



Archaeology Southwest

2024 ANNUAL REPORT





In 2024, we had the absolute joy of working with Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist David Wallace and retired NPR host Corey Flintoff to produce a 3-minute video sharing the why and how of our work. From conception to release, the process helped us develop new, more intuitive ways to talk about our collaborative and conservation-based approach. IMAGES: SKYLAR BEGAY

Use your smartphone  
to view the video



Dear Friends,

Although 2024 was my first year at Archaeology Southwest, it was the organization's 35<sup>th</sup> year since its 1989 incorporation—and what a journey that has been! Trailblazing, wayfinding, pivoting around washouts and obstructions, never stopping.

For those who are our longtime companions on this path, thank you for your steadfast support and belief in our mission. For those who are new to this community, welcome!

As you know—as *you make possible*—Archaeology Southwest continues to pioneer the practice of Preservation Archaeology, which

- » Advocates for landscape-scale protections at local & federal levels
- » Helps enforce federal laws pertaining to place and heritage
- » Seeks creative ways to learn and share people's stories in & on the land
- » Supports a sense of place & community today and into the future as informed by award-winning research and in collaboration with Tribes and other stewards.



We look forward as well as back—where American archaeology and our own organization have been, and where we collectively need to go. That future is increasingly empowered and driven by diverse communities. I see it clearly as I spend time on the landscape with our team and our partners.

Even as we expand the scope of our collaborations, we continue our integrated, holistic approach to understanding our landscape and our place in it. As you read this report, you'll see how integrated our work truly is. This interconnectivity is woven into everything we do.

I hope you're as proud of what we're achieving, together, as we are. **Thank you.**

Sincerely,

**Stephen E. Nash**  
President & CEO



# Landscape & Site Protection and Tribal Collaboration

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NEXT STEPS

IMAGE © RICK WICKER

## Protecting Places and the Stories They Hold



2024 was a busy year for our “Land of Enchantment” division, headed by **New Mexico Director Paul Reed** and staffed by **Preservation Archaeologist Ben Pelletier**. In March, Paul completed work on ***Orphaned and Abandoned Oil-Gas Wells in the Southwest: Implications for Protecting Sacred and Cultural Sites and Surrounding Landscapes***.

This report focuses on the impact of these wells on sacred & cultural sites in sensitive areas such as the **Greater Chaco Landscape** and **Bears Ears National Monument**, as well as impacts on frontline communities living nearby. It also identifies ways to mitigate the crisis, prevent the creation of new orphaned & abandoned wells, and ultimately address the root cause of this longstanding problem.

*Tribal leaders express significant concerns with the problem of orphaned and abandoned wells in proximity to sacred cultural sites such as Chaco Canyon and what are known as “the Lands Between” Bears Ears and Mesa Verde. **Clark Tenakhongva**, former Vice Chair of the Hopi Tribe, stated, “The past and current practice of oil and gas extraction has endangered life and land, and brought continuous contamination to the first peoples of America. Orphaned wells have impacted many areas, without thought to the consequences to the land and our people. Life and land are sacred and no amount of money will ever repair life or land once it is destroyed.”*



### next steps

With our partners, leverage the report to **press for critical updates to federal bonding requirements that will hold oil & gas companies responsible for cleaning up the wells they drill on public lands, in order to protect cultural landscapes from such threats in the future.**



2025 ONGOING

Use your smartphone to access the report:





**next steps**

Complete and publish  
the study.

2025 ONGOING



The New Mexico team also began work on an **Archaeological Overview for Chaco Culture National Historical Park and Aztec Ruins National Monument**. The project will summarize significant archaeological research completed at these locations over the past century and a half. Work by several major institutions helped Southwest archaeology gain nationwide recognition in the late 1800s & early 1900s, and urgent concerns about destruction in Chaco Canyon contributed to passage of the **Antiquities Act of 1906**. More recent excavations have supported preservation initiatives, and Aztec & Chaco are the twin birthplaces of the **National Park System's Stabilization Program**.

