The Last Archaeologist to (Almost) Abandon Grasshopper

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The history of Arizona Anthropology engagements with Apaches and their territory perpetuates my occupation of and with Grasshopper and other sites excavated by my forebears and benefactors. Arizona Anthropology’s centennial offers occasions to both celebrate and reflect upon the sources and consequences of individual and institutional successes. My intention here is to direct attention to contributions made to Arizona Anthropology by the White Mountain Apache Tribe and vice versa. The history of the relationship and the directions taken by the Tribe in response to the relationship provide the basis for my opinion that Arizona Anthropology should abandon neither Grasshopper nor the Tribe more generally.

To paraphrase Twain: reports of the end of anthropology at Grasshopper are much exaggerated. I know this first hand. After my second season on the University of Arizona’s archaeology field school staff (1984–1985), I succumbed to the seductive buttes and canyons of White Mountain Apache lands and found myself lingering well into August. In addition to the region’s rugged romantic allure and understudied Apache archaeology, my Grasshopper Region infatuation led not only to four more seasons with the field school, but also to employment as a Bureau of Indian Affairs contractor (1987–1992), then staff archaeologist (1992–2005), then as the Tribe’s historic preservation officer (THPO, 1996–2005) (Welch in Nicholas et al. 2008). Not even a mid-career vault from government jobs in Arizona to Simon Fraser University loosened the ties that bind me to the Tribe and its lands: I serve as an advisor to the Tribe’s Heritage Program and as a board member of the non-profit Fort Apache Heritage Foundation (Welch 2001; Welch and Brauchli 2010).

The long, cordial, and dynamic relationship between Arizona Anthropology and the Tribe has had pronounced effects on each organization. The Grasshopper
Archaeological Research Project (1963–1992) was the longest-lived of the four major University of Arizona Anthropology and Arizona State Museum projects on White Mountain Apache lands (Reid and Whittlesey 1999, 2005). The other three projects—Kinishba, Forestdale and Silver Creek—operated on the reservation for about 20 additional seasons (Table 2). The research partnerships begun by Dean Byron Cummings at Kinishba in 1930 deserve continued investments. This is particularly true at Grasshopper, where work remains to be done on two final and often overlooked stages of archaeological research: (1) site restoration to pre-excavation condition; (2) site rehabilitation for ongoing use by non-archaeologists, especially descendant and steward community members (see Agnew and Bridgland 2006). As discussed below, my conclusion is that, because the Tribe has made clear in broad terms that it wants to reassert control over its territory and citizenry, sovereignty-driven research offers an apt framework for reoccupying the relationship between Arizona Anthropology and White Mountain Apaches.

**Academic and Local Benefits from Grasshopper**

Reid and Whittlesey (1999, 2005) ably enumerate the impacts of the Grasshopper project on anthropological archaeology—especially

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Project Focus</th>
<th>Representative Publications</th>
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<tr>
<td>1929, 1932</td>
<td>Canyon Creek Ruin excavation (Gila Pueblo Archaeological Foundation); Forestdale Valley survey and excavations</td>
<td>Haury 1934, 1940, 1985</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931–1952</td>
<td>Kinishba Pueblo excavations, rebuilding, and museum development</td>
<td>Cummings 1940; Welch 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963–1978</td>
<td>Grasshopper field school, surveys, excavations</td>
<td>Longacre and others 1982; Olsen 1990</td>
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*Table 2. Arizona Anthropology projects on White Mountain Apache land*
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processual and behavioral archaeologies, ethnoarchaeology, and ceramic analysis. Arizona State Museum shelves sag and collections areas bulge with the materials and documentation gathered from White Mountain Apache lands. Nearly 1,000 aspiring archaeologists and physical anthropologists obtained technical and analytical skills while building personal and professional networks on White Mountain Apache lands (Haury 1985; Reid and Whittlesey 1999, 2005; Welch 2007a). The resultant object and documentation collections are sufficient for various future generations of industrious research. In the meantime, the impressive roster of staff and students educated on Apache lands indicates breadths of research and training that are readily confirmed bibliographically. For Grasshopper alone, as of 2015, Arizona Anthropology students, faculty, and affiliates have produced some 25 doctoral dissertations, 11 master’s theses, 125 journal articles and book chapters, and various books and monographs (see Reid and Whittlesey 2005:218). Curriculum vitae of dozens of anthropologists are packed with publications grounded in places under Apache jurisdiction, and research continues (Welch 2013).

