

# Goat Camp Ruin Interpretive Development Project

## PROGRESS REPORT

Season 6 Operations from 9/23/17 through 6/10/2018  
Arizona State Museum Permit 2012-107ps 7/17/2012

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Prepared by

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### **Excavation**

Over the course of the last year the project continued to make progress toward implementing the goals established in the Excavation and Stabilization Plan (Wood 2012) with continued excavation work in Rooms 7, 8, 22, 28, 29, and 30 (Fig. 1). Stabilization of the site also continued with work in Room 15. As always, this work was performed by volunteer members of the Arizona Archaeological Society (primarily the Rim Country, Desert Foothills, and Santan Chapters) under professional supervision provided by myself, Connie Darby, Deil Lundin, and Denise Ryan.

This season was curtailed somewhat by the weather. Several Fall weekend sessions were cancelled due to rain and the last Spring sessions planned for the year were cancelled due to the site's inclusion in the Forest closure at the onset of fire season.

### Room 7

Following the complete excavation of the upper floor last season, we began to investigate the construction history of the room and the circumstances of its having been remodeled. We began by clearing the entry unit in the south wall. Excavation just outside the room encountered original ground surface, characterized by the presence of the marl substrate of the ridge, at a very shallow depth but dipping steeply to the north into the room. Halfway through the doorway, it merged with the upper floor. While we had originally thought that the doorway into the upper floor was part of the remodeling of the room, it now appears that it is the original doorway to the room, descending quickly and steeply to the original floor, similar to the entry into Room 22 (see below).

To begin our examination of the original floor of the room a test trench was excavated along the east wall beginning at the original test unit in the southeast corner where we had first identified the two floor building sequence. The original floor, largely intact and easily defined, was followed in the trench for about 2/3 of the length of the room where it ended more or less abruptly in the marly substrate. At that same point, the base of the wall shifted upwards to match the level of the second floor. This indicated that filling in the room and laying the second floor was not simply a remodeling of the original room but part of a nearly full reconstruction of the entire room. Our interpretation at this point is that it was enlarged both to the north and the west, resulting in the doorway being offset from center in the south wall – an observation which, up to this point, had no reasonable explanation.

To confirm this interpretation, we opened up the NE ¼ of the room adjacent to the trench and began excavating the original floor and defining the edges of the original configuration of the room. This work was not completed by the end of the season. When we return, we will complete that quarter and extend the excavation of the original floor to the south wall and through the entryway. We do not intend to excavate any further in the west half of the room in order to preserve the granary platform on

the upper floor, so hopefully our work in the east half will be sufficient to allow us to extrapolate a rough idea of the original configuration and use of Room 7.

Artifact recovery from the lower floor has been low, especially compared to what was found on the upper. For the most part, it appears to have been cleaned off prior to laying the upper floor.

Nevertheless, additional clusters of burned beans and corn were found along with several more pieces of the strung shell bracelet found last season on the upper floor.

### Room 22

Following the complete excavation of the interior of the room last season, all that remained to do with this feature was to define its rather odd entryway. An arbitrary unit exterior to the entry was defined and excavated to the original ground surface. That surface was not well defined owing to post-occupational erosional disturbance and over much of the unit was equated with the top of the marly substrate. Nevertheless, we succeeded in defining the entry way as a steep hemi-conical ramp, almost like a funnel, extending from OGS to the floor of the room over a distance of about a meter and a half from the center and dropping about half a meter in depth with one stone step just inside the entryway. At the top of the ramp, a series of small sections of burnt daub at OGS were found regularly spaced along an arc enclosing the entryway. While we were only able to trace this arc from one side to a little past center, it may have been as much as two meters across where it met the exterior face of the room wall. This suggests that a light fence or low berm had been constructed at the top of the funnel-shaped ramp to screen the entry and prevent flooding of the room. The thin delta of sand and silt washed onto the floor that we encountered last season further suggests that this barrier was reasonably effective during the time between the cleaning of the floor and the deliberate razing of the room. Needless to say, this form of entryway is unique to the site so far and also appears to have been rare to unique in the Payson area.

