



Concho Valley Archeological Society Newsletter

July 2010

July Picnic
Fort Concho Commissary
Thursday July 22nd @ 6:30 pm.
CVAS will furnish the meat.... tea....paper goods...

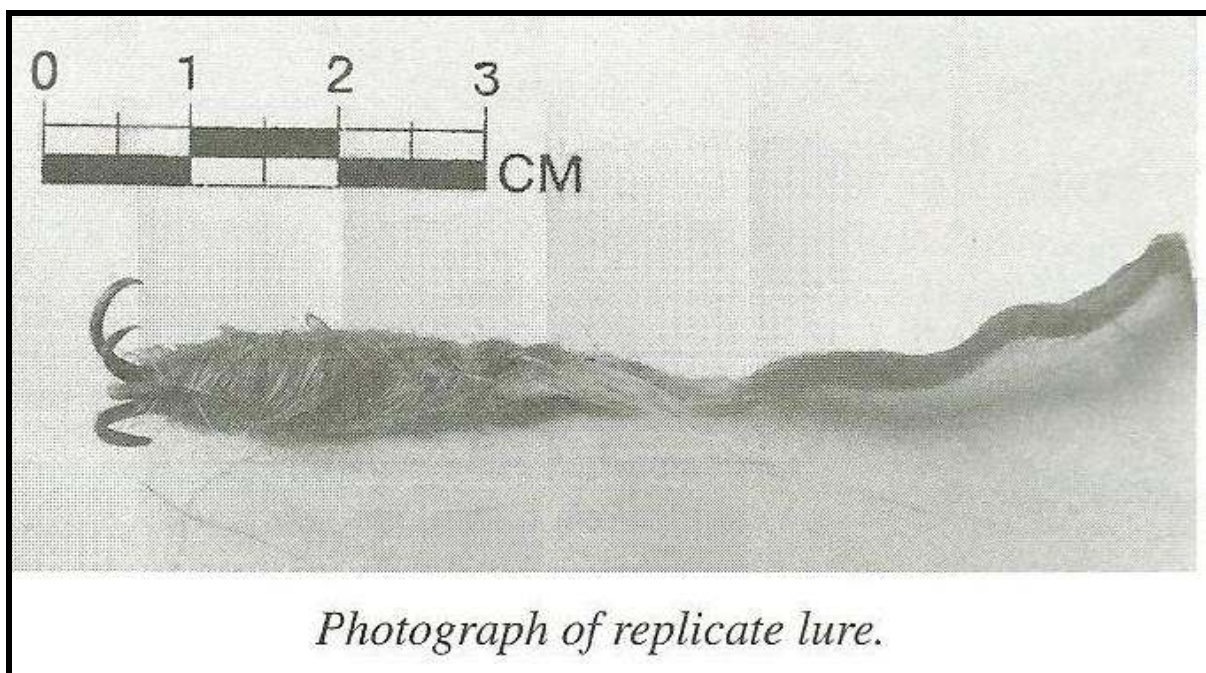
Every one else please bring....vegies....deserts.....

We will need... ice...bread....a relish tray... So someone bring one or more of these.

RSVP Sue... 949-5156 by July 18th

Larry Riemenschneider featured in TAS newsletter

Those of you who have email saw the article on Larry from the TAS newsletter summer issue. For those of you who did not see the article, Larry was asked to look at a collection of artifacts from the Lower Pecos and while inspecting them found what looked to be a fishing lure made from the spines of a Fishhook Cactus. He decided to try to replicate the lure and experiment to see if he could actually catch a fish. He used jute twine and three Fishhook Cactus spines. Larry explained, "If you haven't seen this type of cactus, the spines are about 1-2 inches long and on the end they are in the shape of a "j" which makes a perfect hook. They are very durable; however a couple of them did break. The hardest part was wrapping them tight enough so they would not pull out of the bundle which made up the lure. We don't have any of this type of cactus in this area. They are mostly found in the Trans-Pecos region, Mexico, New Mexico, Arizona, etc. A friend from Comstock sent the ones I used." **(continued on page 5)**



