



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

February 2015

Independence Creek: Alan Shelter excavation wrap-up

Tom Ashmore

Thanks to Evans Turpin submitting the paperwork we now have an official trinomial from the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory for this site. It is now designated **41TE703**.

We wrapped up of the Alan Shelter excavation over the weekend of January 23rd—25th. This was a small group, due to the very small area to work in for this shelter. It again included Eric Schroeder, CVAS member and professional archeologist, along with University of Texas archeology graduate student, Steve Evans, and archeologist, Ethan Moorehead. Also working the site were Lisa Wrinkle, Independence Creek manager and caretaker and Evans Turpin, IAS member and THC Steward.

Our plan for this trip was to expand the original unit size from 2m X 50cm to 2 X 1 meters and to go deeper than the original 30cm. It was hard work, but we were successful in all of it. What we found was that we hit original bedrock at around 40cm deep, extending out to the beginning of the unit. We also found that it appears a layer of stones were placed on top of the bedrock in order to level out the inherent changing elevation of the bedrock and then on top of that was laid a layer of thick, flat stones. These appear to be the base of the cooking oven. I use the term oven due to everything pointing to this being a shelter-enclosed midden or earth oven.



Measurements in preparation for unit widening



Eric drawing in large stones found in unit. Rock at back of unit is bedrock.

Eric, Steve and Ethan also were kind enough to lab all of the artifacts found on our last trip. There were many flakes of various types of chert, as many as 12 small scrapers, some broken knives, animal bones (to include turkey vulture and deer molars) and the Bandy point I've discussed in previous newsletters.

We also found a probable Paisano point in this dig. This is very interesting because the Bandy point is generally dated 6—4,000 B.C. However, the Paisano point is believed to have been in use 200 B.C—600 A.D. These two points help to explain the enormous talus slope in front of this tiny shelter. This shelter probably continued to be found and reused by many groups over many thousands of years.

Continued on next page

Independence Creek: Alan Shelter excavation wrap-up



Bone awl



Probable Paisano point

Eric, Steve and Ethan told us they would again do the lab work on the various artifacts found on this dig. We did find an interesting awl made of bone and we also found some charcoal at the very bottom. It would be interesting to carbon date it, but that will be up to whether Eric can find a way in the UT/TARL world to do this as a favor.

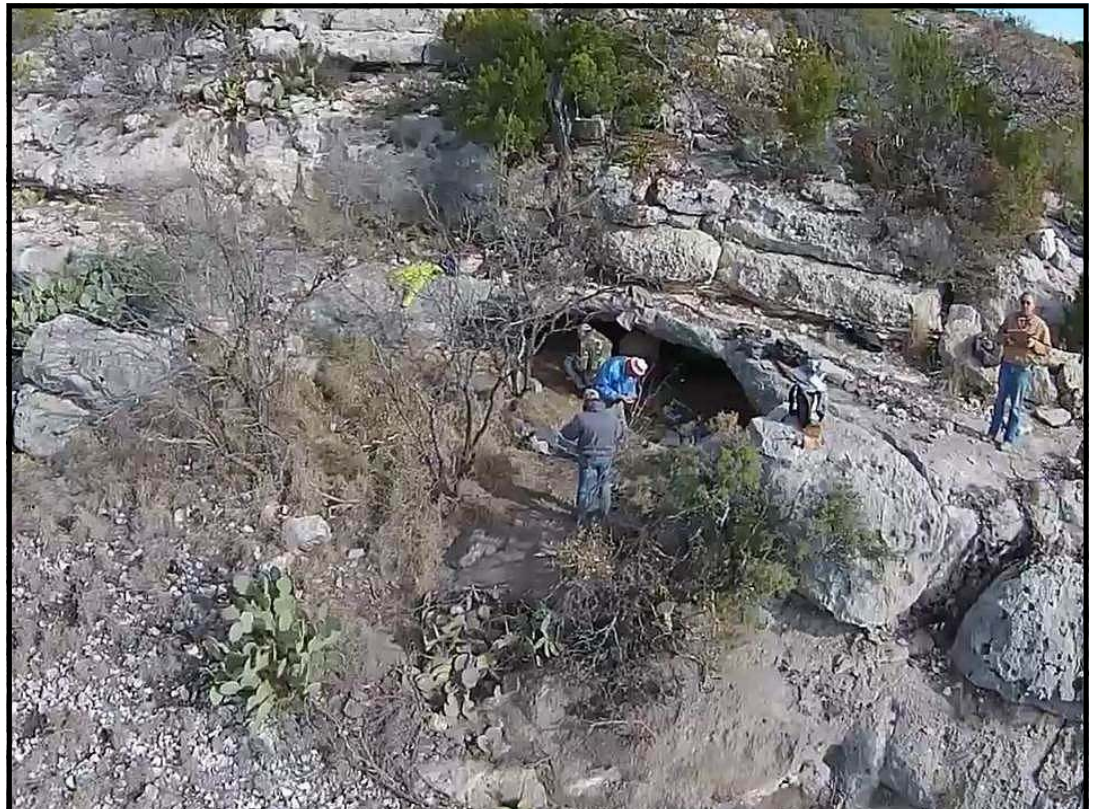
I will continue to work on my paper and presentation on our work for this year's SWFAS symposium, probably to be held the weekend of April 25th at Hobbs, NM.

