

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation



Field Trip Report

Destination: Pecos Conference

Date: August 8 - 10, 2019

Leader(s): Foxie and Dick Mason

Number of Participants: 2

The Masons, Foxie and Dick, attended the Pecos Conference which was held at the Cloudcroft Ski Area in Cloudcroft, New Mexico (elevation 9,100) the weekend of August 8-10, 2019. This conference is one of the most important annual gatherings of archaeologists, anthropologists, academics, Forest Service and BLM employees, as well as State Archaeology personnel and practitioners involved with Southwestern U.S. archaeology.

The 2019 conference drew an estimated 300 students and other interested parties to the conference tent to hear approximately 45 15-minute sessions that discuss excavation findings, theories, conclusions and other topics over 2½ days.

A large percentage of the attendees camped on the ski area land. Heavy rain occurred during Friday night but since the setting is informal and dress is likewise, no one was particularly affected by the rain other than suffering from leaky tents.

A sample of some of the interesting topics included the following: a number of papers about ongoing archaeology investigations of the Mimbres culture mainly located in and around the Gila National Forest. One conclusion being drawn that this culture, mostly known for looted pottery in the past, is now being proposed as a significant "northern regional" archaeological area. An avocational archaeology paper considered an intriguing new theory of the form and function of the T-shaped door frequently found at Chaco and other Chaco settlement outliers. Research data presented on recent findings from 37 ancient sites has found that Ancestral Puebloans established astronomical observational sites that not only tracked annual solstice and equinox occurrences but also appear to have tracked astronomical features known as "cross quarter" days.

These days mark the midpoint between a solstice and equinox and signaled the beginning of each season, winter and summer. The presenter also indicated that it appears that the timing of certain pueblo ceremonial dances may correlates with the occurrence of cross quarter days. Another interesting paper reported on the continuing research that is working to identify the pottery production locales and trading patterns of San Juan Redware pottery.

Overall, attending this conference provides fascinating information and insights which are being gained through careful scientific study of the ancient indigenous Native American cultures. The conference sessions illustrate how findings and knowledge are steadily being accumulated over the decades to bring new insights, understanding and changing interpretation about the ancient world of the Southwestern U.S.

Exciting news... The 2020 Pecos Conference will be hosted by Fort Lewis College and held in the Mancos Valley in early August and presents an opportunity for San Juan Basin Archaeology members to experience this conference firsthand next year.