

Summary of Field Trip to Springerville Sites September 18 & 19, 2021

This Photo Summary of the Springerville Field Trip was assembled by Dennis DuBose from an earlier draft by Marie Britton and Kim Gilles, edited somewhat by Dennis DuBose, with photos from Kim Gilles, Marie Britton, Diane Seago, Denise Johnson, and others. Uncredited photos are from uncertain sources (please pardon the lapse).

The Springerville Field Trip was arranged, organized, and led by Kim Gilles, at the time Secretary of Rim Country Chapter, also a member of San Tan Chapter, with specific site guides arranged by her.

In overall outline, the Springerville Field Trip visited Casa Malpais Pueblo site as its centerpiece, with visits to the Sipe Mountain Wildlife Area Rudd Pueblo site and Amity Pueblo site and associated museums. Casa Malpais features an astronomical calendar observatory, a great kiva, ancient stairways and rock art from the Mogollon culture. Since the trip destination of Springerville is not a short drive from Payson and points southwest, the field trip involved one or two overnight stays locally for Field Trippers who participated in both days.

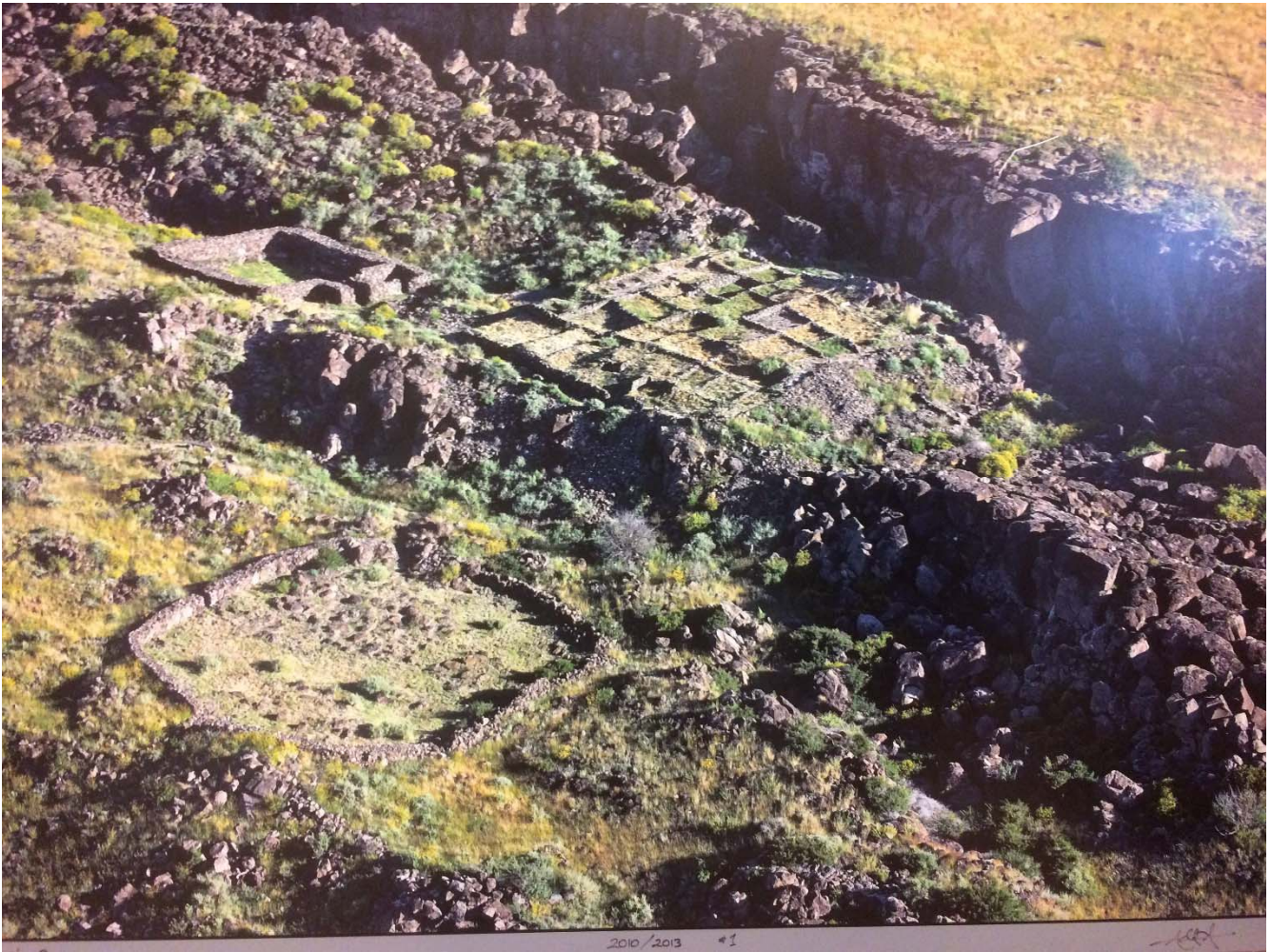
Saturday morning September 18, AAS members were transported in a small bus to the Casa Malpais Pueblo Site near Springerville, Arizona.