Bibliography speaks to the beneficial impacts of the Grasshopper project on careers, on Arizona Anthropology, and on the discipline, but fail to fully index the real contributions of Apaches and their lands. In this regard, notes in Grasshopper publications provide at least some insights. Reid and Whittlesey (1999:xiv) give voice to many colleagues’ sentiments: “acknowledgements cannot express fully our heartfelt thanks to the White Mountain Apache, who encouraged, assisted, and worked alongside….this book is dedicated to the Cibecue Apache.” They also write, “As friends and coworkers, the Apache help us achieve a more intimate knowledge of the land…and teach us the importance of spiritual beliefs to everyday existence” (Reid and Whittlesey 2005:xv). In a reflection on his professional development, Shimada (2014:1-2) writes: “working with the Apache crew…[fostered] profound appreciation that archaeological practice, regardless of where one…[works] is fundamentally an affair involving live people and complex interpersonal management. The Apache crew instilled a strong appreciation that …the archaeologist must commit to and communicate effectively with team members and be mindful of the broader social context of fieldwork.” If advances in other
anthropologies—social, linguistic, and physical (for example, Basso 1996)—were to be included, or if contributions from the neighboring San Carlos Apache Tribe and its citizens, especially to the Point of Pines field school (see Haury 1989) were also to be tallied, the Arizona Apache benefits to Arizona Anthropology would be that much more impressive.

Given the varied benefits and subsidies that have flowed from White Mountain Apache to Arizona Anthropology, it seems reasonable to ask whether the reverse is also true. The question is especially fair in light of uniquely favorable geographical, social, and archaeological attributes of Apache lands. Where else, within a day’s drive from Tucson, lies a suite of largely undisturbed village ruins under the jurisdiction of generous and tolerant stewards? No better context for multiple decades of archaeological research and field training during Arizona’s scorching summer months was available in 1963 and none is in 2015.

Table 3 spotlights benefits flowing from the Grasshopper project to Apaches. The initial agreement, negotiated by Emil Haury and Raymond Thompson and unanimously endorsed by Tribal Council Resolution 63-48, provided Arizona Anthropology with permission for surveying anyplace west of Highway 60/77, for excavations, and for use of five acres for the Grasshopper camp. In exchange, Arizona Anthropology paid $200 per year, agreed to hire tribal citizens “for such labor as is required in connection with the construction and maintenance of the buildings,” and committed to giving the camp buildings and improvements to the White Mountain Apache Tribe following the conclusion of the project.

**Apache Responses to Grasshopper**

Grasshopper’s benefits for the Tribe and its citizens are substantial, but I find no clear basis or point in attempting to assess which party got the better deal. Instead, I think questions about Grasshopper’s still-reverberating consequences for the White Mountain Apache Tribe are more meaningfully assessed through a consideration of the Tribe’s responses, direct as well as indirect, to opportunities and challenges arising from Grasshopper. Table 4 lists some of these responses, admittedly biased because of limits to my knowledge, of projects and programs implemented in accord with Apache values and in pursuit of the Tribe’s interests.
Direct responses include questions raised by some of the Tribe’s leaders about the merits of the Grasshopper project, as well as the Tribe’s initiatives to restore and rehabilitate the Grasshopper site. In late 1973, the Tribe limited the archaeology permit to territory well to the west of their reservation’s most westerly town, Cibecue. In 1979, the year Reid took over as the field school direc-