First use of a drone in CVAS archeology

Tom Ashmore

This dig I decided to use the quadcopter drone to get a different perspective on this shelter and its enormous talus slope. So, I took the drone with me and made a short video of the work. I've edited it down to 2 minutes and provided it to Lisa Wrinkle, Eric Schroeder, Evans Turpin and Steve Evans. Steve, a graduate student working in TARL, will submit the video to TARL to accompany the trinomial application data. I will use the video as an introduction to my presentation at the SWFAS symposium.

The use of drones in archeology is quickly becoming commonplace university and professional archeology projects. This is the first use for us, as a avocational organization, to use this technology. For this I am only using a standard video. However, in the future it is possible to use some of the higher technology cameras and software to develop 3D mapping and thermal imaging during events where this technology may contribute to the data and help to answer basic archeological questions.



ENC Act 2: Return to Eagle Cave

By Charles Koenig, aswtproject.wordpress.com, Jan 18 2015

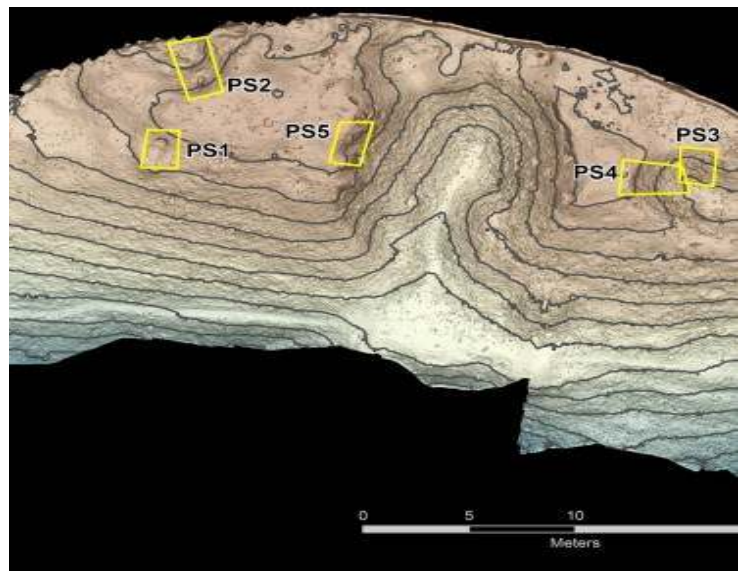
Yesterday we wrapped up our first week of field work for the 2015 season, and things are off to a great start (even if the weather is a little chilly). Last year we worked at four sites within ENC: Skiles Shelter, Horse Trail Shelter, Kelley Cave, and Eagle Cave as discussed in previous posts. To recap, we completed our planned investigations at Skiles and Kelley, we carried out initial testing at Horse Trail, and we got started at Eagle. Although we learned a great deal by working at four different sites, this year we will focus on one site: Eagle Cave.

