



# SITE LINES

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 2

SPRING 2026

## Council Report

The SFNF Site Steward council met on April 18 at the Forest Office. Following are some highlights from that meeting:

*Steward Status:* Siobhan Hancock (Caja/Garcia team) was approved as a certified steward. Dan and Michelle Sundt were approved as provisional stewards on the Jemez. Chris Gardner will orient them to their new sites.

An ad-hoc Outreach Committee consisting of Siobhan Hancock, Grace Brill, Paula Lozar, and Bruce Herr has met and discussed strategies for recruiting new stewards, with a goal of adding ten this year. The event at Mesa Prieta on May 3 was discussed as the first step in achieving this goal.

### *Events:*

There was some discussion about the format for the annual meeting this year. It will be finalized at the July meeting, but most likely will be a one-day event, rather than the overnight campout that we have had in alternating years.

The education committee hopes to restart the lecture series, probably in the fall. Details to follow.

The next quarterly Council meeting will be July 18, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the SF National Forest Office. (Donuts and coffee beforehand, around 9:15). As always, all SFNF Site Stewards are welcome to attend.

-- Bob Florek

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## News from the Forest

The USFS reorganization has not yet impacted the SFNF. The Forest will probably be taking on some responsibility for what used to be regional work, but nothing is settled at this point. They are not hiring, but nobody has left.

As of April 3, 2026, the SFNF is currently under Stage 1 fire restrictions.

The Poshuouinge stabilization project and the work on Rattlesnake are ongoing. New fencing is proposed on a few pueblos to keep out the cattle. We are hoping for a good monsoon season this year, but, until that starts, we will be holding our breath that the Forest has minimal fires.

The Forest welcomes Lauren Goode. She is on a one-year Conservation Legacy appointment to help with the recreation residences on the Pecos/Las Vegas Districts. For Lauren's biography, see pg. 2.

-- Kathi Turner

### Contributors to this issue:

Grace Brill  
 Nancy Cella  
 Bob Florek  
 Siobhan Hancock  
 Gary Newgent  
 John Pitts  
 Kathi Turner

**The editors thank you!**

## Introducing Lauren Goode

Hi there! I'm joining the Santa Fe Heritage team on a year-long contract with Conservation Corps New Mexico. I will be helping out with the heritage side of the recreation residences program on the Pecos/Las Vegas district. I worked as a seasonal archeology technician on the Espanola and Coyote districts of the Santa Fe a few years ago. I have also spent some time doing archeology for the Cibola National Forest down in Grants, NM and for the Tahoe National Forest in Northern California. I currently live in Santa Fe with my husband and my dog. I love the Santa Fe and am excited to start helping out!

## Site Steward Foundation Update

05/06/26

The Site Steward Foundation is again offering a H. Wayne Nelson grant of \$1,000 with a grant application deadline of September 30, 2026, and a grant award date by December 1, 2026. To apply for a Foundation grant, please contact Gary Newgent at [sitestewardfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:sitestewardfoundation@gmail.com) for a grant application.

The location and date of the Foundation meeting this spring are yet to be determined.

The 2026 Pecos Conference will be held August 6 - 9, 2026 near Mancos, Colorado: [pecosconference.org](http://pecosconference.org).

The Site Steward Foundation has been selected as the organizer of the 2027 Pecos Conference, with plans for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pecos Conference to be held at the Forked Lightning Ranch in the Pecos National Historical Park.

If you are not a member of the Site Steward Foundation, or have not renewed your membership for 2026, please consider joining or renewing today. The Foundation accepts credit cards for membership dues and donations on our website, [sitestewardfoundation.org](http://sitestewardfoundation.org), or checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 32224, Santa Fe, NM 87594.

If you would like to be notified of Foundation tours and activities, please subscribe to our email list on the Foundation website. Thank you for your support of site stewards!

— Gary Newgent, President

## A Request from the Archives Committee

We are updating the membership roster and email list this spring. If you have received the email notification for this newsletter and no longer wish to be on the list, please contact Bob Florek at [bobflorek@gmail.com](mailto:bobflorek@gmail.com). Note that there is an option to be an "inactive" member, so if you are no longer able or willing to do site visits, but still are interested in what's going on or in attending meetings, please let us know that.