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<th>Dates</th>
<th>Benefit Types; Sources</th>
<th>Aims and Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1963–1972</td>
<td>Lease payments; University of Arizona Grasshopper field school</td>
<td>Compensate Tribe ($200 per year; $2000 over 10 years) for exclusive seasonal use of camp and non-exclusive use of sites under investigation.</td>
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<td>June 1965</td>
<td>National publicity; Lynda Bird Johnson and presidential press corps</td>
<td>President Johnson’s daughter attended 10 days of the field school, focusing favorable attention on the Tribe, its lands, and its commitments to education.</td>
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<td>1969–1992</td>
<td>Seasonal employment; University of Arizona</td>
<td>Engage Apache men to assist with excavation, cornering, mapping, facility construction and maintenance, etc. At least $150,000 paid to about three dozen Apache employees over 24 seasons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973–1992</td>
<td>Lease Payments; University of Arizona Grasshopper field school</td>
<td>Compensate Tribe ($500 per year; $10,000 over 20 years) for exclusive seasonal use of camp and non-exclusive use of sites under investigation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>-1978–1982</td>
<td>Long-range site preservation planning; University of Arizona and Arizona State Parks</td>
<td>Site surveys to assess distribution and intensity of damage from collectors; Arizona State Historic Preservation Office grants W. A. Longacre and J. J. Reid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984–1986</td>
<td>Plan for Apache crafts cooperative; University of Arizona</td>
<td>Proposal by J. J. Reid and W. Jernigan (not funded) to fund initial development of a beadwork, basketry and juniper woodworking enterprise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992–continuing</td>
<td>Donation of Mogollon exhibit and book royalties; J. J. Reid and S. Whittlesey</td>
<td>Enable interpretation of regional archaeology and other educational programs through donations, including all royalties ($175 and counting) from Reid and Whittlesey (1999) to the Programming Endowment managed by the Fort Apache Heritage Foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional, -1964–1982, 1988–1989</td>
<td>Wildland firefighting on Reservation lands; University of Arizona students and staff</td>
<td>Provide supplies, equipment, firefighters, and site location information in support of wildland fire suppression efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967–1992</td>
<td>Cultural and historical site surveys; Grasshopper field school</td>
<td>Document and assess significance of sites, including Apache sites, as pioneered by J. Ayres, Longacre, Reid, Welch, H. D. Tuggle, and M. W. Graves in his work with K. H. Basso.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1986–1990</td>
<td>Purchase of field school food and other supplies; Grasshopper field school</td>
<td>Help local economy by buying camp food (~$2000 per season) at the Cibecue Commercial Center during the years it had a full grocery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997–1999</td>
<td>$33,420 grant to White Mountain Apache Tribe; University of Arizona Provost Research Fund</td>
<td>Stabilize exposed masonry architecture at Grasshopper Ruins and Cowboy Camp; Restore Grasshopper camp to pre-1963 conditions; Backfill dangerous areas and remove dead trees and industrial intrusions; Rehabilitate vehicle tracks.</td>
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**Table 3. Benefits to the White Mountain Apache Tribe from the Grasshopper Project**
tor, his consultations with Tribal Council Chairman Ronnie Lupe led to a halt in intentional burial excavations (Reid and Whittlesey 1999:x, 2005:143-144). By the early 1980s, resolutions from the Tribe’s governing body no longer passed with unanimous endorsements for the project. Judy DeHose, a councilmember from Cibecue, began opposing the project’s continuation on the grounds that the excavations were disrespectful and could have unforeseen negative consequences. By about 1984, the terms of the permit further reduced the size of the Grasshopper study area and included University responsibilities to restore all excavated areas and otherwise leave “the area in as near to original condition as possible” as well as to return all collected materials “to the Tribe after analysis and report preparations unless otherwise directed.” In 1991, Jeff Reid and Joe Ezzo requested and received the Tribe’s permission to conduct bioarchaeological research, possibly the first such proj-