*Archaeology Southwest's largely archival project on the history of Chaco & Aztec archaeology includes explorations of the Chaco Research Archive online and the physical Chaco Archive located at the University of New Mexico. IMAGE COURTESY NPS*

**next steps**

Survey, analyze, and  
synthesize views from  
**Section 106 experts**; publish  
an open-access article  
on how comprehensive  
cultural landscape  
studies complement  
compliance with Section  
106 of the **National Historic  
Preservation Act**—and  
would have made a  
difference for the San Pedro  
cultural landscape.

2025 COMPLETED



In 2024, we sustained our coalition's opposition to the routing of the SunZia Southwest Transmission Line through southeastern Arizona's **San Pedro River Valley**. Represented by **John R. Welch, Vice President for Preservation & Collaboration**, and **Alex Binford-Walsh, San Pedro Community Steward**, Archaeology Southwest stood with the **San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tohono O'odham Nation**, and **Center for Biological Diversity** in maintaining legal pressure on government agencies and the project proponent to properly recognize and act upon the landscape-scale impacts of this massive industrial intrusion into the valley.

*On January 17, 2024, our coalition filed suit against the federal government in the US District Court of Arizona. Our complaint alleges that the US Bureau of Land Management (USBLM) failed to complete steps required by the National Historic Preservation Act prior to authorizing construction of the SunZia Southwest Transmission Line. We are honored to support the Tohono O'odham Nation and San Carlos Apache Tribe in demanding that USBLM revisit its decision to route the powerline through the **San Pedro Valley**, which is replete with places significant in O'odham, Apache, Hopi, and Zuni culture & religion. IMAGE © RICK WICKER*





\*\*\*Water flowing in the Great Bend of the Gila.  
IMAGE © DAVID WALLACE VISUALS



On August 2, 2024, the **late Congressman Raul Grijálva** introduced **H.R. 9257, “Great Bend of the Gila National Monument Establishment Act.”** The bill included a section on **Tribal co-stewardship** of the proposed national monument with the US Bureau of Land Management, as well as the **establishment of a Tribal Commission** to enable co-stewardship.

As part of the **Respect Great Bend Coalition** supporting monument designation, several Archaeology Southwest staffers participated in a variety of outreach activities, including small-plane aerial flights with journalists and Tribal partners donated by **EcoFlight & LightHawk**, podcast episodes, radio & print interviews, trivia nights, and community arts events. The coalition even partnered with **Arizona Wilderness Brewing Co.** and Oatman Farms to create Great Bend of the Gila pale ale!



*April 13–17, 2024, President & CEO Steve Nash and Skylar Begay represented Archaeology Southwest in Washington DC alongside David Feinman (VP Government Affairs, Conservation Lands Foundation) and others in the Friends Grassroots coalition as part of the National Monumental Day of Action. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CONSERVATION LANDS FOUNDATION*

### next steps

Build relationships with new legislative champions; continue to promote the many values of the Great Bend of the Gila and its significance to 13 Tribal Nations.



2025 ONGOING





# Collaborating with Tribes

## next steps

Produce an open-access **position paper on Tribal Data Sovereignty** and how we will integrate best practices at Archaeology Southwest. The paper will join our **2024 Preservation Archaeology Position Paper, Tribal Co-Management: What Works Where and How?**, by John R. Welch, Skylar Begay, Ashleigh Thompson, and Paul F. Reed.

2025 ONGOING



Use your smartphone to access our position papers



## next steps

Continue programming with these partners and expand to new partners, especially those supporting Indigenous youth.

2025 ONGOING



In addition to tabling at **Indigenous Peoples' Day** in Phoenix and at the **Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day** hosted by AZ Gov. Katie Hobbs, **Director of Tribal Collaboration in Outreach & Advocacy Skylar Begay** (Diné, Mandan and Hidatsa) and other staff members & advisors attended the **Indigenous Data Sovereignty Conference**, the **Friends Grassroots Network Summit**, and the inaugural **Indigenous Grassroots Network Summit** (the latter two hosted by our partners at the **Conservation Lands Foundation**). The summits are gatherings of Tribal advocates for cultural landscapes in the National Conservation Lands system (NCLs) and of nonprofit "Friends" groups that provide material support to those NCLs.



