

## Photo Summary of Field Trip to Atkeson Pueblo Ruin and Verde Valley Archaeology Center

November 5, 2022

Led by Ken Zoll (Verde Valley Archaeology Center)

Photos by Dennis DuBose, Diane Sago, and Sharon DuBose

Arrangements with Verde Valley Archaeology Center by Diane Seago

Sponsored by Rim Country Chapter (RCC) of the Arizona Archaeological Society (AAS)

This Field Trip included a quick tour of the Verde Valley Archaeology Center, including rooms normally closed to visitors, before heading out to the Atkeson Pueblo Ruin. This ruin contains the highest surviving freestanding prehistoric wall in the Verde Valley.

All text and captions to these photos are by Dennis DuBose. Dennis DuBose is responsible for all inaccuracies in this text and these captions. Photos are by Dennis DuBose unless otherwise noted.



1887 Photograph of Atkeson Pueblo from South Side of Oak Creek by Edgar Mearns, looking north (courtesy of the Library of Congress)

The Atkeson Pueblo Ruin came to the attention of some members of RCC through this Youtube video *Episode 6: The Hisatsinom Hilltop Sites of the Verde Valley* by the *The Archaeological Conservancy*...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ald8IQZBM98>

It features people from the Conservancy, the Arizona Site Stewards, and the Verde Valley Archaeology Center.

This photo of Atkeson Pueblo Ruin above came from *The Archaeological Conservancy* document *Verde Valley Archaeology Field Institute Guide Handbook* (7/30/2017) Section 6.1 Atkeson Pueblo (Oak Creek) Overview which can be found online at

[https://www.archaeologicalconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/6VVAFI\\_Handbook\\_ATKESON\\_OTTENS-2.pdf](https://www.archaeologicalconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/6VVAFI_Handbook_ATKESON_OTTENS-2.pdf)

It contains many old photos and much information about Atkeson Pueblo Ruin.

On November 5, 2022, at 9:00 am, twelve Arizona Archaeological Society Field Trippers gathered at the Verde Valley Archaeology Center in Camp Verde to begin our visit to Atkeson Pueblo Ruin. The Trip Leader Ken Zoll first gave us a quick tour of the Center, including rooms normally closed to visitors. Then we caravanned to the Atkeson Hilltop Pueblo Ruin a few miles away.

Since RCC sponsored a Field Trip to Verde Valley Archaeology Center on May 21, 2022 and a Photo Summary of that trip was sent out to RCC Members in early June, this Summary will primarily only address some of the “back room” tour.



The Dyck Collection of Perishable Objects and other Collections are kept in the Curation Room, which is temperature and humidity controlled.



Smaller and Delicate Items are kept in Movable Cabinets (Three Pronged Crank rolls them smoothly back and forth) while Larger Sturdier Items are stored on Open Shelves



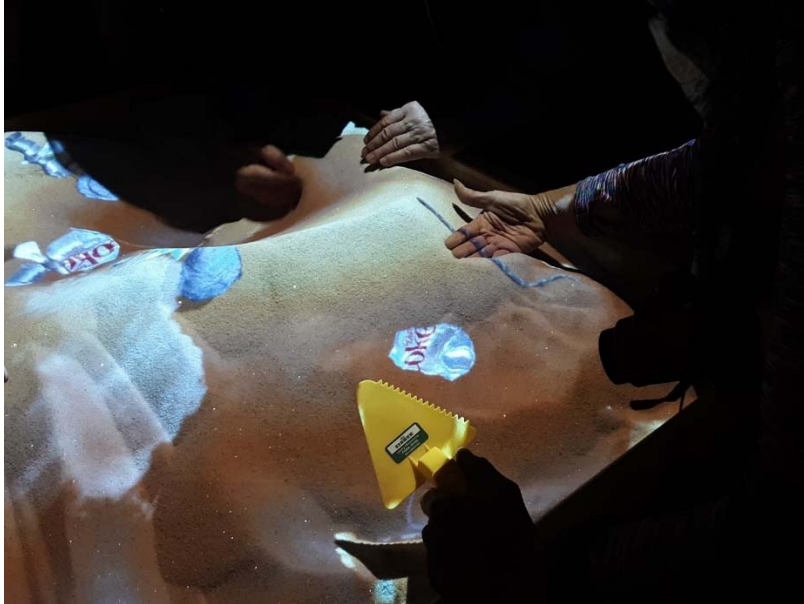
The Children's Room Got a Lot of Attention from the Field Trip Participants. Apparently, there were a lot of "Children" on the Tour. At Left is a "Curation Cabinet" and at Center is the Virtual Archaeology Sand Table.