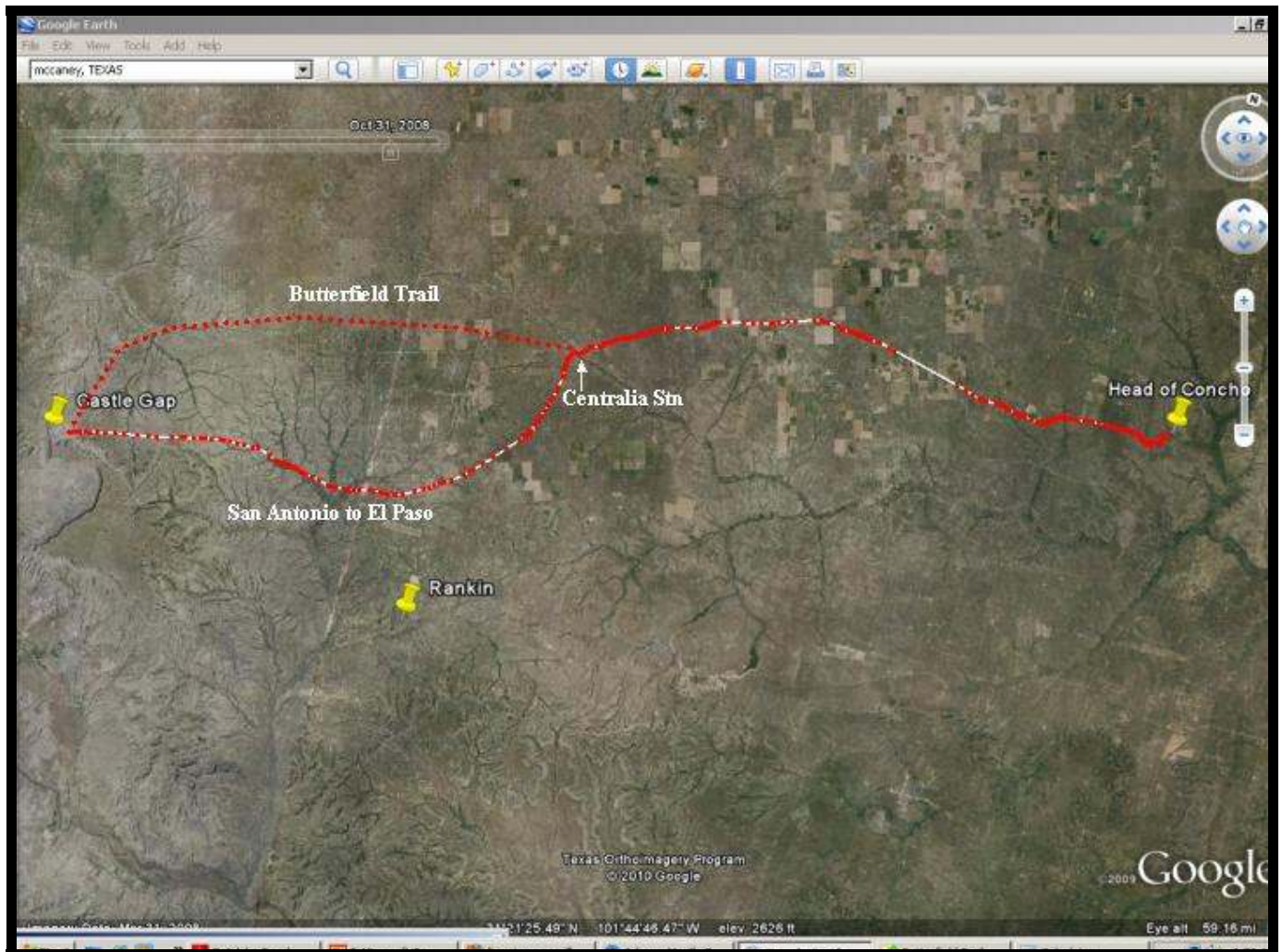
Photograph of replicate lure.

Stagecoach Trails—Head of the Concho to Castle Gap

By Tom Ashmore

You may remember that I wrote about the two trails heading into Castle Gap in the CVAS newsletter April issue. Those two trails were the stage trail and the cattle trail that parallels the stage trail. I decided to see if I could follow the trail all the way back to the Head of the Concho Station. This is no easy feat. The region is filled with oil wells, oil pumping stations and service roads everywhere. However, I persisted and finally got it worked out. Going east from the Gap, that trail headed northeast first and then east. Then a friend who I got interested in this trail following asked me about the other trail that headed due east out of the Gap. He was right. There was quite clearly another trail heading due east. So I decided to follow that one. It was obviously a well worn trail and probably a wagon trail also. This turns out to be the later San Antonio to El Paso trail, also know as the Ben Ficklin stage line. What I think I've discovered is that although the trail starts as one trail leaving Head of the Concho going west, it splits at Centralia Station. The old Butterfield Trail continued on due west while the later trail (San Antonio to El Paso/Ft Stockton trail) dips down south before continuing on west. So what we have was a northern trail and a southern trail heading to Castle Gap.