## ATL Reports

*Garcia* (Jeff Koester): At the January 18, 2026 meeting, the Council approved merging the Caja del Rio and Garcia teams under Jeff Koester as ATL. Jana Comstock reviewed the sites in the Garcia area and recommended only one (Guaje Ridge) for regular monitoring. She and Jeff will arrange for a site visit with two new stewards.

*Caja del Rio* (Jeff Koester): Jeff reported that every site except one has been visited recently. John Pitts recently recorded nine new rock art panels on Daingerfield Rock near the river below Caja del Rio Norte Pueblo [see his story on pg. 4].

Kathi stated that construction is scheduled to begin on the Los Alamos power line in September, so there will be some "improvement" to Forest Road 24 in the area.

*Jemez* (Bob Florek): The Jemez team is still in need of an ATL. To keep site visits going while we search for a new ATL, several members have volunteered to handle the reporting out/in duties normally handled by the ATL.

**NOTE:** Anyone interested in stepping up as ATL/AATL for Jemez should contact Bob Florek, [bobflorek@gmail.com](mailto:bobflorek@gmail.com).

*Rio Chama* (K Paul Jones): K. Paul will be resigning in July as the ATL for Rio Chama, to be replaced by new steward David Bowman after David has completed one year as a steward and is certified by the council.

*Gallina* (Anne Beckett): The team has had trouble making site visits because of recent rains, but they are trying to visit all sites this spring and fall.

*Pecos* (Bob Florek): No news, except that signs are being replaced on several sites. The team recently had a spring get-together.

*General Information:* A comprehensive list of sites and conditions in all areas is needed. Pecos recently did this, and two other areas are working on it. Kathi suggested that all ATLs compile this information for their areas and send it to her and the appropriate zone archaeologist for review. Gallina ATL Anne Beckett has created a template to collect relevant information.

Kathi has available signs and flag stickers to place on signs to discourage shooting. Stewards should ensure that posted signs have current information, because some old signs have obsolete dispatch numbers.



**Atlatl Demonstration at SiteWatch meeting:** See the story on pg 5. The targets are dummies – no animals were harmed in the making of this photo. [Paula Lozar]

## Successful Recording of Daingerfield Rock, Caja Del Rio

On April 11, 2026, five volunteers, including three SFNF Site Stewards, accomplished the scientific recording of an impressive boulder at the bottom of White Rock Canyon. The boulder, named after a recently deceased SFNF and Valles Caldera volunteer, Daingerfield Ashton, contained nine rock art panels. What follows is a brief description of the great efforts that went into this recording.

The successful recording of Daingerfield Rock was the culmination of an effort involving ten people over several years. The effort actually began with the discovery of the boulder eleven years prior. In 2015, Tom Beyer (Site Watch) and I went down the cliffs below Caja del Rio Norte Pueblo (AR-03-10-06-92, LA00174) in search of a rock art panel noted in the Site Steward File for the site. During the search for LA90791, 06-918, we discovered ten panels on the cliffs and ledges for which the SFNF had no record. Following a tour of these sites with the SFNF archaeologists, Mike Bremer and Jana Comstock, I assembled a team with two other experienced recorders to record the "new" panels. We managed to record nine of the ten panels in one day, but could not attempt to record the complex of panels found on the boulder resting next to the edge of the Rio Grande.

In the following year, an effort was made by a team led by Jana Comstock to record the boulder, but it proved to be too time-consuming using the existing National Forest forms. Covid and other factors delayed further work for ten years.

Finally, I was recently given the green light to use the rock art recording procedure and forms developed by the Archaeological Society of New Mexico. Then it was just a matter of assembling the right team for the task. Besides Tom, I succeeded in luring two other Caja del Rio Site Stewards, Siobhan Hancock and Bob Greene, to join in the adventure. Both had extensive experience recording with the Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project. (MPPP) To beef up our technical expertise, I chose Jerod Roberts, the archaeologist with the MPPP. But no one, including myself, really appreciated what a gigantic task the recording would entail.

The enthusiasm of the team members was evident when all agreed to assemble at 8AM, despite some traveling from Los Alamos and Velarde. We were lucky to find the roads across the Caja del Rio Plateau dry and made it to our starting point, Caja del Rio Norte Pueblo, in just over an hour. Loaded down with recording gear, an advanced camera for 3D photography, a first-aid kit, and a gallon of water each, we were ready. Oh, we also took various saws to clear away the large Siberian Elm which enveloped three sides of the boulder, a major hindrance to recording efforts, especially photography. It took us over two hours to reach our destination. The ten years since my previous visit to the site had eroded my memory of the difficulty of descending over 1,000 vertical feet of steep boulder fields and volcanic scree.