The Sand Table is full of Sand and nothing else. The overhead device is a projector. It also has sensors that tell it how much sand has been scooped aside in a given location.



Participant “Children’ Gathering around the Sand Table and Digging for Virtual Artifacts

The overhead device projects various desert fauna moving over the Sand Table, such as scorpions and snakes crawling around on the sand and birds flying above with their shadows on the sand. There are a couple of trowels available for digging, or people can use their hands to dig in the sand.

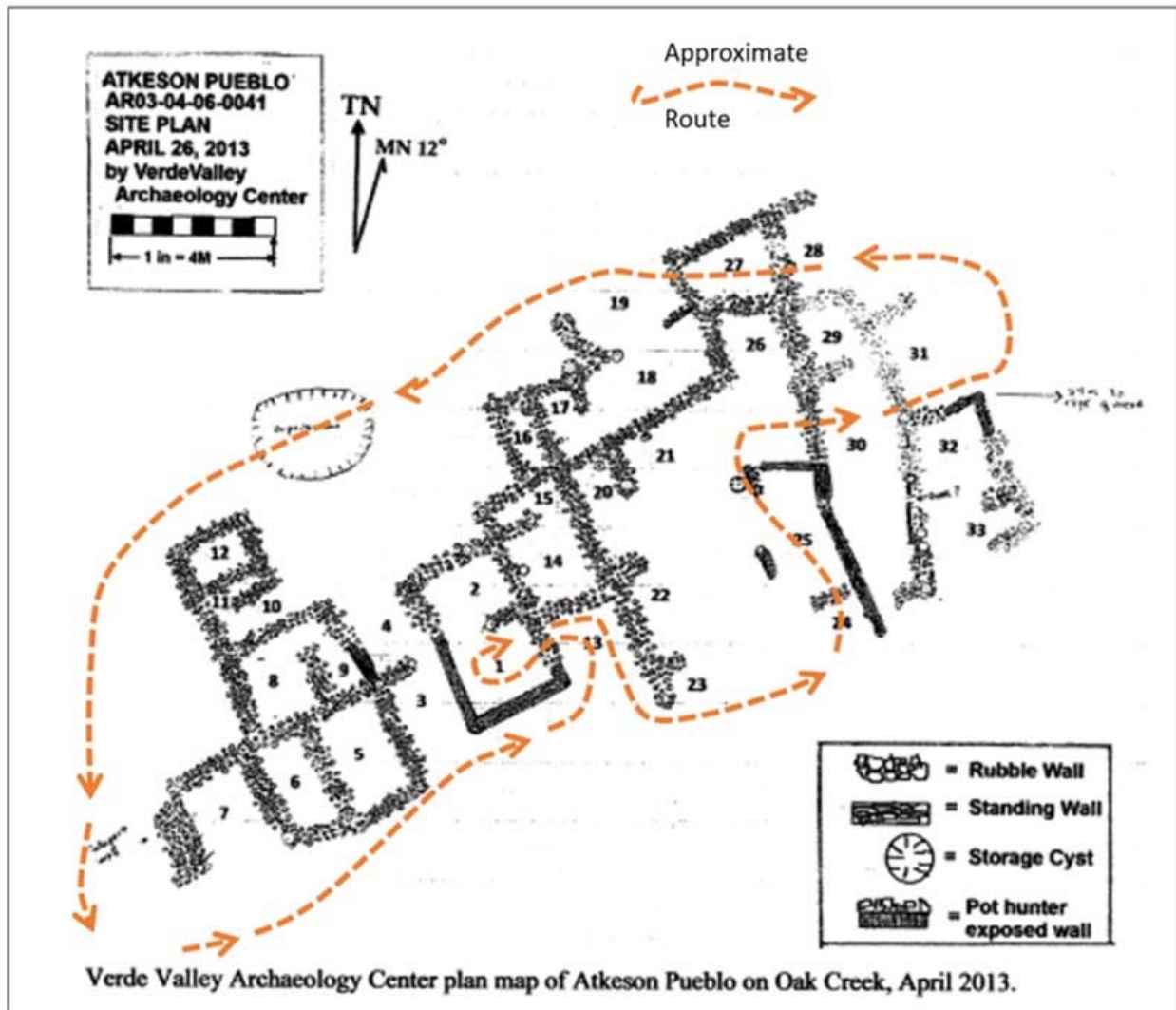


Immediately beneath the Surface, Digging Reveals Modern Artifacts, such as Coke Cans. But digging deeper turns up Prehistoric Artifacts like Pottery. Digging even Deeper can Reveal Fossils.



Photo by Diane Seago

Then, the Field Trip participants drove over to Atkeson Pueblo Ruin. From the 1887 photo at the beginning of this Summary, it appeared that it was going to be quite a precarious climb up to the Ruin. That photo is from the South side. Some photos below will show that the south edge of the Pueblo is a precipitous drop down to Oak Creek. The East side is just about as steep. The North side seems to be a long steep but passable slope. However, the Field Trippers drove up to the West side, which is not bad at all.



The 1887 photo of the south side of the Atkeson shows many Cavetes down below near Oak Creek. We were not able to visit these. Our Guide Ken Zoll said that to do so would require wading across Oak Creek carrying some long ladders and then doing some climbing.

Ken said that the former owner of the Atkeson Pueblo Ruin still lives nearby within sight of the ruin. Ken said that he is very protective of the site. Unexpected visitors could expect to encounter him with his shotgun ready. Ken said that the former owner had been notified that the Field Trippers would be visiting, so there was nothing to worry about.

Contrary to the 1887 photo, the approach to the Atkeson Pueblo Ruin was fairly easy. We drove almost right up to its highest point with only a short easy climb up from the West.





Field Trip Participants arriving at the Highest Point of Atkeson Pueblo.