I know the Goodnight-Loving Trail followed the old Butterfield Trail so that fits for the northern trail. Although both routes went to the location of what later became Centralia Station, it was the Ben Ficklin line that actually built a station there. The split at this location is supported by a passage out of the book, '900 Miles On The Butterfield Trail' which had a quote from a cowboy trail driver in 1876 stating, "At Centralia, which was a stage station on the high plains guarded by Negro troops, we left the stage road and followed the old Butterfield route to Horsehead Crossing." On the southern trail, a couple miles past Centralia Station the trail splits again, with another trail heading south. This is where the split was made to go down to Camp Melbourne and Fort Stockton. Later a shortcut was made by the military through Grearson Spring. **(continued on page 4)**



Dig continues at outpost site

By Vianna Davila - Express-News, Web Posted: 06/21/2010 12:00 CDT

FLORESVILLE — To the untrained eye, the grass-covered mounds at the end of County Road 144 could be mistaken for nothing more than a local dumping site or someone's abandoned, overgrown property.

But these are actually the remains of the 18th century ranching outpost for San Antonio's Mission Espada. It was called Rancho de las Cabras, a settlement that once covered 1,000 acres of what was then the rugged terrain of northern New Spain.

And once again, a team of archaeologists and archaeological students from the University of Texas at San Antonio have come to the site to dig for clues that hint at the outpost's past.

“A lot of archaeology is just trying to put the pieces together and find out what does it mean,” said Marybeth Tomka, UTSA staff archaeologist and project leader.

Archaeologists have worked here for several decades to determine how the site figured into that period of history; Tomka said the ruins are among only a handful of Spanish Colonial-era ranches that remain in the country.

“The whole purpose of the excavation out here is trying to figure out what was going on at the site,” said Susan Snow, archaeologist for the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, which acquired the site from the state in 1995. “We know there's a lot going on out here that is atypical of a mission ranch.”

Archaeologists first uncovered the ranch ruins in the 1980s, when they discovered the remains of four rooms and a chapel, dating to the mid-1700s.

UTSA held a similar field school at the site in 2008, when the team unearthed the remains of an outdoor Spanish colonial-era floor. Last year, teams uncovered parts of a south and western wall.

Now, the UTSA students are trying to determine if there were other rooms at the site, a possibility indicated by a bowl-shaped depression in the ground adjacent to the existing rooms.

For the last two weeks, the students have worked beneath makeshift canopies made of plastic blue tarps and thin tent poles.

They dig seemingly perfect 1-by-1 meter squares in the ground just beside where the rooms might be — excavating from the side decreases the chances of damaging any possible structures, Tomka said.

It's a slow-going process that only sometimes yields a big find. Students carry buckets of the soil they've overturned to one of four sifters, where they shake out the debris in hopes of discovering artifacts or fragments.

“Whole lotta nothing,” said student Kelsie Spengler, as she shook out another batch of clay soil and sandstone.

The lucky ones have unearthed pieces of Spanish Colonial-era pottery, plus several cow bones that likely date back to the 18th century, Tomka said.

