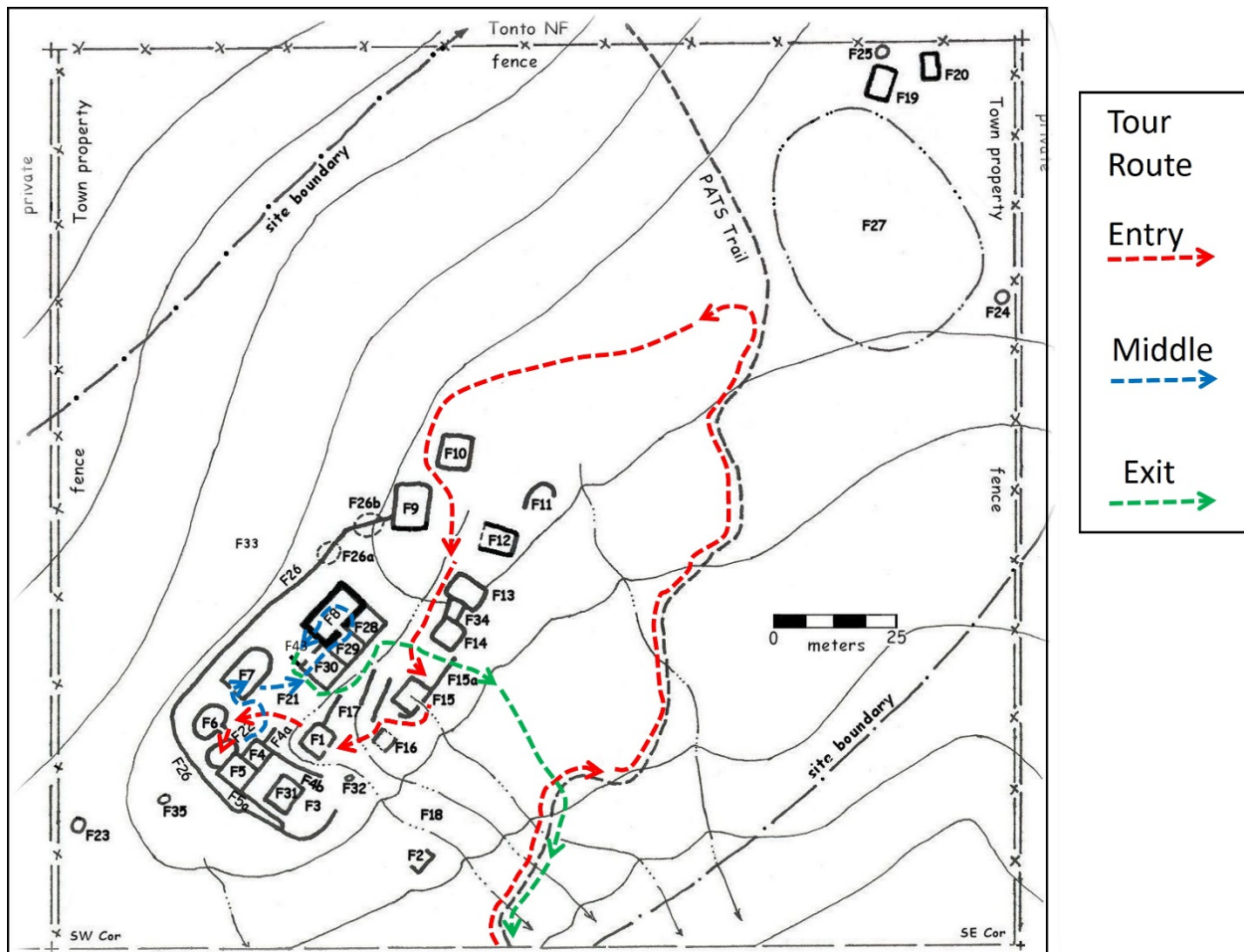


Photo Summary of the Narrated Tour of Goat Camp Site Ruin Led by Scott Wood

Scott Wood, former Tonto National Forest Archaeologist (40 years) and now President of Friends of Tonto National Forest, gave this guided Tour midday on September 17, 2022. Earlier in the morning Scott presented a narrated slide show Presentation [Getting up to Date at Goat Camp Ruin](#) at the September Meeting of the Rim Country Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society.

