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COVER FEATURE

12 THE BEARS EARS CONTROVERSY
BY JULIAN SMITH
Opinions differ on how to protect thousands of archaeological sites in southeast Utah.

22 STEPPING INTO THE PAST
BY TOM KOPPEL
Archaeologists have discovered 13,000-year-old human footprints on a remote island in western Canada.

30 A TALE OF TWO CITIES
BY KRISTIN OHLSON
Archaeologists working in southern Mexico believe religion worked for and against political and social unification in ancient times.

36 LOOKING FOR THE LOST COLONY
BY PAULA NEELY
What became of 118 people who vanished from the New World’s first English settlement?

43 THE SEARCH FOR A LEGENDARY SHIP
BY ALEXANDRA WITZE
A group of volunteers could be on the verge of identifying Capt. Cook’s Endeavour.

48 point acquisition
A GLIMPSE OF THE VIRGIN ANASAZI
The Conservancy’s new acquisition in Utah could help archaeologists understand a little-known prehistoric group.

2 LAY OF THE LAND
3 LETTERS
5 EVENTS
7 IN THE NEWS
• Evidence Of Spanish And Native Religious Interaction
• Ancient Tobacco Usage
• Sixteenth-Century Spanish Fort Discovered

50 FIELD NOTES
52 REVIEWS
54 EXPEDITIONS

COVER: This is one of the numerous Ancestral Pueblo cliff dwellings found in the Bears Ears region. Many of these archaeological sites are unprotected.

CREDIT: Alan Vandendriessche

View more images from our feature articles online at www.archaeologicalconservancy.org
Protect Bears Ears

The Antiquities Act of 1906 gives the President the authority to create national monuments on public lands. Beginning with Theodore Roosevelt, every president, save two, has used this authority to protect and preserve some of America’s most important natural and archaeological treasures including Chaco Canyon, Devils Tower, and the Grand Canyon. In virtually every case, the creation of a new national monument was surrounded by political controversy.

In this issue of American Archaeology (see “The Bears Ears Controversy,” page 12), we explore the debate about the proposal to create a new national monument in southeastern Utah in and around Cedar Mesa and the Bears Ears. On one side is a coalition of Native Americans, archaeologists, and conservationists who are pressing President Obama to improve protection of this area by creating a national monument. They are being opposed by local politicians who are against new restrictions on the uses of public lands.

The area is rich in archaeology with thousands of sites spanning some 13,000 years from Paleo-Indians to Mormon pioneers. It’s an area of diverse natural resources and great scenic beauty. Sadly, it is also an area of rampant looting and vandalism of archaeological sites, both for fun and for profit. Anasazi pottery can bring thousands of dollars on the black market, while looting destroys critical parts of the nation’s heritage. A few years ago government raids in the area netted thousands of stolen artifacts and several big time looters and dealers, but a number of Utah politicians defended this criminal activity.

The archaeological sites of the Bears Ears and Cedar Mesa are a national treasure, and they desperately need increased protection. Creation of a national monument would be an important step in the right direction.
In 1585, more than twenty years before the establishment of Jamestown, Sir Walter Raleigh dispatched 107 men to what is now Roanoke Island in North Carolina to explore the area and construct a fort. The men established the first English settlement in the New World. But being a New World colonist was, as you might imagine, one of life’s more challenging occupations. Nine months into their jobs, beset by various problems, the men quit, catching a ride back to England with Sir Francis Drake.

The original colonists were succeeded by another group—118 men, women, and children—in 1587. This attempt was not only short lived, but shrouded in mystery. The colony failed, the colonists disappeared. The whys and wherefores are to this day unknown. In our feature “Looking For The Lost Colony,” (see page 36), we tell of the longstanding efforts to solve this great mystery.

The First Colony Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on understanding North Carolina’s, and America’s, beginnings through archaeological and historical research. Much of their work is devoted to finding the Lost Colony. The FCF has assembled a team of researchers that investigates archaeological sites and scrutinizes historical texts in search of clues. The archaeologists, for their part, have been excavating Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on Roanoke Island, as well as other places in the region. They’ve uncovered traces of the colonists on the island and inland, but for now the centuries-long mystery remains unsolved.

American Archaeology welcomes your letters. Write to us at 1717 Girard Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, or send us e-mail at tacmag@nm.net. We reserve the right to edit and publish letters in the magazine’s Letters department as space permits. Please include your name, address, and telephone number with all correspondence, including e-mail messages.
Why Save Archaeological Sites?
The ancient people of North America left virtually no written records of their cultures. Clues that might someday solve the mysteries of prehistoric America are still missing, and when a ruin is destroyed by looters, or leveled for a shopping center, precious information is lost. By permanently preserving endangered ruins, we make sure they will be here for future generations to study and enjoy.

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The Role of the Magazine:
American Archaeology is the only popular magazine devoted to presenting the rich diversity of archaeology in the Americas. The purpose of the magazine is to help readers appreciate and understand the archaeological wonders available to them, and to raise their awareness of the destruction of our cultural heritage. By sharing new discoveries, research, and activities in an enjoyable and informative way, we hope we can make learning about ancient America as exciting as it is essential.

How to Say Hello: By mail: The Archaeological Conservancy, 1717 Girard Boulevard NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106; by phone: (505) 266-1540; by e-mail: mbawaya@americanarchaeology.com; or visit our Web site: www.americanarchaeology.org

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NEW EXHIBITS

National Museum of the American Indian
Gustav Heye Center, New York, N.Y.—“Ceramica de los Ancestros: Central America’s Past Revealed” is a bilingual exhibition that explores the ancestral heritage of Central America from 1000 B.C. to the recent past. The exhibit examines seven regions representing distinct Central American cultural areas that are today part of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. The featured ceramics are augmented with significant examples of work in gold, jade, shell, and stone, illustrating the richness, complexity, and dynamic qualities of the Central American civilizations that were connected to peoples in South America, Mesoamerica, and the Caribbean through social and trade networks. (212) 514-3700, www.nmai.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/newyork/ (Through December 2017)

Alutiiq Museum
Kodiak, Alaska—The new exhibition “Qayat-Kayaks” explores Alutiiq maritime traditions, highlighting a rare, recently returned historic kayak to the Alutiiq from Harvard’s Peabody Museum. The vessel will be displayed opposite a kayak frame carved by one of just a handful of Alutiiq kayak builders whose knowledge has been informed by studies of these historic boats. The kayak will be used as a tool for teaching traditional kayak-making skills, which the museum hopes to revive. Historic photographs and other artifacts related to kayaking will also be on display. (907) 486-7004, www.alutiiqmuseum.org (New, long-term exhibit)

McClung Museum of Natural History & Culture
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.—In honor of Knoxville’s 225th anniversary, the new exhibit “Knoxville Unearthed: Archaeology in the Heart of the Valley” explores the city’s heritage as seen through recent archaeological discoveries. Using historic artifacts unearthed in and around Knoxville along with historical images, maps, documents, and oral histories, the exhibition tells the story of Knoxville’s development from a frontier settlement to an industrialized city. A related lecture “Knoxville Unearthed” will be offered September 20th. (865) 974-2144, http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/exhibits/ (September 7-January 8, 2017)

Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History
Montreal, Quebec, Canada—“Fragments of Humanity: Archaeology in Québec” is the first major exhibition dedicated entirely to Québec archaeology. Highlighting the richness and diversity of Québec’s archaeological collections, the exhibition is divided into four thematic sections relating to archaeology: ancient history; a land of trade and commerce; chronicles of daily life; and subaquatic archaeology. Some 350 significant artifacts will be featured, celebrating fifty years of archaeological discovery in Québec. A highlight of the exhibit is a rare dugout canoe made out of a single piece of wood that was discovered in the mid-1980s in a lake in Lanaudière. (514) 872-9150, www.pacmusee.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/ (Through January 8, 2017)
CONFERENCES, LECTURES & FESTIVALS

Annual Iroquois Indian Festival
September 3-4, Iroquois Indian Museum, Howes Cave, N.Y. This festival is a celebration of Iroquois creativity and self-expression that features both traditional and contemporary arts. The Sky Dancers from the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario will perform traditional Iroquois social dances, and the festival includes Iroquois storytelling, demonstrations of early technology, native foods, a children’s area featuring arts and crafts activities, and staff from the museum’s archaeology department that will be on hand to help identify archaeological finds and share information. (518) 296-8949, www.iroquoismuseum.org

Ocmulgee Indian Celebration
September 17-18, Ocmulgee National Monument, Macon, Ga. This event provides an opportunity to interact with people from all of the Southeastern Native cultures, as well as representatives of other tribes from throughout the nation. Over 300 artists, dancers, storytellers, musicians, and historic lifestyle demonstrators will attend. New events will include a Native stickball game demonstration. Native foods such as Indian tacos, fry bread, buffalo burgers, and roasted corn will be available. (478) 752-8257 x222, www.nps.gov/ocmu/index.htm

Southeastern Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology
September 30-October 2, McClung Museum of Natural History & Culture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn. In honor of Knoxville’s 225th anniversary, this year’s conference theme focuses on the urban South. A Friday evening reception will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Knoxville. Paper and poster presentations will take place Saturday, with a special reception Saturday evening. A guided tour of the Blount Mansion, the home of Governor William Blount and the focus of archaeological research on enslaved African Americans, will take place Sunday morning. (865) 974-2144, http://mcclungmuseum.wix.com/sechso2016

Mogollon Archaeological Conference
October 6-8, University of Las Vegas, Nev. Hosted by the Department of Anthropology at UNLV, the conference will highlight papers and presentations related to the archaeology of the Mogollon region, including the Mogollon Rim, Mimbres, and Jornada regions, and northern Chihuahua. A reception will be held Friday evening at the Barrick Museum. (702) 895-3646, www.unlv.edu/anthro/mogollon2016

Midwest Archaeological Conference
October 6-8, Sheraton Iowa City Hotel, Iowa City, Iowa. This year’s conference includes paper presentations, posters, symposia, and general sessions, as well as a paleoethnobotany workshop. Thursday afternoon features a symposium titled “Encounters, Exchange, Entanglement—Current Perspectives on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Intercultural Interactions throughout the Western Great Lakes,” which will be followed by a welcome reception. www.midwestarchaeology.org

Great Basin Anthropological Conference
October 6-9, the Silver Legacy, Reno, Nev. This year’s conference theme is “Featured Landscapes,” which touches upon a long-standing paradigm in North American archaeology that recognizes that the cultural patterns preserved in individual sites can best be interpreted when they are seen as part of the larger landscape or territories utilized by past peoples. The conference will feature symposia, paper, and poster presentations, a banquet and fieldtrips to local sites. http://greatbasinanthropologicalassociation.org/gbac/

Society for Cultural Astronomy in the American Southwest Conference
October 25-29, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Cortez, Colo. The theme for this year’s conference is “Before Borders: Revealing the Greater Southwest’s Ancestral Cultural Landscape.” The conference will focus on subjects such as the regional interchange of ideas and culture, increasing American Indian and other indigenous people’s participation in cultural anthropology and astronomy studies and research, and examining landscape archaeology along with public architecture. The conference seeks to deepen our understanding of the relationship between religion, storytelling, and practices related to cultural anthropology and astronomy across the Greater Southwest. www.scaas.org

Southeastern Archaeological Conference
October 26-29, Classic Center, Athens, Ga. The conference will feature recent research and methods in prehistoric and historic archaeology in the Southeastern U.S. There will also be a portable X-ray fluorescence workshop in conjunction with the University of Georgia’s Center for Applied Isotope Studies. www.southeasternarchaeology.org/annual-meeting
Christian inscriptions and symbols etched next to extensive Native American spiritual iconography deep inside a remote Caribbean cave offer new insights about religious dialogue between indigenous people and the first generation of Europeans in the New World during the sixteenth century, according to a study published this August in the journal *Antiquity*.

