National Council on Public History
CampingCon 2024 – Wilderness and the Historian
Camp Thunderbird | Mimbres, New Mexico
October 9-13, 2024

Preliminary Conference Program

Note: Activities before noon, Thursday October 10th and after 1:00 p.m., Saturday October 12th may incur additional fees. Any meals during pre- and post-conference periods are not covered by registration.

Wednesday, October 9

12:00 p.m. Camp Thunderbird Opens

4:00 p.m. Carpool to Dinner
Downtown Silver City or Buckhorn Saloon & Opera House

7:30 p.m. Film Screening (Lodge)
Salt of the Earth
A dramatization of the 1951 strike by the Mexican-American miners of Grant County, New Mexico against the Empire Zinc Company. One of the first Hollywood films to advance a political and feminist point of view, for which the work and those involved with its production were blacklisted, the film was added in 1992 to the National Film Registry. The strike is the focal point of an ongoing regional public history project – the Salt of the Earth Recovery Project.

Thursday, October 10

6:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Hike along the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) into the Gila Wilderness (Lodge)
A moderate 5-mile out-and-back guided hike with less than 300’ elevation gain, the route follows along Section 9 of the CDT in New Mexico. Just 10 minutes north of the camp, hikers will proceed from Highway 35 into Rocky Canyon, crossing the Gila Wilderness boundary after the first ½ mile. The canyon narrows as the hike proceeds past cairn markers, through sections of pine forest and open floodplain, culminating in a riparian area next to a flowing stream. Participants should be generally fit and prepared for moderate inclines and uneven terrain; dress in layers, bring at least 32 oz. of water, apply sunscreen, and have proper hiking footwear. Gather in the Lodge for instructions before departing.

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Check-In/Registration (Lodge)

Noon – 1:00 p.m. Lunch (Lodge)
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.  Session 1 (Lodge): Aldo Leopold
   *Aldo Leopold’s New Mexico Years: The Most Important Time of His Life*
   Stephen Fox, Independent Historian

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  Session 2A (Lodge): Gila Film School
   *The Gila Film School*
   Kristi Drexler, Director, Gila Film School

   Session 2B (Recreation Building): Skiing in the American West
   *The Cultural and Environmental Impacts of Backcountry Skiing*
   Matt Green, PhD Candidate, History Department, University of Utah
   *“Just Ski”: The Past, Present, and Future of New Mexico Skiing*
   Heather McClure, Librarian & Archivist, Museum of New Mexico

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  Session 3A (Lodge): Silver City, New Mexico
   *How the Gila Forest Saved Silver City*
   Susan Berry, Historian and Preservationist
   *Seeing the Forest for the Trees: The Silver City Museum*
   Bart Roselli, Director, Silver City Museum

   Session 3B (Recreation Building): Interpreting Place
   *Segregation, Memory, and the Role of Public History at Oklahoma’s Lake Murray State Park*
   Trevor Egerton, PhD Candidate, History Department, University of Colorado Boulder
   *Conservation in the Colony: Forging and Contesting Public Lands in Puerto Rico*
   Alex Standen, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, New Mexico State University

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  Dinner (Lodge)

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  Plenary A (Lodge): Title TBD

Thora Padilla, President, Mescalero Apache Tribe
Padilla became President of the Mescalero Apache Tribe on January 12, 2024. Prior to that she worked for the tribe as Director for the Division of Resource Management and Protection. She helped to establish and develop the program, which began as the Office of Environmental Protection in 1994. She also worked for eight years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mescalero
Agency as a Timber Sale Forester. Ms. Padilla has served on the New Mexico State Parks Advisory Board, the US Forest Service Collaborative Forest Restoration Program Technical Advisory Panel, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service Western Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Council. She graduated from New Mexico State University in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, with a major in Horticulture, and minors in Botany and Fine Art.

8:30 p.m. – ??  Campfire Discussion & S’mores (Group Fire Pit)
Attendees are invited to share with the group recent public history scholarship that has informed their work. This can be anything from a recent book or article in The Public Historian to a museum exhibit or community project. This is an informal discussion, no need to prepare anything, just a willingness to share your thoughts and eat s’mores!

Friday, October 11

6:30 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.  Morning Hike (Lodge)
This moderate guided hike will proceed along trails and fire roads behind the Camp and explore the nearby Gila Forest.

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.  Breakfast (Lodge)

8:30 a.m.  Departure for Historic Sites (Lodge)
Bring 32 oz of water, jacket, hat, sunscreen, snack, and pick up your sack lunch in the Lodge.

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  Session 4 (Mimbres): Mimbres Culture Heritage Site
Two Thousand Years of Mimbres Stories
Bill Hudson, President, Imogen F. Wilson Education Foundation

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  Session 5 (Bayard): Fort Bayard Museum and Fort Bayard National Historic Landmark
A Walk-Through History: Outdoor Interpretation at Fort Bayard National Historic Landmark
Dr. Doug Dinwiddie, President, Fort Bayard Historic Preservation Society

12:30 p.m.  Depart for Camp Thunderbird

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  Session 6A (Lodge): Public Land Paradigms
Representing Wilderness & Shifting Public Lands Paradigms in U.S. Public Lands
Artist-in-Residence Programs
Hardt Bergmann, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography, New Mexico State University
Eric Magrane, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, New Mexico State University