Definition of the entryway concluded our excavation work on Room 22. Afterwards it was partially backfilled and prepared for stabilization.

### Room 8 Complex

The Room 8 Complex is defined as Room 8 and the constructed features attached to it, namely Features 28, 29, and 30. As of the end of this season, only one of these attached features, 28, can be reliably identified as a room.

This complex is the final major excavation focus of the fieldwork proposed for Goat Camp Ruin and will likely take several more seasons to complete. We began work on it by re-clearing all of the walls that had been originally defined in 2010 as part of mapping the site prior to excavation. Doing so, we reestablished the Room 8 is a single large structure with no interior division walls and that Features 28, 29, and 30 were clearly built afterwards, butted up against the exterior of Room 8. We also confirmed that the entry into Room 8 was from the interior of Feature 29 and discovered that the doorway of Room 28 also opened out into Feature 29.

Excavation of the complex was initiated with a test trench through Features 28 and 29 along the exterior wall of Room 8. This trench, packed solid with wall fall from the massive masonry construction of Room 8, was excavated to the floor in Room 28 and to a hardened compacted surface in Feature 29. In Room 28, the floor was a finished plastered surface, very well prepared and preserved except at the north end where it had been disturbed. The nature of this disturbance is unclear at the moment within the confines of the test trench but may have included at least one episode of vandalism. However, within the disturbed area, in what may be a pit dug below the floor, several potentially reconstructable ceramic vessels (or portions of same) were found, apparently in situ. Hopefully this situation will clear up once we expand excavation away from the trench.

