The Salado Preservation Initiative: Combining Research and Regional Preservation Planning

Archaeology Southwest
Exploring and protecting the places of our past

Salado Archaeology and Social Change in the Late Pre-Contact Southwest

In the late 1200s, prolonged drought and social upheaval across the Four Corners region led many residents of this area to leave their homelands. Among these northern peoples were groups archaeologists call the Kayenta, who migrated to already populated valleys in the central and southern Southwest. In some places, they joined existing communities; in others, they created new settlements. Though relatively few in number, Kayenta immigrants were economically and socially influential.

In many places where the Kayenta resettled, their arrival coincided with a series of changes in how people lived and what they believed. At first, tensions ensued. As a generation or two passed, though, the descendants of immigrants and local groups found ways to live together, or at least coexist as neighbors. From these diverse communities emerged a new ideology—a new way of looking at things—that embraced aspects of local and immigrant traditions. We call this ideology, and the new traditions, practices, and objects associated with it, "Salado."

Archaeology Southwest researchers have conducted a series of related projects since the 1990s focused on understanding the complex social, political, and demographic changes associated with Salado developments. Here we discuss how this program of research has been both informed by and has informed our recent work to preserve sites and landscapes across the Southwest.
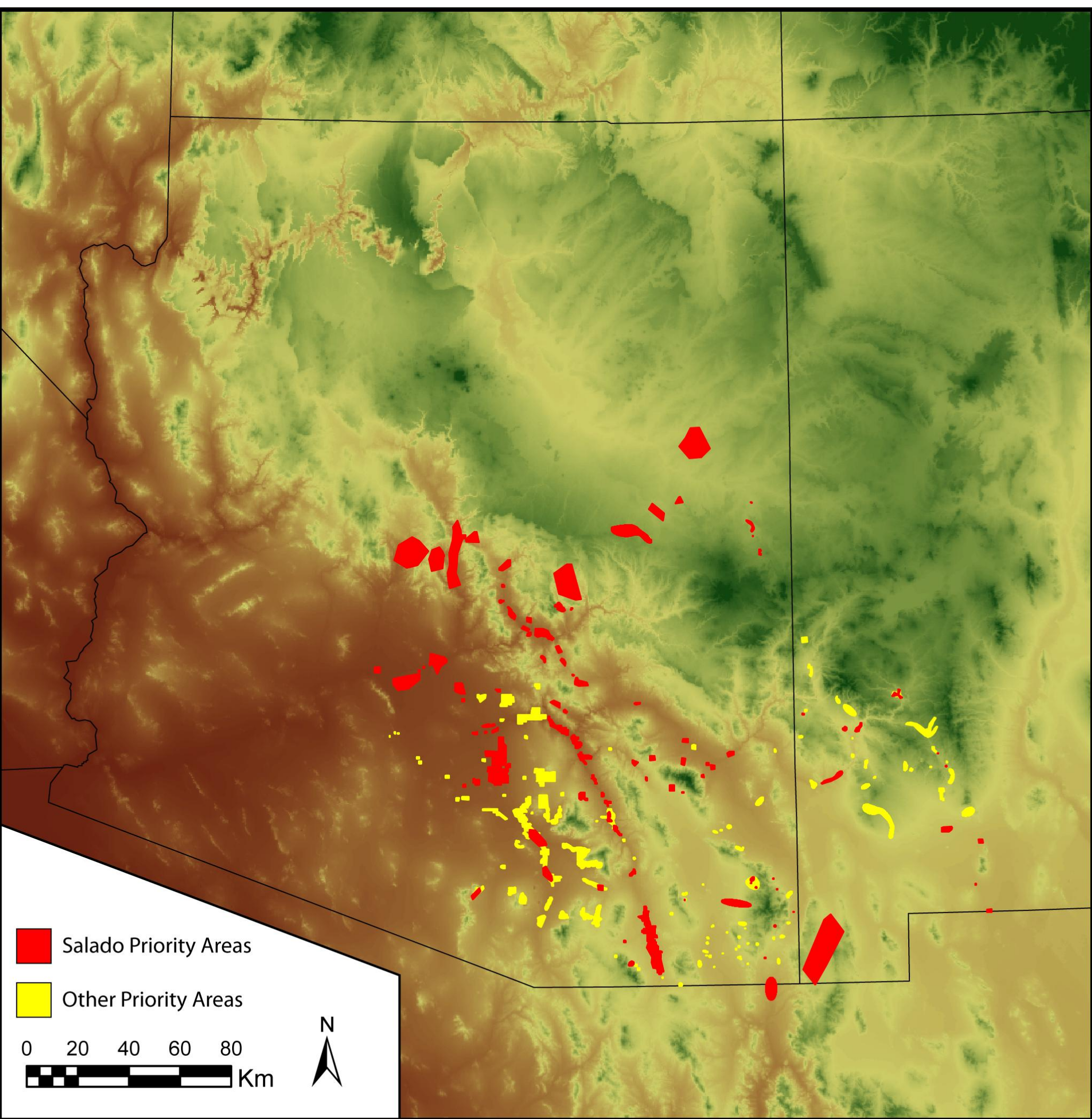
Goat Hill Pueblo
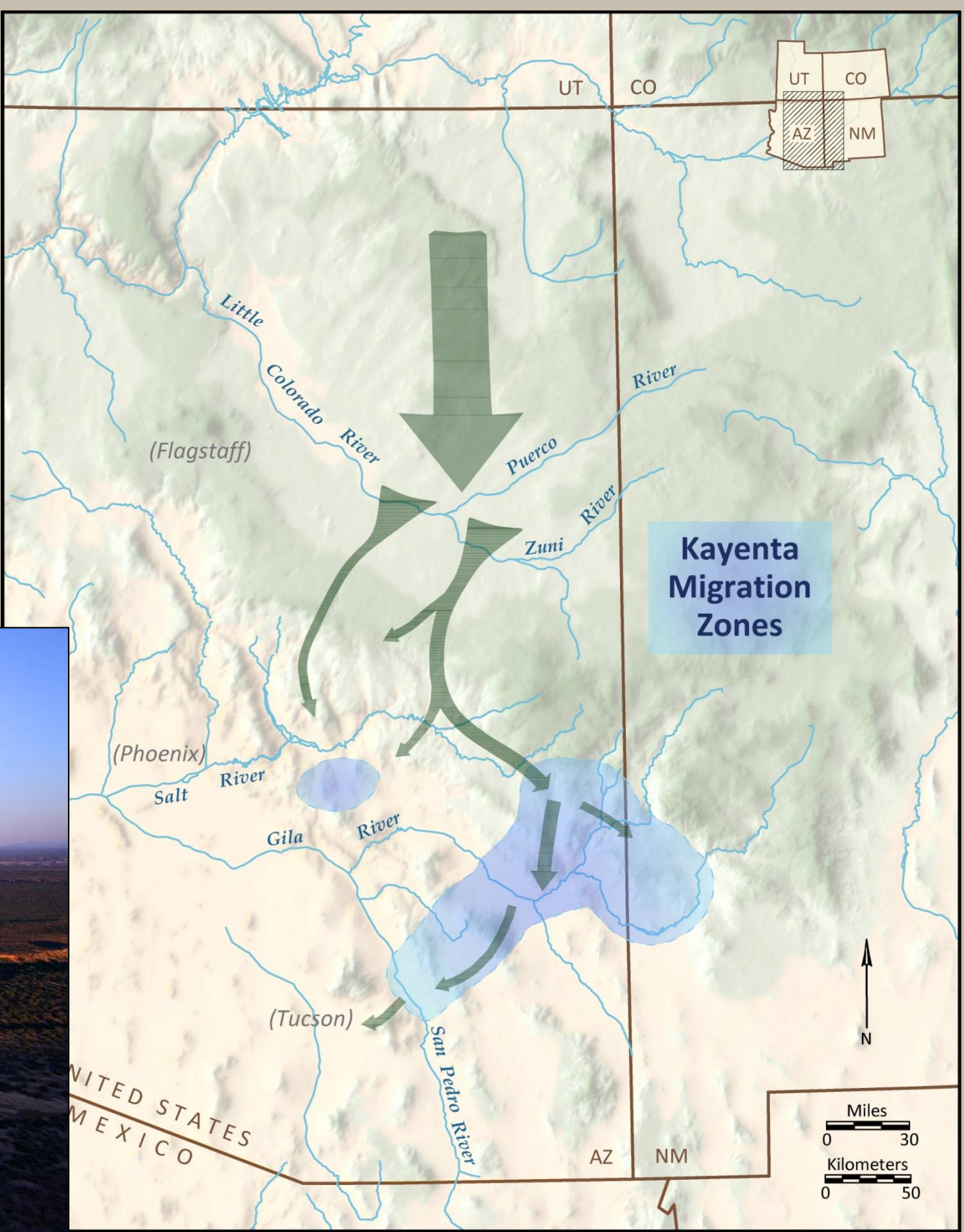
Kayenta Migrations, ca. A.D. 1275-1325

