



# New Mexico Archaeology

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO FOUNDATION

WWW.NMARCHAEOLOGY.ORG

FEBRUARY 2021

## FROM THE DIRECTOR QUALITY OF LIFE

ERIC BLINMAN, PH.D.  
OAS DIRECTOR

The office and MNMF saw a flurry of activity in January as Dr. Ann Stodder, OAS bioarchaeologist, was invited to participate in crafting a grant proposal whose research goal is to assess how ancient perceptions of quality of life might have influenced large scale patterns in Southwestern culture history. It's an interesting topic that can cover the full breadth of human culture.

Much of the interpretation we do in archaeology is limited by what we can observe, infer, and model about the past. We are on our most solid footing when building our reconstructions on resource economics: What were sustainable harvests of wild plant and animal foods for Archaic populations? How did the availability of water structure where people could live during the different seasons of the year? How did patterns of climate influence agricultural production and reliability? Can we infer periods of stress or abundance from relationships between population-determined demand and environmentally-determined supply? These are the low-hanging fruit of archaeological interpretation (not that the studies are easy), and the relationships can address some of the simpler questions of quality of life: Can each family or community survive to reproduce?

But there is so much more to quality of life. Some qualities,

See **Director**, on Page 5.

## SIGNS OF PROGRESS



Mollie Toll and Pam McBride examine the winter garden at CNMA.

### **ADDITIONAL WORK IS BRINGING NEW LIFE TO THE CNMA 'WALK THROUGH TIME' GARDEN**

In the middle of a long, dark winter – one which sometimes feels like the darkest and longest in recent history – people's thoughts are turning to springtime, and to gardens.

Members of the Education Outreach Program at the Office of Archaeological Studies, along with other employees and volunteers at

CNMA, are making plans for spring too.

Planning and planting for the Walk through Time Garden has been going on for the past several years, and signs of progress are slowly beginning to appear.

See **Signs**, on Page 6.

### ONLINE LECTURE

# FOA, FRIENDS OF HISTORY SPONSOR TALK ON ARCHAEOLOGIST ROYAL A. PRENTICE

Twentieth century Tucumcari attorney Royal A. Prentice harbored an archaeological hobby, surveying sites and photographing rock art in eastern New Mexico, from west Texas to eastern New Mexico. He recorded over 1,000 sites and donated his records and photographs to the Museum of New Mexico, where they still reside in Archaeological Records Management Section (ARMS) in the Laboratory of Anthropology.

Like so many of today's Friends of Archaeology and Friends of New Mexico History, Prentice was a scientist at heart. He recorded and photographed sites at his own expense. Before he started his archaeological hobby, he read for the law in East Las Vegas and was a Rough Rider.

Prentice was appointed land recorder by President Taft when he moved to Quay County in 1906 after recovering from yellow fever and two wounds from his time in Cuba. He went on to become one of the largest landowners and successful businessmen in Tucumcari before statehood.

Join Richard Ford, retired anthropologist from the University of Michigan's Museum of Anthropology; Gary Hein, rock art surveyor, retired nuclear scientist, and a current Friend of Archaeology; and Allison Colborne, librarian for the Laboratory of Anthropology will uncover the work and the worlds of Royal A. Prentice in a special lecture co-sponsored by the Friends of New Mexico History and the Friends of Archaeology.

Due to current stay-at-home orders, the Friends of History has moved the First Wednesday Lecture Series to an online presentation format until the New Mexico History Museum is able to reopen and host large gatherings.

The lecture will be available on Wednesday on the History Museum YouTube site. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NMmuseum>.



Royal A. Prentice is seen among the ruins of San Cristobal Pueblo in August 1914.



Prentice, with his daughter.

The Webinar begins at noon on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. There will be a live Question & Answer Session with the speaker immediately following the presentation.

### ROYAL A. PRENTICE LECTURE DETAILS

The webinar begins at noon on Wednesday, March 3. The lecture will be available on Wednesday on the History Museum YouTube site. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NMmuseum>. For more information, contact Michael Ettema, at [Michael@ArtAppraisalsofSantaFe.com](mailto:Michael@ArtAppraisalsofSantaFe.com).