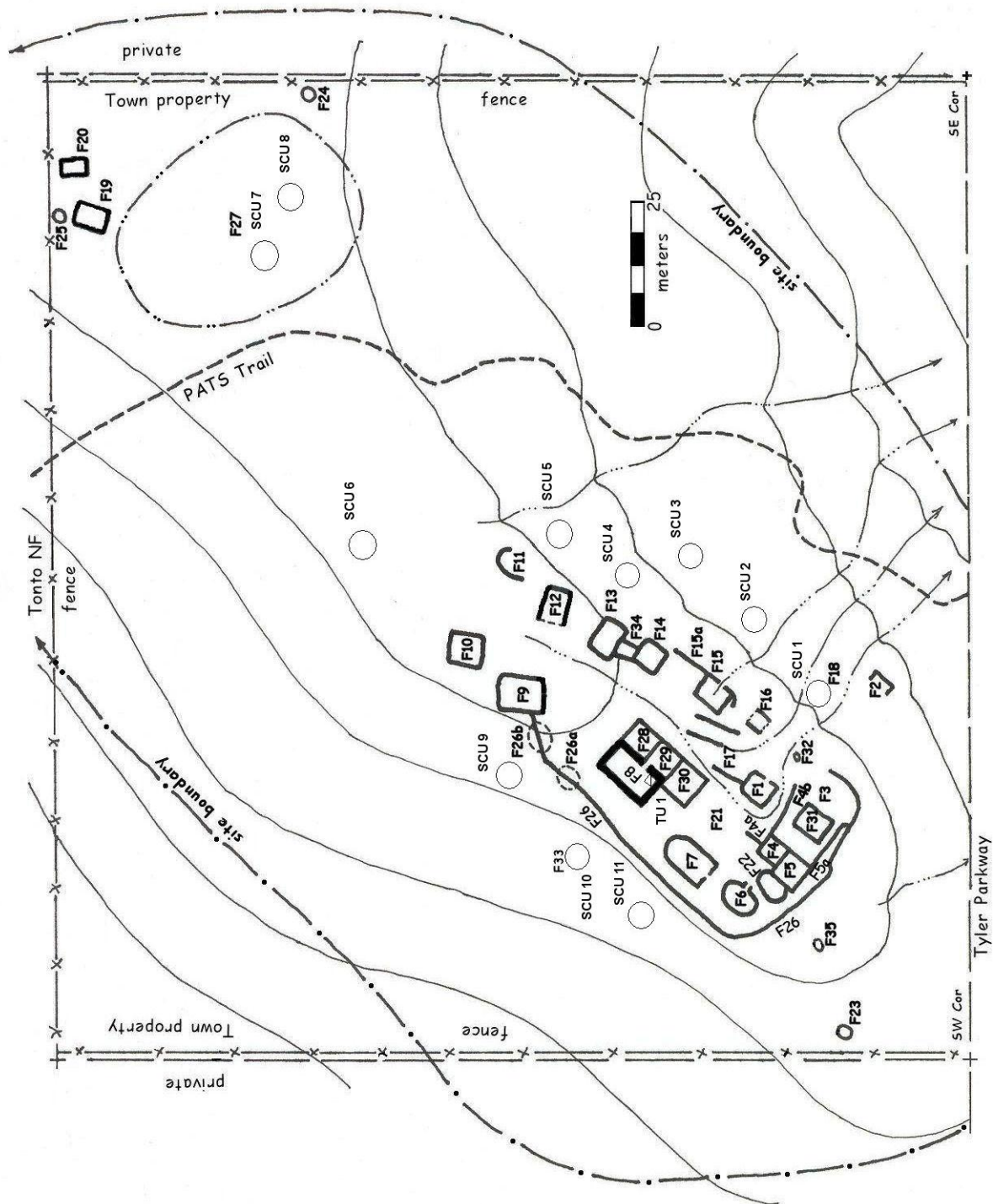


Fig. 1. Showing the layout of architectural features and surface collection units identified at Goat Camp Ruin (AZ O:11:72 ASM). Excavations in Season 4 were carried out in rooms F6, F7, F22, and F31.

The room was clearly burned, preserving several sections of basal wall plaster which were covered into the floor which was also heavily burned. A thick layer of charcoal and ash – but no burned beams – covered every part of the floor exposed in the trench but the disturbed area at the north end. Other than the possible reconstructable vessels, the artifact assemblage on the floor was sparse and unremarkable, suggesting that the room may have been unoccupied when it burned, but any such assumption will have to await further excavation.

Feature 29 was completely different. The hard compacted surface discovered in the trench near the base of the Room 8 wall, while punctuated with miscellaneous pressed in sherds, was not so much a floor as a prepared exterior surface, open to the weather, built up with gray, ashy mud. The enclosed space of the feature had not burned, there being no charcoal in the fill and only a couple of small patches of fully burned ash on the “floor.” Closer examination of its exterior walls made when re-clearing the complex also indicated that they were not full height masonry as with Rooms 8 and 28 but merely low foundations, possibly for a jacal wall. From all this and the fact that both Room 8 and Room 28 were entered from Feature 29, we now conjecture that Feature 29 was not a room but an unroofed courtyard used to control or direct access into both of the other rooms.

We began to excavate the north half of Feature 29 to confirm its nature and purpose and to try to identify its exterior entry but this work was left incomplete by the fire closure.

### Room 31

At the beginning of the season we reassessed the work proposed to continue at this feature after last season. Given the additional work remaining for Room 7 and the complexity of defining the Room 8 Complex, combined with the high level of tree root disturbance throughout the area identified as containing the entryway, we decided not to pursue any further work on this room for the time being.

### Features 36-39

These features, reported previously (Wood 2015) were scheduled for definition and mapping in Season 6 but due to the short season and the time needed to address more pressing issues in Room 7 and the Room 8 Complex, that work was postponed. Again.