The museum features artifacts and photos from Casa Malpais and a video introduction by Hopi and Zuni elders.



Our tour guide was Darrell, provided information at each stop along the tour in story format which kept all of us entertained and informed regardless of prior archeology knowledge. In the photo above Darrell stands next to two petroglyph solstice makers on boulders which line up with points on the landscape.

Casa Malpais means Bad Country House. The pueblo is located in a tangle of volcanic rubble at the base of a cliff. The mesa top above and the land spread out before the pueblo is relatively flat grassland.



An Aerial View of Casa Malpais ... You can see the astronomical calendar observatory in the foreground, the great kiva on the left, and the main room block center. At the top you can see the cliff which has the prehistoric staircase up to the mesa top behind the pueblo.



Trail Entering Casa Malpais Pueblo Site

The Casa Malpais Guide Darrell led the group up the hill toward the lava cliffs and the village, passing several terraces which had been prehistorically cleared of rocks ...



Photo by Denise Johnson



One of Many Petroglyph Panels
Photo by Denise Johnson

And they entered the Great Kiva.



The Great Kiva at Casa Malpais

Photo by Denise Johnson



Then the Field Trippers followed the trail through the room block and ascended the prehistoric staircase located in the volcanic cliff to the mesa top, from which they could look across to see Coyote Hills shield volcano which produced the flows that created the basalt cliffs.



Mesa atop the Prehistoric Staircase looking across to see Coyote Hills Shield Volcano



Miles Johnson Atop the Prehistoric Staircase Looking Down towards the Casa Malpais Pueblo
Photo by Denise Johnson

Looking down from the mesa top one could see room blocks ...



.... And a prehistoric astronomical calendar observatory...