The 3 1/2 hours spent actually preparing the site and recording all the panels went quickly with hardly enough time for a quick lunch and hydration.



Jana Comstock on an earlier visit to the Daingerfield Rock Petroglyphs.

[Continued on pg 5]

## Daingerfield Rock Recording, continued from pg 4

Then came the most difficult part of the adventure, exiting the canyon to where we had left our two vehicles and driving out. The effort to climb up the side of White Rock Canyon took energy most of us did not know we had, as well as the technical skills to maneuver past steep obstacles. It took fully 3 hours to reach the cars, and we succeeded without serious injuries. Heck, scratches, bruises and puncture wounds don't count as "serious!" The rain had fallen in Santa Fe and dampened the dirt track, but, all in all, we felt lucky to have survived and returned with valuable information to record a magnificent site which I, frankly, do not feel I have to visit again! Thus ended a 12.5 hour, door to door, experience we will treasure (?) for quite a while!

Why was this rock art so important? Besides being so concentrated, according to Polly Schaafsma, the style of the rock art shows it to be an example of Plateau Puebloan style (900-1300 CE), which is uncommon in this area.

I promise you, when we return to the Caja del Rio to record other rock art panels we will be parking in close proximity to the cliffs. Any volunteers??

-- Article and photo, John Pitts

## Thunder from Down Under: Ground-Penetrating Radar

On March 28, 2026, New Mexico SiteWatch hosted a meeting at the Center for New Mexico Archeology for Site Stewards from both SiteWatch and the Santa Fe National Forest. One presentation at the meeting was on Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) by Jennie Sturm of SWCA Environmental Consultants.

GPR, a geophysical method, is widely used in archeology projects because it is non-invasive and more accurate than other methods, such as magnetometry. (LIDAR is valuable, but it measures only the ground surface.) GPR measures both physical and chemical changes in the ground, and can view up to a 3-meter depth and 40 cm accuracy. Following Jennie's presentation, attendees had the opportunity to try out the GPR system. (The radar is housed in the box close to the ground, and the visual readout appears on a screen on top. We didn't find any new sites.)

Attendees at the meeting also had the opportunity to try their hand at throwing atlatls. See the photo on pg. 3 for someone with better technique than mine.

**AND** two SFNF/SiteWatch Site Stewards, David Bowman and John Pitts, received awards at the meeting for their work at Bandelier. Congratulations!!



Jennie Sturm demonstrates GPR to Site Stewards (Article and photo: Paula Lozar)

## Introducing Southwest Seminars

Our region is lucky to have so many local organizations dedicated to archaeology, cultural heritage, and other topics of interest to SFNF Site Stewards. One example is Southwest Seminars, an educational non-profit that specializes in developing programs in Southwest studies, primarily in the fields of history, archaeology, natural sciences, and culture. Its purpose is to educate, foster and encourage awareness, as well as to heighten cultural sensitivity in the Southwest. The organization was founded in 1997 by Connie Eichstaedt and Alan Osborne.

Southwest Seminars is perhaps best known for hosting a weekly public lecture series in Santa Fe. There are usually several SFNF Site Stewards in attendance! The Monday night lectures feature scholars in a variety of fields who share primary research with an engaged audience. Lectures scheduled for June include:

- June 8, Danyelle Means (Oglala Lakota), *A Path to Healing and Reciprocity: Native American Grave Protection Act*
- June 15, Dr Matt Schmader, *Uncovering America's First War: Contact, Conflict, & Coronado's Expedition to the Rio Grande*

- June 22, Dr. John Ninnemann, *John Wesley Powell and the Colorado River*
- June 29, Dr. Eric Blinman: *A Curmudgeon Looks at Chaco: A Null Hypothesis of Origin and Function*

The lectures cost \$20 at the door (or \$75 for an entire monthly series).

The organization also runs trips led by scholars. For instance, in March this year there was a one-day tour exploring the geology of the Galisteo Basin with Dr. Kirt Kempter and this summer there will be two 7-day rafting trips on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. These trips will be led by geologist Wayne Ranney and social anthropologist Dr. John Ware. Trips in prior years visited destinations including Canyon de Chelly, Chaco Canyon, and the Pueblos of Zuni, Acoma, and San Ildefonso.