Questions and comments posted during the lecture on the Museum's YouTube page chat box will be shared with the speaker during the Q&A session. At the end of the broadcast, the link to the full presentation and Q&A will be posted on the Museum's Facebook and YouTube pages. We're looking forward to enjoying the event with you.

For more information on this event, contact Michael Ettema, at [Michael@ArtAppraisalsofSantaFe.com](mailto:Michael@ArtAppraisalsofSantaFe.com). ❖

**Office of Archaeological Studies**

The Office of Archaeological Studies (OAS) was the first museum program of its kind in the nation. OAS staff conducts international field and laboratory research, offers educational opportunities for school groups and civic organizations, and works to preserve, protect, and interpret prehistoric and historic sites throughout New Mexico.

**Friends of Archaeology**

The Friends of Archaeology is an interest group within the Museum of New Mexico Foundation that supports the OAS. To join the FOA, you need only become a member of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation and sign up. Visit [www.nmarchaeology.org](http://www.nmarchaeology.org) for information. We're also on Facebook; just search for "@FriendsofArchaeology."

**Mission Statement**

The mission of FOA is to support the OAS in the achievement of its archaeological services mandate from the State of New Mexico through participation in and funding of research and education projects.

**Friends of Archaeology Board**

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# ONLINE OUTREACH

OAS Education Outreach Coordinator Chuck Hannaford and Jennifer Kilbourn, FOA coordinator, are working on a new online series, Ancient Lifeways. The series will include episodes on stone tools, yucca fiber work, and flintknapping. The first episode will premiere March 4, 2021, at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC71Nvwch-5klR4OxiW2nYSw>. Stay tuned for more information.



### ONLINE CLASS

# THE DEEP CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN SOUTHWEST

For the past several years, FOA has offered an evening class series on the history of Southwestern peoples, from earliest times to the seventeenth century. Taught by OAS director, Dr. Eric Blinman, the class consists of eight illustrated lectures, each lasting 1 to 1½ hours. In the past it has been held in the early evenings at CNMA, with room for about 20 participants. During the social distancing of the pandemic, we plan to hold the class as a series of Zoom lectures, on Wednesday evenings, starting at 5:45 p.m.