Session 6B (Recreation Building): Connections to Public Lands
How Do you Solve a Matter Like John Muir?
Mike Wurtz, Head of University of the Pacific Holt-Atherton Special Collections & Archives
Conserving Ancestral Connections Through Action and Dialogue
Kyle Trujillo, Senior Program Director, Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps
3:45 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.  **Session 7A (Lodge): Museum Interpretation**  
*Challenging Interpretation: A State’s Response to Tribal Calls for Action*  
Manuelito Wheeler, Former Director, Navajo Nation Museum  
Aaron Roth, Manager, New Mexico Historic Sites, Department of Cultural Affairs  

**Session 7B (Recreation Building): Water Ecologies**  
*Fluid Geographies: Settling New Mexico During the Reclamation Era*  
Maria Lane, Professor of Geography & Environmental Studies, University of New Mexico  
*Connecting to Gila: The Body as a Vehicle for Reconnection to Land*  
Sandra Paola López Ramírez, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Theater and Dance, University of Texas at El Paso  

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  **Dinner (Lodge)**  

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  **Plenary B (Lodge): Title TBD**  

Priscilla Solis Ybarra, Associate Professor, Department of English, University of North Texas  
Dr. Ybarra’s research is on Chicana/o contributions to environmental thought. Her book *Writing the Goodlife: Mexican American Literature and the Environment* (University of Arizona, 2016) was chosen for the 2017 Thomas J. Lyon Award in Western American Literary and Cultural Studies by the Western Literature Association and was selected as one of the six finalists for the 2017 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) Ecocriticism Book Award. She is co-editor of *Latinx Environmentalisms: Place, Justice, and the Decolonial* (Temple University Press, 2019). Dr. Ybarra has lectured on Chicana/o environmental approaches at many U.S. and international universities and currently teaches courses on Latina/o literature and environmental literary studies.  

8:30 p.m. – ??  **Campfire Music & S’mores (Group Fire Pit)**  
Join us as New Mexico State University’s Dennis Daily – archivist by day, musician by night – leads us through American and Mexican folk and old timey tunes. Feel free to sing along!
Saturday, October 12

6:30 a.m. – 7:00 a.m. Morning Hike (Lodge)
This moderate guided hike will proceed along trails and fire roads behind the Camp and explore the nearby Gila Forest.

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Breakfast (Lodge)

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Session 8A (Lodge): Teaching with Public Lands
Students, Lions, and Bears!
Travis Perry, Professor, Department of Biology, Furman University
The Archaeology of Trails: Hiking, Camping Along, and Backpacking the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail as Landscape Archaeology
Troy Lavota, Professor, Honors College, University of New Mexico
Fostering a Love of Wild Places Leads to Protection of Wilderness
Patrice Mutchnick, Board Chair, Heart of the Gila

Session 8B (Recreation Building): Nature’s “Resources”
Challenging Extraction: The Fight to Stop Extractivism in the Gila National Forest and Wilderness (1905-1964)
Benjamin Shultz, PhD Candidate, Department of History, University of Texas at El Paso
Shifting Values, Changing Borders: The Evolution of Joshua Tree National Park
Sawyer Castleberry-Backman, MA student, Department of History, North Carolina State University
This Land is...: A Facilitated Discussion on Uses of Nature, Colonial Violence, and Loss
Tanmai Vemulapalli, MA student, Department of History, North Carolina State University

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Session 9A (Lodge): Public Land and Memory
Life on the Edge...of the Wilderness: Narratives of People, Nature, and Place through the Farm Security Administration Photographs of Russell Lee
Brian Forist, Senior Lecturer & Program Coordinator, Parks, Recreation, & the Outdoors Indiana University
South by Southwest: Public Statues, Monuments, and Memorials of Texas and New Mexico
Spencer Herrera, Professor, Department of Languages & Linguistics, New Mexico State University
Active Public Historians in Public Spaces
David McIntosh, Assistant Professor of History & Anthropology, Southeast New Mexico College

Session 9B (Recreation Building): Apache Landscapes
A Pre-Gila Wilderness Identity
Ruben Leyva (Chihene Ndé Nation), PhD Student, Department of Native American Studies, University of New Mexico
Wendell Chino, the Mescalero Tribe, and Native Sovereignty
Jeff Shepherd, Professor, Department of History, University of Texas at El Paso
Session 9C (Gazebo): Commemorations

Commemorating Mimbres: A Zine Project
Kendall Lovely, PhD Candidate, History Department,
University of California Santa Barbara

Cyanotype Commemorations
Sarah Marsom, Heritage Resource Consultant

1:00 p.m. Carpool to the Log Cabin for Lunch

Afternoon Carpool to Silver City for museum visits and meals
Western New Mexico University Museum and the Silver City Museum

8:30 p.m. – ?? Campfire & S’mores (Group Fire Pit)

Sunday, October 13

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Post-Conference Tour – Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
The six-hour itinerary includes travel time, stops at the Gila Visitors Center and Bookstore, docent-led hikes to the cliff dwellings and along the West Fork of the Gila River into the Gila Wilderness, and a lunch break. Note that the Cliff Dweller Trail and West Fork Trail #151 are moderately strenuous with exposed trails and multiple ankle-deep water crossings on the latter. Attendees can opt-out of the West Fork Trail hike and further explore other parts of the monument.

Attendees must have removed all their possessions and food from the bunkhouse, lodge, and grounds before departing for the tour. Personal/rental vehicles can remain at Camp Thunderbird.