The unique markings were discovered in 2014 at Isla de Mona, one of the most cavernous areas in the world, by a team of British and Puerto Rican archaeologists led by Alice Samson of the University of Leicester and Jago Cooper of the British Museum.

“There is nothing else like this in the Caribbean, and possibly nowhere else in the Americas,” says Samson.

Located between Puerto Rico and Hispaniola, Isla de Mona was recorded by Christopher Columbus on his second New World voyage in 1494. More than 250 indigenous drawings of geometric motifs and complex scenes of anthrozoomorphic and ancestral beings cover the walls and ceilings of chambers and tunnels in the cave’s dark zone. Charcoal from two chambers was radiocarbon dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, indicating that they were in use shortly before the time of European colonization.

Within the same area, there are more than thirty European inscriptions that include Christograms and phrases in Latin and Spanish such as *Plura fecit deus* (God made many things). Over half a dozen people signed and dated the walls including Capitán Francisco Alegre, who was an administrator in charge of Isla de Mona and other royal estates during the sixteenth century. Analysis of the forms of letters, abbreviations, and other handwriting styles of the European inscriptions dates them to the sixteenth century.

There were also seventeen crosses, including two crucifixion scenes, one of which includes two crosses flanking an indigenous Christ figure. Some of the other crosses could have been drawn by natives who were converted to Christianity, Samson says.

The cave is not easy to find and is difficult to reach. “You need to navigate through complete darkness to get to the chambers,” she says. The researchers think it is likely that the natives showed Europeans the cave on multiple occasions.

The discovery reveals a European response to indigenous culture and beliefs that is not seen in documents. “The markings in the cave reflect an interest and engagement in another religion that counteract the official histories of a violent clash of belief systems,” Samson says. The Spanish didn’t ban visiting the cave, and rather than destroying the indigenous markings, they added to them. —Paula Neely
Archaeologists recently discovered what appear to be the oldest known tobacco seeds and possibly the earliest human use of tobacco in North America at an Ice Age campsite in Utah’s Great Salt Lake Desert. Four tiny charred tobacco seeds were discovered in fill from the remains of a prehistoric hearth dated to about 12,300 years ago, according to Daron Duke, principal investigator for Far Western Anthropology Group, a cultural resource management firm.

“The evidence is compelling that people were using tobacco here,” Duke says. But he is still scrutinizing the data and plans to conduct additional studies on the age of the seeds and identify the species of tobacco. Previously, the oldest tobacco seeds discovered by archaeologists were unearthed at an Arizona site dated between 387 and 205 B.C., according to the book Tobacco Use by Native Americans, Sacred Smoke and Silent Killer. The earliest evidence of humans smoking tobacco in North America currently dates to about A.D. 860, based on residue in pipes from a site in the Pacific Northwest. “We have a hard enough time understanding what these people ate, and now we find tobacco, which is used for its psychoactive values. It opens an interesting window into people’s social lives,” says Duke.

He and his colleagues discovered the hearth, a black circular smudge that was exposed by wind erosion, about a year ago during an archaeological survey at the Hill Air Force Base Utah Test and Training Range west of Salt Lake City. The radiocarbon dates were obtained from three pieces of charcoal in and around the feature they also discovered small fragments of burned waterfowl bones. “It looks like people were eating waterfowl and throwing bones into and around the fire,” Duke says. Flake tools, possibly used to cut open the ducks, and little flakes that may be debris from people refurbishing their tools around the hearth, were also found.

About ten feet away from the 12,300-year-old hearth, archaeologists discovered an intact Haskett spear point roughly four inches long. “It is one of the best pairings of a Haskett point with a dated feature that anyone has,” he says. Haskett points are generally thought to be no older than roughly 10,500 years, but Duke notes that the period these points were used is not well defined. Several years ago, Duke discovered fifty-five Haskett points a few hundred yards away from the hearth site that are about the same age. Blood residue on one of them was associated with mammoths or mastodons.

—Paula Neely
Maya Royal Tomb Discovered

New finds tell the story of epic events in Maya history.

Archaeologists discovered the royal tomb beneath the stairs of this temple at Xunantunich.

Researchers from Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the Belize Institute of Archaeology recently discovered a burial likely belonging to one of the rulers of Xunantunich, an ancient Maya city in Belize. The tomb, which contained an adult male between twenty and thirty years old with a muscular, athletic build, is one of the largest ever found in Belize.

While most Maya tombs were constructed within existing buildings, this tomb was built in a temple purposely constructed around it. “It’s not every day that they would bury someone in a temple,” says team leader Jaime Awe, an archaeologist with NAU. “And the temple is right in the heart of the city. This context alone strongly suggests that the occupant of the tomb was a member of the site’s ruling elite.”

The archaeologists also unearthed two large hieroglyphic panels in front of the same temple. They quickly realized the panels weren’t original to Xunantunich because the stone was different from that used locally, and the glyphs were of a style not seen in the area. But the two panels are similar to panels that had been part of a hieroglyphic stair erected at Caracol, a city about twenty-six miles south of Xunantunich. The entire sequence of panels, which together comprise the hieroglyphic stair, tells the history of K’an II, a king of Caracol and ally of a powerful family known as the Snake dynasty. K’an II, acting in concert with the Snake dynasty, attacked and conquered Naranjo, a city west of Xunantunich, in 626 and 631.

About fifty years after the second battle, Naranjo gained revenge against Caracol. Afterward, Caracol’s hieroglyphic stair was dismantled. Some of its panels were carried to Naranjo and reassembled out of order, so that the narrative of Naranjo’s defeat would be illegible. Three panels were brought to Xunantunich and Ucanal, which were likely Naranjo’s allies. The panels were displayed as war booty and a reminder of victory over a shared enemy.

The two Xunantunich panels, combined with the Ucanal panel that was found years ago, complete the statement made on Caracol’s hieroglyphic stair, which describes “both the highs and lows of the Snake dynasty as well as its origins,” says Christophe Helmke, the project’s epigrapher. They also provide the date, A.D. 642, when the hieroglyphic stair was probably dedicated and commissioned by K’an II.

“We’re realizing how the site we’re working on may have been an important player in the dramas unfolding during this time in ancient Maya history,” Awe says. “Here are the Maya telling us something about their own history.”

—Elizabeth Lunday
Sixteenth-Century Spanish Fort Discovered

Researchers use remote sensing to find Fort San Marcos.

Using remote sensing technology, archaeologists recently discovered the location of Fort San Marcos on Parris Island in South Carolina. San Marcos was one of five sixteenth-century forts built at Santa Elena, the first capital of Spanish Florida. “The fort is an important part of the history of the competition for control of the New World, and the harbor was considered one of the finest in the world,” says archaeologist Chester DePratter, University of South Carolina, who has searched for the fort since 1993. “It’s part of the story of how the USA came to be and how this part of the world led to who we are today.”

Archaeologist Stanley South discovered the remains of Santa Elena in 1979. Santa Elena was the northernmost Spanish settlement in the Americas. It was established in 1566 to thwart French exploration into the New World, and in 1571 it became the capital of Spanish La Florida. In 1576 the town was abandoned after relations with Indians deteriorated. It was reoccupied by the Spanish in 1577, when Fort San Marcos was built, but after the capital moved to St. Augustine, Santa Elena was abandoned again in 1587. According to DePratter, Santa Elena is the best-preserved sixteenth-century town in the country, in part because it is located underneath a former military golf course that has no standing structures on it.

DePratter and Victor Thompson of the University of Georgia began surveying the area in 2014 using ground-penetrating radar, magnetic gradiometry, and soil resistivity. The researchers knew from documentary sources and previous fieldwork approximately where the fort should be. A 1578 drawing of the fort, located in the midst of the town, showed that it consisted of a two-story blockhouse with casemates or towers at opposite corners and a large triangular gun platform facing the river.

Remote sensing and high resolution imagery revealed enormous postholes over five feet in diameter that held posts strong enough to support cannon that weighed as much as 5,400 pounds. The study also revealed a possible well and evidence of buildings in the center of the fort, and a two-story casemate at the back of the fort where cannons were positioned.

The researchers also identified other previously unknown structures, new features of previously known structures, and possibly the layouts of streets and other pathways of the fifteen-acre town. “Knowing where the fort is and how it relates to the other forts and the town area helps us interpret what life was like on the edge of the world and how they adapted,” Thompson says. Thompson and DePratter’s discovery was recently published in the Journal of Archaeological Science Reports. —Paula Neely
Extra Toes Conferred Extra Status

Research at Chaco Canyon reveals Ancestral Puebloans honored, and perhaps even emulated, individuals with polydactyly.

Archaeologists working in Chaco Canyon in northwest New Mexico have long puzzled over the question of why images of feet appear pressed into plastered walls, etched into rock faces, and carved out of turquoise—many with six toes. A team of researchers led by University of New Mexico archaeologist Patricia Crown has concluded that an extra toe, a condition known as polydactyly, accorded them respect. “Six-toed individuals seem to have been treated well, but not as gods,” Crown says. The team recently published a paper in the journal *American Antiquity*.

The Maya revered individuals with extra digits, treating them as gods. Crown and her colleagues wondered if the Chacoans did the same. So the team examined human remains and artifacts from Pueblo Bonito, Chaco’s largest great house. Analysis of 96 skeletons identified three polydactyl individuals, putting the rate of polydactyly in the population at about three percent. Modern Native Americans report only a 0.2 percent rate of polydactyly and Caucasians 0.13 percent. Two of the three polydactyl individuals were buried with respect, and in one case, luxury. Nearly 700 turquoise beads were wrapped around the right ankle of one polydactyl adult male—the ankle of the foot with the extra toe. High status could account for the high rate of polydactyly among the population. “If you have a trait people value, that can lead to greater reproductive success and the trait may appear more often,” says Crown.

Even individuals with the standard number of toes might have emulated those with six by wearing what are known as “jog-toe” sandals. These sandals have a jog or bulge at the outer edge that would comfortably fit a foot with six toes. Seven out of the thirteen sandals discovered at Pueblo Bonito have the jog. “It’s possible people were wearing these sandals not only because they had six toes, but also because six toes were seen as a good thing,” Crown says.

The jog-toe also shows up in sandal images incised on walls and in stones pecked or ground into a sandal shape. In fact, feet and footwear were popular shapes for ornaments carved out of shell or turquoise.

Crown’s team still doesn’t know the exact meaning of polydactyly to Chacoans, or why attention shifted away from feet in the 1200s. After some 350 years, foot imagery died out after 1250. Nevertheless, the researchers have confirmed what many archaeologists suspected: extra toes mattered at Pueblo Bonito. —Elizabeth Lunday
The Bears Ears Controversy

It’s estimated that the Bears Ears region in Southeast Utah could have tens of thousands of archaeological sites, most of which are unprotected. Some people are encouraging the Obama Administration to designate this vast area a national monument, while others are strongly opposed to the idea.

By Julian Smith
San Juan County covers almost 8,000 square miles of Utah’s southeast corner. It is the largest and the poorest county in the state, and about half of its 15,000 residents are Navajo and Ute Indians. People have occupied its striking landscape of mountains, mesas, and river canyons for thousands of years. San Juan may have more archaeological sites than any other county in the United States, but many have not been documented and are effectively unprotected. A proposal to set aside a large part of the county as a national monument has set off a lively debate over how the federal government should go about protecting cultural resources on public lands in the West.

Utah’s quarter of the Four Corners region, where it joins Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado, centers on a distinctive pair of 9,000-foot buttes called the Bears Ears. Visible for miles, they overlook Natural Bridges National Monument and Cedar Mesa, a broad plateau sliced by sandstone canyons and bounded by the Colorado and San Juan rivers.