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<th>Dates</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Aims / Partners / Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1969–continuing</td>
<td>Establish and operate the White Mountain Apache Tribe Nohwike’ Bágowa (House of Our Footprints) Museum at the Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School historic district (National Historic Landmark since 2011)</td>
<td>Collaborations with elders to gather oral histories; Partnerships with the Arizona Historical Society and, since 1997, the Fort Apache Heritage Foundation to develop collections and exhibitions for the primary benefit of the Apache community and for a secondary audience of Fort Apache visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–continuing</td>
<td>Authorize a Cultural Advisory Board of Apache elders and cultural practitioners</td>
<td>Assist the Tribe and the Tribe’s cultural resources director in repatriation efforts pursuant to NAGPRA, in the protection of Apache sacred sites, and in the perpetuation of Apache language and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–continuing</td>
<td>Establish and operate the White Mountain Apache Tribe Historic Preservation Office</td>
<td>Maximize local capacities in heritage site recording, significance assessment, and preservation; Minimize State of Arizona participation in resource and project planning and management on the Tribe’s lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997–continuing</td>
<td>Charter the Fort Apache Heritage Foundation as a 501(c)(3) entity recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service</td>
<td>Assist the Tribe’s historic preservation, cultural and language perpetuation, and other heritage efforts, especially through the preservation and redevelopment of the Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School National Historic Landmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2004</td>
<td>Broaden and redirect field school training through Arizona Anthropology’s Silver Creek Archaeological Project Research Experience for Undergraduates</td>
<td>Obtain National Science Foundation support (Mills and Welch) to include ethics seminars, Forestdale Valley survey, mapping and site damage assessment; Kinishmenta mapping and stabilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2012</td>
<td>Create the Western Apache Ethnography and GIS Research Experience for Undergraduates</td>
<td>Obtain National Science Foundation support (Hoerig) for a field school focused on the creation of a Western Apache cultural atlas</td>
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Table 4. Some indirect White Mountain Apache responses to Grasshopper
ect authorized post-NAGPRA. In
the fall of 1992, Bureau of Indian
Affairs Fort Apache Agency Su-
perintendent Ben Nuvamsa initi-
ated discussions with the Tribal
Council that led to a sustained
campaign by Apache, Zuni, and
Hopi cultural and elected leaders
to restore and rehabilitate Grass-
hopper and other sites on Apache
lands investigated by Arizona An-
thropology (Welch and Ferguson
2007). Intertribal consultations
held at Grasshopper identified
specific concerns that were ad-
dressed by clean up, backfilling,
re-contouring, and architectural
stabilization work completed by
the Tribe’s historic preservation
office (1997–1999). The University
provided funds; the U.S. National
Park Service provided technical as-
sistance through workshops led by
staff members that included Mick-
ey Estrada, Todd Metzger, and Jim
Trott (Table 3; Welch 2001, 2009).

The Tribe and its people also
responded indirectly to Grass-
hopper. Nick Laluk, a citizen of
the White Mountain Apache Tribe
who received his anthropology
doctorate under Barbara Mills’
supervision in 2015, participated
in the restoration and stabiliza-
tion workshops while an intern
with the historic preservation of-

cine. Laluk later enrolled in the Ar-
izona Anthropology summer field
school as an undergraduate (Mills
et al. 2008; Laluk 2015). The Tribe
also hired Arizona Anthropolo-
ogy Ph.D, holders—first me then
Karl Hoerig, who has dedicated
much of his career to service as
the director of the Tribe’s Cultural
Center (since 2001) and non-profit
Fort Apache Heritage Foundation
(since 2005) (Hoerig et al. 2015).