The photos and text in this Summary are all by Dennis DuBose, who is solely responsible for any errors. The text/captions are based on his memory of Scott's morning presentation, memory of Scott's comments during the tour, memory (mostly years past) of participation or presence during excavation, plus personal speculation unencumbered by facts. Consequently, there may be inaccuracies in this Summary.

--- Dennis DuBose



Approximate Goat Camp Tour Walking Route.

Features (Rooms, etc) are marked like F11, F35, and so on.

The Tour took perhaps two hours (?).



Parking at Goat Camp. The Ruin is on the Hill above RCC President Sharon DuBose's (in pink top) Hand



Heading Up the Trail to Goat Camp Ruin



Pause at the top of the Hill for Orientation

This Area was Originally thought to be the Location of the Original Pit House Settlement before the Prehistoric Americans Moved slightly south out to where the Masonry Ruins are Now



Ant Hill – The Surface is covered with Degraded Pink Granite, but Ants bring up Earth from Deeper Down.

Prehistoric Ruins and Trash Heaps are Full of Ashes and Decayed Organic Materials, Coloring the Soil Dark. This Ant Hill Indicates there are some Prehistoric Disturbances Below



Taking a Look at an Unexcavated Feature. This is Feature 10 (F10).



Entering the Central Part of Goat Camp Ruin. To the Right are Features 28 & 29.



Room (Feature) 15, the second Room to be Excavated.

The Hearth is a little forward of Scott's cane. A Conus seashell was found in the doorway. This room has been stabilized with fresh mortar in the seams and under the top stones. The stabilization mortar is made of an earth-water-polymer mixture. Contact Jim Britton, Treasurer of San Tan Chapter, if you are interested in participating in Stabilization.

When the excavation is complete, the floor is covered with a woven protective material and then covered over with a layer of fill dirt to hold it down and to protect the actual floor.

Among the items found in this room were broken manos, a Conus shell, and ceramic pieces.



Scott Wood stands before a portion of the wall of Room 15 opposite the doorway that had collapsed prior to excavation, probably in prehistoric times.

The reason is that the room is cut into the hillside, water runs downhill, and a single course wall of masonry was not strong enough to bear the combined weight of earth and water. The excavators have built a diversion wall slightly uphill to divert water around the room rather than to it. You can see this “wall” at the top left of the photo, near observers feet.

The Room 15 wall collapse has been stabilized to show the kind of construction problems that occurred with the original inhabitants. All the rooms so far excavated were burned except Room 15. It appears it was abandoned while the site was occupied and used as a trash dump.



Scott Discusses Room 1, which coincidentally was the first room excavated.

Room 1 is a short ways uphill from Room 15. Among the items found in this room were several broken ceramic pots, a stone shaft straightener, and a stone axe head. Also, a piece of a shell bracelet.

This room has also been stabilized.



A visitors' "museum" piled on the wall of Room 1.

Well-meaning visitors pick up potsherds and "save" them in a pile for the Archaeologists. Don't do this.

Since it is not recorded where on the site the potsherds came from, they are now of very low value archaeologically.

It is okay to pick up potsherds and examine them, but try to return them to the spot where you found them.



Scott Wood and Tour Participants examine Room 6.

Not very visible in any of the photos here, this room has some long vertical slabs lining the walls in front of Scott and just to his right and elsewhere. This is different from other excavated rooms which all have coursed horizontal stone masonry walls.

Some parts of this room have coursed masonry wall sections. These apparently were repairs where the wall collapsed during occupation. The room was partially cut into a pre-existing trash mound by its prehistoric builders. This previously disturbed soil did not hold up well.



Notice the different floor colors in Room 6.

This room was cut into an earlier area of occupation. The lighter colored floor is native subsurface. The darker part is where a previous occupation trash mound was. As with the ant hill noted earlier, earlier habitations and trash mounds are full of ashes and decayed organic matter darkening the soil.

Scott Wood said that the earlier Archaeological assessment of the site had been that the original settlement had been pit houses further up the ridge and then the Prehistoric Americans moved closer to the point of the ridge and changed to stone-based architecture.

Now, says Scott, it appears the entire site had been used in earlier times and then shrunk in area along with the change in architecture.

The doorway (some visible in the foreground) was wide but framed in with wood, which burned. A lot of charred wood was pulled out of this door framing during excavation. It was carefully preserved for Carbon 14 dating.



