

2022 Kelso Conference: Order of Presentations

Organized by: Edward Knell

Archaeological Foundations, Context, History, and Effects of Pandemic

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2. Jeanne Binning: *Rock Hounding, the Lake Manix Industry, and the Calico Early Man Site – The History of the Plundering of Surface Quarries in the Mojave Desert – What have we lost?*
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Collections and Fieldwork Analysis

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2022 Kelso Conference: Title, Authors, and Abstracts
(Alphabetical order by last name)

Recent Insights into the Geoarchaeology of Edwards Air Force Base

Jeff Baker

Over the years, a number of myths have developed concerning the geologic setting on Edwards Air Force Base. Archaeological work over the last five years has provided clear evidence that the nature of geologic deposits and the geologic processes active on Edwards AFB are more complex than most archaeologists have assumed. The data produced by the last five years of research has implications for archaeology throughout the western Mojave.

Rock Hounding, the Lake Manix Industry, and the Calico Early Man Site – The History of the Plundering of Surface Quarries in the Mojave Desert – What have we lost?

Jeanne Binning

The Central Mojave has numerous prehistoric surface quarries and prospects. Rockhounding books identify the major prehistoric quarries as great places to collect rocks. Over the years, rockhounds have visited these locations and collected items that were obviously prehistoric artifacts and in essence took away from the quarries most, if not all, of the quarry discards. In 1958, Ruth Simpson published her seminal article “The Manix Lake Archaeological Survey” in which she first proposed the Lake Manix Industry and suggested that some of these quarries were, in actuality, Native American Pleistocene habitation sites. In 1959, Louis Leakey, while at the British Museum of Natural History in London, met with Ruth Simpson who showed him some artifacts from surface quarries near the Calico Mountains. Leakey pronounced them as “real” and “very ancient,” bringing both notoriety and credibility to the idea that these artifacts represent the deep antiquity of the New World. These declarations excited a lot of people, and many joined the cause and some even started taking what they thought to be ancient tools from the surface quarries. Most of what they collected were unfinished percussion bifaces. Over the years, any tool-like items were stripped from the quarries by rockhounds and Calico enthusiasts. The question considered here is “to what degree has this affected our understanding of the prehistory of the Central Mojave Desert?” A lot? Not at all? If so, how?

The Archaeology of Carricut Mesa, North Range, NAWS China Lake: Preliminary Perspectives

Ryan M. Byerly

Naval Facilities Engineering Command tasked Far Western with completing archaeological inventories of several thousand acres of the North Range aboard the Naval Weapons Station China Lake in Inyo County, California. Surveyed acres encompass much of the footprint of a late summer 2020 fire that ravaged the landscape south of Parrot Peak in the Argus Range. This presentation briefly and preliminarily summarizes inventory results from one of four volcanic tableland formations within the project area, herein labeled Carricut Mesa. Summaries focus on assemblage profile comparisons with select prior regional archaeological inventories, particularly referencing rock imagery and bedrock milling features.

Back to Where it All Ended: A Fresh Look at the Lake Mojave Outlet Channel

Josh Deslaurier

Located at the northern end of today's Silver Lake, the outlet channel for Pleistocene Lake Mojave has been a significant point of archaeological and geological interest since Elizabeth Campbell's expeditions in the 1930s. When Claude Warren undertook the most recent archaeological analysis of the outlet channel as part of the Kern River 2003 Expansion Project, he lamented that extensive surface collecting by multiple parties, variation in the site recording procedures utilized, and the absence of any analysis of George Brainerd's 1953 debitage-heavy collection have greatly limited modern archaeologists' ability to cohesively analyze the sites near the outlet channel. Recent efforts by Edward Knell have overcome many of these obstacles, providing an opportunity for portions of the Campbell, Brainerd, and Warren collections to be studied as a unified assemblage. My analysis of the Brainerd and Warren collections from the primary outlet channel site—CA-SBR-140—for my forthcoming master's thesis seeks to address Warren's lament by analyzing the tools, cores, and debitage from these sites in a similar manner to evaluate the lithic technological strategies Paleoindians used at this site. The result will be the most thorough investigation into Paleoindian technological adaptations around the Lake Mojave outlet channel to date. Results of my analysis, when complete, can be plugged into Knell's ongoing organization of technology-based research around pluvial Lake Mojave.

Excavating the Blue Goose - The Rest of the Story....