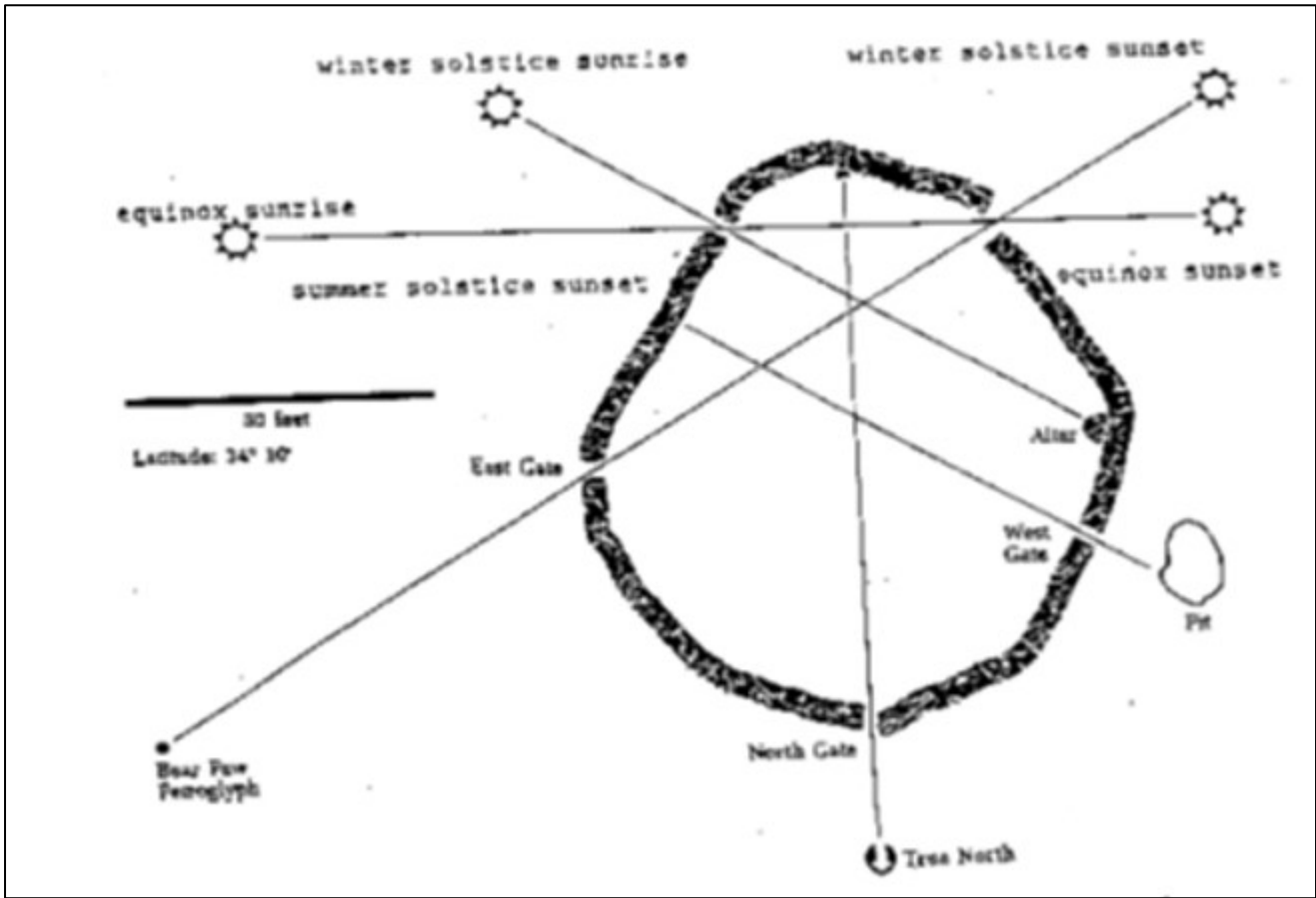


Diagram Explaining the Markers and Openings in the Casa Malpais Calendric Observatory



Southeast Gate for Equinox Sunrise Southwest Gate for Equinox Sunset
 Casa Malpais Calendric Observatory Southern Gates for Observing Equinoxes

Field Trippers followed the Casa Malpais visit with a visit to the Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area seven miles south of Springerville.



At the Sipe Visitor Center

Photo by Diane Seago

It is a former ranch that the Arizona Fish & Game has turned into a recreational area. The Sipe White Mountain Wildlife area had an interesting visitor center which contained examples of the pottery and construction styles found at Rudd Pueblo.

