

Silver City NM Field Trip Participant Comments and Photos

This is an assemblage of comments and photos by participants on the Field Trip to the area of Silver City, New Mexico, jointly sponsored by Arizona Archaeological Society Rim Country and San Tan Chapters, that took place Friday, Saturday, & Sunday, October 15, 16, & 17.

Several places were scheduled for the Field Trip and several more were added in progress as the opportunity arose. The Field Trip was flexible and not all participants visited all sites. All of the sites had either Archaeological or Historic significance.

The Catwalk

Western New Mexico Museum

Gila Cliff Dwellings (National Monument)

Spirit Canyon Pictographs

Mimbres Cultural Heritage Center (Mattocks Ruin, Historical Ranch, Museum)

Santa Rita Copper Mine Overlook

Fort Bayard

City of Rocks State Park

Dragonfly Trail

First, some verbal impressions from Field Trippers ...

From: Lou Jackson

Day 1:

I was initially not enthused with visiting the "Catwalk". My thinking was, "where is the rock art?" However, after spending some time there, I realized it was a good opportunity to get to know my fellow travelers. Most of you probably already knew each other, but this was only my second outing with the Rim Country AAS. And once I set aside my pre-conceptions, I really enjoyed the sojourn up the canyon. The Catwalk is an amazing feat of engineering, and the scenery breathtaking. (Although it was not wise to take a deep breath with all the bugs in the air ...)

The museum at the WNMU was interesting, and my wife probably would have enjoyed it more than I did; unfortunately museums are just not my cup of tea. I did find the history of the building interesting; I can only imagine the frustration of professors attempting to conduct chemistry experiments with basketballs bouncing and dribbling all over the ceiling.

Day 2:

Was a very busy day! For me the Gila Cliff Dwellings was the highlight of the trip. (The drive just to get there was exciting also ... J) I have visited a few other cliff dwellings, but these were the most extensive and best preserved ruins I have had the pleasure to visit, to date. Unfortunately, I did manage to trip on my own big feet and did a number on both knees and my right fore-arm. I guess it could have been worse – I could have gone over the cliff. L

The hike up Spirit Canyon was awe-inspiring to see so much rock art that was created by people hundreds of years ago. I have seen similar art all over the southwest – and have always come away humbled.

Finally, the guided tour through the Mimbres village was fascinating. Our guide brought the old dwellings back to life for us.

Day 3:

The walk through Fort Bayard brought back a lot of memories – most pleasant, others not so much – of seven years in the Air Force. It doesn't matter what branch you served; all military installations have a sameness about them.

What can I say about the trip through the City of Rocks? It was a fun way to finish off the trip. It felt like a scavenger hunt looking for rock art. I have always loved Kokopellis – I have several t-shirts emblazoned with them – and it was fun to find them in the park. (Even if they were fake ...) It did sadden me to see how the park service had set up camping areas within the rocks. It really diminishes the grandeur of the rock formations.

Then that afternoon a couple of us hiked the “Dragonfly Trail” just outside Silver City. I am glad that we did. The petroglyphs at the end of the trail are abundant and very interesting. And I am certain that we missed a lot of them.

From: Dennis DuBose

In reference to the “fake Kokopellis,” here are some joint remarks from myself and from Lou Jackson ...

I have always associated Kokopelli with Arizona sites and cultures, so it did seem to me to be a rather far eastern location for the images. Also, they were rather well formed, like commercial depictions, while most petroglyph depictions I have seen were less well crafted. Also, they were black, like painted on the rock, while the other rock art items were white, pecked through the weathered boulder patina.

The larger first one (see photo by Lou Jackson last page below) is completely unprotected from the elements. It would have been exposed to the sun and rain for centuries. I don't see how those fine lines, especially, could have survived so well.

I did a casual Internet search for things like “fake Kokopelli rock art at City of Rocks” and found only one person posting something about any Kokopellis at City of Rocks. He appears to have

been a student who toured some of the same places we did in the Silver City area. He indicated that perhaps they are “not authentic” and “of questionable origins.”

Here are his two postings with the excerpts about the City of Rocks Kokopellis ...

<https://mccuration.com/city-of-rocks-s-p-rockart/>

I also found one very small, and one quite large Kokopelli figure. A friend of mine who is quite knowledgeable about New Mexico rock art thinks they are not authentic, but I am not so sure. Regardless of their authenticity, I had a great time looking for them.

<https://mccuration.com/thanksgiving-2016-a-quick-trip-to-some-new-mexico-classics/>

There are two Kokopelli figures in the park, one large and one small. They are of questionable origins, but I was happy to find them.

From: Diane Seago

I truly enjoyed everything on the Silver City trip. I expected the Catwalk and Gila Cliff dwellings to be impressive and they were. However, the City of Rocks was also impressive and fun. A bunch of adults on a scavenger hunt for petroglyphs! The ranger provided a sheet of instructions/locations for the petroglyphs and off we went. We, of course, found them all. The best one was the Kokopelli located behind the small rock. (I will send photos later.)

Kudos to the organizer. It was a great trip.