Skylar is particularly proud of the ways we expanded **youth outreach** in 2024, joining three different partners—**San Lucy District's Summer Work Program** (Tohono O'odham Nation), **Bryan Brown Youth Academy**, and **Wild Arizona Youth Conservation Corps**—to learn and listen with 75 Indigenous & non-Indigenous young people.



Skylar Begay notes that his work in 2024 can be measured in mileage as well as engagements: "From local & regional events to multiple advocacy trips to Washington DC, I put in a lot of travel time. We heard from many partners that 'Archaeology Southwest shows up,' and over 2024 we certainly lived up to that compliment. Indeed, our **Tribal Collaboration Model** directs us to show up in person, consistently, over years, to build and maintain relationships."

Allen Denoyer, Anastasia Walhovd, Sara Anderson (pictured at left), Sarah Oas, and Shannon Cowell helped Skylar (far right) bring special programming to Indigenous youth groups. IMAGE COURTESY OF WILD ARIZONA YOUTH CORPS



## Restoring Trust, Building a Network, and Helping to Meet Federal Obligations

### next steps

Strengthen our “bench” through staff & partner-development exercises and continuing ARPA trainings.

2025 ONGOING



The **ARPA Assistance Program & Save History project**, currently led by **Preservation Archaeologists Shannon Cowell and Anastasia Walhovd** (Red Cliff Ojibwe), and previously including director **Ashleigh Thompson** (Red Lake Ojibwe), is a preservation & prevention powerhouse! ARPA is shorthand for the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, which provides tools for law enforcement to protect heritage on federal and Tribal lands.

SAVE  
HISTORY  
.ORG

*The following 2024 benchmarks highlight initiatives we have undertaken in partnership with the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):*

- » Undertook several **site protection and restoration projects**, including a 900-acre survey of an at-risk cultural landscape and distribution of 75+ trail cameras & 500+ no-trespassing signs to Tribal & BIA law enforcement in Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma
- » Conducted **7 field damage assessments** at the request of 4 Tribal Nations
- » Responded to **12 relevant tips** through the ENDLOOT line (1-800-ENDLOOT) and Save History (SaveHistory.org) online reporting form
- » Cohosted **3 ARPA trainings with the BIA Indian Police Academy**, attended by 102 people from 18 Indigenous Nations and 7 agencies
- » Offered several other high-profile, customized trainings across the western US
- » Distributed more than 2,000 copies of the **Save Indigenous History children’s activity book** to Tribal Nations (and discussed the booklet on **NPR’s “Here and Now”**!)
- » Presented at a wide variety of major gatherings and conferences.



In 2024, Archaeology Southwest contracted with the BIA to expand our collaboration to encompass assistance with consultations, repatriations, and compliance pursuant to the **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act** (NAGPRA, 1990). This contractual agreement follows on updated 2024 NAGPRA regulations, which provide clearer frameworks for institutions and prioritize Indigenous knowledge.

**Program Coordinator Amy Gillaspie** joined our staff as lead, with Skylar Begay and others receiving training and assisting Amy in working with museums, universities, and institutions across the US to facilitate the return of Indigenous Ancestors & their belongings to their descendants.

### next steps

Keep up this important work, which is a high priority for the BIA and Tribal Nations, and furthers our commitment to Tribal collaboration.