Main area of Salado influence
ca. A.D. 1300-1450
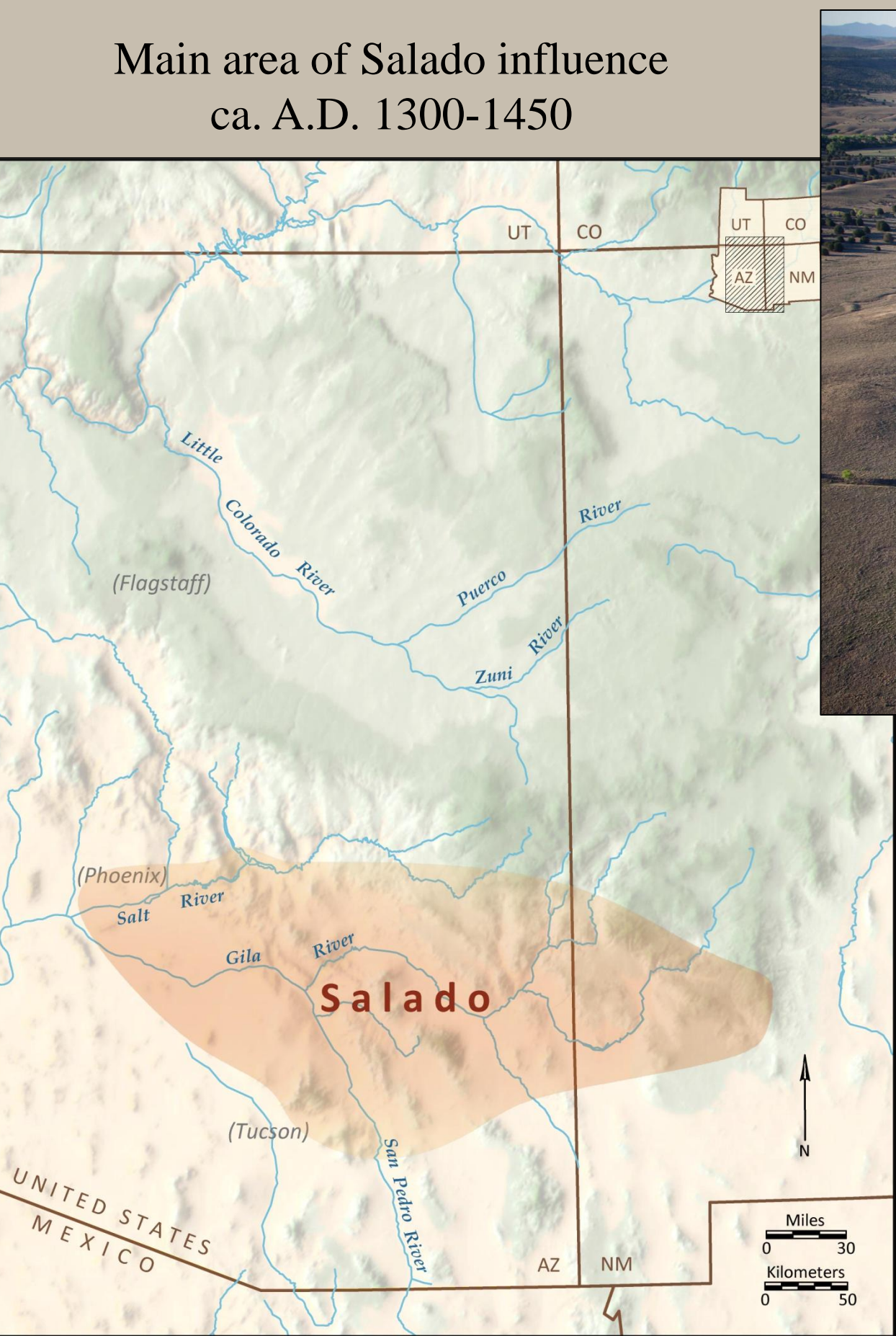
3-Up Site

