ginn
Pat & Holly Hasenbuhler
Art & Susan Hurley
Kenneth Russell
Bob Young
Mr. Rabel
Ms. Flannery
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Pierre Morenon
Linda Mayro

Archaeological Conservancy
Steve Lekson
Marston Keeler
David Ingle
Ronald Werner
Calvin Jackson
Lonnie & Carolyn Pippin
Anonymous Donations and
Donation Box at Entrance

\$1000 and over

Lyn Wharton
Dorothy Washburn
Roland & Martha Mace
Ed Deal
Jo Hudson



Your donations of time, money and interest make our work possible. Thank You!

2023 Statement of Activities
Cash only, October 31, 2023
Revenue and Related Income

Services	\$656,736.00
Gift Shop Sales	\$21,968.00
Fund Raising and Association	\$7,229.00
Admissions	\$12,538.00
Donations	\$17,833.00
Grants	\$0.00
County Support	\$0.00
Site Stewards	\$0.00
Sale of Assets	\$2,200.00
Membership	\$2,590.00
Consultant	\$4,400.00
Interest	\$0.00
Miscellaneous (ERC)	\$77,173.00
TOTAL	\$802,667.00

Expenses

Museum	\$ 335,234.00
Division of Conservation Archaeology	\$ 382,752.00
TOTAL	\$ 717,986.00

2023 Financial Statement

Unaudited Statement of Financial Position, October 31, 2023

Assets

In-bank Cash	\$117,840.00
Savings and Short-Term Investments	\$213,402.00
Long-Term Investments (Endowment)	\$998,836.00
Accounts Receivable (DCA)	\$121,520.00
Gift Shop Inventory	\$46,433.00
Prepaid Insurance	\$28,478.00
Petty Cash	\$250.00
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$1,526,759.00</i>
Property and Equipment	\$127,615.00
TOTAL	\$1,654,374.00

Liabilities and Capital

Accounts Payable	\$0.00
Taxes	\$50,046.00
Vacation Benefits	\$22,108.00
Deferred Revenue	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$72,226.00

Capital

Investments in Fixed Assets	\$345,897.00
Unappropriated Fund	\$430,026.00
Current Fund	\$1,677,508.00
Net Income	(\$52,936.00)
TOTAL	\$2,400,495.00
Total Liabilities and Capital:	\$2,472,721.00

Board of Directors, 2023

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Kim Stradling

Vice President
Ken Russell

Secretary
Andrea Greenaker

Treasurer
Clay Johnston

Members
Beth Clancy
Mickey Ginn
Richard Friedman
Ingrid Gilbert
Joel Mayer
Karen Marchand
Patricia Shelton
Dean Peek
Donna Thatcher
Jenna Wolfe

San Juan County Representative
GloJean Todacheene



Association Staff

Salmon Ruins Museum

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Tori Myers, Curator & Education Coordinator
Brandi Amarilla, Business Manager
Melvin Dennison, Operations Support
Penelope "Penni" VonGedda, Receptionist
Suzanne and Wayne Martinez, Custodians

Division of Conservation Archaeology

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Leonard Yazzie, Assistant Archaeologist
Tori Myers, Ceramic Specialist
Hans Freuden, Special DCA Projects
Leta Yazzie, Administrative Assistant