This ahead is the highest freestanding prehistoric wall in the Verde Valley. There are some other freestanding walls in this ruin but not as high.





Inside Room 1 of Atkeson Pueblo.

The framing in the “window” was put in recently to stabilize the wall section there. It replaced an earlier historic framing put there by others who were trying to stabilize the ruin. Ken Zoll said that it is not known if this opening was a window or door originally, or if the opening was due to part of the wall falling away naturally, leaving a hole. In the Conservancy Report PDF in the “handbook” PDF link above there are photos of earlier times showing this hole.

At the right is a vertical “post” embedded in the wall. It is capped by a piece of modern dimensional lumber that someone had wedged in there to help stabilize the ruin. Ken said that it is not known if the vertical post is original or part of a still earlier attempt at stabilization.



Many Field trip Participants had Fun taking each Other's Photograph through the "Window."





Photo by Diane Seago

Here is One of the Other Freestanding Walls Downslope Moving Eastward from the Top.

Not visible here, there is a high steep drop just to the left (south) down to Oak Creek.



Looking East

Field Trip Participants Continuing Moving Eastward Downslope along the South Edge



Looking West



Looking East

Field Trip Participants Encountering Another Freestanding Wall



Looking South



Closeup View of Wall Structure. It is amazing that this wall has stood up for 800 years.



Looking Back Upslope (West) at Freestanding Wall Remains



Heading around the Lowest Freestanding Wall Downslope, which Turns out to be a Corner





View (East) of Oak Creek from East End of Atkeson Pueblo Ruin



View North from Atkeson Pueblo Ruin





Looking Downslope North from North Edge of Aketson Pueblo Ruin

Access to the Pueblo hilltop is high steep cliff on south, lesser steep cliff on east, long slope on north (above photo), and a very short slope on west (where the road access is)



Photo by Sharon DuBose

Returning From Hilltop Ruin Coming Down Westward to Parked Vehicles, full circle back to the way we came in.