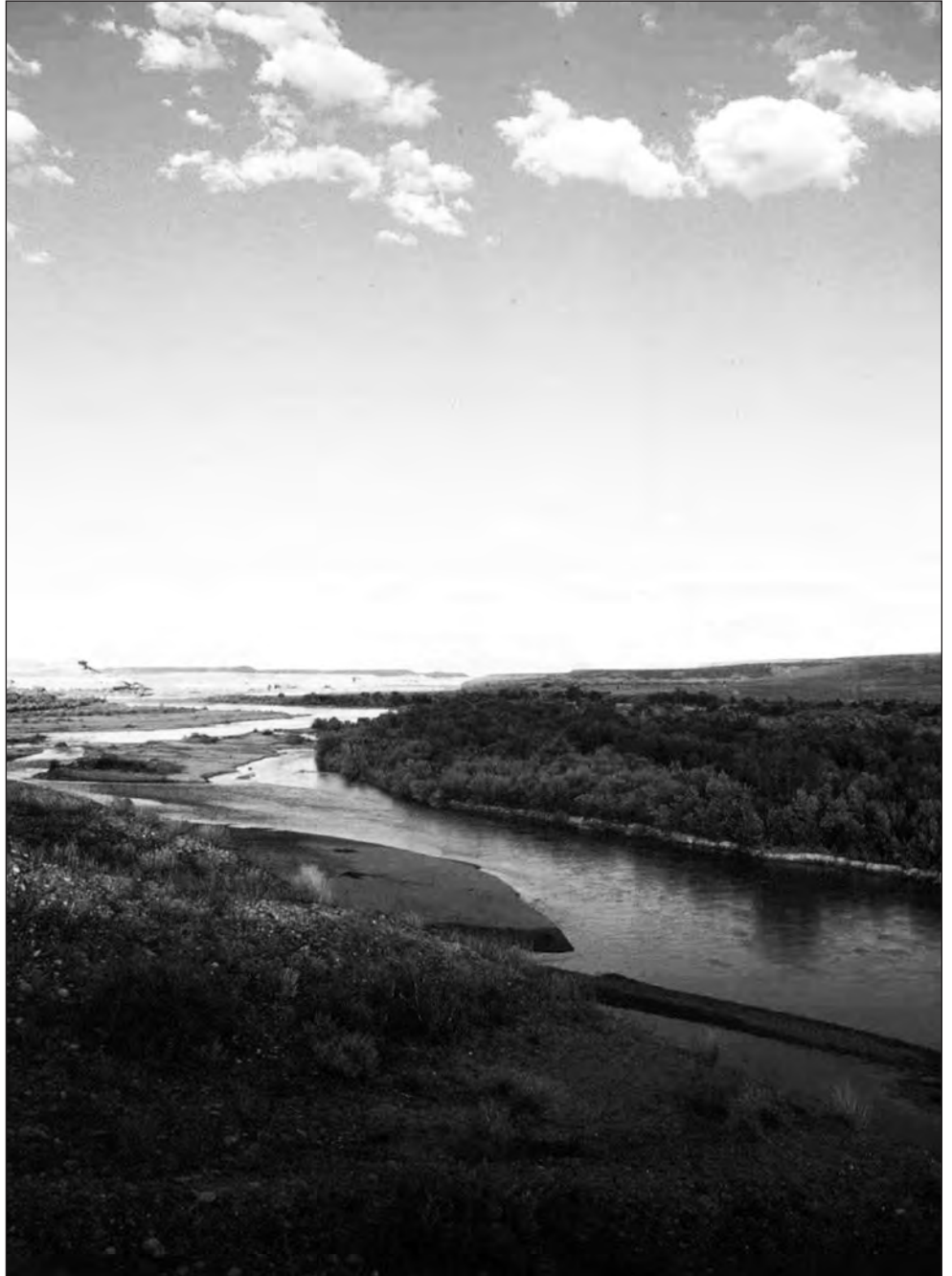
A complication is that we can't record and post the classes on YouTube. This is partly due to Eric's use of illustrations from current research literature that runs counter to journal and book publishers' senses of copyright – their use is okay for a lecture, but it's not okay for a permanent posting on the Internet. However, Eric will distribute PDFs of the lecture slide sets to all interested participants.

The first foundational principle of the course is that the cultural variety of Native American peoples at the time of European colonization (hundreds of communities speaking more than a dozen mutually unintelligible languages) is underserved by publically accessible resources. The second principle is that although the history appears to be complex, it actually is remarkably elegant and understandable.

The general breakdown of topics will be as follows:

#### **Conceptual and Practical Tools for Understanding SW Archaeology:**

Archaeological histories are circumstantial arguments that rely on some basic models of how human populations function and change. This lecture will cover evolutionary models, subsistence economies, how languages change, principles of demography, tools for climate and environmental reconstruction, and measures of time.



The San Juan River.

**The Destination: Modern Peoples and Cultures of the Northern Southwest:** The cultural variety of SW Native peoples is underappreciated and oversimplified by today's society. This lecture will cover the diversity of

environments and cultures at European contact, language diversity and history, means of maintaining identity, and how impacts of colonization have shaped

See **Class**, on Page 5.

## CLASS

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perceptions (and misperceptions).

### **The Early Years: Peopling of the Americas through the Southwestern Archaic:**

Although every year archaeologists are learning more about the pre-agricultural periods of the SW, the detail of our understanding is limited. Paleoindian and Archaic lifeways can be characterized, but it's difficult to translate the patchy record into a detailed history of distinct peoples.

### **Agriculture, Pottery, and the Emergence of Formative Culture:**

Agriculture and pottery were transformative technologies, and variability in adoption and expression provide glimpses of the underlying multicultural SW landscape. Population growth and sedentism increase the visibility of ancient communities, revealing sensitivities to climate change and multiethnic interactions.

### **Villages, Social Complexity, Ethnic Diversity, and the Foundations of Chaco:**

The social and economic consequences of population growth are expressed in remarkable detail in the northern SW against an independent rhythm of climate change. It is during this period that many of the distinctions between modern descendants crystalize in their varied expressions of social complexity and interaction.