As described in the blog post from last spring (see [Eagle Cave: Where Context is Crucial](#)), previous archaeological work in Eagle Cave in the 1930s and 1960s, and subsequent erosion, resulted in the massive trench spanning from the rear wall to the dripline. Based on the work done by the Texas Archeological Salvage Project during 1963, we know that the deposits the trench bisects are between 10 and 20 feet deep (3-6 m). Through the decades the once-vertical trench faces gradually succumbed to the forces of gravity, wind, burrowing critters, and misplaced footsteps, leaving a sloping U-shaped depression. We planned from the outset of the project to expose, sample, stabilize, and backfill the trench, but we needed to gain experience working in other areas of the site before taking on the daunting task of the main trench.



Last season we opened up 5 small “windows” in different areas of the site. Profile Section (PS) 1 was on the downstream side of the site where a large badger burrow exposed surprisingly intact deposits just under the surface. Only a few meters away, PS 2 began in the disturbed deposits along the rear wall which had been dug out long ago by the Witte, the “local boys” of Langtry, and burrowing animals. As we removed the deeply disturbed rear wall deposits and worked our way outward we encountered intact remnants there too.

Each of these exposures (PS 1 – 5) gave us the opportunity to test, modify, and improve our excavation and sampling methods, as well as gain experience documenting the complex and fragile stratigraphy of the dry rockshelter deposits. Yet, each exposure provided only a rather narrow (~3-4 feet) view of the deposits, and it was difficult to link stratigraphic layers between profiles. Our 2014 experience drove home the realization that in order to gain a better understanding of the deposits, we would need more substantial stratigraphic exposures – and there is no better place to do so than in the main trench.



The focus of the 2015 field season is exposing, recording, sampling, and stabilizing the south wall of the main trench. We want to take advantage of the slumping trench wall and expose as much intact stratigraphy as we can. In other words, we want to frame the microstratigraphic layering seen in small windows within the context of the larger structural patterning visible across the site. We are continuing to step our profiles vertically and horizontally to maintain stability (and provide access), and we are following the same “Low Impact, High Resolution” sampling strategy

This past week we re-exposed PS 5, which we had draped with landscape cloth and gently covered with fill at the end of the 2014 season. And we began opening up fresh exposures at two additional locations along the trench. As the season progresses we will step down the exposures deeper into the trench, but for now we are focused on the upper deposits. By the end of the 2015 field season we expect that we will have documented and sampled rather spectacular stratigraphic exposures along the main trench, and we look forward to sharing what we find!

Children's Grave Offers Insight Into Earliest Americans

news.nationalgeographic.com, by Traci Watson, Nov 2014

During the last ice age, two infants in what is now Alaska were laid to rest, precious hunting tools at their sides. Now, more than 11,000 years later, scientists announce the discovery of the tiny skeletons and their extraordinary burial spot—underneath the fire pit of an ancient house.

The find is the first to show that the earliest Americans did such complex burials. What's more, the burial site reveals a cultural link between residents of North America and those of far eastern Asia, a jumping-off point for the earliest migrants to the New World.

The infants' bones were found just below a previously discovered grave that held the cremated remains of a toddler. Like the burial, the surrounding campsite is the first of its kind to be found. Artifacts show that a small band of Native Americans, long thought to be inveterate wanderers, spent at least part of the summer there, fishing for salmon and catching ground squirrels.

The gravesite allows scientists "to explore the treatment of the very youngest members of society," says University of Alaska Fairbanks archaeologist Ben Potter, who led the excavations at the site.

Scientists have found New World burials older than this one, but none of this vintage that were so elaborate or that were within a residential area.