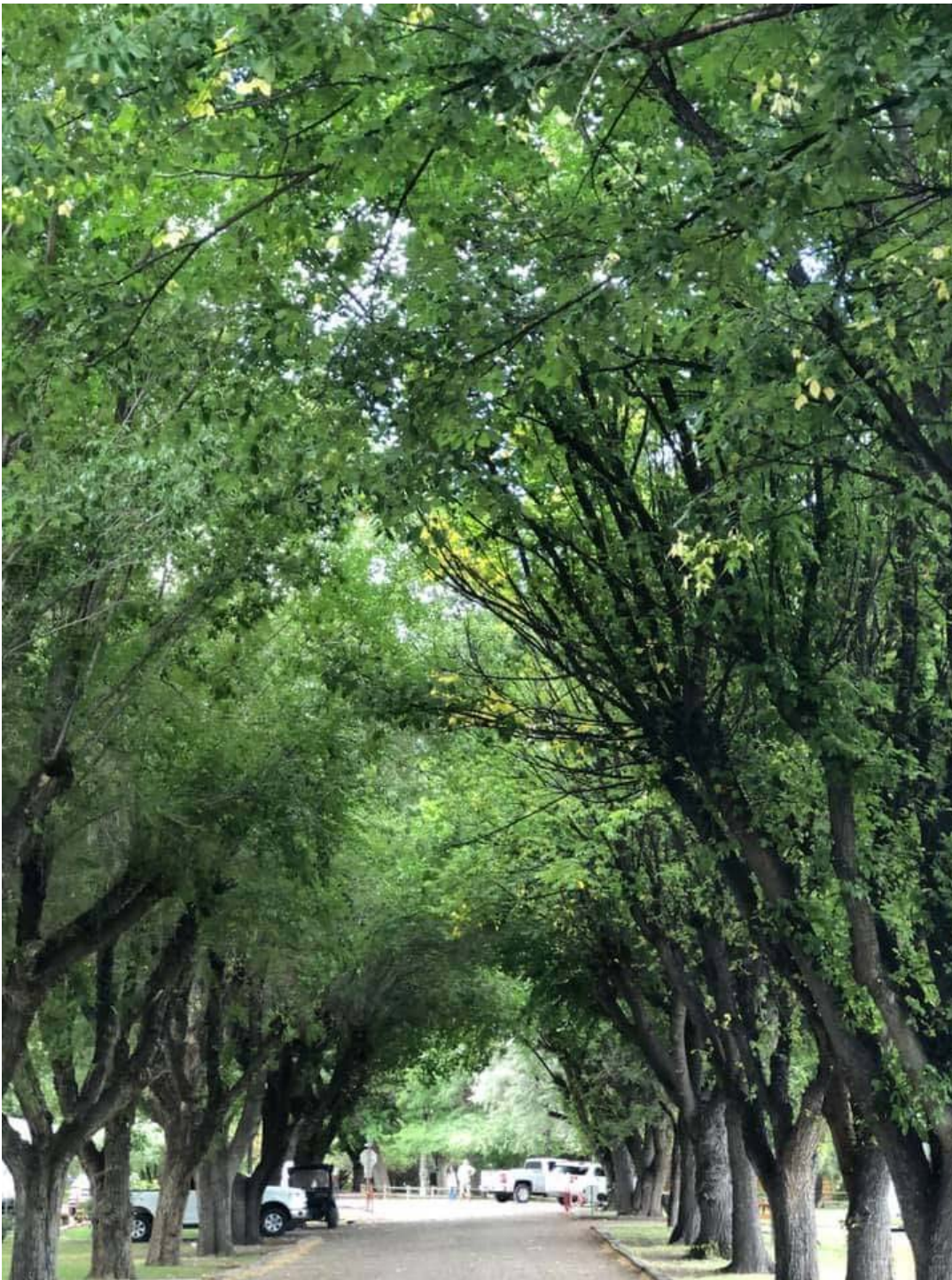


St Johns Phase Polychrome Redware Bowls at Sipe Museum



Construction Style Exhibit at Sipe Visitors' Center

Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area includes four hiking trails, one of which leads to some petroglyphs. It was intended to visit these petroglyphs, but recent flood damage to a trail bridge prevented this. Instead, the Field Trippers walked a short distance to the Rudd Pueblo Site.



Road into Rudd Creek Pueblo Site

Photo by Denise Johnson

Hardworking camp hosts had cleared a path through overgrown vegetation to the ruin, including a beautiful Chaco-style wall.



Chaco-Style Wall at Rudd Pueblo Site at Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area Photo by Marie Britton

Rudd Pueblo had many beautiful painted pottery sherds as shown in the photo below, including part of a ladle handle.



Some Rudd Pueblo Potsherds

Sunday morning September 19 the AAS Field Trippers visited Amity Pueblo on a 71-acre property owned by The Archaeological Conservancy in Eagar, Arizona. Eagar is a sister-town to Springerville. In 2011 there were plans to construct a two-acre fishing pond near the pueblo. This resulted in disturbing a portion of the prehistoric site, and the project was cancelled. The walls are not visible except for wall fall, but there were many very interesting sherds to see.



Amity Pueblo Wall Fall (Marie Britton)



Amity Pueblo Area (Diane Seago)

The tour guide was Carol Farnsworth, a very active member of the Little Colorado River AAS chapter. The group enjoyed listening to one of our AAS members speak about the botany of the area in relation to native American archeology.



Field Trippers at Amity Pueblo Site



Two Amity Flower Photos by Diane Seago

Sipe Flower Photo by Denise Johnson

Field Tripper Jim Britton, Treasurer of San Tan Chapter, who has been somewhat involved with the Casa Malpais site since 1990, said that it is the most interesting site he has ever seen. He had visited the Casa Malpais site while it was being excavated and got to see many things before others had. It was a nostalgic walk down memory lane for him, as he had not been there for a long time.

Jim Britton said that he had met and known all of the original excavators, including Ned Danson. This is a point where Casa Malpais intersects popular culture.

Edward Bridge Danson Jr was one of the archaeologists who worked on Casa Malpais. He was the director of the Museum of Northern Arizona 1959–1975. He apparently also was an archaeologist for the Navajo Reservation. Consequently, his son Edward Bridge Danson III was raised in Flagstaff. His son is better known as Ted Danson, the actor in the TV series "Cheers" and various other TV and movie items. Apparently, some archaeology rubbed off on him, as he and his wife Mary Steenburgen have a production organization called Anasazi Productions.

Another point of intersection with popular culture ... Visible near Eager and Amity Pueblo
Photos by Denise Johnson ...



26 Bar Hereford Ranch Once owned and often visited by Film Legend John Wayne. The Ranch with the prominent white show barn came to fame in the 1940s as the Milky Way Hereford Ranch, owned by the Mars Candy Family. Now owned by the Hopi Tribe