### **The Pueblo II Period and the Workings of the Chacoan System:**

Chaco has dominated archaeological and public imaginations for more than a century. Although it deserves the attention it receives, it has also been a distraction from the larger story of Pueblo culture history. This lecture will try to redress the balance by summarizing new research on Chaco within a larger temporal and regional context.

### **Pueblo III Communities and Migration:**

A prolonged twelfth century drought correlates with the decentralization of



An obsidian arrowhead.

Chaco and the failure of many farming communities across the entire region, initiating an early period of migration. Formation of large Pueblo III communities followed in some areas, only to be impacted by a late thirteenth century drought and the "Mesa Verde migration."

### **Pueblo Communities at the Threshold of Colonization:**

Climate change is fickle. The twelfth and then thirteenth century migrations were followed by two centuries of a new normal in which boundaries and interaction patterns were redefined. Climate changed again at about AD 1500, coinciding with colonization, population crash, and the combination of closed and new opportunities for adaptation.

The class will be broadcast every Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. starting March 10, and will conclude on April 28, 2021. Zoom invitations will be sent to participants in advance of each lecture. Cost for the series will be \$125 for FOA members, \$150 for non-members. Reservations can be made by calling the hotline at (505) 982-7799, ext. 6, and leaving as message with your name and return phone number and the number of "seats" for the lecture. An FOA representative will call you back to confirm your enrollment and answer questions. ❖

## DIRECTOR

Continued from Page 1.

like the sense of physical and social security, are influenced by subsistence economics. However, cultural responses to scarcity can range from heightened tensions of guarding against thievery to the strengthening of social bonds through altruistic sharing. Periods of surplus can translate into improved child survival in one generation, only to have later higher population densities increase susceptibility to disease or result in more acute resource stress should surpluses fade.

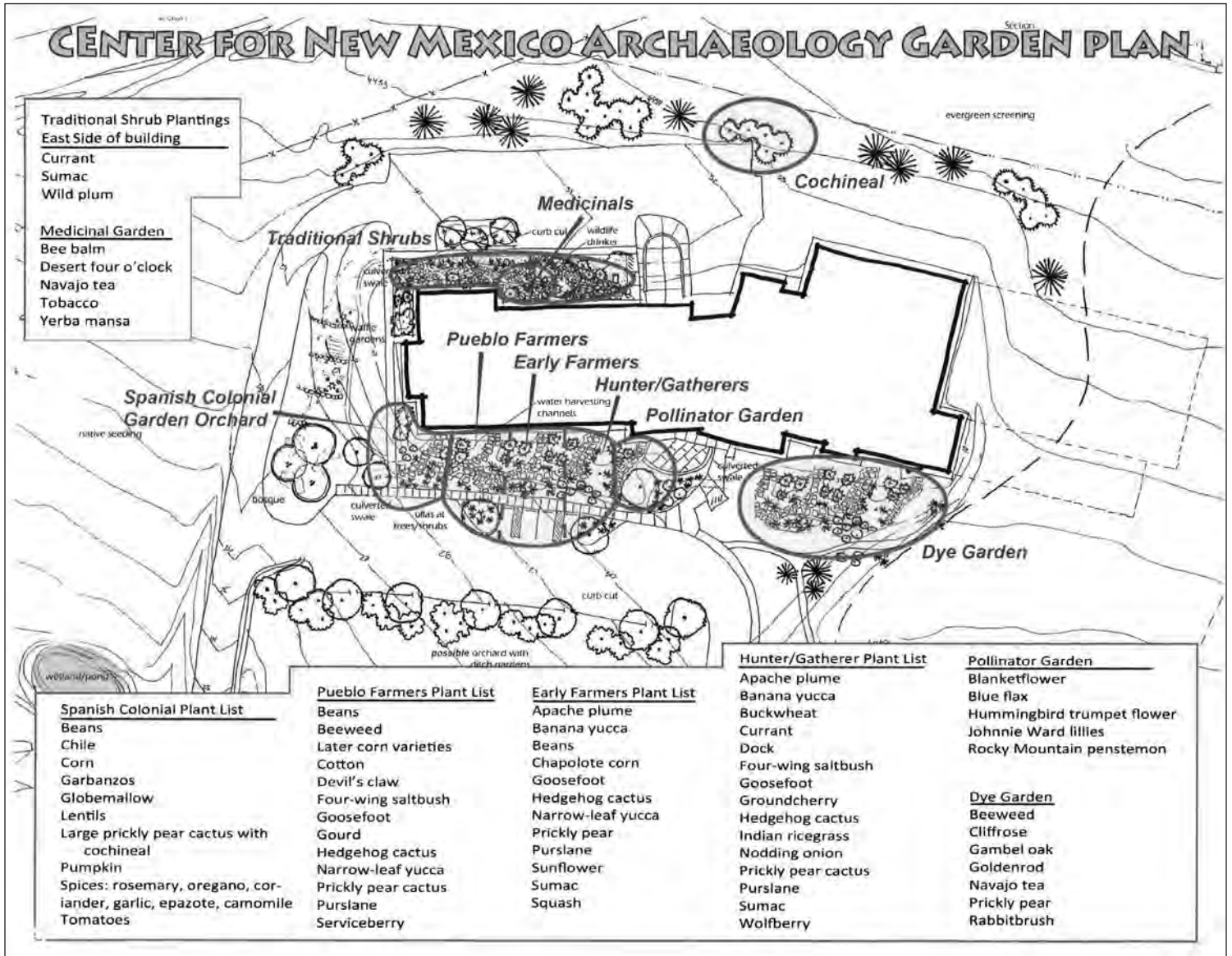
Less tangible positive qualities of life, often expressed in art (including song and dance) either can be imperceptible in the archaeological record or the preserved material traces can be ambiguous. One archaeological model links early investments in Chaco Canyon religious construction to periods of economic surplus (exuberant celebrations of good times), while the last construction episode may be better interpreted as desperate sympathetic magic. Do we sing and dance to celebrate rains, or do we sing and dance to encourage rains that have not come?