Field school students participating in the Salado research program

The Salado Preservation Initiative

The Salado planning effort differs from previous projects in that the study area was defined thematically rather than geographically. We considered a restricted time period (A.D. 1250-1450) and defined the focal resources as those sites/areas with the potential to provide data important for studying the origins and spread of Salado. This allowed us to cover a larger geographic area and to tie this preservation work to our current research goals.

What is priority area planning?

➢ A dynamic process for using known information and expert opinion to identify spatially explicit cultural resource preservation priorities (sites and landscapes) within a region

➢ One tool in the preservation toolbox intended to complement other preservation laws and management practices

Salado Priority Areas
Other Priority Areas

Final 106 Salado priority areas and other priority areas within the study area.

Why should we set priorities?

➢ Resources (time and money) are scarce and we cannot protect it all

➢ Our goals and objectives are best accomplished when are actions are proactive rather than reactive

➢ Preservation opportunities can be serendipitous and we need to be ready to act

➢ Adverse effects are best avoided when considered early in planning processes, particularly when information can be organized at regional levels
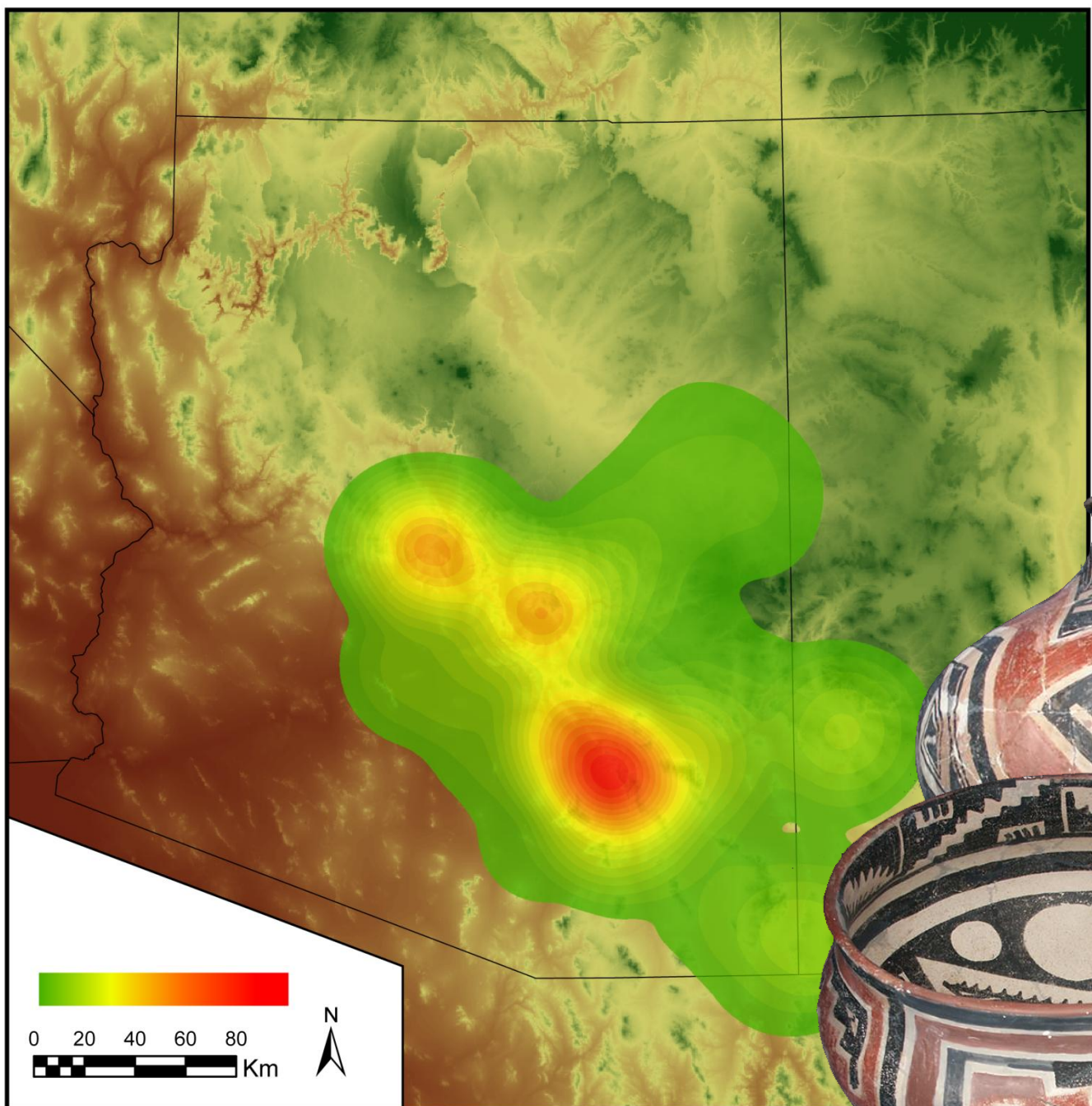
Regional distribution of Salado Polychrome (Roosevelt Red Ware) ceramics across Arizona and New Mexico
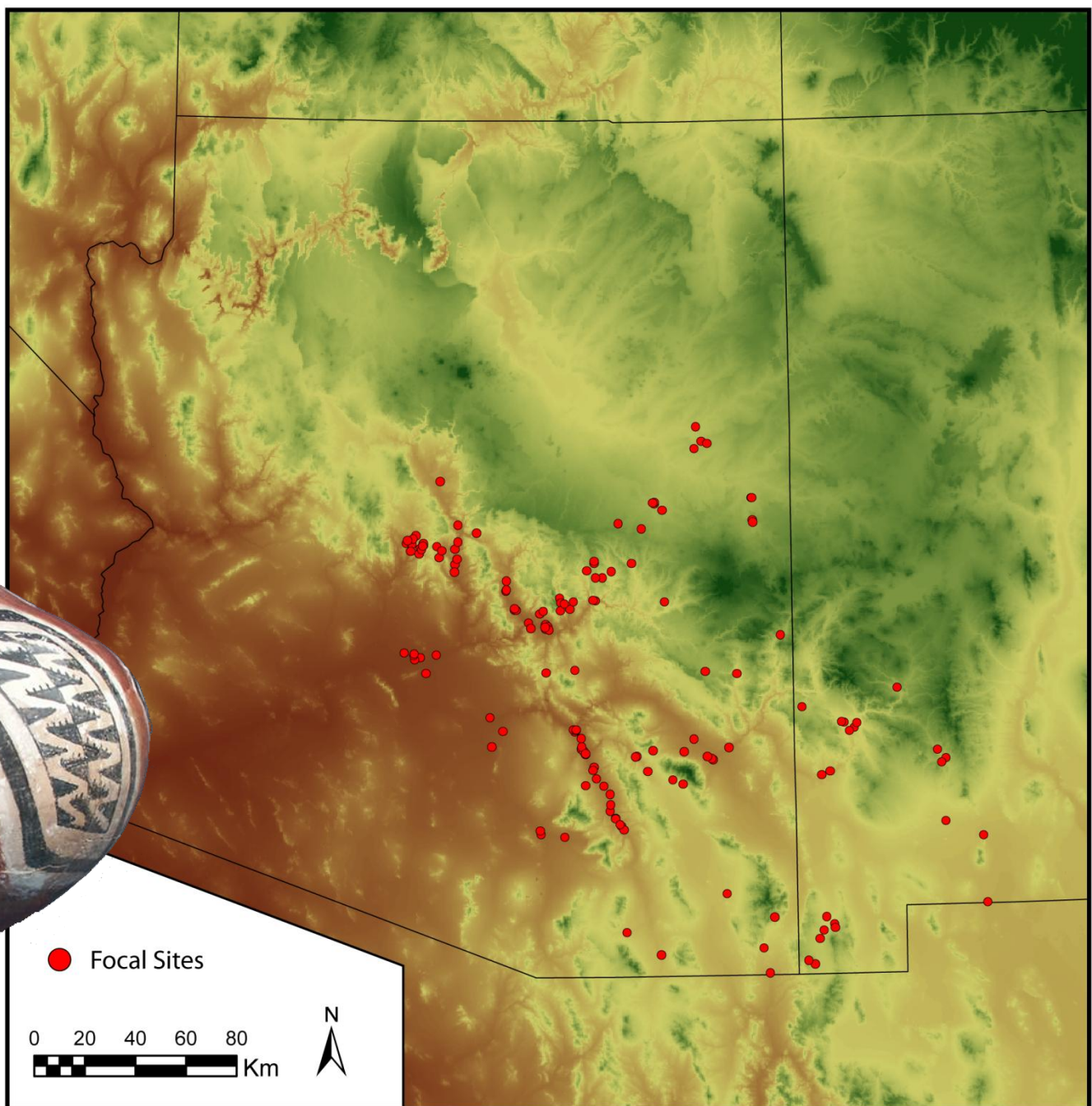
Focal Sites