Paleo-Indians arrived here as early as 11,000 B.C., and Archaic hunter-gatherers roamed the area for thousands of years after the end of the last Ice Age. During the Basketmaker II period from 500 B.C. to A.D. 300, people farmed maize and wove fine baskets and sandals. Clustered pithouses eventually evolved into stone masonry buildings during the Ancestral Pueblo period of A.D. 750 to 1300, when tens of thousands of people called this part of the Colorado Plateau home. Most inhabitants left by the late thirteenth century, possibly due to climate change, overpopulation, or both. Some of these migrants joined the Hopi and Rio Grande pueblos to the south and east. Ancestors of today’s Navajo and Ute tribes arrived by the 1500s, followed by Mormon settlers in the late nineteenth century.

The region’s importance to American archaeology is hard to overstate, says Jonathan Till, curator of the Edge of the Cedars State Park Museum in Blanding. “The record out there is just tremendous, and it’s also very deep. When you look across the landscape, you’re looking at human history as we know it in North America over the past 13,000 years.” Archaeologists with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages 41 percent of San Juan
County, know of 32,000 recorded sites, but they estimate the actual count is much higher. Some experts think San Juan County has roughly 200,000 sites, which is more than any other county in the country.

This is where cowboys-turned-archaeologists Richard and John Wetherill first used stratigraphic excavation techniques to show that the remains of earlier Basketmaker cultures lay beneath cliff dwellings. Excavations by them and other archaeologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced impressive artifacts for collectors and museums such as the American Museum of Natural History, and helped popularize the science among the general public.

The region is still producing important new information about the past, says Bill Lipe of the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center and a past president of the Society for American Archaeology. (Lipe is also a board member of The Archaeological Conservancy.) There are still large gaps in the record that remain unknown, especially the period from A.D. 700 to 900. “Much productive archaeological and historical research could also be done on the Navajo and Ute sites, but for the most part it hasn’t been done yet,” he says.

Few places have an archaeological record that is this impressive and accessible to the general public, says Lipe. As remote and rugged as most of the area is, tens of thousands of incredibly well preserved ruins, rock art, and other artifacts draw visitors to places like the Edge of the Cedars State Park Museum in Blanding and Grand Gulch, a popular canyon off Cedar Mesa.

Not all visitors know or care about how to behave around delicate prehistoric sites. Some damage comes from ignorance or indifference, such as when visitors disturb artifacts or structures. In 2012, campers destroyed a nineteenth-century Navajo hogan for firewood. Other damage is more deliberate. Looters have used rock saws to remove petroglyphs, and they’ve dug up pristine kivas in search of pots and other artifacts to collect or sell. Looting has been a problem since the early days of amateur excavating more than a century ago, according to Lipe. The BLM has documented twenty-eight incidents of serious damage to cultural resources since 2011, including five in the first half of 2016 alone.

“You have everyday visitors who may not know or be aware of how important a single artifact can be, to intentional looters looking for artifacts to sell or trade,” says Nathan Thomas, the BLM’s Deputy Preservation Officer for Utah. Although it’s illegal to disturb archaeological resources on public land without a permit, looting has long been a...
problem in the area. “You have everyday visitors who may not know or be aware of how important a single artifact can be, to intentional looters looking for artifacts to sell or trade,” Thomas says.

The BLM does what it can to protect the area’s cultural riches, but its resources are limited. It has allocated $400,000 to stabilize ten sites, allocated $150,000 to train volunteers to serve as site stewards in Utah and started a statewide anti-looting and anti-vandalism campaign titled Respect and Protect. The BLM is also collaborating with Friends of Cedar Mesa, a conservation group, that’s offering a reward of $2,500 for information leading to the conviction of thieves or vandals of archaeological sites. Nonetheless, the BLM’s Monticello field office, which has jurisdiction over three-quarters of the proposed monument area, has just two full-time professional archaeologists and two law enforcement officers to oversee 1.8 million acres.

In October 2015, a coalition of five tribal nations took the unusual step of proposing that President Obama create a 1.9 million-acre [3,000 square-mile] Bears Ears National Monument to protect archaeological sites in the area where the Ancestral Puebloans once lived. The coalition included the Navajo Nation, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the Ute Tribe, the Hopi Tribe, and the Pueblo of Acoma.

Corn, the primary staple of the Ancestral Pueblos’ diet, was stored in granaries like this one.
Monument. The Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Uintah and Ouray Ute, Hopi, and Zuni tribes all claim ancestral and modern ties to the region. The monument would cover a rough triangle bounded by the Colorado and San Juan rivers and Utah Highway 191, connecting Canyonlands National Park, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and the Navajo Reservation. It would encompass Natural Bridges National Monument, Cedar Mesa, Grand Gulch, the Abajo Mountains, and the Dark Canyon Wilderness.

The innovative plan would set up an eight-person management commission including representatives of each tribe and three federal agencies which currently manage part of the region: the BLM, National Park Service, and National Forest Service. It would increase law enforcement resources and allow for continued Native American practices such as gathering medicinal herbs, holding ceremonies at sacred sites, cutting firewood, and hunting. The plan would also address two other threats by banning mining and restricting motorized vehicles to existing roads and trails.

Native American groups have never before called on the president to use his power under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to create a national monument to protect ancestral lands. After San Juan County refused to work with Native Americans, five tribes formed the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition and approached both the Utah Congressional delegation and the Obama administration, according to Gavin Noyes, the executive director of the advocacy group Utah Diné Bikéyah. “Everybody agrees the area needs to be protected, and if Congress can’t do it by the end of 2016, then the task will fall to the Obama administration,” he says. If Obama did invoke the Antiquities Act, says Lipe, it would be especially fitting since that law was passed in large part to prevent
looting of archaeological sites in the Southwest. Close to 300 tribes have already endorsed the idea of a monument, Noyes says, and over 700 archaeologists have also signed a letter to President Obama in support of the proposal.

Utah’s state legislature, on the other hand, passed a resolution in May opposing the presidential declaration of any new national monuments in the state. Governor Gary Herbert, U.S. Senators Mike Lee and Orrin Hatch, and Congressmen Jason Chaffetz and Rob Bishop, Republicans all, have spoken out against the proposed monument, saying it would represent federal overreach, bar income-generating development, and increase impacts on cultural resources by attracting more visitors. According to a Washington Post article, Hatch mentioned the possibility of an armed standoff like the one at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon earlier this year. “I would hope that my fellow Utahans would not use violence, but there are some deeply held positions that cannot just be ignored,” he said.

Bishop is chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, and he and Chaffetz have introduced legislation in the House known as the Utah Public Land Initiative (PLI) as an alternative to a national monument. The PLI, which has been in development in Congress since 2013, would affect eighteen million acres in seven counties in eastern Utah, covering everything from roads and recreation to energy development and wilderness. It would preserve about 1.4 million acres of the Bears Ears region as a National Conservation Area. The PLI has gone through more than a dozen drafts, and has drawn criticism from tribal leaders and conservation groups for giving state and local officials too much power in managing federal lands, weakening the management role of tribes, and leaving sensitive areas unprotected and open to energy development. Scott Groene, Executive Director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, calls the PLI a “terrible wilderness bill” for the region. “The legislation ignores large portions of the Tribe’s 1.9-million-acre proposal, and threatens cultural sites with more off-road vehicles,” he says.

The PLI is the result of state and local input, which “is almost always preferable to federal control,” says Bishop’s communications director Lee Lonsberry. The bill calls for four times more land to be designated for conservation than
it does for new recreation or economic development opportunities, he says—about 4.6 million acres for conservation versus 1.15 million for recreation and economic development. “This is a good bill that demonstrates conservation and economic development can co-exist,” Lonsberry says, adding that Bishop is optimistic about its chances of making it out of committee and passing the House. “PLI also brings certainty to areas that have been uncertain for so long.”

Josh Ewing, executive director of the Friends of Cedar Mesa, says that a legislative solution like the PLI would be far less controversial than a national monument. “There is almost unanimous support locally for protecting it as a National Conservation Area,” he says, a designation that only Congress can bestow. But the chances of an acceptable bill passing this year are slim to none, Ewing says. “And the area needs to be protected this year—we just cannot wait any longer.”

Till, an archaeologist, is ambivalent about the idea of a national monument. “A designation could help protect from industry, but it could also act as a magnet for visitors,” he says. “What really needs to happen is we need more archaeologists, and to beef up law enforcement. The BLM are hard workers, they’re just overwhelmed. If you call something a monument, you need to back it up.”

A looter used a rock saw and a chisel to remove part of a petroglyph from the face of this rock.

A monument designation wouldn’t guarantee more manpower or funding, however. The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in south-central Utah was created by President Clinton in 1996, also in the face of significant local opposition. Twenty years later, the BLM’s Kanab Field Office has no more than two law enforcement rangers to cover an area even larger than the proposed Bears Ears monument.

Statewide polls regarding the monument have shown different results, with support for it ranging from seventeen percent to seventy-one percent. There haven’t been any local polls, but opinions are definitely mixed among San Juan County residents, says Phil Lyman, the chairman of the San Juan County Commission and an outspoken critic of the proposal. The national monument is one of the most divisive issues to hit the community in a long time, he says. “I don’t want to see these decisions made in Washington D.C. It’s treating people like subjects, not citizens. If you’re worried about human impacts, why would you designate it a national monument?”

Mark Maryboy, a board member of Utah Diné Bikéyah, agrees that more visitors could lead to more impact. But a national monument “would definitely solve problems on the ground—the looting and vandalism of ancient sites,
overgrazing, mineral exploration,” he says. “The Utah leadership has never passed or supported any legislation to protect the lands in Utah, and this practice continues today.”

In general, says Noyes, support for the monument is high in the local Native American community. “If you go to most chapter house meetings, the resolutions are passed unanimously.” Utah Diné Bikéyah has collected over 1,100 postcards from Native Americans who live nearby advocating for the proposal; this despite someone having distributed flyers with misleading information at gas stations and post offices. One was a fake letter from Sally Jewell, the Secretary of the Interior, saying that four million acres of the Navajo reservation will revert to the federal government if the monument is created. Another flyer stated that Jewell and President Obama would attend a party in July celebrating the national monument designation, but Utah Navajos were not invited.

President Obama has already declared five national monuments this year, including three in southern California that cover 1.8 million acres. As everyone waits to see what he decides to do in southeast Utah, Lipe points out that most national monuments are established for reasons that have nothing to do with archaeology. “The relatively undeveloped landscapes and environments of the region present many objects of scientific interest,” he says, and features like the Bears Ears, Grand Gulch, Comb Ridge, and the Hole in the Rock Trail used by Mormon pioneers are all historic landmarks.

Jewell visited the area in July and attended a lively public meeting in Bluff that drew both supporters and opponents. “For decades, support has been growing from local communities, tribal nations, state leaders, Congress, and even former Secretaries of the Interior to preserve these stunning lands and protect their cultural importance for generations to come,” she said in a statement. Nonetheless, a Department of the Interior spokesperson added, the decision to create a national monument is the President’s decision alone.

Either way, says Ewing, something has to happen, and soon. “It’s a place of international importance. Let’s call it that and put resources to take care of it, make sure our grandkids can enjoy it.”

JULIAN SMITH is the author of Smokejumper: A Memoir by One of America’s Most Select Airborne Firefighters. He is a frequent contributor to American Archaeology.
An artist’s depiction of what life could have been like on Calvert Island roughly 13,000 years ago. People needed boats to reach the island, and this vessel resembles traditional boats, generally made from sealskins, that were used by the Inuit and Yupik. According to an oral account, these boats were used by native peoples long ago.
The discovery of 13,000-year-old footprints on a remote island in western Canada indicates that people were living on the Pacific Coast during the Clovis period.

