

# New Mexico Archaeology Field School

Building the field through increased access and job skills acquisition



**New Mexico Office of  
Archaeological Studies**

Presented to the Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee

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by NM Office of Archaeological Studies

A division of the Department of Cultural Affairs



- The New Mexico Office of Archaeological Studies (OAS) has operated as a state agency enterprise in New Mexico since the 1990s. Prior to that, the division operated as the Research Section of the Laboratory of Anthropology (est. 1950s) under the Museum of New Mexico.
- OAS provides public archaeology services under state and federal rules and regulations such as the **Cultural Properties Act** (NMSA §§ 18-6-1 et seq.) and the **National Historic Preservation Act** (36 CFR 800 1966, as amended).
- OAS became the State's centralized professional archaeology unit under the Dept of Cultural Affairs Act (NMSA §§ 9-4A-1 et seq.) in 2004.
- The mission of the Office of Archaeological Studies is to promote the understanding and preservation of New Mexico's rich archaeological heritage through its diverse programs of public archaeological services, research, outreach and education.



The New Mexico Office of Archaeological Studies conducts archaeological research projects throughout New Mexico prior to new construction on public and private lands, which require state and/or federal compliance.

## **Services Provided:**

- Cultural Resource Permitting and Compliance Services
- Archaeological Surveys and Excavations
- Artifact Analysis
- Ethnographic and Historical Research
- Education and Community Engagement



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# Cultural Resource Permitting & Compliance

## What is the Process and Who Must Comply?

Federal, state, county, and municipal regulations and codes are enacted to consider a project's impact on the cultural environment. If triggered, these regulations and codes may require that- *prior* to any undertaking- historic and archaeological assessments for potential effects are completed with consultation from the regulatory agency, proponent, review agencies (State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation), Tribal governments *and* interested parties, including the public.

The goal is to minimize or mitigate any adverse effects on historic properties resulting from the planned undertakings.

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**OAS  
Clients  
include:**

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Department of Transportation

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Private Corporations (Energy & Construction)

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Oil Conservation Division

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Department of Game and Fish

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Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations

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Municipalities

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Telecommunications and Utility Companies

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Private Landowners

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**Types of projects  
that require  
State/Federal  
Compliance  
include:**

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Municipal Utility Infrastructure

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National Energy Infrastructure

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Wildlife Refuge Restoration

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Construction/Development  
Projects

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Forestry / Fire Mitigation

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Highway and Road Improvement

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# The State of Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management in New Mexico

New Mexico's cultural resource management sector is facing a significant shortage, with too few adequately trained archaeological field personnel to readily meet the compliance and preservation demands of state, federal, and tribal projects.

## Workforce Deficit

- General Decline in Academic Enrollment and University Programming
- Barriers to Entry Level Employment – especially in rural and traditionally underserved communities

## Federal Volatility

- Influx of Infrastructure Projects: American Recovery & Investment Act (2009); Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (2021-2024)
- 2025 Federal workforce reduction included archaeologists at NPS, BLM, DOI, USDA, etc.

# Archaeology Field School

House Bill 2 appropriation to EMNRD included \$300,000 for Dept of Ag and DCA *to develop an archaeology field school education and training program statewide, for expenditure in fiscal year 2026.*

**Goal:** Train entry level and advanced technicians for fieldwork necessary to complete regulatory requirements for cultural resource management and historic preservation in New Mexico.

Program Structure: 6-week program launching fall of 2025

## Hybrid Program

- Online modules and in-person learning, followed by an intensive on-the-job field training
- Targeted to provide broad access across New Mexico -- in-field training will be held in different geographic locations across the state

## Two Tiered:

- Field Technician Track – entry level
- Advanced Track – in coordination with university students on track for supervisor-level qualifications

## On-The-Job Field Training:

- Participants work on active archeological review projects
- Participants are evaluated by instructors and supervisors who document completion of course requirements and mastery of job skills



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**NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF  
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