If you want to expand your horizons and learn more about archaeology and cultural heritage both locally and further afield, check out the lectures and trips on their website:

<https://southwestseminars.org>

-- Grace Brill

## Site Stewards Needed!

The SFNF Site Steward program is always in need of more site stewards to ensure that all areas are thoroughly covered, and that there is backup when site stewards are unavailable or have to leave the program. We are working on remedying this situation in the near future.

However, one of our best recruiting methods is word of mouth. If you have friends who like archeology and the outdoors, and find the idea of site visits interesting, urge them to contact us. If you are visiting a site and run into hikers who are curious what you're doing there, tell them about the site steward program and suggest that they follow up with us (we have actually gained new site stewards that way!).

Contact information is on our website: [sfnsitestewards.org](http://sfnsitestewards.org)

## **Review of Ancient Women Gardeners – David E. Stuart, Ph.D.**

This is a splendid book. Even if you have read about Southwestern prehistory a time or two and think you know all about the Chaco Canyon Phenomenon, you will learn something new. Instead of text about pottery styles, types of house construction, and dates of everything, this is a book about people and their struggles to stay well fed, stay warm, building secure housing, and stay protected.

Dr. Stuart is an anthropologist in its full sense: ethnologist, archaeologist, university professor, guest speaker, and consultant.

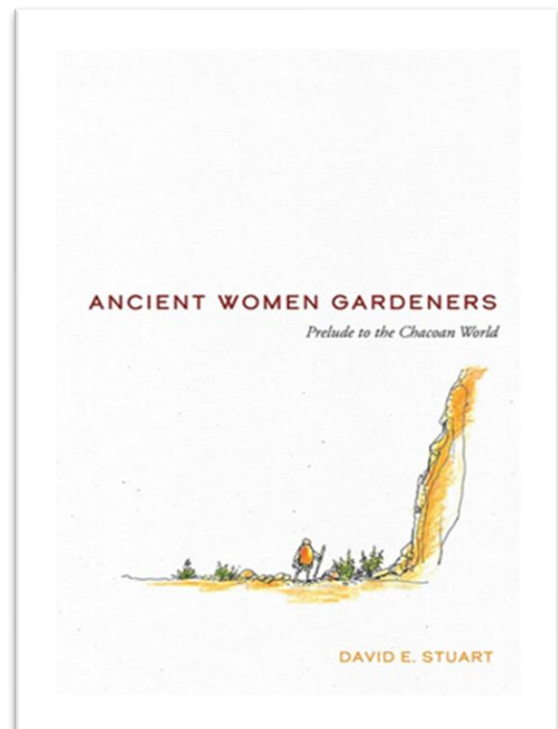
The introductory chapter does what all good introductions do: it tells the reader what is ahead: an overview of the vast changes in climate, of temperature, and rainfall that affected subsistence, house styles, food resources, technology, population density and movement throughout the San Juan Basin, and group and family structure and status from the initial peopling of the New World to the collapse of the Chaco Canyon Phenomenon.

The text is divided into four parts with individual chapters devoted to specific topics. The book should be read carefully; its conclusion is not a mystery. I especially appreciated the emphasis on women's contributions to the well-being of their kin group during every cultural period, as well as their health issues affecting their overall well-being and fertility.

Part I, entitled Hunters and Foragers, focuses on the centuries following the Ice Ages to the Early and Middle Archaic, ca. 10,000 BP to 1000 BC. At least three waves of human groups followed game animals across the Bering Strait bridge, estimated to be about 600 miles wide at the height of the Pleistocene glaciation. Some groups followed the Pacific Coast southward to take advantage of land and sea resources. These people were as unaware of their entry into a new continent, as were animals. Woolly mammoths, huge cave bears, horses, giant sloths, saber-tooth tigers, dire wolves, and now extinct bison were some

of the fauna, many of whom provided large amounts of meat to those fortunate enough to avoid the danger of close contact. Large stone spear points included the beautifully crafted Clovis and Folsom points, hand axes, and other stone tools.