By Tom Koppel

“FOOTPRINTS HAVE RAISED RIDGES,” says Duncan McLaren, as he crouches and scapes with his trowel at the bottom of the seaside pit. “Here, you can see what we think is the back—the heel—of a footprint, and here is another entire footprint, with toes.” When someone steps into soft sand or mud and then pulls their foot out, he explains, it raises the area around the edges and leaves a slight depression. In this case, the yellow-gray clay eventually became firm. “This black sediment is set into it,” he adds, pointing with the trowel to where dark sand later filled in the depressed area. The

A 13,000-year-old footprint is prepared for removal. The impression, which was made in light colored clay, was subsequently covered by dark sand.
contrast makes the print readily visible. “You can almost feel the edge of the footprint with the trowel, and the clay has a slight anaerobic scent from lack of oxygen. Like rotten eggs.”

McLaren, forty-five, wiry and athletic, is working one end of a rectangle the size of two queen beds. It has been sunk into the foreshore just below the high tide line on a sheltered bay at remote Calvert Island, in British Columbia, Canada. McLaren leads a team of archaeologists and support personnel that has spent portions of five field seasons here already. Most have links to the University of Victoria on Vancouver Island either as students, recent graduates, or faculty members. There are also representatives from the Wuikinuxv and Heiltsuk First Nations whose traditional territories encompass Calvert and neighboring islands.

Colleague Daryl Fedje, sixty-three, tall and slim, is working away in the opposite end of the pit. McLaren and Fedje have collaborated on numerous projects and published papers, their research funded by the privately endowed Hakai Institute. The dig site is ten minutes by boat from the Institute’s island field station, where the crew is housed and fed. Visitors come and go by seaplane.

Painstakingly shaving away the muck at the lowest levels of the pit, the archaeologists uncovered twelve well-defined prints in just a few days. These are in addition to the equally numerous footprints they unearthed here last year. Each find is a eureka moment. There are large ones, likely from an adult male; medium-size ones, perhaps left by a woman; and notably smaller ones, possibly belonging to a child. It is tempting to imagine a family gathered around a campfire on the beach. There are other foot-shaped impressions in the clay that overlap and are not as clearly defined. There is also a hearth-like feature, some stone artifacts, and ample bits of wood or charcoal, samples of which can be used to date the layers.

What makes the dig unique, however, is that these human traces were left behind some 13,000 years ago, making them the oldest footprints ever found in North America. They are roughly the same age as the Clovis culture, which inhabited much of our continent’s interior. But their location is very different from the numerous sites where Clovis artifacts have been found. Calvert Island lies off the Canadian mainland midway between Vancouver and southern Alaska. Anyone living there toward the end of the Ice Age must have adapted to a marine ecosystem and travelled by watercraft. The footprints, therefore, may help in understanding how and when some of the earliest settlers arrived in the Americas in late Pleistocene times.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PRINTS is the result of a decades-long search for ancient sites by McLaren, Fedje, and a few others. Finding evidence of human habitation of this age on the Pacific coast requires precise knowledge of where the shoreline was located then. This is no simple task. As the great ice sheets covering northern North America (and high latitudes elsewhere) melted, the water returned to the ocean and worldwide sea level rose some 350 to 400 feet. This drowned most places that ancient maritime people might have occupied. Even though glaciers didn’t form as far south as what is now Oregon and California, those shorelines lie deep under water today and are practically inaccessible.

In once-glaciated areas along the North Pacific, however, the situation was different. As the ice sheets receded from Canada’s coast, their enormous weight was gradually...
removed. Where they had pressed down on the Earth’s somewhat flexible crust, the land rebounded and was uplifted. On some outlying islands, including Calvert, the rate of uplift closely matched the rise in sea level. This made for remarkably stable shorelines. People were able to continue occupying roughly the same seaside locations millennium after millennium. At Calvert Island, the shell midden that built up behind the beach, representing countless years of seaside food harvesting and daily life, is hundreds of feet long and over twenty-feet deep in places—an archaeological treasure-trove.

McLaren did his Ph.D. research at the Dundas Islands, which are just south of the Alaska Panhandle and are thought to have a sea level history similar to Calvert’s. His focus was on confirming the location of ancient shorelines and searching for coastal habitation sites. Fedje had pursued...
similar research interests many years earlier, mapping sea level history and directing major digs as the Parks Canada archaeologist for the Queen Charlotte Islands, which are also known by their native name Haida Gwaii. When government cutbacks eliminated his position four years ago, Fedje joined McLaren’s group. “I’m not proud,” he quips, resigned to playing second fiddle as the two men work side by side. “I used to be important. Now I’m just an old shovel bum who does what I’m told.”

Fedje is in fact more eminence grise than old shovel bum, and it was he who found the first footprint at Calvert. In 2014, the team was digging small test pits, doing a transect from high on the beach down into the inter-tidal zone. Suddenly, Fedje saw something he could hardly believe. It looks like a footprint, he announced to his colleagues. They gathered around, gazing down doubtfully into the dark little hole. It was near the end of their season, so they collected a sample of charcoal from within the print for radiocarbon testing. When they got the results they were shocked: the footprint is 13,200 years old.

The following year McLaren excavated a square measuring nearly seven feet on each side. This revealed the first twelve footprints and what looked like part of a hearth. They took more samples to radiocarbon date. Five of the samples are roughly 13,000 years old, while two from just above the footprint layer were in the 2,000-to-4,000-year-old range. It was pretty convincing, but the conditions had been difficult, with rain and high tides flooding the pit each night. McLaren was reluctant to publish the results until he obtained clearer photos of the prints.

This year the excavation coincides with a lower tidal cycle, which largely eliminates the flooding. The weather is mild and dry, and his crew takes much better photos. After reinforcing the edges of the footprints, they carefully dig around and under them, recovering several of the prints for future study.

Archaeologists today increasingly favor the Pacific coast migration model as the most likely explanation for the initial peopling of our hemisphere. This hypothesizes that maritime people from northeast Asia skirted the ice that blanketed Alaska and Canada, using a chain of ice-free offshore refugia as stepping-stones. They would have populated the northern Pacific coast some 15,000 to 16,000 years ago, or even earlier, with some spreading inland once they reached unglaciated North America at Washington State. Others would have continued south along the coast. This is long before anyone could have migrated south through a supposed ice-free corridor that was probably blocked during the relevant millennia.

McLaren is contributing one of the “little bits of
This aerial photo of Calvert Island shows the location of the Hakai Institute and the excavation site. To the west of Hakai are a series of sand beaches that are exposed to the open ocean. The excavation site, located east of Hakai, is fronted by a calm harbor.
evidence that are relevant to this issue. But he is not fixated on migration per se. Rather than viewing ancient people as passing through on their way to somewhere else, he prefers to emphasize how long they lived on this coast, with its wealth of resources from sea and forest.

Still, the Calvert discovery adds nicely to the ancient sites on the periphery of the continent, including places that could only be reached by people with some kind of boats. To the north, on Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, a mammal-bone tool found in 1994 at On Your Knees Cave dates back 12,000 years, while 14,000-year-old bear fossils show that the island was free of ice by then and had ample food for land mammals. On Santa Rosa Island, off the coast of southern California, human remains found at Arlington Springs in 1959 were dated to 13,000 years ago.

More recently, several sites that predate Clovis have been found on, or very close to, the Pacific. There is the Manis site on Washington’s Olympic peninsula, where a 13,800-year-old bone spear point was found lodged in a mastodon’s rib. Human coprolites dating to 14,350 years ago were discovered at the Paisley Caves in Oregon. Though these caves are not near the Pacific, coastal migrants could have reached them via river valleys. And in Peru, Tom Dillehay, the archaeologist who excavated Monte Verde, has reported 14,000-year-old evidence of humans at the shoreline site of Huaca Prieta.

Knut Fladmark of Simon Fraser University first proposed the coastal migration model in 1979. Another long-time advocate is E. James Dixon of the University of New Mexico. “Shellfish beds,” he argues, “can be harvested by children and the elderly, and watercraft enable family units to travel in much greater safety and numbers” than on land. “If you look at the resources in Kamchatka and northeast Asia, and along the North Pacific Coast, and you look at them on the Northwest Coast, they’re very similar. You have salmon and shellfish and seals. So I think once you have that adaptation, moving along that coastline is very easy.”

This ecological productivity and similarity around the Pacific Rim led
Jon Erlandson of the University of Oregon to propose that a “kelp highway” lured coastal peoples from northeast Asia into the Americas. Erlandson says that if the Calvert Island footprints dates prove to be correct, it will be “yet another nail” in the coffin of the Clovis-First ice-free corridor model.

There are alternative views on how the Americas came to be inhabited, such as multiple migration routes from Asia or an influx of Solutrean people from Europe. The most persuasive evidence in support of the coastal migration hypothesis would likely be to find traces of human occupation on or near the North Pacific coast that are oldest in the north and sequentially younger farther south and elsewhere in the Americas. The search for such evidence is bound to be difficult, because so many likely habitation sites lie deep beneath the sea. But the Calvert Island region, with its stable shorelines and long history of occupation, holds great promise, especially given the presence and unique nature of the Hakai Institute.

Hakai is the pet project of a wealthy philanthropic couple, Eric Peterson and Christina Munck. Peterson, born and raised in British Columbia, earned a Ph.D in biology and was co-owner of a private medical imaging company. When the company was sold, he and Munck netted over $160 million [USD], most of which has gone to worthy causes. In 2009 they purchased a deluxe fly-in fishing lodge on otherwise uninhabited Calvert Island and turned it into a well-equipped and staffed marine science facility that can house 100. They support long-term research and education programs in archaeology, oceanography, marine biology, geology, bio-diversity studies, and other disciplines.

McLaren recalls how exciting it was to be approached by Peterson to join Hakai. “Eric sat me down and said, well, I’ve read your Ph.D. thesis about sea level and archaeological sites in the Dundas Islands.” Which was surprising,” McLaren laughs, “because I don’t even think all of my committee read the whole thing.” Both McLaren and Fedje have enjoyed an enviable professional and personal relationship with Peterson and Munck. Beyond covering research expenses, Hakai’s power couple funds their half-time positions at the University of Victoria. Most other scientists can only dream of such non-bureaucratic support, year after year, with no need to face university committees or apply for grants.

The unusual local sea level history makes the Calvert region one of the very best places to search for ancient sites, adds Fedje, taking a break from digging. Having the field station right here, with its comfortable accommodations, boats, labs, and other logistical support, doesn’t hurt either: “It’s that perfect storm, just an ideal environment for archaeology.”

TOM KOPPEL is a journalist living on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. His book Lost World: Rewriting Prehistory—How New Science is Tracing America’s Ice Age Mariners documents the search for evidence of ancient coastal migration.
During the dry season, when they weren’t tending their crops, thousands of people left their villages in what is now the Río Verde Valley in the Mexican state of Oaxaca and headed towards Río Viejo, a larger community situated near the Verde River and the Pacific Ocean. Beginning around A.D. 50, they built what would become one of the largest structures in all of prehispanic Oaxaca: a massive earth-and-stone acropolis the size of seven football fields. It rose some twenty feet above the surrounding plain and supported two structures more than fifty-feet high.

Archaeologists Arthur Joyce of the University of Colorado Boulder and Sarah Barber of the University of Central Florida have uncovered the distinct construction styles of at least five work groups at the acropolis who are thought to have hailed from different villages. Someone had clearly succeeded in forging alliances and winning allegiances within the region, marshaling the kind of labor needed to build this magnificent structure.

But their power waned quickly. Other Mesoamerican urban centers with monumental architecture on Río Viejo’s scale—such as Monte Albán in the Valley of Oaxaca, now a day’s drive from Río Viejo—became regional sites of great power and authority that lasted many centuries. However, Río Viejo dwindled into obscurity in 100 years. Joyce and Barber’s investigations have led them to a surprising conclusion as to why. In the Río Verde Valley, they argue, vibrant...
It’s generally thought that religion contributed to political and social unification in ancient times, but research in southern Mexico indicates that wasn’t always the case.