2025 ONGOING



Save History at Indigenous Peoples' Day. IMAGE © RICK WICKER



# Research & cyberSW

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NEXT STEPS

IMAGE: SKYLAR BEGAY

## Expanding a Digital Resource



With the support of 3 National Science Foundation grants, the **cyberSW team** (Joshua Watts, Manager; Andre Takagi, Senior Systems Analyst/Developer; Caitlynn Mayhew [Diné], Native American Fellow; Sarah Oas, Preservation Archaeologist; and Jeff Clark, Vice President for Research, serving in an advisory capacity) continued standardizing and adding information about pottery, plant & animal remains, and stone tools & artifacts recovered from ancient Indigenous settlements in Arizona's Tonto, Phoenix, & Tucson Basins, southwestern New Mexico, and southwestern Colorado. By the end of 2024, they had added **data from more than 200 settlements!**

Late in 2024, cyberSW (with Josh as Principal Investigator) was awarded a \$350,000 grant from the **National Endowment for Humanities'** (NEH) prestigious Digital Humanities Advancement Grant program. Funding will help us develop a **digital field guide to O'odham keystone plant & animal species**, and help us improve the web platform in general. Work will build upon Caitlynn's pilot project on Indigenous Knowledge & use of bird species.

*Yellow-headed blackbirds, a culturally important species to O'odham peoples. While preparing the NEH grant, and with the help of our **Tribal Working Group**, we developed a close relationship with several southern Arizona Tribes, particularly the **Gila River Indian Community** (GRIC). This relationship developed into a formal collaboration with GRIC that allows Caitlynn to interview Indigenous Knowledge Holders.*

IMAGE: CAITLYNN MAYHEW



### next steps

Secure alternative funding sources to continue the work with GRIC. The federal government rescinded the NEH award in April 2025.



**2025 ONGOING**





## "Excavating" Legacy Data

### next steps

Continue processing and analyzing the flotation samples; continue examining previously unstudied ethnobotanical & zooarchaeological (plant & animal) assemblages from older collections in our study area.

2025 ONGOING



The research team led by **Preservation Archaeologist Karen Gust Schollmeyer, Jeff Clark, and Michael Diehl** (of **Desert Archaeology, Inc.**) has been working hard on **preserving endangered datasets** and using some neglected museum collections as part of our **National Science Foundation** (NSF)-supported study on plants and animals in cultural integration (NSF BCS-2312349). Two NSF-funded undergraduate assistants, Lisa and Jordan, are working with Karen to comb through limited-distribution reports and compile data on animal bone clusters (like bird wings) and animal bones in interesting contexts (like a carnivore skull on a room floor). They will use this information to assess **how people's use of certain animals changed** as migrants from northeast

Arizona joined new communities in the late 1200s CE.



Karen adds, "We also located unprocessed flotation samples from Central Arizona College's excavations in the 1970s. The repository holding these collections was happy to have us process them, turning them from heavy bags of dirt into small light fractions!" Light fractions are the seeds, tiny bone fragments, and other organic materials saved for further study.

IMAGES: KAREN GUST SCHOLLMAYER

## Walking the Land

### next steps

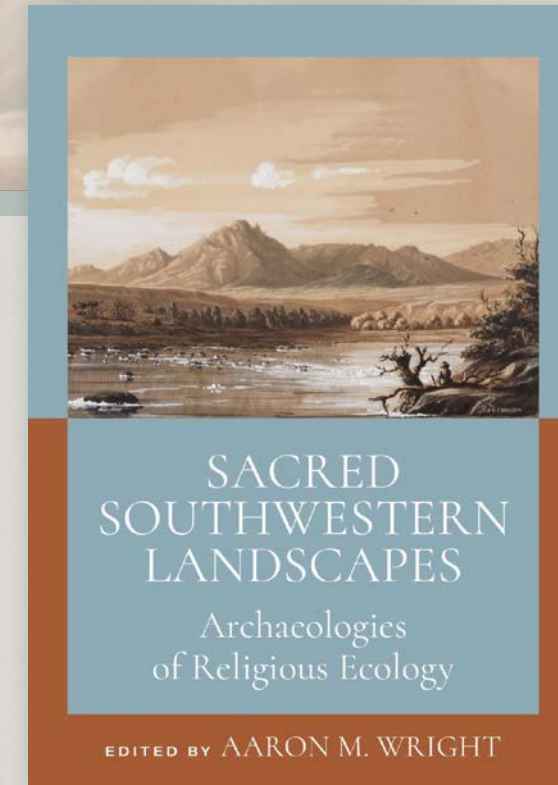
Undertake phase 2 of a project documenting Indigenous trails in & around public lands in southern Arizona (funded by USBLM); convene workshop on **rock imagery and Indigenous cultural resilience** across the Sonoran Desert (funded by the **Wenner Gren Foundation**).