Focal sites were defined based on the presence and frequency of Salado ceramics or other related features/structures.

The Priority Planning Process

The priority planning process can be broken down into five basic steps:

➢ Organizing information
  ➢ Gathering available site data from research and management databases
  ➢ Spatially organizing those data to highlight focal resources
➢ Soliciting expert knowledge/opinion
  ➢ Providing spatial information and engaging experts one-on-one or in workshop settings to define/draw polygons in real-time (GIS) around important sites or areas based on their detailed knowledge of those areas
➢ Site Survey and land status research
  ➢ Refining priority area boundaries based on more detailed survey information when available
  ➢ Removing private lands which do not support focal sites
➢ Updating condition assessments
  ➢ Where recent information are not available (and where possible) conducting new condition assessment/site visits
➢ Finalizing recommendations/boundaries
  ➢ Boundaries are finalized based on all the information above
  ➢ Developing a publicly accessible platform for disseminating results
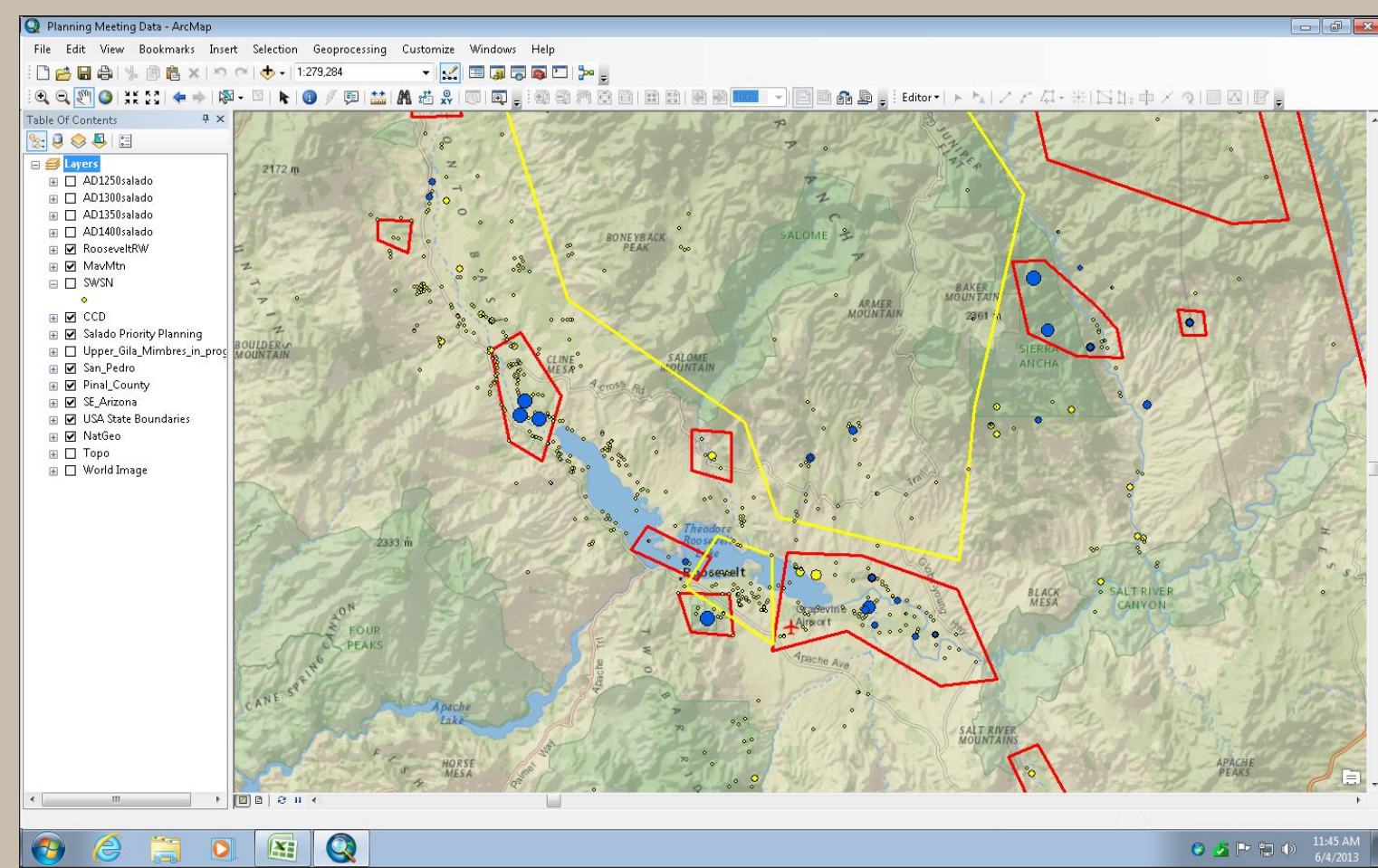
This map shows an example of the GIS environment used to accompany discussions with expert consultants. Using this format, we are able to display different categories of sites or different base maps to guide the conversation and to define priority polygons. We use this format both in person and remotely with screen sharing software.

Research and Preservation Outcomes

➢ Identification of priority areas is providing new data on known sites and broader context to better understand this information.

➢ Priority areas enable us to proactively engage with federal, state, and tribal agencies as well as individual private land owners

➢ Priority areas are being used by land management agencies to evaluate impacts of large scale projects (i.e. energy infrastructure) earlier in the planning process.

