ARCHAEOLOGICAL testing and data recovery investigations were conducted by TRC at 22 sites along US 54 in Otero County, New Mexico. These sites include Jaca (LA 6829), Orogrande 1 (LA 128699), Orogrande 2 (LA 128700), Orogrande North (LA 128708), LA 110358, LA 115255, LA 115256, LA 115257, LA 115258, LA 115259, LA 115260, LA 115261, LA 115262, LA 115263, LA 115264, LA 115265, LA 126178, LA 126181, LA 128701, LA 128707, LA 128709, and LA 128710. Eleven of these sites were tested only and were not treated during the data recovery phase (LA 110358, LA 115255, LA 115257, LA 115258, LA 115259, LA 115261, LA 115264, LA 126178, LA 128701, LA 128707, LA 128709, and LA 128710). Two of these sites, LA 115255 and LA 128709, were determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), while the rest were deemed ineligible. LA 115255 was completely avoided by a re-design of the construction right-of-way, and significant cultural resources at LA 128709 were all located outside of the small corridor of the site impacted by the construction project.

Eleven sites were treated during the data recovery phase (Jaca [LA 6829], Orogrande 1 [LA 128699], Orogrande 2 [LA 128700], Orogrande North [LA 128708], LA 115256, LA 115259, LA 115260, LA 115262, LA 115263, LA 115265, and LA 126181). These sites produced significant cultural resources spanning in time from the Late Archaic period to the early portion of the El Paso phase. A wealth of diagnostic artifacts, along with 73 radiocarbon dates, provided abundant chronological data on these sites. Historic remains, most of which were associated with the town of Orogrande, were also documented at some of these sites. These sites varied considerably in terms of size, numbers of features, and density of remains. Jaca (LA 6829) was, by far, the largest and most productive site, with a primary component dating from the late Doña Ana phase to early El Paso phase. Orogrande 1 (LA 128699) was the second largest site, with high density of features, indicating an intensive occupation. Abandoned excavations at this site uncovered plastered floors that appear to mark substantial structures. Preservation conditions at this site were exceptionally good, and it yielded the largest faunal assemblage from any of the US 54 sites, and maize was recovered from the botanical materials. Adjacent site LA 115265 also yielded maize remains, and is probably part of the same, early Doña Ana-phase community that includes LA 115260. These sites were unusual for Late Formative agricultural settlements, in that they are located within a basin-floor playa.

Although none of the historic remains at the data recovery sites were deemed significant to the NRHP, most of these materials are associated with the historic town of Orogrande. A century ago this was booming mining center, but was almost completely abandoned in the early twentieth century. Because so many of the investigated sites were located in and around historic Orogrande, archival and oral historical research surrounding this town's history were carried out as part of this project, and a narrative account of the town and its mining district is presented in this report.