## **Stabilization**

### Room 15

Stabilization of this room was initiated this season, conducted by Jim Britton with assistance from several regular members of the Goat Camp excavation crew, using the same procedures and treatments introduced last season in Room 1. This work was nearly completed and probably would have been if not for the fire closure. Stumps in the floor and protruding through the north wall were removed without any additional disturbance and all of the standing walls were repointed and/or re-set with treated mortar prepared on site using SoilShield-LS. As well, all exposed capstones on the wall were reset and sealed with the same material. A runoff diversion structure, basically an angled terrace, was built on the uphill (west) side of the room using wall fall stones that had been excavated from the room and stockpiled. This structure is one course high, laid on the current surface and banked with screened excavated fill and duff to look like an extension of the walls of Feature 17, though it is of clearly different construction.

The back (west) wall of the room was being partially reconstructed at the corners to key in support for the dead load behind it. The middle portion of that wall, which had collapsed prehistorically and probably led to the abandonment of the room and its re-use as a trash dump, will be stabilized as a

collapsed structure to provide a visual aid in the interpretation of the room. That work will be completed next season.

### **Burial Recovery**

The human remains recovered last season were repatriated to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. We anticipate receiving the analysis report from Aztech Engineering sometime this season.

### **Artifact Processing and Analysis**

All of the artifacts from the excavations done in Season 6 were washed and re-bagged. Rough sort analysis based on the Checklist of Pottery Types for the Tonto National Forest (Wood 1987) was completed on all of the recovered ceramics and preliminary analyses were completed on all of the lithics, ground stone, and other artifact types as well.

#### Ceramics

Total recovery of ceramics to date now comes to 26,623 sherds: 21,278 of these are plainware (79.9%), 5,046 are redware (18.9%), and the remaining 299 sherds (1.1%) are decorated and/or imported, including imported Gila Plain, Gila variety pottery from the Salt-Gila Basin and several sherds of Apache pottery (Rimrock Fingernail Indented). The ratios remain about the same as they were last year (Wood 2017). The bulk of the plain and red pottery still appears to be local (Tonto Plain and Tonto Red, primarily Payson variety followed by Verde variety), though several varieties from the Sierra Anchas, Tonto Basin, and other relatively nearby central Arizona sources were also recognized during the rough sort. As many as 25 whole or partially reconstructable vessels had previously been identified from Rooms 1 and 7, nearly all of which are locally made plainware; one or two additional whole or partially reconstructable vessels may also have been identified in the test trench of Room 28.

Similar to the numbers previously reported, about 70% of the imported/decorated pottery was comprised of buffwares from Hohokam sources in the Salt-Gila Basin, beginning with Snaketown R/b and continuing through Gila Butte R/b, Santa Cruz R/b, and Sacaton R/b. Other decorated wares that occurred in much smaller quantities and percentages were Tusayan Whiteware (16%), Cibola Whiteware (5%), and Little Colorado Whiteware (3%), in that order. Dating from these ceramic types continues to indicate that the site was first occupied sometime between AD 600 and AD 750, given the consistent recovery of late forms of Snaketown R/b and early forms of Gila Butte R/b and the very Vahki-like appearance of much of the Gila Plain, and continued to be continuously occupied until sometime between AD 1250 and AD 1300 – most likely about AD 1280, when the whole of the Payson area was abandoned.

The consistent presence of later forms of Snaketown R/b and early forms of Gila Butte R/b still suggests that Goat Camp began as either a Hohokam colony or a trading outpost in Early Ceramic Central Arizona Tradition territory. In any case, the persistence of Hohokam pottery indicates that whoever the original inhabitants of the site were, they became well integrated into the Hohokam system quickly enough and were wealthy enough to engage in some fairly wide-ranging trade, at least during the Preclassic Period. After 1150, the level of imports drops drastically, suggesting a distinct change in the political and/or economic position of the settlement, possibly reflecting the rise of the much larger Risser Ranch Ruin at the top of Alpine Heights just a kilometer to the South.

