**PROJECT ABSTRACT**

**Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**(Cooperative Agreement # H1200-09-0005)**

**Park:** Bandelier National Monument

**Project Title:** Graffiti Mitigation in the Frijoles Canyon Cavates

**Funding Amount:** $24,941

**CPCESU Partner Institution:** The University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning

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**Start Date:** September 1, 2009

**End Date:** December 31, 2010

**Abstract:**

There are approximately 1,068 cavates concentrated on the north side of Frijoles Canyon in Bandelier National Monument. Cavates, which are chambers that were excavated into the volcanic tuff cliffs, were often rear rooms to the now-collapsed multi-story masonry buildings constructed against the cliff face. The cavates in Bandelier National Monument were occupied from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century C.E., and are the ancestral dwellings of the Pueblo people.

*Project description:*

Many of the cavates in Frijoles Canyon retain original applied earthen plaster and soot finishes over the volcanic tuff substrate. Some cavates have modern graffiti carved into or applied onto their interior walls and ceilings. The highest concentration of graffiti appears to be in cavates that are open to the public, as well as those that are easily accessible from the visitor trail (even though they may be closed to public access). To help prevent further damage and vandalism, the Vanishing Treasures Program is mitigating some of the modern graffiti.

The principal goals of graffiti mitigation are to obscure modern graffiti and reduce the rate of its recurrence. Graffiti is mitigated by infilling and inpainting incised areas with physically and visually compatible materials, primarily earthen mortars and pigments. Infilling also helps prevent additional disintegration and loss of the plaster and the tuff, which easily erodes once the surface has been broken.

The current cooperative project, ‘Graffiti Mitigation in the Frijoles Canyon Cavates,’ is an outgrowth of the more comprehensive cavate conservation program that began in 2000. The project will involve hands-on graffiti mitigation treatments, and will provide a platform for refinement of existing treatment protocols. Project participants from the School of Architecture and Engineering at the University of New Mexico will work with staff of the Vanishing Treasures Program at Bandelier National Monument and conservators from the Museum of New Mexico Conservation Division to document and treat (through infilling and inpainting) cavate features that have been vandalized through the application of graffiti. Project participants will also assist in the development of a treatment matrix for graffiti in the cavates, which will become part of a management document for the archaeological resources in the park.

**Keywords:**

Cultural Resources: Protocols / Reference Materials, Management, Native American

Anthropogenic Issues: Archaeology