2025 ONGOING

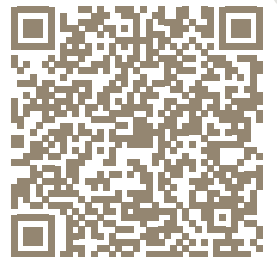


In the cooler months of 2024, **Preservation Anthropologist Aaron Wright** and his team, including **Charles Arrow** (Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe), wore out their field boots as they continued their pioneering approach merging Preservation Archaeology with landscape archaeology to reveal trails, foraging & farming areas, and irrigation systems. Their work shows these elements to be essential connections between and among individual sites.

Aaron's long-anticipated edited volume, **Sacred Southwestern Landscapes: Archaeologies of Religious Ecology**, was published by the University of Utah Press in September 2024. "I asked contributors to explain what makes Southwestern landscapes sacred," Aaron wrote in a blog post about the book. "It reads a bit differently than the average archaeological monograph—perhaps less science-y and with a bit more humanity." BOOK COVER IMAGE COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH PRESS



Use your smartphone to learn more about Sacred Southwestern Landscapes:





# Outreach & Education

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NEXT STEPS

IMAGE: P.K. WEIS

## Sharing What We're Learning



In 2024, our **Preservation Archaeology Field School**—directed by **Karen Gust Schollmeyer** and **Danielle Romero**, and staffed by **Allen Denoyer**, **Maxwell Forton**, and **Rebecca Harkness**—trained 12 students in museum curation, laboratory analysis, experimental archaeology, and archaeological survey. We worked with the **University of Arizona School of Anthropology** and **Western New Mexico University Museum** to catalog and analyze the **NAN Ranch Collection**, about 800 boxes of materials collected by a Texas A&M University field school in the 1970s through early 1990s. Our laboratory data are now available in the museum's online catalog.

Students surveyed the NAN Ranch property near Silver City, where they undertook condition assessments of 5 previously recorded sites and documented 12 newly encountered sites ranging from very ancient stone tool scatters to 1880s homesteads.



*A generous private foundation ensured that all 12 students were able to attend the program in 2024. One first-generation college student from that cohort is now on their way to graduate school. IMAGES: KAREN GUST SCHOLLMAYER*

### next steps

Do it all again with a new cohort of students!



2025 COMPLETED





**next steps**

Produce the 2025–2026 season, **Tread: The Where, How, and Why of Trails and Foot Travel**, at our very own Bates Mansion headquarters in Tucson, with concurrent streaming.

**2025 UNDERWAY**

We concluded the 2023–2024 season of **Archaeology Café**, *Nourishing Body, Soul, & Earth: Traditional Foods & Foodways*, with a mix of in-person and virtual meetups. Two hybrid gatherings at **The Loft Cinema** early in the season marked a careful return to in-person programming, and the remainder of the season occurred online. This transitional approach helped us reestablish community connections.

Archaeology  
*Café*

Later in 2024, we launched the following season with a fully in-person format at **Catalyst**, a community-creative space run by the **Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance**. *Dogs! Exploring Canine Cultural Histories in North America* proved to be vibrant and well-received, including by the very good dogs in attendance.



Thanks to friends who shared photos of their dogs, we had a great slideshow at the beginning of each café! We remain fortunate to partner with **Victoria Rendón of Bicktorius Media**. Videos of this and other seasons are available at our YouTube channel. DIGITAL COLLAGE: SARA ANDERSON

**next steps**

Bring the Hands-On curriculum to the Preservation Archaeology Field School.