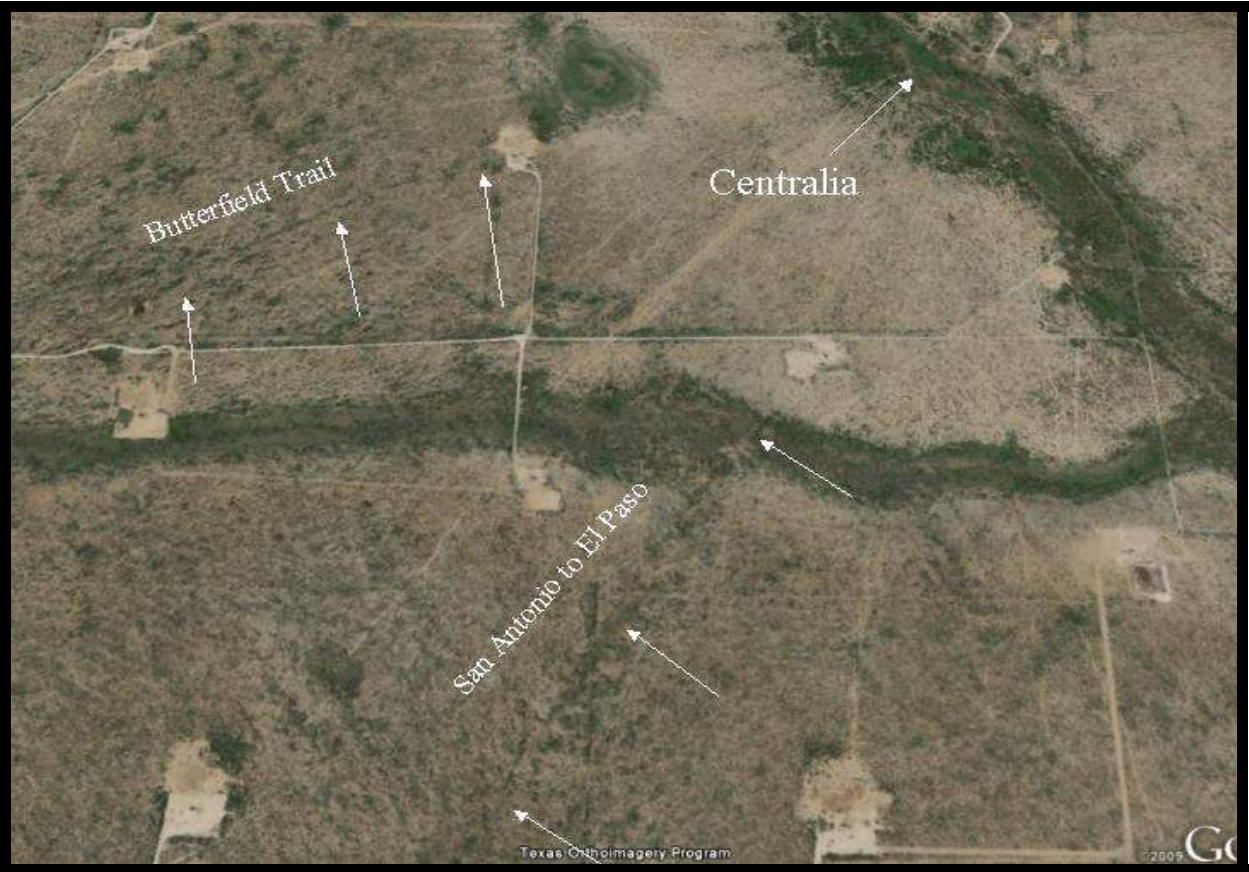
“We are looking at the roots of the whole livestock industry in Texas,” said Anne Vieyra, an undergraduate anthropology student taking an archaeology class with Tomka. “This is the birthplace of all that.” **(continued on page 5)**



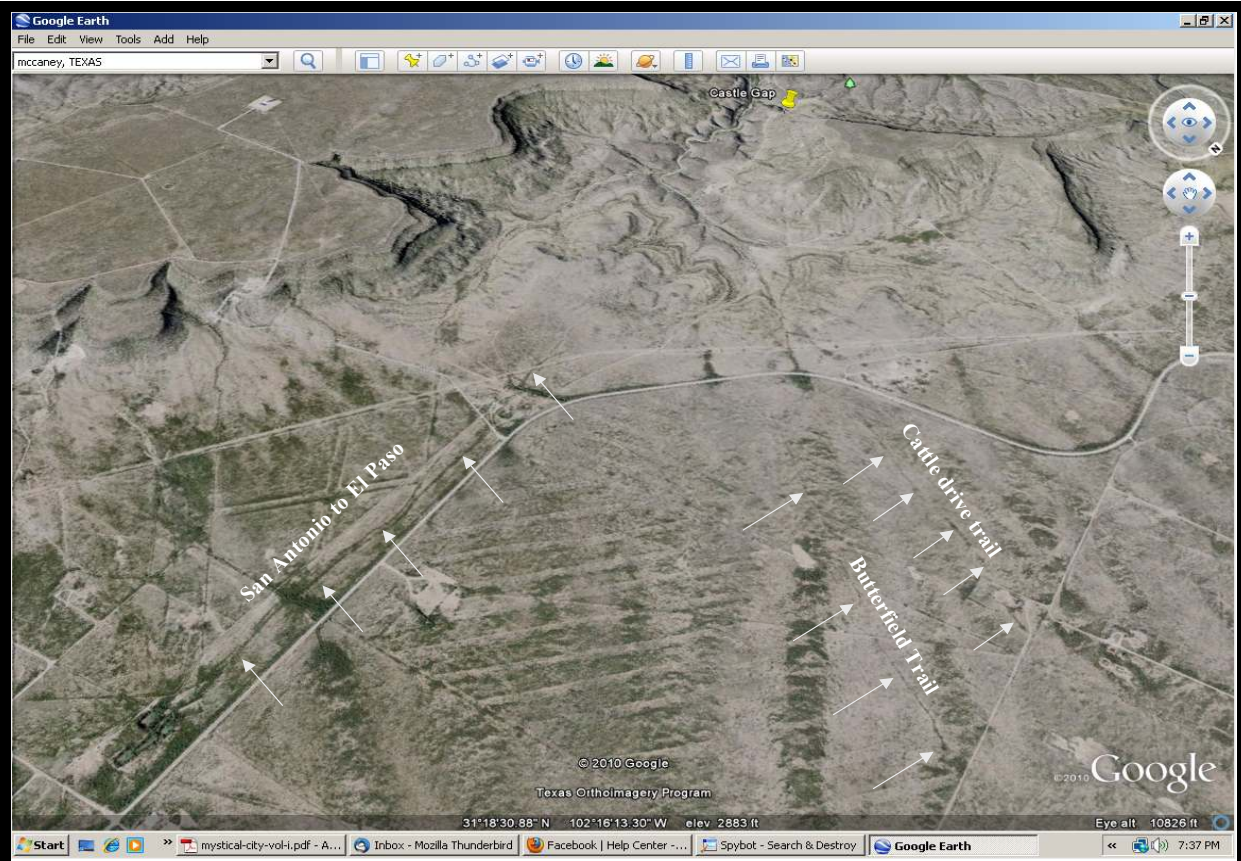
Students and volunteers with UTSA's Center for Archaeological Research sift through dirt for artifacts at the site of the Rancho de las Cabras. JOHN DAVENPORT/jdavenport@express-news.net