Susan Gilliland

Dr. Joan Schneider and Susan Gilliland initiated the project to assemble and curate the research data and artifacts from Dr. Claude Warren's 1960's excavations of the Harris Site (CA-SDI-149) in the months before Covid. At the 2019 Kelso Conference they presented the evolution of the project and their plan for its completion.

This 2022 talk revisits the origins of this project and how our approach changed due to Covid. We had to adapt, and created a specialized Covid bubble to keep going. We finished the bulk of our work in August, 2021 and deposited all materials at the UCLA Fowler Curation Facility. Dr. Schneider is working on completing some of Dr. Warren's analysis.

Because this Kelso weekend includes a morning of remembrance for Dr. Warren, a review of this project is timely, and honors his pioneering work at the iconic Harris site.

Removing Derogatory Place Names from Public Lands and Encouraging Advocacy

Amy Girado

The naming of archaeological places is a common task for archaeologists, often in conjunction with CRM. Secretarial Order 3404 initiated removing a derogatory term from public lands and took a big step towards removing offensive language from USGS topo maps. Additional work is needed to ensure that archaeological sites, districts, nominations, publications, and grey literature pick up the mantle of respectful language. Let's have a conversation about how we can take on the mantle of inclusive and respectful language.

The Traditional Cultural Landscape Type of Significance: A Case Study through a Section 106 Lens

Micah Hale and Loukas Barton

We describe a recent application of Traditional Cultural Landscapes (TCL) as a type of significance conveyed under Criterion A (important events in prehistory/history) of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). While there has been much discussion among federal agencies and their consulting partners about Native American landscapes, there are few applications that logically link the concept to Section 106 significance criteria. In this example, we operationalize the TCL as a “type of significance rather than a property type,” following guidance from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP, 2012). Specifically, by considering archaeological evidence and information gained through tribal consultation, we identified several archaeological districts in the Interstate 15 corridor eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion D for strong information value. The archaeological manifestation of these districts were also found to convey a TCL type of significance under Criterion A. Tangible materials across the landscape attest to a history of activity that includes daily demands of sustenance, shelter, travel, communication, teaching, and learning among individuals, families, and communities, both human and non-human; the landscape also contains a record of change in knowledge and understanding of how these entities interact, come together, and move apart. The intangible, though no less relevant to those who live there, are the combinations of elements that shape the identities of people today. The nexus of the two – the tangible and the intangible – are where archaeological and Tribal values coincide to convey the TCL type of significance.

Reconstructing Paleoindian Procurement Patterns around Lake Mojave

Alexandra Jonassen

Relatively little is understood regarding the way Paleoindians obtained or procured stone to make lithic tools in California’s Mojave Desert. It is largely assumed that Paleoindians procured toolstone with the goal of optimizing time and energy, but this assumption remains untested for the archaeological sites around pluvial Lake Mojave (Silver and Soda Lake). I will address this issue for my forthcoming master’s thesis, which asks the following question: where did Paleoindians around pluvial Lake Mojave obtain the stone to make tools (i.e., their conveyance patterns) and did they procure this stone in an optimal manner? I will address this question by first relocating a large sample of Paleoindian lithic artifacts from the shorelines of pluvial Lake Mojave and then will assess their geochemical signatures using a portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) machine. This will tell me where the stone was procured from, including the distance and direction it was brought to Lake Mojave. I will then model the likely route(s) Paleoindians traveled to Lake Mojave using the ArcGIS least cost pathways (LCP) modeling program, which maps the optimal routes Paleoindians should have taken to conserve time and energy in lithic procurement. Understanding how Paleoindians around Lake Mojave organized the conveyance of toolstone is important because it will improve understanding of Paleoindian land use patterns in the Mojave Desert, which is currently largely unknown.

Rockin’ at the Lake: Toolstone Use and Procurement Along Holocene Lake Ivanpah, CA

Kara Jones

Lake Ivanpah is a Holocene dry lake located in the Mojave Desert along the California-Nevada border along I-15. Lake Ivanpah is well studied in segments through gray literature but has had little work done in the accessible realm of academic literature. My Master’s thesis work is to create a synthetic document regarding the archaeology of Lake Ivanpah, focusing on toolstone use and procurement strategies

employed by those who lived along the shores and on the playa of this lake. Recent research by Spaulding and Sims has revealed two new Holocene lakestands at Lake Ivanpah as well as one additional Terminal Pleistocene/ Early Holocene lakestand. I am investigating how these new lakestands and subsequent lacustrine environments may have impacted mobility and subsistence strategies of those who occupied or passed through the area. These factors can be investigated through procurement strategies including factors of material choice and the use of curated tool technologies. These theories are tested and interpreted through the synthesis of multiple site and project reports, as well as GIS analysis.