The two babies—one an infant 6 to 12 weeks old, the other a nearly full-term fetus—were buried below the floor of a now vanished, partially underground dwelling at what's known as the Upward Sun River site, in Alaska's rugged interior.

After the burial, the babies' kin piled a thick layer of dirt atop the bodies, built a new hearth on the fill, and used the hearth for cooking and disposing of trash.

Either later that same summer or a subsequent summer, the scientists say, Upward Sun River was occupied by a small family group, probably the same one that had buried the two babies.

Once again, at a time of year when food should have been most plentiful, the camp's residents suffered a tragedy: the death of a three-year-old. This child's body, Potter and his team reported in 2011, was deliberately cremated in the fire pit just before the entire dwelling was abandoned. The cause of death for all three is unknown, as is their gender, though some features of the skeletons suggest they were girls.

Why did the toddler receive different treatment in death—cremation—than the infant and fetus? Perhaps, Potter says, beliefs about the age when a human acquires a soul dictated the type of burial. Or perhaps funerary rituals were determined by whether a particular relative, such as the father, was present or absent.

Whatever the reason, the toddler was laid to rest without any grave goods, and the babies were buried with a collection of what look like hunting darts, fashioned from elk antler rods and carefully hammered stones. Still functional and therefore valuable, Potter says, they probably belonged to a close relative of the babies.

Burying a family member in or near living quarters may seem a strange choice today, but it wasn't unusual in prehistoric times. Several children have been found buried below 13,000-year-old houses in far eastern Russia, and the people of Çatalhöyük, one of the world's first urban centers, in what is now Turkey, buried their dead just below their homes.



The two infants found at the Upward Sun River site were buried with hunting tools made from stone and elk antlers.

Photograph courtesy of University of Alaska - Fairbanks, Ben Potter

Feb 26th meeting
Larry Riemenschneider
DOVE CREEK BATTLE (BEFORE, DURING and AFTER)

This presentation is the story of the Kickapoo Indians, Confederate Soldiers and Texas Militia before, during and after the battle of Dove Creek (1865). We will follow the Kickapoo in Texas, Mexico and Kansas in their early years, their short stay at Dove Creek and their journey ending in Mexico. We will also look at the events prior to the battle that lead the Confederate and Militia troops to Dove Creek, the battle and their plight after the battle. The Battle of Dove Creek was the largest Indian engagement of the Civil War. It is also the most distinctive event in the history of the Kickapoo. This presentation presents more than the "battle". Come, bring a friend and learn about the Battle of Dove Creek.

SWFAS 2015

The Southwest Federation of Archeological Societies 2015 symposium is scheduled to be held in Hobbs, NM the weekend of April 25th. At this time we have not received the call for papers, but Tom Ashmore has been in touch with the lead who is coordinating the event. We will pass the call for papers on when we receive it. Tom Ashmore and C.A. Maedgen are scheduled to attend to represent CVAS.

CVAS Trailer

It's time for the tires on the trailer to be replaced. C.A. replaced the first one due to it going flat and Tom Ashmore replaced the second to match. Our originals were non-radials and we need to match radial to radial for the replacements. Tom will be storing the trailer at his place at Dove Creek.

2015 Dues

Please don't forget that annual dues are due this month. The new application form is on the back of this newsletter or you can pay at the Christmas Dinner to our treasurer, Steven Schooler. The new address is on the application in this issue.

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
CVASSANANGELO.ORG

Meeting Location

Please remember that our meetings are now in the classroom at the Fort Concho Living History Stables, **236 Henry O. Flipper St.** We enter through the side door.

2015 Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Cell _____

Family members _____

132 Kilt Road San Angelo, TX 76901

Email _____

I pledge I will not intentionally violate the terms or conditions of any current or future state or local statute concerning cultural resources or engage in the practice of buying or selling artifacts for commercial purposes, or engage in the willful destruction of archeological data, or disregard proper archeological field techniques

Signature _____ Date _____

Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student or military N/C		<input type="checkbox"/>

(active military only)

Mail to: CVAS, 132 Kilt Road, San Angelo, TX 76901