Stagecoach Trails—Head of the Concho to Castle Gap

(continued from page 2)



Stagecoach trail splits at Centralia



Three trails heading into Castle Gap

Larry Riemschneider featured in TAS newsletter (continued from page 1)

The next step was to try it out, which gave the family a good excuse for a fishing trip to Brady Lake. After the hook and twine became saturated it sank and was soon hit by a nice size crappie, proving the durability of such a rig and ability to provide sustenance for the ancient Indians of the Lower Pecos region.

Larry and Dr. Solveig are in the process of documenting two collections of artifacts from rock shelters on the Pecos. They are documenting a bundle burial that had many baskets, net items and much fibrous materials. They have sent the skeletal remains to Oklahoma University for analysis and basket fragments to a carbon lab to be C-14 dated. Larry promises to give CVAS a full program on this in the future when all the analysis is complete.

Dig continues at outpost site (Continued from page 3)

Evidence suggests the site was more than just “cowboys taking care of livestock,” Snow said. High-value goods, like broken, beaded crosses and Spanish teacups and saucers, have previously been discovered at the site.

Snow said it's also possible the site was a fortification against Comanche Indian raids or a trading spot, based on its close proximity to the Camino Real, Snow said.

Every new find is one piece of a bigger puzzle to determine what happened here, before the site was abandoned in the 1770s and 1780s.

But for all the work the students will do this summer, Tomka and Snow agree the park service needs more funding to complete the project.

Restoring the existing walls and chapel (which remain covered with sand to protect them) could cost millions, Tomka said. More in-depth study of the site would also require a team of professional archaeologists, but the funds aren't currently available, she said.

For now, the park service will rely on teams like this one or volunteer days funded by its friends group, Los Compadres.

In the meantime, Tomka is still waiting for her eureka moment this dig, which lasts through early July. She stood beside where the additional rooms may lay beneath the ground's surface.

“I really would like to know what this depression is,” she said.

Larry Riemenschneider to give Lady In Blue message in Sunday sermon.

Larry will be giving a talk on the Lady in Blue at the Wall Brethren Church on 25 July. Larry was inspired by the information from the Indian Pow-wow about the Lady in Blue and decided this would be a good message to present, especially since Christianity in the Concho Valley started right here in San Angelo. The services are at 10:45 a.m. Turn off on the loop into Wall and they are the Red Brick Church with sign in front.



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.

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
CVASSANANGELO.ORG

CVAS is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to bring together people who have an interest in archeology and whose mission is to protect the historic and pre-historic resources of the region.

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of every month except July, November and December.

2010 CVAS Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Cell _____

Family members _____

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: Cynthia Purcell, PO Box 703, San Angelo, TX 76902