Archaeologists tend to think that big transitions like the building or abandonment of cities stem from factors like economics, politics, warfare, and environmental challenges. “Those explanations weren’t adding up,” says Joyce, who has spent thirty years conducting research in the Río Verde Valley. “But in the last twenty years, some archaeologists have been increasingly looking at the interconnection of religion with social life and seeing it as central to social change.”

The assumption has been that religion tends to build unity and institutionalize authority. But Joyce, Barber, and others have a different perspective. In Mesoamerica, these scholars are paying particular attention to indigenous worldviews in which interactions with the divine were part of everyday life. In post-Conquest narratives, native people explained to Spanish scribes that they viewed the world as rippling with life and purpose: mountains, streams, plants, and other natural things were not only alive, they possessed souls.

Even buildings were given life as a result of elaborate rituals that “ensouled” them. Once alive, the buildings received ritual offerings by the people that used them. These buildings were like members of the community as well as places for beseeching the gods. “The indigenous people didn’t see...
Human burials (above) were the most significant ensouling rituals. This flute made of bone (below) was found at an elite burial in Yugue.
the world in separate boxes the way we do: religion versus politics, or sacred versus mundane," Joyce says. "Where we might see the building of a church as a mundane thing and the rituals in the church as sacred, the distinction would be blurred for native people."

Given that religion was so tightly connected to everything else in the lives of these indigenous people—to politics, economics, agriculture, trade, and domestic life—it could be a tremendous force in both driving and hindering social change. Sometimes religious ceremonies were conducted on a larger scale and in grander places, like the acropolis or the Main Plaza at Monte Albán. Religion was also exploited by aspiring leaders to gain influence. In fact, Barber believes religion may be the driving force in the formation of Mesoamerican cities.

"The more I study this, the more I think early urban societies look like religious phenomena," she says. "They were places where people could more effectively encounter the divine, both because of the architecture and layout of urban spaces and because people with special skill sets—rulers, priests, other practitioners—lived there. Getting in touch with the gods was one of the major factors influencing people’s choices." But sometimes this attempt to scale up was not successful, and this is what Barber and Joyce believe happened in Río Viejo. Instead of a tool for unification, they argue that religion can also be "a crucible of tension and conflict," as they wrote in a recent paper that was published in the journal *Current Anthropology*.

In the Río Verde Valley, villagers practiced religious rituals long before the development of the elite who organized the building of the Río Viejo acropolis. At several smaller sites throughout the valley, Joyce, Barber, and their colleagues have uncovered the remains of other public buildings with ample evidence of significant ritual activity. In Cerro de la Virgen, Yugüe, Cerro de la Cruz, and San Francisco de Arriba, they have found artifacts from ritual feasting as well as offerings and human bones underneath, or near, where the feasts took place.

At San Francisco de Arriba, the objects buried under the floor were especially lavish: 500 beads, pendants made of greenstone and rock crystal, fragments of iron ore, and tiny jars that had been locally produced. At Cerro de la Virgen, they found 260 ceramic cylinders cached in granite-slab compartments buried beneath a floor at the edge of the public plaza. Another offering included a cylindrical vessel that was more than two-feet long, while a third offering featured a stone rain deity mask. In fact, Joyce says it’s hard to dig a test pit in a public building at one of these smaller sites without finding a big cache of either bodies or goods.

"I have a grad student, Jeff Brzezinski, who just finished a dissertation project at Cerro de la Virgen," Joyce says. "He was digging in a ceremonial area and started finding all these offering vessels and granite slabs. He stopped digging after he found 90 vessels, because excavating and curating those things takes a long time. But he could have kept digging and kept getting more and more vessels."
Joyce and Barber believe these are examples of ritual caching to give the buildings a soul as well as to “feed” them through their years of use. One of Barber’s very first Río Verde Valley excavation finds suggested this kind of ritual feeding: in Yugüe, she uncovered a cooking jar which had been filled with mussels and broken pottery, placed in a pit with dirt piled up to the jar’s neck, and then set on fire.

“Who were they feeding?” she says. “They were clearly leaving these things as offerings and not feeding themselves. The only interpretation is that this is food being left for the place. That matches with the literature saying that buildings and temples have souls and needs, and that you feed them to build a relationship.”

Human burials were the most important of these ensouling rituals. As in many cultures around the world, these people regarded the dead as powerful advocates who had already passed out of the corporeal world and could help them speak to the gods. Villagers gathered to open the floors of their ceremonial buildings and deposit the bodies of their ancestors—thereby implanting their souls into the space—often pushing aside the bones of a previous burial to make room for the new arrivals. The elite were sometimes buried with commoners, adding their extra clout with the gods to the mix. In Yugüe, for instance, the bones of a young man who showed no evidence of hard labor, wore a decorative iron-ore mirror as a pendant, and held a fancy flute—all indications that he was a ritual specialist and a member of the elite—were mixed with the bones of commoners.

Having excavated Río Viejo’s acropolis for four years, Joyce and Barber found evidence of feasting, but no hint that ensoulment and feeding rituals took place there. This leads them to conclude that despite Río Viejo’s powerful rulers and its appeal as a religious center, the villagers had established such deep ties to their local ritual spaces that they would not abandon them for the city. They were not going to leave the bones of their ancestors behind. The leaders at Río Viejo could persuade the villagers to build the acropolis and come for an occasional feast, but nothing more. The people remained in their villages, largely beyond the leaders’ control.

Things played out very differently in Monte Albán. The city lies on a majestic mountaintop commanding a view of the Valley of Oaxaca. The Main Plaza was built to hold several thousand people, with a north-south orientation that could incorporate important astronomical events. Joyce suggests the city was established by people who abandoned other communities in the valley. Even some 1,000 years after its collapse, Monte Albán remains powerfully numinous. “Anyone who visits there today feels as if they’re among the gods,” Barber says. “People went back there to conduct rituals long after the collapse, even people of different ethnicities.”

In the Valley of Oaxaca, excavations show that people buried their dead under the floors of their homes rather than using them as community offerings to ensoul public ceremonial spaces. As a result, there was less to hold them to the
ritual spaces in their villages. By the Late Formative Period (400-150 B.C.), the site had grown to a population estimated to be as high as 20,000 people.

Despite the city’s ultimate success under a series of hierarchical rulers, archaeological evidence suggests that religion also created some friction in Monte Albán’s early days. While there were elite dwellings near the plaza, separate burials in elaborate tombs, and some inscriptions carved into cornerstones referring to rulers and human sacrifice—there weren’t grand monuments or portraits dedicated to the ruling class. Instead there were hundreds of stone slabs with the images of naked men, many with blood flowing from their genitals, set into the walls of one building on the plaza. These images have traditionally been viewed as sacrificial victims to the elites, but more recently archaeologist Javier Urcid from Brandeis University has argued that they represent a group of warriors, ranked by age, committing the ritual act of auto-sacrifice as a way to communicate with ancestral spirits and deities. In their recent article in the edited volume *Mesoamerican Plazas: Arenas of Community and Power*, Urcid and Joyce concluded that these images affirmed the existence of distinctive elite and communal religious authorities at Monte Albán.

“If these stones were a political statement by a ruling elite regarding their conquest and sacrifice of humans, the victor would be shown prominently,” says Urcid. “But here, everyone is engaged in the same activity and there is no figure that is more prominent. I see this as a representation of a community, rather than a statement about unequal access to power.”

By A.D. 200, though, the power struggle between the hierarchical elites and communally-oriented institutions seems to have been resolved in favor of the elites. The stones depicting the warrior group were removed from the buildings, and some were reused in other architectural projects or buried, suggesting that there may have been some sort of struggle for control. No polity is ever without conflict, but the elite of Monte Albán—masters of both religion and politics—were able to hold the city together for many centuries.

What fascinates other archaeologists is how Joyce and Barber, with their extensive body of work in Oaxaca, have illuminated the push-pull that religion can have on social change. “Their work is unique in that it considers how belief systems and ritual practices had very real effects on the degree to which certain political experiments were successful,” says Stacie King, an archaeologist at Indiana University who studies mortuary practices. The outcomes of “novel experiments” such as Monte Albán and Río Viejo are uncertain and depend of various factors, she says. “This is what is new and exciting about this work.”

**Kristin Ohlson** is the author of *The Soil Will Save Us: How Scientists, Farmers and Foodies Are Healing the Soil to Save the Planet*. She is a frequent contributor to *American Archaeology*. 

*An offering of ceramic vessels in granite-slab compartments was discovered at Cerro de la Virgen.*

JEFF BREZINSKI
Looking For The Lost Colony

Archaeologists are trying to learn what became of 118 men, women, and children who vanished from the New World’s first English settlement.

By Paula Neely
ON A SUNNY DAY last April, several First Colony Foundation (FCF) archaeologists made their way carefully along a narrow stretch of sandy beach at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on the north coast of Roanoke Island, in North Carolina. The first English settlement in the New World was established here in 1585 by a group of colonists sent by Sir Walter Raleigh. Another group of colonists arrived on the island in 1587 and vanished without a trace, leaving, according to historical accounts, only the word “CROATOAN” carved in a gate post and “CRO” etched into a tree. Despite numerous attempts to find them, what happened to the Lost Colonists, as they are known today, remains America’s oldest unsolved mystery. Where and how they lived on the island is also a mystery. Almost 430 years later, archaeologists are trying to solve this mystery, but it’s a race against time as erosion continues to wash away evidence.

Established in 2004 by a group of archaeologists and historians, the FCF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conducting archaeological and historical research related to Raleigh’s expeditions to Roanoke Island. Its board members include Eric Klingelhofer of Mercer University, Nicholas Luccketti of the James River Institute for Archaeology, and James Horn, a historian and president of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation, as well as other colonial scholars. The FCF is funded through grants and donations and its board members and many other researchers volunteer their time.

In partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), the FCF has developed a five-year research plan to investigate the Fort Raleigh site. FCF President Phil Evans, a former NPS ranger who became a lawyer, said the foundation plans to spend a few weeks in the field each year as funding and access to sites permit. Fort Raleigh does not have a staff archaeologist, and NPS has worked with various organizations to conduct archaeological investigations there since the 1990s. “There was work that could and should be done, but no university, or the National Park Service, was going to do it,” he said. The FCF is helping to fill the void.

“This is the preamble to American history. Lessons learned here helped the colonists establish Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the New World,” said Klingelhofer. “We’re interested not just in the end of the colony, but the beginning.” They hope to find where the colonists lived on the island to learn more about their lives and their relationships with the Indians. The archaeologists are also studying an inland site called Site X, where they believe some of the colonists lived after leaving the island.

As the archaeologists surveyed the shoreline, they climbed over one fallen tree after another that had eroded out of the dune-covered bank into the choppy waters of Roanoke Sound. About halfway up the side of a ravaged dune, a piece of black plastic that had once lined an archaeological test pit flapped in the chilly northeasterly wind. All but one
corner of the pit, which was excavated in 2006, has washed away. “It’s shocking how bad it is,” Klingelhofer said. “We’ve lost about ten feet of shoreline in the last ten years.”

“Previously colonial materials from the late-16th to the mid-18th centuries have been recovered from the beach below the bluffs,” said archaeologist Eric Deetz of the University of North Carolina, who directed the field work for the foundation. (Deetz and Luccketti previously worked together unearthing James Fort in Jamestown, Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in the New World.) On the north end of the island, researchers discovered five pieces of Indian pottery on the beach beneath the profile of a pit feature. The feature is about 100 yards from the site of an Indian ossuary, where several burials were excavated in the 1960s after they began washing away. Deetz said it might be part of the Roanoac Indian village, where the natives lived when the colonists were there. Clay Swindell, an FCF archaeologist, identified the sherds as shell-tempered Colington-style pottery, associated with the Roanoac and other coastal Algonquins, that could date from A.D. 800 to 1650.