Diane

From: Marie Renner

The whole day was filled with wonderful experiences, but what a taste of ancient life we had at the Gila Cliff Dwellings! The climb was well worth it, to be so immersed into the life that trod the same path as we did. To stand in those rooms and imagine the lives that once thrived there was overwhelming to me. How fortunate the inhabitants were to wake up each morning to that vista. I could have spent more time, but Jim was anxious for us to meet Larry the Lizard on the path. LOL!

The collection of Mimbres pottery on display at WNMU was a true joy to see. So many figures and creatures they used to decorate the wonderful pots with such precision and detail. I think I took a picture of nearly every one!

From: Jim and Marie Britton

This field trip Included eight venues which introduced us to several new sites that we had never heard of e.g. Catwalk National Rec. Site, the Mattocks site in Membres Valley, Fort Bayard, and City Of Rocks State Park. Each site was special in its own way. At City Of Rocks, we searched for the 5 petroglyphs. Using clues provided by the park we found all five and a live rattlesnake. It reminded us of being on an easter egg hunt. In total it was a GREAT field trip.

And now some Photos ...

From: Lou Jackson



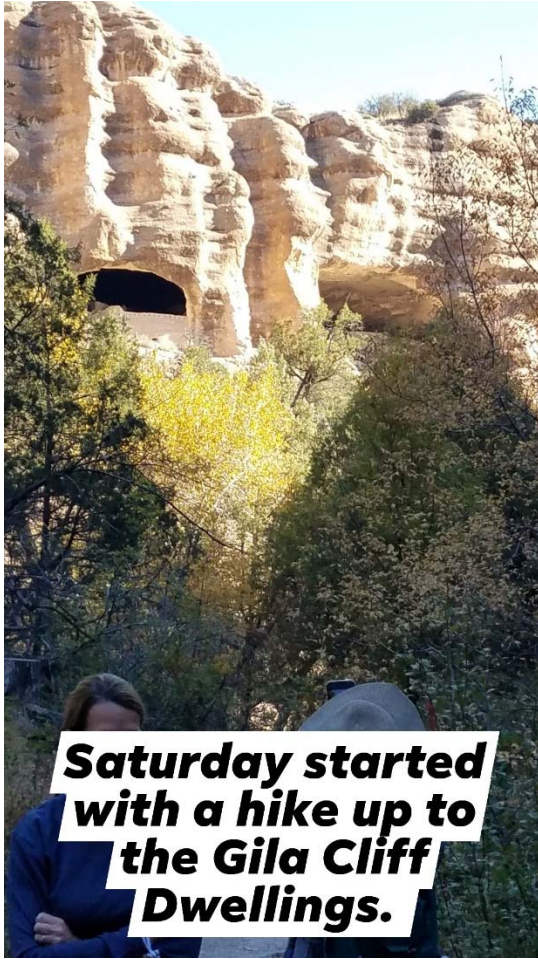
All but 3 of the Filed Trippers (or Motley Crew, as Lou calls us) Pose at City of Rocks

