

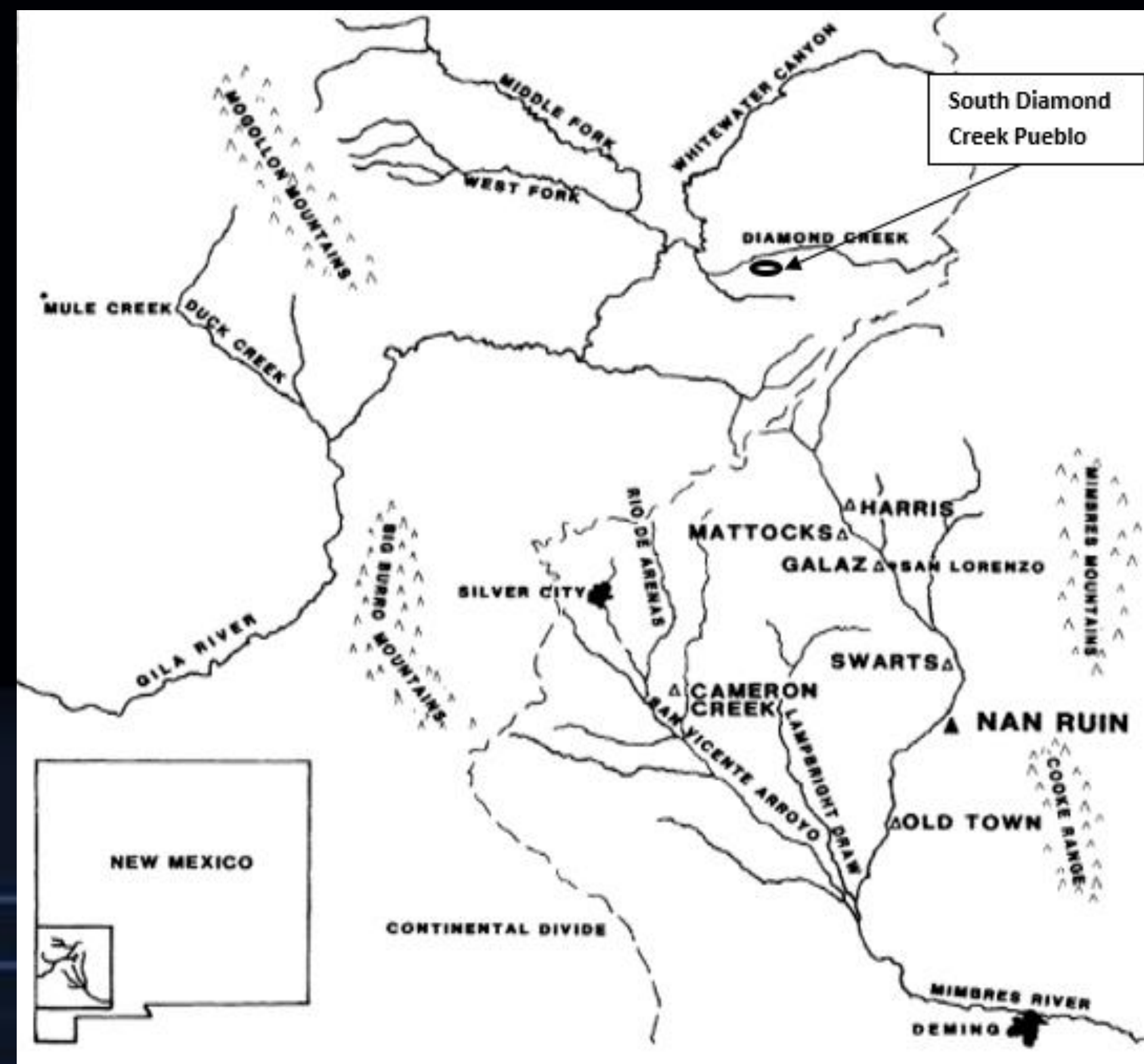
# Salvage Excavation: NMSU Summer Field Project at the South Diamond Creek Pueblo in the Northern Mimbres Region

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## Introduction:

As a part of long-term archaeological research in the northern Mimbres region, New Mexico State University (NMSU) anthropology students spent the summer of 2016 getting to know a bit more about the Mimbres people, and along the way helped preserve their history. Eight NMSU students joined community volunteers for four weeks to explore and excavate areas of the South Diamond Creek Pueblo (SDCP) in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Area of the Gila National Forest. The recovery effort was initiated due to the site eroding off a canyon rim. Recovery of archaeological data was critical before the site was lost to the elements.



## Research Goals:

The project has three goals: 1) to contribute to our understanding of cultural trajectories in the northern Mimbres region, 2) to assess the damage to the site by erosion and looting activities, and 3) to learn about being stewards of cultural resources for the public at large.

## Accomplishments:

This project has been remarkably successful and several NMSU students have used data from the excavations for their own research. Their projects are diverse and include studies of ceramic exchange, lithic tool-stone procurement, and environment-human relationship on this landscape. In collaboration with NMSU students and volunteers, the SDCP project helps us improve our knowledge of when and how the Mimbres people inhabited southern New Mexico. We want to promote archaeological investigation while being conscience of the post field requirements for artifact curation and analysis.

## Conclusion:

Since 2014, NMSU students and the PI have explored the question of when and how the Mimbres people lived in the northern Mimbres region. After the completion of salvage excavation at SDCP this summer, we hope to provide more data and information about the Mimbres culture within the region. By so doing, the public can learn the cultural trajectory from the SDCP site and understand how it is similar or different from other Mimbres cultures in the Mogollon area.



## Northern Mimbres Region:

Geographically, the Northern Mimbres is defined by Mimbres Pithouse Period and Classic Period sites that are situated along or in spatial proximity to Diamond Creek, a branch of the Gila East Fork, and its tributaries of South Diamond Creek, East Diamond Creek, and Middle Diamond Creek. The study area is part of the Black Range Ranger District of the Gila National Forest as well as the northern portion of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. Mimbres sites in this region represent some of the most northern settlements within the traditionally defined boundaries of the Mimbres region west of the Black Range.

Although archaeologists have conducted archaeological research in the Mimbres River Valley, Eastern Mimbres Valley, and Upper Gila River Valley, there has been little exploration or synthesis of archaeological research in the northern Mimbres region. Research conducted by Arakawa and Chris Adams represent some of the first professional documentation and study of Mimbres sites within the area.

## Future Research:

The PI and NMSU students will conduct a field school in summer 2017 for six weeks. Excavation of a pit depression will be the focus for 2017. This depression is a possible great kiva or pithouse. We will also sample around the plaza of the pueblo and will ensure that we have reached sterile soil in the pueblo. To view our progress or to stay informed on some of our research please follow us on Facebook: @ New Mexico State University Archaeology Field School.