The Outer Banks, a string of barrier islands visible on the horizon, protects the sixteen-square-mile island from the Atlantic Ocean’s waves; nonetheless, erosion has increased substantially in the last hundred years, according to Stan Riggs, a coastal geologist at East Carolina University. Riggs said the sea level has risen by just under two feet since 1584, but storms have become more severe due to climate change.

Furthermore, $640,000 of riprap that was installed by
the National Park Service in 1978-1980 to protect some areas of the shoreline is making erosion in other areas worse as the riprap diverts the waves to the adjacent, unprotected areas, noted Jami Lanier, NPS cultural resource manager at Fort Raleigh. David Hallac, the superintendent of the NPS Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the Outer Banks Group, said they have requested funding to develop a resource vulnerability study to determine how to mitigate the erosion. After the study is completed, they will need additional funding to implement a solution. "We care deeply," he said, noting that he did not know how long it would take to obtain the resources they need to address the erosion, which is also affecting other NPS sites throughout the Outer Banks.

ENCOURAGED BY THE RESULTS of his 1584 scouting expedition, Raleigh sent a group of 107 men to Roanoke Island in 1585, more than two decades before Jamestown was founded, to build a fort, explore the area, look for precious metals, and study the natural resources. During the expedition, artist John White famously drew a series of illustrations of the North Carolina Algonquin Indians and the local flora and fauna. Nine months after the colonists arrived, however, relations with the Roanoac Indians, who lived on the north end of the island, became hostile, and their chief was killed by colonists during a battle. Then, when Sir Francis Drake arrived with several ships to resupply the colony, a hurricane struck Roanoke Island. Their supplies destroyed, the colonists decided to abandon their settlement and sail back to England with Drake. A garrison of 15 soldiers arrived later to hold the island, but they fled when they were attacked by Indians and vanished.

Behind the dunes in a maritime forest of ancient trees is the footprint of a star-shaped earthwork. It's believed to have been built by the 1585 colonists, and it was first excavated by archaeologist Talcott Williams in 1895. The earthwork was fully excavated in 1947 by NPS archaeologist Jean “Pinky” Harrington and reconstructed in 1950. Located on the highest ground in the park, the small structure was probably an artillery sconce where cannons could defend against ships approaching the north end of the island, Klingelhofer said.

In the early 1990s the nonprofit Virginia Company Foundation sponsored an excavation led by Ivor Noël Hume that discovered evidence near the earthwork of America’s first scientific workshop, which was used by the noted astronomer and mathematician Thomas Harriot, among others. The artifacts included fragments of ceramic crucibles used in metallurgy, ointment jars, pieces of distilling flasks, and antimony used to separate silver from copper. In the mid-1990s, Klingelhofer and Luccketti directed additional excavations, but very few artifacts were recovered. Since 2006, the FCF has continued the search for the lost colony.

The last group of colonists arrived at Roanoke Island in 1587 with 118 men, women, and children, including John White, who was the colony’s governor. White’s daughter, who accompanied him, gave birth to Virginia Dare, the first

Archaeologists excavate around and within Fort Raleigh’s reconstructed earthwork in 1990.
In 1587, 118 colonists arrived at what is now Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. When John White returned to the site in 1590, the colonists were gone. It’s possible that they went south to what was then called Croatoan Island. Archaeological evidence also suggests that some of them moved inland to Site X.
recorded English baby born in America. According to Horn, author of *A Kingdom Strange: The Brief and Tragic History of the Lost Colony of Roanoke*, the colonists’ destination was actually Chesapeake Bay, where they were to establish the Cittie of Ralegh. But they landed instead at Roanoke Island because the captain refused to take them further.

So far, no domestic artifacts or structures have been found in or around the earthen fort. Klingelhofer believes that much of the settlement remains to be found, but, pointing into the sound where part of an English barrel was discovered at what they call Barrel Beach, he noted that “some people think it’s washed away.” Dated to the time of the colony, archaeologists think the barrel may have lined a well similar to those that Spanish explorers reported finding nearby in 1588.

In 2008-2010, archaeologists led by Luccketti and Klingelhofer excavated an area near the science workshop, where earlier digs had unearthed European artifacts and possible postholes. Two feet beneath the sand dune they discovered two small pits containing a copper pendant necklace, aglets, and Venetian glass beads. In a layer of topsoil that covered the pits, they also found martincamp flask sherds, olive jar fragments, a crucible sherd, and Colington-style pottery from the late Woodland period. A narrow slot trench that may be associated with either the colony or a nearby eighteenth-century farmstead was also uncovered. “It may be where Hariot and his assistants lived when they were working, but it is not where the colonists settled,” Luccketti said. “There are not a lot of artifacts, no food remains, or food preparation and consumption objects.” If the settlement site hasn’t washed away, he and other experts think it may be somewhere else on the north end of the island, or closer to Shallowbag Bay, a few miles south of the park. “That would have been one of the best locations on the island for harboring ships and boats,” he said.

**HOW LONG THE 1587 colonists stayed on the island is unknown.** About six weeks after they arrived, White went back to England for supplies. He reported that when he departed the colonists were prepared “to move fifty miles into the main.” Unfortunately, he was not able to return until three years later, since England needed ships to fight the Spanish Armada of 1588.

When White finally returned to the colony in 1590, he found that the settlement had been palisaded and the houses had been dismantled. He discovered the word CROATOAN carved into a gate post and thought the colonists may have relocated to Croatoan Island—now called Hatteras Island—on the Outer Banks, where the friendly Croatoan Indians lived. He did not find the mark of a cross carved into trees, which the colonists had been instructed to leave if they were in trouble.

On the way to Croatoan Island to look for the colonists, a storm blew White’s ship out to sea and the captain was forced to sail back to England. White never returned, but other explorers, including the colonists who arrived at Jamestown, continued to look for survivors. The 1608 Zuniga Map, a Spanish spy’s copy of a map drawn by Jamestown founder John Smith, shows inland locations where the local Indians told Smith and other explorers the colonists moved to.

Where the 1587 colonists went remains a mystery. In recent years, archaeologists from East Carolina University and Britain’s
Bristol University have discovered early colonial artifacts at the Cape Creek site on Hatteras Island, including a signet ring and musket, but they were in deposits that date to the late 1600s and may have been trade items rather than the belongings of the 1587 colonists, according to Swindell.

One tantalizing new clue emerged a few years ago when the FCF asked officials at the British Museum to see if they could find out what was beneath two paper patches on the La Virginea Pars map drawn by John White. Using noninvasive light techniques, museum officials discovered that one patch appeared to have been applied so that White could redraw a coastline, a common practice of cartographers of that time.

Under the other patch they discovered the iconic aymbol of a Rennaisance-style English fort just west of Albemarle Sound and near the site of the Indian village Metaquem, about 50 miles from Roanoke Island. Even more surprisingly, an image of a rectangular settlement had been drawn over the patch with what may be invisible ink.

Could that be where the lost colonists resettled? It was “a prime, strategic location to get further inland,” said Horn. The Roanoke River leads to the Appalachian Mountains, where the colonists thought they would find gold. “They had a clear intent to look for mineral wealth—gold, silver, and precious gems—in the interior. The coast was not to be the final place for the settlement.” Coincidentally, Luccketti had already conducted a pre-construction cultural resource survey of 1,400 acres in that area and had found early colonial artifacts near Salmon Creek.

After the map discovery, Luccketti and Bly Straube, the FCF’s curator, reassessed the artifacts recovered during the survey. Some of the items were associated with Nathaniel Batts, the first permanent English settler in North Carolina, who lived there around 1657; but there were also pieces of a North Devon plain baluster jar used for provisioning sea voyages and shards of Surry-Hampshire Border ware, a domestic tableware that could date to as early as the 1580s. “There’s no evidence of anyone prior to Batts who lived there,” Lucketti said, “so they can’t be attributed to anyone other than Raleigh’s colonists.”

Since 2012, the FCF has excavated an area near Salmon Creek that they call Site X. Though they’ve only dug in a small area, the archaeologists have uncovered thirty sherds of Border ware, which is significantly more than any other early seventeenth-century colonial site, with the exception of Jamestown, has yielded. They have also found pots used for cooking and storing food. The area is too small for a large group of colonists to have lived there, but Luccketti and other FCF scholars are convinced that some of Raleigh’s colonists resided there for a short time. They may have been sentinels on the lookout for Spanish ships, or a small group of survivors.

Horn believes that most of the colonists moved inland along the Chowan and Roanoke rivers, and some may have eventually joined the Chowanoac and Tuscarora Indians. He thinks a small group probably went to Croatoan Island to stay with the Croatoan until White returned so they could tell him where the other colonists were located. “If they were absorbed into Native American societies, that would change the way we look at European and Native American relationships,” he said. “There may have been more fluidity than we imagined.”

Other theories have it that the colonists were massacred, or they starved to death, like many of the Jamestown settlers. Finally locating the Lost Colony could put all this speculation to rest. “When something is lost,” Lucketti said, “we want to find it. It’s human nature.”

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These sherds are part of a tin-glazed ointment jar that dates to the late 1500s and was made in England or the Netherlands. They were recovered on a bluff overlooking Barrel Beach by Eric Deetz and archaeologists from NPS’ Southeast Archeological Center, who returned to Fort Raleigh in June to excavate areas affected by erosion. The sherds of similar vessels had previously been unearthed around the science workshop and earthwork.
A volunteer marine archaeology organization in Rhode Island could be on the verge of identifying Capt. James Cook’s *Endeavour*.

By Alexandra Witze
**THE **bottom of Newport Harbor, Rhode Island, is a dim and murky place. Sunlight filtering through the seawater illuminates only five, maybe ten feet of the landscape ahead. But occasionally, a diver swimming above the seafloor can come across something intriguing in the murky gloom—a ballast pile, or even a cannon, from a Revolutionary War-era shipwreck. “Those are the best days,” says Kerry Lynch, an archaeologist with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst who has spent many hours diving off Newport. “Those are pretty exciting.”

Her days may be about to get a lot more exciting. Lynch is part of a volunteer group, the Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project, or RIMAP, that has been exploring the Ocean State’s rich underwater heritage for more than two decades. In May they announced that they might be close to identifying one of history’s most famous ships—HMS *Endeavour*, from which eighteenth-century British explorer James Cook mapped parts of Australia.

RIMAP’s archaeologists have been investigating a fleet of thirteen Revolutionary War ships off Newport, which were deliberately scuttled there by British troops in 1778. Based on documents describing the ships’ history, RIMAP’s executive director, D.K. “Kathy” Abbass, believes one of the thirteen is the *Endeavour*, which had been re-purposed and re-named after its epic voyage with Cook.

In January Abbass narrowed the search even further. At the National Archives in London, she unearthed a 1778 report about where five of the ships, one of which is the *Endeavour*, had been sunk. The report dramatically reduced the area in which RIMAP needs to search to confirm they’ve identified *Endeavour’s* remains. “We’ve already mapped four of the five sites that we now know are possibly the *Endeavour*,” says Lynch. “There’s a very, very good chance that we’ve already been on the site.”

If RIMAP identifies the legendary vessel, it will be a dramatic coup for an all-volunteer organization that has carved out a unique niche in preserving Rhode Island’s maritime history. “We’re not a cultural resource management company, we’re not a university, but we have aspects of both of those things,” says Abbass. “We’re an unusual animal.” The group has trained a cadre of divers to carefully map sites of interest, including wrecks near the famous British vessel **HMS Gaspee** that was burned by Rhode Islanders in the run-up to the American Revolution, and the possible remains of a 19th-century ship reported by some historical accounts to have carried slaves. “It is a crackerjack team,” says Charlotte Taylor, an archaeologist with the state’s historical preservation and heritage commission who oversees permits for RIMAP’s work.

