



THE LABORATORY OF TREE-RING RESEARCH

presents a talk by

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The Dendroarchaeology of Navajo Sites on Northern Black Mesa, Northeastern Arizona

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 - 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Room: Zoom Only

From 1967 to 1986, scholars from, first, Prescott College and, subsequently, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale undertook one of the largest contract archaeological projects in Arizona. The Black Mesa Archaeological Project (BMAP) was designed to mitigate the damage to the cultural resources of the Mesa caused by the construction of an open pit coal mine to provide fuel for the Navajo Generating Station near Page, Arizona. Documentation of nearly 2,000 prehistoric (Ancestral Puebloan) and historic (Navajo) sites produced more than 8,000 archaeological tree-ring samples. The scale of this effort provided an ideal opportunity to explore the contribution that dendroarchaeology could make to understanding Navajo wood use behavior, which could refine dendroarchaeological sampling and analysis. BMAP and LTRR combined to collect and analyze roughly 5,000 Navajo-sites tree-ring samples in a breadth and depth that has rarely been achieved. A few examples illustrate the breadth and depth of information that can be produced by a focused dendroarchaeological approach. In addition to the expectable chronological implications, the research illuminated aspects of the early Navajo occupation of the Mesa, response to their forced evacuation of and return to the area between 1864 and 1868, the devastation wrought by the Spanish influenza outbreak of 1918-1919, the settlement effects of the stock reduction programs of the 1930s, and others.