This was the era of Man the Hunter whose social status depended upon their tracking and hunting skills. Women, children, and the elderly accompanied the migratory kin-related bands, and collected plant parts as part of their diet. Population density was probably sparse. Hunting camps have been found, but people were mostly on the move. The cause of the extinction of the large fauna at the end of this period has been abundantly argued, discussed, thought and written about for many years. Was Man the Hunter the principal cause, or was the drastic change in climate the cause? Remember that the fauna in the Americas had not previously experienced human hunters and were most likely not fearful of these small creatures with



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[continued on pg 8]

## **Review of *Ancient Women Gardeners*, cont'd from pg 7**

long sticks. Dr. Stuart opines that climate warming and depletion of their food resources were probably the principal factor in the extinctions since there were most likely not enough hunters to effect the demise of so many animals. In the later centuries of this era when climate warmed and the large game were gone, humans increasingly depended upon plants and smaller game. Foraging for native plants and game such as rabbits, turtles, frogs, lizards, snakes and such became necessary. During the Early and Middle Archaic, acquisition of food depended upon moving from area to area of known resources where plants, such as Indian rice grass, chenopodium, amaranth, and other edible plants could reliably be harvested. Instead of large spear points, projectile points for atlatl weapons and later, arrow points are more commonly found.

Part II is entitled Corn and Women's Pocket Gardens that Stuart dates from 1000 BC to 500 BC (Early Archaic) and 1 to 600 AD (Late Archaic). While a shifting subsistence pattern was still practiced, small gardens were prepared for the early varieties of corn. Camps with these small garden plots could be abandoned during part of the growing season and revisited during harvest times. During the later centuries of this era, improved varieties of corn were grown along with native plants. Women's pocket gardens were prepared in part by lining the borders with stones that helped shield the young plants from spring winds. If not located near permanent water sources, water was carefully carried in woven baskets.

Dr. Stuart regaled his university students with his description of "critter fritters," a mixture of plant and small animal parts to form a pancake that was toasted on a stone slab balanced on rocks, with a small fire beneath the slab.

The gardens typically contained cultivars and native plants bearing protein-rich seeds, edible leaves, and roots that provided a variety of nutrients. During these years, families were generally well fed, thanks to women gardeners. The role and status of women as vital providers of daily food improved. During this long span of centuries archaeologists have identified changes more associated with post-Basketmaker elements that have been named Pueblo I-II. There is evidence of larger family groups, in-migration, semi-permanent residences, storage pits and containers, above-ground habitation, a general population increase, perhaps a specialization of roles, and an increase of water and erosion control systems. Women's roles now included ownership of land, housing, and gardens. Men's roles continued with hunting, initial preparation of gardens, and construction of housing, now a mixture of styles depending on local topography.

Part III, Small Farmers and Great House Elites, discusses the many changes throughout the San Juan Basin, particularly within Chaco Canyon. In addition to the plethora of housing styles, the rainfall was very unpredictable in the late 700s AD. It wreaked havoc in terms of protein and iron deficiencies, overwork, and signs of violence, particularly against women. At the site of the future Great House – Pueblo Bonito – there is evidence of smaller structures beneath the future major buildings. In the late 700s AD, the core of what became Pueblo Bonito structures overlaid the burial of a man wealthy in turquoise and Mesoamerican items: the burial was covered by feet of new clay and sand deposited by floodwaters.

[Continued on pg 9]

## **Review of *Ancient Women Gardeners*, cont'd from pg 8**

The change from local trading among family partners and sources of aid in times of less rainfall and crop failures to Chaco Canyon Great Houses and an elite class of leaders has been called the Chaco Canyon Phenomenon. Who were these Great House elites? People from Mesoamerica? Indigenous people from other villages in the San Juan Basin? A lot of speculation and discussion, but the question has not been fully answered.

In addition to Pueblo Bonito, Dr. Stuart lists 13 additional Great Houses in the core of Chaco Canyon built from the 830s AD through 1075 AD. Each required labor groups, timber, mortar, shaped stones, and new fields to support the increased yields of corn – the currency of the day.

Today's visitors to Chaco Canyon find it nearly impossible to envision any sort of farming that would feed great numbers of residents, much less fill storage rooms with corn enough to distribute to outliers and villages. And yet, here they are: Huge multistory stone structures of finely laid banded sandstone, one after another, along the now dry entrenched Chaco River. During the occupation of the Great Houses, slightly improved rainfall and elaborate water control devices all along the Chaco River resulted in the slowing and channeling sufficient to divert water to fields. Water cascaded off the cliffs to produce swampy areas. A lagoon was once part of the Pueblo Bonito complex.