#### Lithics (general)

This year, preliminary sorting of the lithics, including projectile points and whole or fragmentary mescal knives identified 3304 flaked stone artifacts, bringing our running total to 10,512 and raising the ratio of ceramics to lithics to 80/20, reflecting the fact that we are once again dealing with the strictly prehistoric part of the site's occupation, prior to the abundant tool-making seen in the Apache reoccupation levels of rooms 6, 7, and 22 (Wood 2017). As in previous analyses, only a handful can be

considered formal tools – projectile points, drills, and mescal knives – with very little in the way even of noticeably utilized or retouched flakes. Further analysis may enlighten this assessment, but at the moment, the Goat Camp lithic industry continues to appear to have been expedient in the extreme with only projectile points and mescal knives being produced by local specialists or acquired by trade.

Preliminary identification of materials reinforces that assessment as it demonstrates an overwhelming preference for locally obtained stone, particularly the chalcedonies abundantly represented in the so-called Rim Gravels with a secondary preference for nearby chert sources. There was also a surprisingly high use of the local siliceous limestones associated with the Rim Gravels and available on site as nodules in the ridge substrate. Indeed, the ratios of different types of materials remain unchanged, with nearly 96% of all of the lithic material identified, with a few exceptions, available within a five mile radius of the site and much of it closer than that.

#### Mescal Knives and other Tabular Tools

Only a single fragment of a schist mescal knife was recovered this season, so there is no substantial change in numbers or percentages from last season (Wood 2017).

#### Projectile Points and Drills

The collection of points and drills recovered continues to grow with the addition of another 15 points and one drill, bringing the current total to 86 points, only 26 of which are too fragmentary to fully characterize, and 6 drills. As they did last year, both of these artifact types continued to be concentrated in the upper fill, the bulk coming, again, from entry units of Rooms 7 and 22.

Of the 60 more-or-less intact points, the most common format (36.7%) remains the small side-notched triangular form with either a flat or concave base. As noted last year (Wood 2017) further analysis may be able to separate the two styles, but for the moment it still appears that more than half of them are probably Apache.

The next largest class of points, narrow contracting stemmed triangulars, were also recovered this season; their percentage of the total remains at 30%. These conform to patterns typically associated with Preclassic Hohokam.

The next largest class, dropping a bit this year to 23.3%, are simple triangular, split half and half between flat and concave bases. Most are small and conform to patterns common in both Preclassic and Classic Period Hohokam and Salado contexts throughout most of central Arizona. However, several of these styles continued in use well into historic times and are known to have been made by a wide variety of people throughout the Southwest, making most of them more or less non-diagnostic.

Finally, there are a few corner-notched and expanding stem points that suggest an Archaic origin.

Material composition continues to follow the patterns and percentages seen last year. Most of the points and fragments (86%) are made of local silicates, primarily chalcedonies (45) and cherts (25). This distribution largely matches that of the general lithic population, in which the local silicates account for 96% of the assemblage, the only difference being a higher preference for chert as a material for projectile points and the addition of some exotic materials like dacite, fine-grained basalt, and obsidian that are only rarely found in the general lithic population. The chalcedonies are all available within a few miles of the site. Some of the cherts, however, resemble materials from somewhat more distant sources under the Mogollon Rim to the east and include several varieties not well represented in the general population of lithics from the site.

Our observations on context remain unchanged from last season other than to note the increased number of points coming from Room 22 out of the entryway area.

## Quartz Crystals

Four more quartz crystals and fragments were recovered this season, bringing the total to 18 intact crystals and 8 fragments, all visually identified as having come from the nearby (6 miles) Diamond Point crystal field. Their context remains unchanged with more than two thirds of them coming from the fill of Rooms 6, 7, and 22, deposits we have identified as representing the Apache reoccupation.

## Ground Stone

Relatively few examples of ground stone were recovered this season and they conformed to the same patterns identified last year (Wood 2017). The most interesting aspect of the ground stone assemblage remains its material composition. Thirty-four portions of metates have been recovered to date including 10 whole, partial or reassembled metates (11 if you include the large portion of a trough metate left in the masonry pedestal on Room 7) and 15 isolated fragments. Altogether, then, a maximum of 26 individual metates may be represented, some from each excavated room. Of the whole and partial metates, 8 are trough style, 2 are oval basins, and one appears to have been a slab. Of the fragments, all appear to have come from trough style metates. Materials used remain largely unchanged from last year (Wood 2017). Over two thirds of them are made of materials present either on site or within less than a mile: 48% are made of Tapeats Sandstone, 16% are made of Payson granite, and 36% are made of vesicular basalt, the only imported material.