By nearly all accounts, RIMAP owes its tenacity and success to Abbass, who founded the group in 1993 and has run it on shoestring funding and volunteer enthusiasm ever since. “To run something like RIMAP you need an extraordinarily passionate and dedicated individual,” says Taylor. “Kathy has given up a lot of her personal life to this project.”

A former university professor, marine surveyor and director of the Museum of Yachting in Newport, Abbass got into shipwrecks by working on the oldest intact war ship in American waters, the *Land Tortoise*, a flat-bottomed vessel sunk in 1758 in Lake George, New York. She helped map the remains, which were meant to serve as a floating gun platform for the British to force the French out of upstate New York. The work resulted in the wreck being listed as a National Historic Landmark, one of only six shipwrecks that have earned that designation.

Seeing that success, the Rhode Island state archaeologist approached Abbass and asked if she wanted to conduct underwater research in her home state. Although Rhode Island has more shipwrecks per square mile than any other
state, its government had no money to professionally survey them. Abbass promptly sent out a call for volunteers. “We wanted to see if the public would be interested in being involved in a professional program of research,” she says.

And they were. Over the years, RIMAP has involved more than 865 people in its activities, working at more than eighty-three sites. Each spring and summer Abbass runs a series of training sessions to teach recreational divers archaeological techniques such as site mapping, field documentation, and legal protocols. “The hidden agenda in all this,” she says, “is to create a cadre of people who are now aware of why these sites are significant and why they should be protected.”

Joseph W. Zarzynski, a retired teacher turned archaeologist who oversaw the Lake George work, says that Abbass has a unique talent for getting the best out of people. “She whipped our group of sport divers into a working team,” he says. “We promptly gave her the nickname the Klingon Lady, which she wore with pride.” (He adds that at her former office at Naval Station Newport, Abbass bossed around Navy Seals.)

RIMAP’s projects span a wealth of Rhode Island history. One of its early publications was a set of self-guided heritage maps for the general public, showing places of interest in the state’s Revolutionary War past. Among the four maps is one pinpointing sites involved in past industries, from metal works to mills and quarries, and another showing revolution-era earthwork forts that can be visited in public parks.

But most of RIMAP’s work is done underwater. One of their ongoing projects is mapping an early twentieth-century U.S. Army marine railway at Fort Adams, which guards the entrance to Narragansett Bay. “The Army had more vessels than the Navy did,” Abbass says. The railway was used to repair vessels at the Army shipyard at the fort, and RIMAP divers have been documenting its deterioration just offshore.

In Warwick, RIMAP volunteers have worked to explore two late nineteenth-century wrecks at Occupessatuxet Cove, near where the Gaspee was burned in 1772. Neither wreck is the Gaspee itself, leading Abbass to nickname it the “not-the-Gaspee” project. But divers have found a ballast pile and wooden artifacts that may date to the eighteenth century, meaning there may be another, much earlier site nearby.

By far the biggest RIMAP project is the fleet of thirteen shipwrecks in Newport Harbor. Even without the Cook connection the wrecks would be important, Abbass says. They were British transports used to carry troops to fight the patriots in the colonies, and after arrival some of them were used as prison ships. They had been floating off the coast of Newport when a French fleet arrived to help the Americans, the first instance of cooperation between the two after the French had joined the war as an American ally. Between August 5 and 9, 1778, the British deliberately scuttled all thirteen ships to block the French fleet from coming too close to shore.

Three weeks later, on August 29, the Battle of Rhode Island broke out. American troops had given up on their siege of Newport and begun to retreat when the British forces within the city attacked them. The Americans eventually withdrew and the British remained in control of Newport for the time being.

Aware of its historical importance, RIMAP had been examining the fleet. But in the late 1990s, Abbass made the key link with James Cook’s Endeavour. Australian amateur historians Mike Connell and Des Liddy had suggested that the Endeavour had left naval service and been renamed the...
Lord Sandwich, and Abbass knew that the Lord Sandwich was one of the Newport Harbor wrecks.

It’s hard to overemphasize the importance of the Endeavour. Originally named the Earl of Pembroke, the ship was bought by the British government in 1768 and fitted out for Cook to travel to the South Pacific and observe the transit of Venus. On this, the first of Cook’s great voyages, he mapped the eastern coast of Australia and visited New Zealand while circumnavigating the globe. That claim later led to England occupying Australia, which is why aboriginal Australians and nearby islanders detest Cook and his vessel. “There’s not just one story to James Cook,” says Lynch. “He means different things to different people, all of which are equally legitimate.”

Cook went on to later voyages on other ships, and was killed by Native Hawaiians on Hawaii Island in 1779. As for the Endeavour, the British admiralty thought she had done her duty, and she was sold off for other uses. In 1777 she was renamed Lord Sandwich, and by the time of the Revolutionary War she carried troops to the colonies to try to quash the rebellion. Off the coast of Newport the Lord Sandwich briefly served as a prison ship for captured Americans, before being sunk to deter the French.

When Abbass realized what she might have, she and Lynch moved to keep the Newport vessels safe from potential exploitation. “Just because they’re underwater doesn’t mean they’re free-for-all,” she says. “These things need to be protected.”

In a rare use of salvage law, the state of Rhode Island filed to “arrest” the abandoned wrecks as its property. A federal court agreed. Now, if and when the Endeavour is identified, the vessel will belong to Rhode Island. “I don’t know of any other state agency that has done that,” says Taylor.

A KEY partner in RIMAP’s Endeavour work is the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney, which maintains a keen interest in Cook...
history and is the home base for a meticulously crafted, full-size replica of the ship that sails around to educate the public about Cook’s exploration. The museum helped pay for some of Abbass’ travel to the archives in London, and it has signed a memorandum of understanding with RIMAP on possible future projects. Representatives of the museum have traveled to Newport several times since 1999, most recently last September to keep up to date with the research, says Kieran Hosty, a marine archaeologist at the museum.

The work is going excruciatingly slow. “This is a very large project, with thirteen different ships in one of the most heavily traveled and visited colonial ports,” says Abbass. “If you start focusing too early you’ll waste all your resources.” That’s why the January archival discovery was important—RIMAP is now focused on five wrecks, all of which lie off the northern tip of Goat Island in Newport Harbor, rather than all thirteen. RIMAP divers have already mapped four of the wrecks in detail, and the fifth will be explored in September.

Pinning down the identity of the Endeavour will be challenging, says Zarzynski, since the names of the vessels are not conveniently preserved on their remains. Rather, it could be a growing list of circumstantial evidence—from historical documents, to the tonnage and dimensions of each ship, perhaps even to exotic pollen preserved from a Cook voyage—that might eventually pinpoint its identity.

RIMAP can’t recover artifacts from the wrecks because they can quickly deteriorate once out of the water, and the organization currently lacks a laboratory for conserving them. Furthermore, conservation laboratories specializing in submerged artifacts are few and far between, according to Lynch. “The nearest conservation lab I know of that could take in artifacts from a submerged environment is hundreds of miles away, far from Rhode Island and the coast, and not necessarily equipped to handle the size of the assemblage that may result from excavating multiple eighteenth-century wrecks,” she says. “Even if it were possible to contract conservation services at a lab hundreds of miles away, transporting materials that far could introduce any number of catastrophically damaging variables.”

But RIMAP hopes to remedy this problem by building a state-of-the-art laboratory, and the identification of the Endeavour could help raise the money to build the facility, says Lynch. Abbass already knows where she would like it built: at Butts Hill Fort, the largest existing earthwork from the Revolutionary War left in southern New England. It sits in Portsmouth, just north of Newport, and it was the center of the American line during the 1778 Battle of Rhode Island. What better place for a research center to commemorate an iconic ship sunk in the run-up to a Revolutionary War battle?

ALEXANDRA WITZE is a science journalist in Boulder, Colorado, and a correspondent for the journal Nature.
Three years ago Gaylord Robb brought the Virgin River Village, a five-acre prehistoric site located in southwest Utah, to the Conservancy’s attention. At the time, the Conservancy was in the process of acquiring Paragonah Mounds in southwest Utah. (See “The Conservancy Preserves One Of The Largest Known Fremont Sites,” page 44, *American Archaeology*, Fall 2013.) The Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah was involved in that acquisition and Robb, the tribe’s director of economic development, was acting as its representative. Being a life-long resident of the region, Robb knew of a number of archaeological sites in the area, including this ancient village near the town of Virgin.

The site is perched on a river terrace overlooking a calm stretch of the Virgin River just west of Saint George. Its location makes it attractive to developers, and consequently it’s in eminent danger of destruction. During a surface survey, eight complete manos and multiple mano fragments were observed across the site, as well as ceramic...
The Protect Our Irreplaceable National Treasures (POINT) program was designed to save significant sites that are in immediate danger of destruction.

Point Acquisitions

This is one of the North Creek Grey sherds found at the site.

Sherds and debitage. The sherds appear to be North Creek Gray, a style that dates from A.D. 550 to 1300.

The site has numerous sandstone slabs, some of which stand upright and resemble tombstones, and as a result it has been mistaken for an Indian burial ground when in fact it’s a habitation site.

A number of slab-lined features are exposed. Some of these slabs meet at right angles, indicating they were arranged by humans. Two of the features appear to have been disturbed recently, but the majority of the site is intact. One large slab measuring approximately twenty-four inches by sixteen inches could have been used as a door for a storage pit or a pit house. There is no geologic formation nearby from which a slab of that size could have been quarried, so it was apparently brought to the site from elsewhere.

Several ceramic sherds are partially buried deep in a hole that could have been dug by a looter. These sherds and the slab-lined features suggest the site has significant buried remains that would make it eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This remarkable preserve may give future researchers insight into the lives of the prehistoric inhabitants of the Virgin Anasazi, a group about which archaeologists don’t know much.

—Chaz Evans

This is one of the North Creek Grey sherds found at the site.
Check Dam Repair
At Pueblo San Marcos

SOUTHWEST—This spring, volunteers with the Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act Working Group, NM SiteWatch, and archaeologists with the Museum of New Mexico joined Conservancy staff to repair breached check dams at Pueblo San Marcos in the Galisteo Basin south of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Considered one of the largest pre-Columbian settlements in the American Southwest, Pueblo San Marcos was occupied from the mid-thirteenth century until the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, and its residents likely played an important role in the revolt. The Conservancy acquired the majority of the site after years of negotiations with private landowners and with the help of a grant from the State of New Mexico.

In 2004, the U.S. Congress passed the Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act, which calls for the protection of twenty-five highly significant archaeological sites in the basin, including Pueblo San Marcos. The Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act Working Group, which formed as a consequence of this act, has been meeting monthly since 2004, working toward the documentation, management, and protection of these sites.

In 2007, Mark Michel, the Conservancy’s president, and Steve Koczan, then its Southwest field representative, built a series of about twenty stone check dams across a drainage that cuts through the site, affecting several room-blocks. While these dams have been largely effective, many of them were breached over the years, necessitating the repair work. The group of twenty volunteers completed the repairs in an afternoon, then a tour of the pueblo followed.
The Sacramento Archaeological Society Visits Borax Lake

WEST—Last May the Conservancy’s Western Field Representative Deanna Commons gave a presentation about the Borax Lake Preserve to members of the Sacramento Archaeological Society. Commons spoke about the Conservancy’s acquisition of the site and research that has been conducted at it. She also led the group on a guided tour of the preserve.

The Conservancy acquired Borax Lake, its first California preserve, in 1989. Since the acquisition, the site has been designated a National Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Borax Lake contains one of the oldest sites in California, dating to 12,000 years ago. The site was first discovered in 1938 by amateur archaeologist Chester Post, who found fluted points that he brought to archaeologist Mark R. Harrington of the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. Recognizing the possible antiquity of the points, Harrington investigated the site from 1938 to 1946, uncovering fluted and wide-stem points, chipped stone crescents, manos, pestles, mortars, and other artifacts. Though accurate dating techniques didn’t exist at that time, Harrington concluded the site was roughly 12,000 years old and that it was occupied for only a few hundred years.