**2025 COMPLETED**

**Preservation Archaeologist and Ancient Technologies Expert Allen Denoyer**, Director of Outreach Sara Anderson, and **volunteer Rocky Hettinger** were as busy as ever in 2024: **The Hands-On Archaeology** program delivered 30 experiential learning events & workshops that directly engaged community members of all ages through recurring programs at **Steam Pump Ranch** and **Mission Garden**. People learned how to make stone tools, hunt with atlatls, make stone & shell jewelry, tan hides, and etch shells—among other activities that left folks tired and dirty but happy! Additional appearances at the **Tucson Festival of Books**, **Native Nations Day**, **Camp Cooper 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary**, and **World Atlatl Day** at Catalina State Park helped broaden our community of supporters and advocates.



Allen Denoyer explains the physics of the atlatl to the Wild Arizona Youth Conservation Corps. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE WILD ARIZONA YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

In 2024, we published "**Better for It: Archaeology Conceived in Collaboration with Community**" (Archaeology Southwest Magazine Vol. 36, Nos. 3 & 4), a companion to our 2022–2023 season of Archaeology Café. Contributors explored the challenges, scope, and rewards of collaborative archaeology. They also shared a vision of how collaboration will transform archaeology and carry communities' stories into the future.





# 2024 Volunteer

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & SPOTLIGHT



*Our successes would not be possible without the dedication, generosity, and expertise of our volunteers. In 2024, **107 individuals contributed a total of 5,034 hours of service** across a wide range of projects. Although the estimated value of that time exceeds \$168,000, the true value of our volunteers as colleagues, collaborators, and community members is beyond measure.*

IMAGES © RICK WICKER

## next steps

Continue to recruit the very best volunteers!

2025 ONGOING



## Thanking Our Fellow Travelers



2024 saw the successful completion of two major legacy collection projects. **The Robinson Project**, led by **Jaye Smith** and staffed by **Mary Graham, Harlow Sires, Joyce Clark, Phil Hunger, Valerie Freireich-Kaplan, Lance & Sandra Trask**, and **Jean Smith**, wrapped up after years of dedicated analysis with 1,944.5 hours contributed in 2024 alone. **The Roadrunner Vista Project**, led by **Sharon Miller**, closed with the successful delivery of the collection to the **Amerind Foundation**. **Joanne Eannacone** and **Autumn Perez** assisted Sharon, contributing over 500 hours in 2024.



Volunteers also played vital roles in fieldwork. **The Desert Trails Survey** logged 1,415.5 hours across 23 participants, with standout contributions from **Mary Grant** and **Sherri St. Martin**, and the **Sabino Canyon Survey** brought together 47 volunteers, including members of the **Sabino Canyon Naturalists**, for 376 hours. In the **San Pedro Valley**, five volunteers contributed 100 hours to archaeological and conservation work.



**Hands-On Archaeology** programming flourished with support from **Rocky Hettinger**, who worked closely with Allen Denoyer at nearly every outreach event throughout the year.

## Meet Sharon



I volunteer at Archaeology Southwest because of Mary Leakey, Victoriana Romero, and Ray Robinson.

In high school, after reading an article about Mary Leakey and her husband's work, I declared that I wanted to be Mary Leakey. My teacher shook his head. "Women don't do that."

Instead, I went off to teacher's college, and, some years later, my husband and I visited Arizona. While here, we walked the Romero Ruin Interpretive Trail at Catalina State Park. I was intrigued to learn that Francisco Romero had brought his wife, Victoriana, far from the safety of Territorial Tucson into an isolated landscape where itinerant bands of Apaches were the only neighbors. For several years afterwards, Victoriana persistently demanded that I write her story.

After retiring here, I studied archaeology at Pima Community College, devoured books about the Hohokam and Tucson history, and finally wrote three books about women at that site: an archaeologist, a fictional Victoriana Romero, and a Hohokam woman who lived there in the 1100s.

Then, in 2018, I read that Archaeology Southwest was looking for volunteers to work with the Ray Robinson collection. The rest, as they say, is history.