In addition to the metate fragments, 137 other pieces of ground stone have now been recovered to date. Almost 60% of those are whole or partial manos. The 11 whole or reassembled manos are “two-hand” loaf shapes, relatively thin and well-worn for the most part. Aside from a couple of “one-hand” oval pebble manos, the rest are fragments of “two-hand” loaf manos, many of which show signs of continued use after being broken. There are also three “floor polisher” style grooved round manos.

The rest of the ground stone assemblage remains pretty much what was reported last year with 4 metamorphic and basalt lap stones, a diorite pestle, 23 assorted hammerstones, 11 polishing stones, 3 grooved abraders, five whole  $\frac{3}{4}$ -groove diorite axes, including an unfinished blank and one that had been converted to a maul, all Classic Period Hohokam style, a fragment of carved slate palette (surface find), an intact flat-ground slate plummet or pendant, a ground blank for an argillite pendant or figurine, and a few other odds and ends that were not clearly assignable to any particular category.

The ground stone assemblage maintains the rather interesting composition seen last year. As noted above, the metates are few and are mostly local in origin, almost 75% of them made from materials on or adjacent to the site. The manos, on the other hand, are both more plentiful and more expensive, as 85% of them are made of the same non-local materials identified last season (Wood 2017).

## Shell

Eighteen whole or fragmentary shell artifacts were recovered this season, bringing the total to 102 items of shell representing eight species that have been recovered to date. Most of it is *Glycimeris* (50.9%), including 12 bracelet fragments, 2 ring fragments, 30 pendants or beads (small entire shells with drilled umbos), a carved and polished needle, and a variety of other fragments. Together with the *Glycimeris*, the 19 whole or fragmentary *Conus* tinklers (including one whole shell with the apex ground off to make a hole) at 18.6%, 12 *Olivella* beads at 11.8%, and the lone abalone pendant at 0.9% make up the bulk of the collection that can be identified to genus at this time. An additional 17 pieces that includes a number of fragments of what may be *Laevacardium*, several nacreous fragments, and a probable land snail rounds out the collection, pending more detailed analysis.

## Beads, Pendants, and Carvings

Relatively few artifacts in this category have been recovered, nearly half of which were found on the surface, with only one additional shell bead found over the last year.

## Bone, Antler, and Basketry/Fiber Industries

No additional artifacts from these categories were recovered this last year.

## Chronological, Environmental, and Other Samples

As noted previously (Wood 2016, 2017), all but one of the rooms investigated so far burned; charcoal and burnt daub samples have been recovered from every room but 15 and, of course, Feature 29, suspected to be a courtyard rather than a room, per se. As a result, we now have 36 datable samples of charcoal, including carbonized beans from Rooms 7 and 31 and corn kernels from Room 7. We have decided to have samples run by Beta Analytic and are currently soliciting more funding toward a goal of having at least one (preferably two or three) AMS or radiometric date from every room (depending on funding).

In addition to the radiocarbon samples, we have also collected 24 pollen and 41 float samples so far from various locations and depths. We also have a total of 36 macrobotanical samples, primarily beans and corn. Funding or a skilled volunteer still needs to be procured for their analysis.

Faunal material continues to be relatively abundant across the site; the total number of samples now at 171, still mostly dead burrowing rodents, some cooked (burnt and fragmented) artiodactyl long bones and ribs, a few turkeys(?), and the occasional bunny.

## **Time and Value**

Season 6 work involved 9 field sessions, 2 lab sessions, and 40 different individual volunteers resulting in 1463 hours of labor for a total to date of 7638 hours that have been contributed by the volunteer staff and crew, not counting administrative time or travel for those who are not full time Payson residents.