Goat Camp Tour Participants inspecting a messy prehistoric repair wall in the back of Room 6. The doorway is front and center. Note that about one-quarter of the room was not excavated.



Another misguided visitors' "museum" of potsherds piled near Rooms 6 and 22.

Room 6 is between Rooms 22 and 7.

These two Rooms 22 and 7 have facing doorways, one sort of north and the other south. Also, both Rooms are oblong, and their doors are on a short side rather than a long side. Usually, the door is on a long side and faces east or southeast towards the rising sun.



Room 22

This room was missed in earlier surface surveys but was revealed in the pre-excavation survey. At first it was intended to excavate only half of it, but eventually it was completely excavated.

The Room 22 doorway faces northward across in front of the eastward facing door of Room 6 towards the southward facing door of Room 7. These three doorways enter upon perhaps a mini plaza.



Scott and Tour Participants inspecting Room 22.

The wide doorway, center, was wood framed in, similar to adjacent Room 6.



Scott Wood in shady Room 22 discussing Goat Camp as some Tour Participants sit and listen and rest. It was hot this day. The tour was midday.



Room 7 opposite Room 22.

Note that the doorway is on a short side but not centered. But it faces the centered doorway of Room 22. This is a large room.

The near short wall is square cornered. Not very clear in this photo, the far end wall is curved. The participating archaeology volunteers nicknamed it "The Amphitheater" before it was excavated due to its size and curved wall.

Most of the right half of this room was covered with rows of broken pots. The left center against the wall was a mortared-in stone slab floor. Imprints of woven baskets were seen in the mortar. The paved floor under the presumed storage baskets were to prevent rodents burrowing up underneath.

A large number of charred beans were found scattered in the far-left corner. A very large stone axe head was found in the far center. A cluster of Olivella seashells drilled with holes for stringing was found near right. In the near left corner a stone drill bit was found. A piece of fossil coral was found about room center.



Scott Wood explaining Room 7 to the Tour Participants.

There were some odd things about the construction of this Room. Excavation down to floor revealed two floors, one above the other, in the front part of the room. The back part of the Room had only the single upper floor.

This Room apparently had gone through some prehistoric remodeling as follows ...

The original Room had been smaller, near the door, which was centered on the wall. But the room had been later enlarged, widened to the left, making the door off center. And also the back part of the Room with curved wall was added.

The new wall foundations of the enlargement were placed about at the older, smaller room's floor level. The older smaller room's foundation stones were left in place and had been set deeper down. Then a new floor was made over the whole remodeled Room. This made for the earlier floor being buried under the new floor in the near part of the room. But the far part addition has only the newer floor.



After walking across the main plaza from Room 7, the Goat Camp Tour Participants arrive at the Room 8 Complex.

Left Center is Room 8, mostly unexcavated so far. Looking straight ahead is Feature 30, then Feature 29, and through the doorway, Feature 28.

Feature 28 is definitely a room. Feature 29 appears to be a small courtyard. I think that Feature 30 in the foreground is also a courtyard.

These three features line the front side of Room 8, a very large sturdily built Room. The Courtyard Feature 29 appears to control access to Room 8 as well as to Room 28.



Scott Points out Courtyard Feature 30. Courtyard 29 further back, then Room 28 at far back. Room 8 is basically behind the people in the foreground.



Scott Wood admires the “Beautiful Courtyard” Feature 29, which controls entry to very large Room 8, at left, and smaller Room 28, behind him.



Scott, standing in Room 28, describes the complex of items found in it. Large broken pots and seashells.



Room 28 was made more complicated by a badger's diggings that caused settling, and by a mass of tree roots.

The floor had been covered by a matting of reeds. This was revealed by a thin layer of ash throughout on the floor and by some impressions of reed stems in mud floor plaster.



Scott explains how a Courtyard can be distinguished from a Room, while holding a piece of Daub.

Roofs were made with wooden beams, filled out with brush and smaller splints, then plastered over with mud daub.

When a room is collapsed by burning, the earthen roof falls in on the burning wooden beams and smothers the fire. Thus, there will be charcoals and charred beams and perhaps even some wood preserved above the room floor. And the heat of the fire fires the dried mud roof daub, something like pottery being fired. This preserves pieces of hard burnt daub in the room fill.