I suspect that all of us have a very different sense of what contributes to our quality of life now than we had at the beginning of the pandemic. Would a future archaeologist be able to correctly assess the nature of that change?

I hope that Ann's research project is funded, and I am very curious to see how some of the most well respected archaeologists in the Southwest handle what I see as a challenging topic. ❖

## LOOKING FOR US?

If you are planning a trip to CNMA, we're located at 7 Old Cochiti Road, just off Caja del Rio Road. We're the first building on the left before you get to the animal shelter.



Plan for the Walk through Time Garden at the Center for New Mexico Archaeology.

## SIGNS

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Over the past several months, Mollie Toll, Pam McBride, and Isaiah Coan have started work on the installation of small signs on the grounds of CNM.

The signs are intended to identify various plants of historic and cultural significance.

The common and scientific name of each plant, as well the plant's most common use, is imprinted on each sign.

"The plan for the Walk through Time Garden is to include and display plants used in hunter-gatherer times all the way up to the early Pueblo farmers and the acequias and orchards later on,"

Plans for the garden include the creation of paths, irrigation systems, and maps of the garden area.

Mollie said. "We're hoping to provide a connection to visitors with specific wild and domesticated plants that have been important to the people of New Mexico."

At least 38 different types of plants and trees are currently present at CNMA -- these include cottonwood, cholla,

See **Progress**, on Page 7.



One of the signs recently added to the garden.

# PROGRESS

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dogbane, three-leaf sumac, and various species of yucca.

“Our intention is to create specialized areas that include cochineal and medicinal and dye plants,” Mollie said “We’d also like to produce significant quantities of plants that OAS uses, like sumac, for baskets, and yucca, for fiber.”

Recently, Mollie and Pam spent a chilly morning searching out and marking several plants on the property.

“It’s a little difficult doing this now,” Pam said. “I think we’ll have better luck in the future, when it gets warmer and the plants start showing a little more green.”

“Some of the things we planted haven’t really taken,” Mollie said. “We put in a whole load of beeweed and rice grass that never came up.”

Mollie said they will try replanting these later this spring.

But replanting is only a small portion of the work that needs to be done to make the Walk through Time Garden accessible to visitors.

“The garden’s a little rough around the edges right now,” Mollie said, “but it’s good to think of the future. We really want to make it more of a learning garden and to make that purpose clear, but the budget’s not really there right now.”