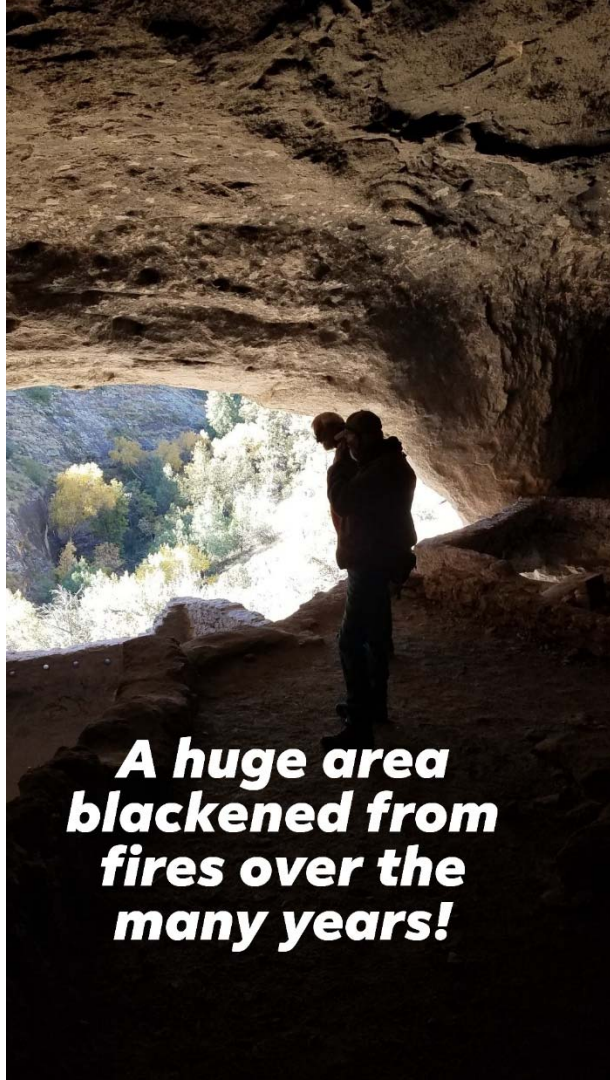
From: Kim Gilles

The Mimbres Culture Heritage Site located off Hwy 35 east of Silver City was a pleasant surprise. We strolled the interpretive trail with our guide Marilyn who the DuBois met at the most recent Pecos Conference. Marilyn was very knowledgeable about the Mimbres culture and had been working with the Mimbres Culture Heritage Site for many years. This site was called the Mattocks site and was occupied about a thousand years ago, it had already been excavated and recovered, Marilyn helped us visualize how the site looked when it was occupied by the original Mogollon inhabitants. The museum had developed beautiful and informative interpretive signs and three-dimensional dioramas that were stationed at each room block. One of my favorite parts of the museum was the display of Mimbres classic period “pottery” which was not really pottery, but dried squash shells painted as Mimbres replicas.



From: Marie Britton





**A huge area
blackened from
fires over the
many years!**



**And sealed doors
along with open
doors??**



**Prehistoric corn
cobs!**



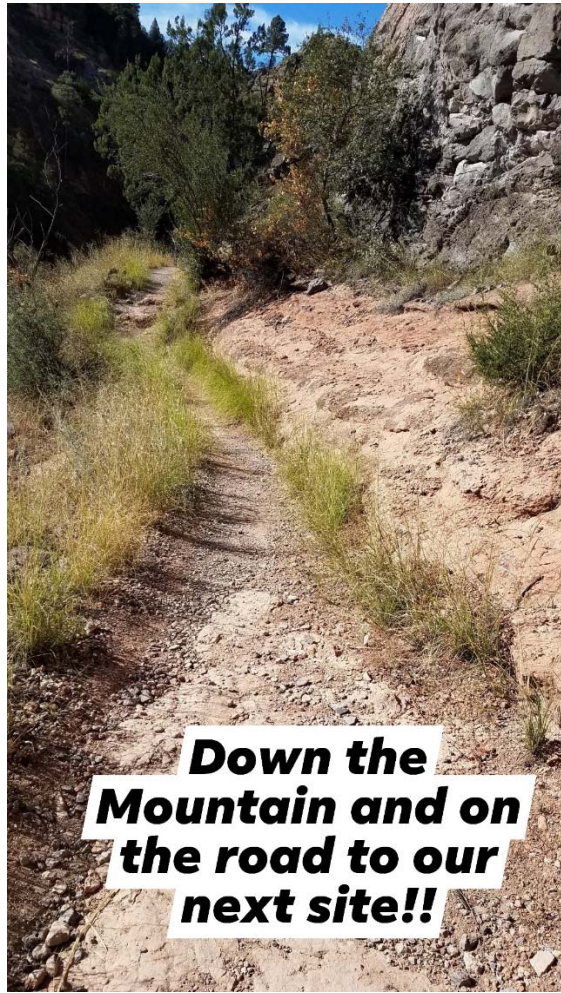
And rock art!

Then a quick trip
down the ladder!



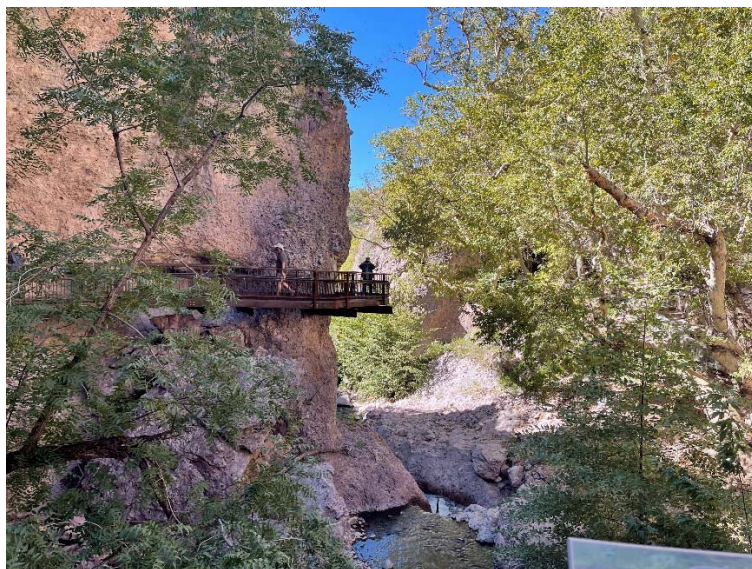


**He looks alive
and scary but
he's really quite
dead!**



**Down the
Mountain and on
the road to our
next site!!**

From: Sharon DuBose



At the Catwalk



More Catwalk



The Catwalk Goes On

From: Lou Jackson



A Day at Dragonfly Trail



Give Sharon a Big Hand



These Might have been Originally One Rock Petroglyphs on Both





Not Sure These are Real Prehistoric Peetroglyphs





Namesaks of the Dragonfly Trail





Trickster of the City of Rocks (Kokopelli)



Give Sharon a Big Hand

Thank you Sharon, for organizing a very enjoyable trip!