Part IV, Chaco Canyon's Dominion & Fall describes in great detail the increase in power and influence of the elites by the late 900s AD. The enhanced trade pathways extended in every direction within the San Juan Basin and southern Colorado. In times of food

shortages, stored corn in the Great Houses was available for distribution to villages. As well, surpluses could be brought to Chaco Canyon. Improvements in existing trails became 30' wide improved roads. The period between the late 800s and 1000s AD was the "era of grandeur:" elaborate banded stone masonry work, huge kivas that hosted large religious gatherings, and fabulous frequently changing pottery styles, most likely impressed visitors and those who sought food and aid in reassurance that the rains will arrive.

Over-extension of resources, long periods of drought, dissention among the elites, diseases resulting from inadequate nutrition, and food shortages likely combined to erode the social pattern to disarray and collapse. One can imagine the dissatisfaction, hunger, and distress among the people within Chaco Canyon itself.

The abandonment of the Great Houses and the diaspora of its people was pretty much complete by the 1300s AD. Many of today's pueblo villages along the Rio Grande and other locations with better water sources received residents of the Great Houses and their outliers around the mid to late 1200s. Mesa Verde people also moved away from their Colorado mesas, some settled in Chacoan towns such as Salmon and Aztec, which were renovated to fit their social and religious organization.

The text concludes with an essay by Elizabeth Chestnut about the past, present, and future of Pueblo Women.

-- Nancy Cella, reviewer

## SFNF-MPPP Joint Meeting

The May 3, 2026 meeting of the SFNF Site Stewards and Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project (MPPP) volunteers was a great success. Thirty-six volunteers attended the event at Los Luceros Historic Site, roughly half-and-half from each group (although a nontrivial number volunteer for both!).

After coffee and donuts, the group assembled in the Visitor Center's auditorium. MPPP archeologist Jerod Roberts gave a presentation about the history of Mesa Prieta, how the project came to be, and its accomplishments, with many slides of the site's outstanding petroglyphs. John Pitts and Siobhan Hancock spoke about the SFNF Site Steward program and how it works, and showed enticing photos of the areas that we monitor. After an outstanding potluck lunch, most of the group reassembled at the MPPP parking lot to visit several of the project's tour loops.

One of the reasons for the gathering (besides fun, of course) was for volunteers to share knowledge about petroglyph recording. Many of the sites we monitor on the SFNF have petroglyphs associated with them; although most of these petroglyphs are known and many have been recorded, many haven't been, and new petroglyphs are discovered all the time. It's important for SFNF Site Stewards to know how to document these petroglyphs in a consistent and professional manner, and who better to learn from than the MPPP, who have been doing it for decades. In addition, some MPPP volunteers are interested in exploring sites beyond the mesa, and the SFNF program provides an opportunity for them to do so.



Photo: Siobhan Hancock

## *Site Lines*

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**Editor:**  
**Paula Lozar**  
**(505) 473-3479**  
**lozarpaula@cs.com**

**Assistant Editor:**  
**Susan McGrew**  
**(505) 424-3932**  
**sumac3b@gmail.com**

**We're on the Web!**  
**www://sfnsitestewards**  
**.org**

## *Save the Date!*

**The American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA)** will be hosting its annual conference in Great Falls, Montana on June 25-29, 2026, at the Holiday Inn. Registration closes on June 9. For more information, see the ARARA website at <https://arara.wildapricot.org/Conference-General-Info-2026>

**2026 Pecos Conference**, August 6-9, 2026, will be held at the Doc Lowell Flats on the San Juan National Forest, about 8 road miles north of Mancos, Colorado. For specifics, see [www.pecosconference.org](http://www.pecosconference.org).

The **Paleoamerican Odyssey Conference** will occur on October 14-17, 2026, in Santa Fe. For more information, see <https://liberalarts.tamu.edu/csfa/paleoamerican-odyssey-program-2026>

**Late Breaking News:** On May 8, 2026, Tribal and Hispano leaders and local elected officials joined Senator Martin Heinrich and Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez to formally announce federal legislation to protect portions of the Caja del Rio.

The Caja del Rio Protection Act (S.4458), sponsored by Senator Martin Heinrich and co-sponsored by Senator Ben Ray Luján, mirrors H.R.8616 in the House, sponsored by Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez.

Whether these bills will succeed, and, if so, what the implications are for Site Stewards, are unknown so far, but we will keep you updated. [Ed.]