—Sharon Miller

## Meet Rocky



What does it mean to be human? How did we come to live the way we do? These are the kinds of questions that drew me to archaeology.

Many years ago, I was fascinated by a documentary I saw about atlatls. In 2017, I was browsing the Archaeology Southwest website and saw that classes were being offered. The upcoming class was about how to make an atlatl. How could I ignore that?

I started taking all of the Hands-on Archaeology classes, which were taught by Allen Denoyer. A great teacher should, above all, have enthusiasm for the subject matter. Allen certainly fulfills that requirement. Using only ancient tools and techniques, I have made atlatls, stone projectile points, stone knives, and a stone axe.

I began attending the Archaeology Southwest outreach events at Mission Garden and Steam Pump Ranch, listening and learning. Soon Allen put me to work demonstrating ancestral skills, answering questions about local & regional archaeology, and talking about Archaeology Southwest's mission. Connecting with members of our community who are interested in archaeology has been quite enjoyable.

—Rocky Hettinger



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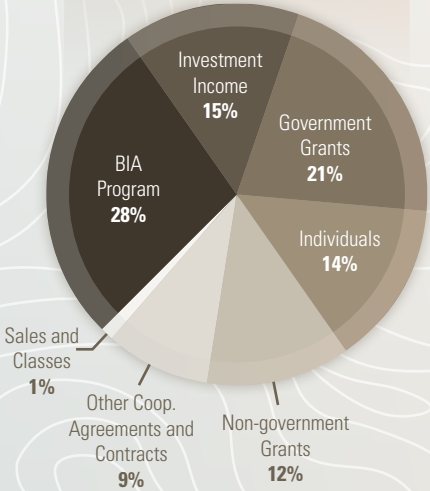
*As we reflect on another year of meaningful research, outreach, preservation, and Tribal collaboration, we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support and generosity. Your companionship and sponsorship on our Preservation Archaeology journey ensures the future of people's stories in & on the land.*

2024 STAFF

Sara Anderson, Charles Arrow, Skylar Begay, Alex Binford-Walsh, Jeff Clark, Shannon Cowell, Ethan Smith Cox, Allen Denoyer, Bill Doelle, Maxwell Forton, Amy Gillaspie, Elysia Hansel, Rebecca Harkness, Caitlynn Mayhew, Sarah Oas, Ben Pelletier, Linda Pierce, Paul Reed, Kate Sarther, Karen Gust Schollmeyer, Andre Takagi, Ashleigh Thompson, Emily Troil, Linda Vossler, Anastasia Walhovd, Josh Watts, John Welch, Aaron Wright

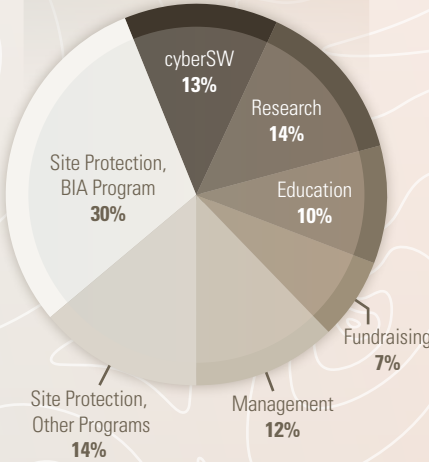
2024 Operating Revenue

Total: \$3,926,328



2024 Operating Expenses

Total: \$3,647,166



Statement of Financial Position

Assets	\$13,346,211
Liabilities	\$1,018,517
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	\$3,266,885
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	\$9,060,809

next steps

Strengthen our financial foundation by **expanding our mix of support**—especially by increasing individual donations, broadening our grantwriting, and carefully managing our endowments; **make monthly giving even easier** and encourage more supporters to join this vital group that sustains our cash flow.

2025 UNDERWAY

COVER PHOTO © JONATHAN T. BAILEY

*Our work would not be possible without you. We hope you have enjoyed this report, and thank you again for assuring our success in 2024 and beyond.*