A chunk of fired or burnt daub with potsherds stuck in it. The original clay mud daub was probably prepared from a handy nearby trash midden containing broken pottery, among other items.

A Courtyard with no daubed roof would not have large chunks of daub on the floor. Fires of items burning in a courtyard would not be smothered by a falling roof, so it would burn thoroughly, leaving only a layer of fine ash.

So, a Room can be distinguished from an open Courtyard by these signs. Burnt daub, charcoal, and charred wood indicate a room that burned. No burnt daub and no charcoal but perhaps a thin layer of fine ash indicate a courtyard.



Scott, standing in Courtyard 29, points to the large stones used to build Room 8.

Room 8 with its associated rooms and courtyards (Features 28, 29, 30, and 43) appears to have been built late in the Goat Camp construction. It also appears to have been built in an area that was originally a central plaza.

The stones used to build Room 8 are much bigger than for other structures at Goat Camp, some weighing 300 pounds. The stones were carried to Goat Camp from a point on Houston Mesa a mile away. A lot of work went into it.

Courtyard Feature 30 is in the foreground.



Scott is standing in front of the doorway into large Room 8. All that is visible is the far “door jamb” near Scott and in line with the tree trunk beyond. The large stones used to build Room 8 are visible at left.



Coursed large stone masonry of Room 8 along Courtyard Feature 29 in front of it. At least some of the stones appear to have been “dressed” before use, not just taken and used as found.



Scott Wood and Tour Participants standing in the large Room 8.

Room 8 is currently under excavation. You can see a bit of uncovered surface in the lower center foreground. This was some surface removed at the end of last spring.

Excavation for the Fall season starts this week in September.



Room 8 again, showing the large stones in its wall masonry and a bit of Courtyard Feature 29.



Scott inspects a Test Pit in Room 8.

Years ago, the first excavations were some Test Pits a meter square dug down to base earth. Another was done in Room 7, maybe others.

The Test Pits were dug next to a wall down to the bottom. This gave some preliminary idea about how much earth would need to be removed, the stratigraphy of the Feature, perhaps some idea of its purpose if artifacts were found, and perhaps a first guess at dating from a decorated potsherd.

That is the status of this pit now, as serious excavation of Room 8 is beginning.



Scott Wood is standing in Courtyard Feature 30 looking at a doorway into Feature 43.

Feature 43 was not identified in either the original site mapping or in the later amended site mapping. It was identified during the excavation of Courtyard Feature 30 by the doorway and its abutting wall. It is nestled in a corner where Room 8 and Courtyard 30 meet.



Scott, standing in Feature 43, is discussing its mystery with the Tour Participants, standing in Courtyard 30. A very small part of Feature 43 has been excavated where Scott is standing, facing the door leading to Courtyard 30.

Note that the sidewall in the center foreground seems to be only a couple feet long, extending left from Courtyard 30. Perhaps this is one end of an unexcavated doorway leading straight out at us? Scott says he has used a probe along the line to the left of the possible "doorway," but he found no evidence that there is a wall there.

I believe Scott said the partial excavation of Feature 43 revealed the base of an upright pole as though to hold up a roof. Charred wood and burnt daub were found in the excavation. So, it was apparently roofed.

It is a weird unexpected feature. Scott said that this Fall season the volunteer crew may excavate Feature 43 further to the left here to see if any sense can be made of it.



A piece of Charred Wood and scattered pieces of charcoal in Feature 43.

This was the end of the Goat Camp Tour.



Tour Participants head downhill from and out of the Goat Camp Site. This is a different route out than how the Tour came in.

The way the Tour Group came in is the eventual intended route for when the Goat Camp Ruin is developed as an educational site with pathways and signage.

That other route is a longer but more gradual climb up to the relatively level main ruin area.

This steeper route is a shortcut. The hill is here rocky and there is no maintained trail.

Typically, the Volunteer Goat Camp Excavators come up more or less this shorter steeper and rockier route, carrying all of the equipment. And then at the end of the day, they carry it back, along with bagged and labeled artifacts found. Some Excavators have to make two trips to get it all.

Traveling this hill is probably the hardest work of the excavation.



Goat Camp Tour Participants have almost arrived at the parking area after the Tour.

Much Thanks to Scott Wood for conducting this Tour and also doing a slide show narrated presentation about Goat Camp earlier in the day.