A Model and Test of Paleoindian Land Use at Pluvial Lake Mojave in California's Mojave Desert

Edward J. Knell, Matthew E. Kirby, Jan Taylor, and Albert Garcia

Fluctuations in the extent and productivity of wetland habitat influenced Great Basin Paleoindian land use strategies. Paleoindians responded to resource fluctuations using a "wetland transient" strategy represented by frequent moves between pluvial lakes, or a "wetland stable" strategy characterized by comparatively long stays at resource hotspots. To assess the optimal land use strategy for pluvial Lake Mojave, we build an optimal foraging theory inspired model that predicts Paleoindians at Lake Mojave optimally selected a wetland stable strategy when the patch-rank (comparatively extensive wetland habitat) was high and a wetland transient strategy when the patch-rank (comparatively little wetland habitat) was low. We test these expectations using data—presence/absence of midden and residential structures and three lines of lithic evidence—from 13 Paleoindian sites around Silver Lake, one of two playa lakes that formed pluvial Lake Mojave. We conclude that Silver Lake was a low-ranked resource patch during Paleoindian times and thus optimally exploited using a wetland transient strategy. The paper concludes by evaluating how this land use strategy compares to that found at other Mojave Desert and Great Basin pluvial lakes to assess whether the pattern identified at Silver Lake is anomalous or part of a broader trend.

Update on the Present Status of the Southwest Museum

Mari Pritchard-Parker

But Where Can We Dig? Restarting the CalStateLA Desert Field Class Post-Pandemic

Melanie Saldaña, Helen Wells, and Jeffrey Rosa

After thirteen seasons in the Mojave Desert, the CalStateLA Desert Field Class was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 because of Covid restrictions. Restarting the field class in 2022 presented new challenges, as our previous long term research projects were no longer available. Spring Semester 2022 became our pilot launch of a new approach to teaching field methods. For spring 2022, we conducted a survey on private land in the east Mojave, and when no sites were found, we simulated an archaeological site on which to teach excavation techniques. For fall semester 2022, we excavated 1 x 1 meter units on our campus to supplement a survey of archaeological sites in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Evidence for Occupation of the Colorado Desert During the Archaic Period

Joan S. Schneider and Susan H. Gilliland

Long-lost charcoal samples taken by students of William J. Wallace in the 1960s were located within the Begole Archaeological Research Center at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. A Begole Archaeological Research Grant supported submission of those samples for radiocarbon (AMS) analysis. The samples led

to verification of the single previously obtained radiocarbon date for the location. Moreover, the stratified charcoal samples demonstrate continual occupation during the Archaic period as well as later occupations at the same locality. These are the earliest dates for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Other recently obtained early dates in the Colorado Desert are discussed, leading to the conclusion that, in spite of overwhelming evidence of Late Prehistoric and Ethnohistoric occupations of the Colorado Desert, and a seeming paucity of stratified sites there, people were around much earlier than commonly believed..

Down to the Studs: A Comprehensive Remodel of Mojave Desert Prehistory

Mark Sutton

While it has long been understood that the prehistory of the Mojave Desert was quite complex, that complexity has always been reduced to simple outlines that tend to mask its dynamic and intricate variation. Classifications such as “Holocene” or “Archaic” tell us little about prehistory, and while the use of temporal periods typically defined by projectile point styles (e.g., the Rose Spring Period) have been useful, temporal periods are still not very informative about the people that were living during those times.

It is here proposed that sufficient information has now been accumulated to advance a more complex model of Mojave Desert prehistory, one that is based on cultural entities rather than climatic or temporal ones. One new and four redefined cultural traditions, each based on settlement, subsistence, technological, and linguistic criteria, are proposed and modeled. Each of these traditions is divided into a series of patterns and phases that reflect the dynamic adjustments those societies made to adapt to their changing natural and cultural environments. This model, or “remodel,” builds on the frameworks of previous research but with modifications and the addition of detail to help untangle a complex and dynamic past.