Proposed Transmission Line Corridor Alignments
INSET
San Pedro River Valley
INSET

Volunteers help to update site condition assessments
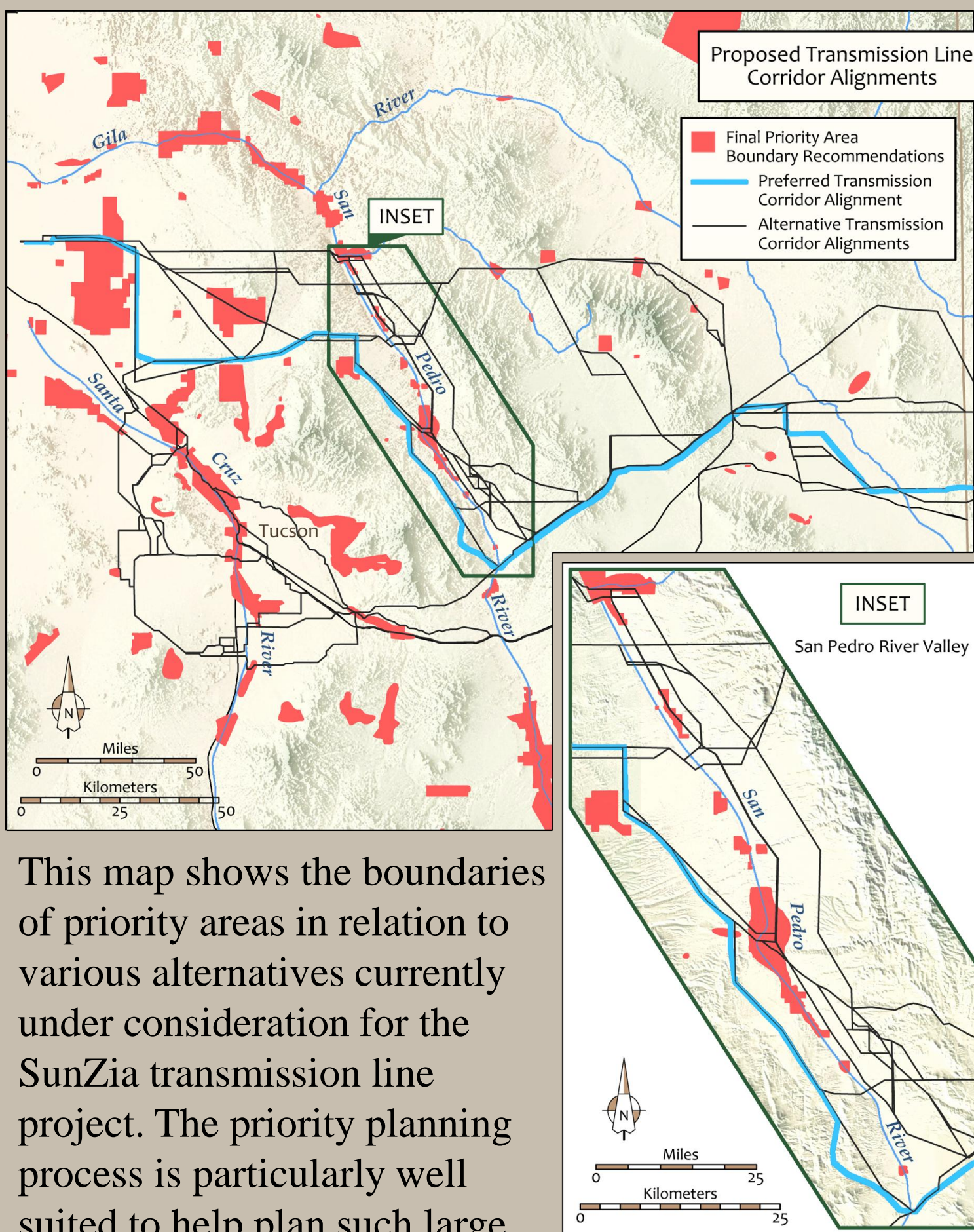
This map shows the boundaries of priority areas in relation to various alternatives currently under consideration for the SunZia transmission line project. The priority planning process is particularly well suited to help plan such large projects.

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