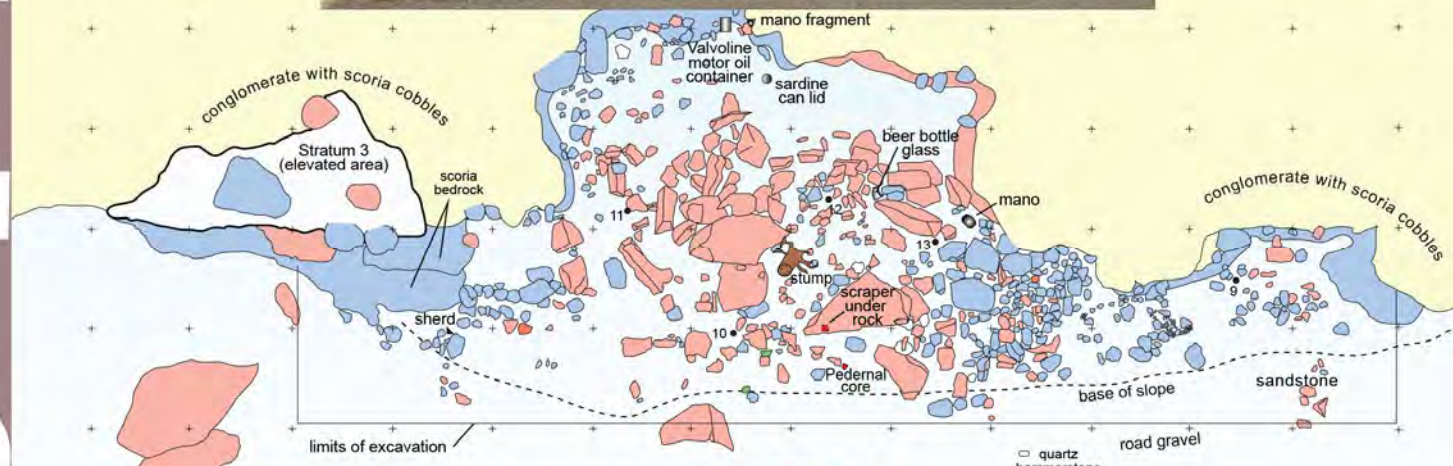


TECHNICAL SERIES 2017-1



COYOTE CANYON ROCKSHELTER (LA 139965): A SPECIALIZED HUNTING CAMP ALONG NM 434, MORA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

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Office of Archaeological Studies Museum of New Mexico
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NMDOT PROJECT CN 4100381
NMCRIS ACTIVITY No. 132345

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

Coyote Canyon Rockshelter (LA 139965) is located along NM 434 just north of Coyote Creek State Park (Fig. 1.1; Appendix 6), in Guadalupita, Mora County, New Mexico. It was excavated at the request of Laurel T. Wallace, Cultural Resources Coordinator, NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT). The site, which was determined "eligible" for inclusion in the *State and National Registers* under Criterion 'd' (July 2, 2014, HPD Log No. 99483), is entirely within the highway right-of-way and would be impacted by planned road improvements. NMDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, plans to widen the highway to provide for two 11 ft (3.35 m) driving lanes, 2 ft (0.6 m) shoulders, and drainage features that will meet current NMDOT design standards.

A data recovery plan was approved in August 2014 (Akins, Moore, and Wilson 2014) and the Office of Archaeological Studies (OAS) began investigations at Coyote Canyon Rockshelter (LA 139965) soon afterward. Surface investigations were conducted August 12-20 and November 5-6, 2014; subsurface investigations took place between August 25 and October 31, 2014.

Excavation of 463 levels of fill in 137 grid units or partial grid units recovered a large sample of cultural materials and exposed multiple stratigraphic profiles. Results indicate that only a portion of the site escaped modern disturbance. Road construction removed the cultural deposits and underlying bedrock talus between Coyote Creek and the face of a rock outcrop or cliff where the rockshelters were formed. The road excavation created what appeared to be a talus slope between the base of the cliff and the current highway. The resulting road-cut slope was eventually covered by a layer of artifact-bearing fill, some of which had eroded down from deposits in the shelters and along the cliff edge. Other cultural deposits on the talus slope and the road edge were pushed or dumped into the area from parts of the original site by mechanical equipment. All of the potential in situ deposits within and in front of the shelters have been excavated, as have most of the redeposited cultural materials within the talus areas. Radiocarbon, ceramic, and projectile point data indicate the shelters and area adjacent to the shelters were utilized by groups traveling along the eastern edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains from at least AD 500 until AD 1400, and again in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its prehistoric use was mainly as a hunting camp occupied by family groups who focused on hunting deer but who also utilized smaller animals and native plants found in the vicinity.

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