At a very conservative in-kind valuation of \$20 per hour of volunteer labor, the Arizona Archaeological Society has contributed a minimum equivalent of \$152,760 to the project on behalf of the Town of Payson over the last six years.

## **Some Preliminary Conclusions**

The work of Season 6 has basically reinforced the conclusions reached after Seasons 3, 4, and 5 (Wood 2016, 2017), which are repeated below, with a few minor adjustments. The biggest surprises of Season 6 were the extent of the rebuilding apparent in Room 7 and the fact that Room 29 turned out to be a courtyard.

Based on the architecture and ceramics we have observed so far, Goat Camp Ruin still appears to have been founded before 750 AD by Hohokam colonists from the Salt-Gila Basin – or by local Central Arizona Tradition folk with very strong economic and cultural ties to early Hohokam settlements, probably those in Tonto Basin but possibly as a result of direct contact with the Salt River Valley. The ceramics still clearly indicate that the major outside influence or trade partner for Goat Camp was Hohokam, the next closest being the folks making Tusayan Whiteware. However, looking at all of the ceramics, lithic, ground stone, and other artifacts recovered to date, there appears to have been a clear drop off in trade with anyone after about 1150 or so. It appears that the folks living at Goat Camp were most connected when they were part of the Hohokam system during the Preclassic Period.

## **Outline of Work Proposed For Season 7**

### Excavation and Stabilization Work: First Priority

- Room 6    Assess the stabilization potential of the room and conduct wall treatments and/or complete backfilling as appropriate.
- Room 7    Last season we managed to follow out a fair amount of the lower floor from the trench along the east wall to corroborate our interpretation that 7 began as a much smaller room



and was expanded in three directions. This season we will continue to sort this out by a combination of excavation and testing and complete all excavation activities for this room and begin stabilization.

Room 15 Most of the stabilization was beautifully completed last season. We still need to buttress the back wall with a ramp of rock and backfill the room.

Room 22 Complete stabilization and backfilling.

Rooms 8, 28, 29, 30 Having completed the test trench through Feature 28, and Room 29, we will excavate at least one half of each of those rooms, wall trench Feature 30 to find its entry and begin excavation of Room 8 by quarters, followed by wall construction studies and stabilization. By the Spring, Room 8 should be the primary excavation focus for the project.

Room 31 Final map and backfilling.

### Excavation Work: Second Priority/Carryover to Next Season

Feature 2 Clear brush and duff to expose walls, map, excavate 1m x 1m test unit (?).

Features 4-5 Clear brush and duff to expose walls, map, excavate 1m x 1m test units (?).

Feature 17 Clear and define retaining (?) walls, map.

Feature 24 Excavate half of this roasting pit.

Feature 26 Clear and define this presumed “retaining wall” and make surface collections along it to determine how it relates to the occupational history of the site either as an original feature or as an Apache attempt to fortify that portion of the site they had reoccupied.

Feature 32 Relocate and excavate F. 32, the slab-lined cist, and perhaps see how it relates to the original ground surface in front of Room 1. To do this, we will need to move one of the backdirt piles from the room excavation.

Features 36-39 Clear brush and duff to expose walls, map and add to master site map.

### Lab Work

During the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> season, we will continue to process new artifact collections and expand our analysis of the pottery, lithics, ground stone, shell, and other material recovered to date. This effort will likely continue during the summer of 2019 after the close of the spring field session. We will also initiate radiocarbon analyses with the funding we currently have available and seek to acquire additional funds for more radiocarbon and the processing of the macrobotanical, float and pollen samples.

### Other Work

Survey/recording of contemporary and earlier sites in the Goat Camp area not already covered by FLEX or ADOT excavations. This will include compiling survey and excavation data from Risser Ruin for comparisons. Realistically, this will probably not be undertaken until the excavation phase of the project is completed.

## References

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