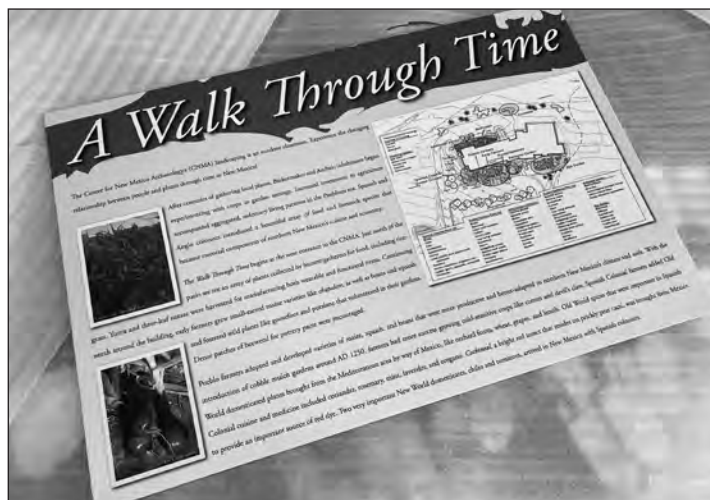
Plans for the garden include the creation of paths and irrigation systems and the development of a garden map and other information sources for visitors. Another, larger sign welcoming people to the garden and further explaining the garden’s purpose has also been purchased.

“The garden’s off to a slow start,” Mollie admitted, “but people are dreaming.”

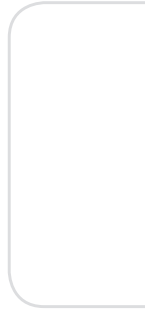
And, believe it or not, they’re dreaming of green.



To contribute your time or talents to the Walk through Time Garden at CNMA, contact Mollie Toll at [mollie.toll@state.nm.us](mailto:mollie.toll@state.nm.us).



Pam McBride and Mollie Toll sort through new plant signs at CNMA. The signs are intended to identify plants of historic and cultural significance on the property. Left, the large sign that will welcome visitors to the Walk through Time Garden.



## EDUCATION

# PARENTS, KIDS RESPOND TO OAS 'SUMMER CAMP' POTTERY BOXES

In the summer of 2020, FOA volunteers, OAS Education Outreach Program coordinators, and OAS staffers spent several months crafting—and destroying—pots, bowls, and other items for kids throughout the state who participated in DCA's Summer Camp in a Box project.

The OAS portion of the project, titled Pottery, Form, and Function, was designed to encourage hands-on learning through a number of activities, ranging from clay identification and experimentation to the reconstruction of broken vessels.

Initially, the kits were intended for use in summer camp and recreation programs throughout the state.

"After Covid, we were forced to change our approach," said Mollie Toll, Education Outreach Coordinator at OAS.

State Librarian Eli Guinee played a major role in determining how the boxes would be distributed, Mollie said. Two hundred learning kits were delivered to tribal and rural libraries. The kits were then distributed to kids and parents.

Response to the kits has been strong. "We've gotten several responses from parents and kids," Mollie said. "Most of the responses came from people who were just glad to know we were thinking about them. I think it's good to remind people that the museums are not just in Santa Fe. And it's important that everyone feels acknowledged."

Mollie said it is "almost inevitable" that a new OAS Summer Camp in a Box project will be organized for 2021.

"My guess is we'll be doing something similar," she said. "Something the kids can figure out all on their own." ❖

## MAKE YOUR MARK ON NM ARCHAEOLOGY!

Please consider supporting the Office of Archaeological Studies by making a gift to education or research by check, credit, stock, IRA rollover, or planned gift this year.

Your tax-deductible donation through the Museum of New Mexico Foundation will have a lasting impact throughout the state. One hundred percent of your donation will be directed to the Office of Archaeological Studies. No administrative fees are charged.

Give online:  
[www.museumfoundation.org/  
support-archaeology](http://www.museumfoundation.org/support-archaeology).

For questions about giving, or to donate, contact Jamie Clements, at (505) 982-6366, ext. 110, or via e-mail at [jamie@museumfoundation.org](mailto:jamie@museumfoundation.org).