



## **MAXWELL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

March 20, 2012

Dr. Wendy Bustard, Curator  
USDI-NPS, Chaco National Historical Park  
450 University Blvd., N.E.  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

### **Re: Report on UNM-60, Catalog Chaco Protection Sites Archaeological Collections**

Dear Wendy:

The Maxwell Museum of Anthropology has completed all the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work for this project. With the available funding, Judith van der Elst, the advanced archaeology graduate student assigned to this project, was able to catalog 43,600 archaeological artifacts and samples and enter the data into the Interior Collection Management System (ICMS) database according to NPS protocols.

Ms. Van der Elst met with Chaco Culture National Historical Park curator Dr. Wendy Bustard to determine the desired organization of the collections and to identify any special rehousing requirements. Using Chaco's written cataloging procedures, Ms. Van der Elst arranged artifacts from each accession according to material type (i.e., ceramic, lithic, faunal) and then cataloged the artifacts in field specimen number order. The cataloged material was rehousing by artifact type, using archival supplies. Because there were multiple accessions involved in this project, Ms. Van der Elst gained valuable experience working with NPS accession records, which are handled differently than those at the Maxwell Museum. She also has become an expert on the ICMS database.

Although the project started a little later than planned (January 2011 vs. November 2010), we were still able to catalog almost half the collection (20,205 artifacts) by the 50 percent target date of June 30, 2011. Ms. Van der Elst cataloged the full range of Southwestern artifact types: ceramics, chipped stone tools, ground stone tools, ornaments, faunal specimens, botanical specimens, wood and charcoal samples etc. Cataloging the artifacts from surface collections of over 30 great and small house Chaco Protection Sites on Navajo Nation land was straightforward. These artifacts were unanalyzed, so Ms. Van der Elst identified them by artifact category and used the NPS Chaco Collection protocols for producing cataloging records.

Cataloging the artifacts collected during subsurface testing at the great houses was more complex. The ceramic, lithic, and faunal artifacts from these sites (Navajo Springs, Crumbled House, and Raton Well) had been completely analyzed in the case of the lithic artifacts, but only partly analyzed in the case of the ceramics and fauna. Ms. Van der Elst was able to work with

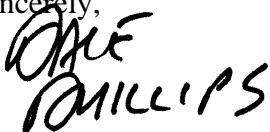
data from the lithic analyst to match identifications and raw material types and incorporate that data into the catalog record. She was also able to match ceramic type identifications using the analyst's records for the ceramics from Crumbled House and Raton Well (the Navajo Springs ceramics were not analyzed). The faunal specimens were more challenging: because of the way the analysis was done, it was not possible to match the analytic data to the specimens.

In addition to artifacts from the Chaco Protection Sites collection, with the available funds Ms. Van der Elst was also able to catalog artifacts from the Chaco Project collection. These artifacts mainly consisted of ground stone and faunal and botanical samples and specimens. The ground stone was sorted by Ms. Van der Elst according to the object categories used in ICMS, primarily manos and metates, and cataloged and rehoused separately in accordance with NPS protocols. The remainder of the ground stone artifacts were identified using the field specimen records and were stored as mixed ground stone. The faunal specimen were analyzed and published in the project reports, however the physical collection could no longer be matched with the published analytic data. The specimens are catalogued by field specimen number and have provenience information.

Flotation samples were checked for possible contamination. If the bags were broken the sample was discarded; all others were placed in new bags. Based on FS number, some of these samples could be matched with flotation residue, derived from a sample selection. These matched records can be used for testing the value of the flotation samples in the collection. During cataloging of this material, Ms. Van der Elst gained valuable insight in the issues related to long-term storage of perishable material.

I am pleased that the cataloged Chaco Protection Sites artifact collections, from unreported, unexcavated sites for which there is little information in the available literature, will provide useful data for scholars studying the Chaco regional system. If you wish to follow up on this report in any way, you can reach me at (505) 277-9229 or dap@unm.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DAVE PHILLIPS". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David A. Phillips, Jr., Ph.D.  
Curator of Archaeology