In the 1960s, archaeologists Vance Haynes and Clement Meighan dated Harrington’s artifacts using obsidian hydration, and they found that the oldest dated to 12,000 years ago, confirming Harrington’s conclusion about the site’s initial occupation. But Haynes and Meighan also found that some of the artifacts were only 3,000 years old, indicating Borax Lake was occupied much later than Harrington thought.

High-Tech Monitoring System Tested

SOUTHWEST—Earlier this year the Verde Valley Archaeology Center deployed a satellite-based monitoring system at one of the Conservancy’s preserves that Verde Valley monitors. Originally designed to catch snow leopard poachers in Siberia, the system uses concealed metal detectors and motion sensors that send signals to a satellite network when triggered, notifying land managers that someone may be approaching an archaeological site. The sensitive equipment can detect the motion of a vehicle, a shovel, or even footsteps within ten feet of its location.

The pilot program was recently launched to test this new monitoring system that archaeologists and land managers hope will safeguard the area’s more than 2,500 known Sinagua and Yavapai-Apache sites. These sites date back more than 1,500 years and they have seen an increase in vandalism in recent years.

The program is partially funded by a grant from the National Park Service, and the monitoring system is also being tested in Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico and Death Valley National Park in California and Nevada. Depending on the success of the program, the technology could be used to monitor other Conservancy preserves.
The Spike Buck Site: Archaeology of the Cherokee Town of Quannassee, 1580–1724

By Dan F. Morse and Phyllis A. Morse
(Borgo Publishing, 2016; 176 pgs., illus., $25 paper; www.borgopublishing.com)

The Spike Buck site lies on the Hiwassee River in Hayesville in southwestern North Carolina. It has been identified as the Cherokee town of Quannassee. Captain George Chicken gave a talk there in 1715 that convinced the Cherokees to support the British in the Yamasee War. In 1716, John Sharp out of Charleston, South Carolina, was appointed the trader at Quannassee, supplying the British colony with deer hides and slaves.

In 1973 and 1975, Western Carolina University, under the direction of John Dorwin, excavated the site. Beginning in 2000, Dan and Phyllis Morse inventoried and analyzed the collection, stabilized the metal artifacts, had the animal bone identified, and prepared the artifacts for permanent curation. This study is a product of that work.

Until their removal in 1838, the Cherokees controlled a large area of the southern Appalachians. This volume provides critical information about one of their most important centers, and thus about the history of the Cherokees over a period of some 3,000 years. The Spike Buck site is now a Conservancy preserve.

The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake

By Martin D. Gallivan
(University Press of Florida, 2016; 288 pgs., illus., $80 cloth; www.upf.com)

When the first English colonists arrived at Jamestown in the Chesapeake region of what is now Virginia, they found the region populated by Native Americans living in scattered villages along the numerous rivers and inlets. The area was ruled by Powhatan, paramount chief of the Algonquians, and his name was also used for his home town and for the province. Beginning with Captain John Smith, the English told the story of the Natives from the English perspective. Smith made a detailed map of the region showing dozens of native settlements that provides much information about the area in the early 1600s.

In The Powhatan Landscape, Martin Gallivan, an archaeologist at the College of William and Mary, expands that story to include the origins and development of the Virginia Algonquians from about A.D. 200 to 1700. Much of the material for this study comes from Gallivan’s research at Werowocomoco, the Chickahominy River, and Kiskiak. Werowocomoco, on the York River, was Powhatan’s capital and the site of John Smith’s rescue by Powhatan’s daughter, Pocahontas. Gallivan’s extensive excavations of the site have pushed its history back 2,000 years.

Using archaeology, and with the help of modern Native Americans, Gallivan deftly shifts the focus of Virginia’s Algonquian past from the English accounts of the colonial era to a narrative describing the construction of places and communities, activity areas, and natural regions. These were a riverine people who relied on fishing grounds, and later on horticulture. Ceremonial spaces including earthwork enclosures were used for centuries to pull people together. This is archaeology that sees the past through the physical places utilized by people over time.

The Powhatan Landscape is an important addition to the growing field of landscape archaeology, providing new perspectives on a people who have been previously understood only through the eyes of colonial interlopers. Their history goes back at least 1,400 years before the arrival of the English, and Gallivan has laid a framework for unraveling and understanding it.
In the late 1980s, the General Services Administration (GSA) made plans to build a large new federal office building in lower New York City in a large complex of city, state, and federal buildings. As required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, GSA commissioned an environmental impact statement that disclosed the possibility of an old African-American cemetery at the site. In 1991, archaeologists used a backhoe to dig a test trench, and they encountered skeletons and other artifacts, confirming the presence of the cemetery twenty-five feet below the surface.

Historical records and maps indicated that there was a seven-acre African burial ground in the vicinity, which was just north of the city in the 1700s. It was in use from about 1712 to 1795, and as many as 15,000 people were buried there. When the city expanded to the north, the rolling hills of Manhattan Island were leveled for new development, and the cemetery was covered with twenty-five to thirty feet of soil. Buildings were erected on top, and the graves were forgotten. In the 1700s as many as twenty-five percent of New York City’s population was of African descent, most of them slaves. These were the remains rediscovered in 1991.

GSA decided to move ahead with the office building and to remove the affected burials. Archaeologists started to work in October 1991, but controversy soon enveloped the project. Some skeletons were damaged, and others were vandalized. The project became a political battleground with successive archaeological firms caught in the middle. By the end of 1992, 419 sets of remains had been excavated. They were taken to Howard University, a historically black school in Washington, D.C., for study. A memorial area was set aside at the site, and in 2003 the bones were placed in wooden boxes made in Africa and reburied. In 2006, President George W. Bush used the Antiquities Act of 1906 to make the African Burial Ground a national monument, complete with a National Park Service interpretive center.

Author Andrea Frohne, an art historian at Ohio University, tells the story in this absorbing volume that recounts the tale of discovery, public controversies, and archaeological research and analysis. The book is an important case study in public archaeology and how the nation’s historic preservation laws can be utilized for the public’s benefit, even if the process is a tortuous one.
Belize And Tikal

Where: Belize and Guatemala
When: January 9 – April 3, 2017
How Much: $3,295 ($450 single supplement)

Our tour begins on the coast of Belize, where you’ll visit Belize City, see Altun Ha, and take a boat ride up the New River to Lamanai, a Maya trading center established before Christ and occupied until A.D. 1641. From the coast you’ll travel to the inner reaches of the country and explore the splendid mountaintop palace of Cahal Pech.

A ferry ride will take you to the ruins of Xunantunich, once an important trading center. There you’ll tour El Castillo, a classic example of the Mayatechnique of constructing a pyramid over an older pyramid. From Xunantunich you’ll visit the recently excavated ceremonial site of Caracol, the largest Maya site in Belize.

You’ll also visit Yaxhá, a city nineteen miles southeast of Tikal that features an impressive series of plazas and platform groups. You’ll spend two days exploring Tikal, a magnificent Maya center situated in the Petén rain forest. Thought to have had a population exceeding 75,000, Tikal once spanned an area of more than twenty-five square miles. John Henderson, a leading scholar of Mesoamerican cultures, will lead the tour.

Aztecs, Toltecs, And Teotihuacános

Where: Mexico
When: March 25 – April 3, 2017
How Much: $2,695 ($380 single supplement)

Two thousand years ago, cultures that have long since vanished from Central Mexico constructed magnificent temples and pyramids. Today, these monuments of the Aztecs, Toltecs, and Teotihuacános remain a testament to the fascinating people who built them.

This tour takes you to a number of sites including those once inhabited by the Olmec, a culture that was known throughout the region for its art. You’ll also visit the monuments of the Aztec, a civilization that witnessed the arrival of the Spanish. You’ll explore Teotihuacán, once a great urban center with a population of 200,000. John Henderson, a Mesoamerican expert with Cornell University, will lead the tour.
Palenque’s magnificent ruins make it a popular destination. The city’s palace is seen in the upper right of this photo.

**Maya of Chiapas and Tabasco**

**Where:** Mexico  
**When:** February 15 – 25, 2017  
**How Much:** $3,195 ($450 single supplement)

This tour takes us to some of the more out-of-the-way but spectacular ruins of Maya cities in southern Mexico that flourished between A.D. 300 and 900. We begin in the tropical lowlands and end in the fabulous highlands of Chiapas among the modern Maya people. We’ll see tremendous pyramids, unbelievable sculptures and murals, and modern arts and crafts.

We begin our adventure with a visit to the major Olmec site of La Venta, with its great earthen pyramid. We will then visit Comalcalco, Palenque, Bonampak, and Yaxchilán. Then we leave the tropical lowlands for a long climb into the Chiapas mountains to the large Maya center of Toniná. The site is dominated by its acropolis, which rises in terraces and buildings some 233 feet up the side of a steep hill. We’ll continue climbing to reach the colonial-Indian town of San Cristóbal de las Casas, where we’ll spend two nights. We’ll then visit the charming Tzotzil Maya villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantán. Our guide will be the noted Mesoamerican scholar John Henderson.
The Archaeological Conservancy would like to thank the following individuals, foundations, and corporations for their generous support during the period of May through July 2016. Their generosity, along with the generosity of the Conservancy’s other members, makes our work possible.

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**Congress Approves Permanent Benefits for Donors to Charities**

Congress has passed three tax provisions that may be of substantial benefit to those who want to make a charitable contribution to The Archaeological Conservancy.

**IRA Contributions:** In 2016, Congress made permanent the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Most taxpayers age 70-1/2 and older are required to take minimum withdrawals annually from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and pay income taxes on that withdrawal. The QCD allows IRA owners to make donations up to $100,000 directly from their IRAs to charitable organizations such as the Conservancy without paying income taxes on that distribution. And the QCD can count against the required minimum distribution. Thus, a donor can, for example, donate $10,000 from his or her IRA to the Conservancy and not pay income tax, which may be as high as 36.5 percent. However, no charitable tax deduction is allowed.

**Qualified Conservation Contribution:** This legislation allows generous tax deductions for individuals who permanently preserve scenic, environmentally sensitive, or historically important property through outright land donations called a qualified conservation contribution, a bargain sale to charity of land (the difference between appraised land value and sale price), and conservation easements (legal preservation restrictions on the use of land) donated to qualifying organizations such as the Conservancy and land trusts. Landowners of qualifying properties such as archaeological sites can deduct from income all or most of the appraised value of their donations, or the difference between the appraised value and sale proceeds for partial gifts to charity, or the difference between appraised values before and after the creation of a conservation easement. A tax deduction is also available for the donation of a qualified conservation easement. Enhanced deduction provisions may also be available for farmers and ranchers.

**Membership:** For Conservancy members who itemize deductions on Schedule A, the entire $25 of membership may be tax deductible.

Please consult with your tax expert to see how you qualify for these tax benefits for 2016 or call Mark Michel at The Archaeological Conservancy for more information – 505-266-1540.
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“A profound and challenging account of an intensely controversial subject, the first human occupation of the New World, written by an acknowledged master.”
—Tom Dillehay, Vanderbilt University

STRANGERS IN A NEW LAND
What Archaeology Reveals
About the First Americans
by J.M. Adovasio and David Pedler

There is credible evidence that has convinced many archaeologists that people came to the Western Hemisphere thousands of years before Clovis — perhaps 38,000 years ago. This superb new book documents 35 Clovis and pre-Clovis sites in the Americas. With over 300 color photos, maps and diagrams, Adovasio and Pedler document these exciting findings.

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