The responses mentioned here
suggest to me a suite of Apache
values and interests relating to
cultural resources that are lo-
el (non-extractive), centered on
Apache oral traditions and other
intangible aspects of living tradi-
tions (not Ancestral Pueblo ma-
terial culture), and connected to
a broader and longer-term pro-
gram of tourism-based economic
development (non-academic and
value-added). It is no coincidence
that these values and interests
stand in clear contrasts to those
underlying the Grasshopper proj-
ect. Grasshopper, in other words,
helped the Tribe to define and
pursue a distinctive heritage pro-
gram. Instead of building upon
Arizona Anthropology invest-
ments in Grasshopper or Kinish-
ba, the Tribe focused on creating
local knowledge and capacity to
document, interpret and other-
wise manage Apache cultural re-
sources for Apache benefit. The
Tribe’s initiatives constitute and
indicate a constructive critical re-
action to external, term-limited, 
extractive research.

**Toward Sovereignty-Driven 
Research**

It may be many years before the 
White Mountain Apache Tribe 
re-prioritizes research engage-
ments with academic proponents. 
The Tribe is otherwise occupied. 
As is true for much of Native 
America, Arizona’s Apaches are 
among the least healthy, wealthy, 
and educated people on the con-
tinent (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). The 
Tribe’s struggles with climate 
change consequences, population 
growth, underemployment, and 
the gradual withdrawal of gov-
ernment support and trusteeship 
are nothing less than existential 
(Wagner 2014). As we await the 
release of tribally authored calls 
for research partnerships and 
proposals, the Tribe’s direct and 
indirect reactions to Grasshopper, 
coupled with my own experience 
and the success of Hoerig’s four 
(2010–2013) Ethnography and 
Geographic Information Systems 
field schools (Hoerig et al. 2015; 
UA School of Anthropology 2013), 
provide interim guidance on ways 
to align academic and Apache re-
search interests and initiatives. 
As authentic expressions of what 
Apaches want in relation to cultur-
al resources, the Tribe’s initiatives 
illustrate at least four attributes for 
collaborative research designs re-
lated to cultural resources:

1. **Community-orientated**—
grounded in local values and 
interests in places, traditions, 
or other forms of heritage.

2. **Value-added**—committed to 
leaving more than taking.

3. **Minimally-intrusive**—com-
mitted to the preservation of 
authentic integrities existing 
at various social, spatial and 
temporal scales.

4. **Sovereignty-enhancing**—sup-
portive of effective and sus-
tainable local governance of 
territory and associated peo-
ple and communities.

This list, while starkly contrasting 
with the research precepts implicit 
in Burge’s 1947 request for assis-
tance (from the 1947 *Atlatl* article, 
“What Good is an Anthropologist?” 
reprinted on page 122 of this issue), 
is a natural outgrowth of discus-
sions centering on “Haury’s idea 
that a people should be allowed to 
work out its own destiny.”

Of paramount interest for the 
White Mountain Apache Tribe 
and its elected and cultural lead-
ers is expanding and enhancing 
sovereignty as an antidote to colo-
nialist policy and practice, includ-
ing extractive research. A shift
from academic or discipline-driven research to sovereignty-driven research begins with the understanding sovereignty as dependent upon five “pillars” or constituents:
1. Self-sufficiency—creation and maintenance of sustainable supplies of the food, water, shelter and human relationships essential for people to survive and thrive;
2. Self-determination—policies and practices that foster and enable futures concordant with longstanding and emergent community values and interests;
3. Self-governance—internal capacities to pursue and sustain self-determination;
4. Self-representation—first-person portrayals of cultures, histories and aspirations;
5. Peer-Recognition—establishment of government-to-government and other peer relationships based on legitimate authority over territory, citizens and resources.

Arizona Anthropology has, at least for the time being, abandoned Grasshopper and other Apache-controlled loci of excavation, collection, and training. Sovereignty’s five pillars offer guidance toward re-occupying and refreshing the partnership and for strategic research planning with tribes and other indigenous and place-based communities. The needs to create and mobilize knowledge relating to sovereignty and its constituents transcend short-term political motives. In this sense, sovereignty-driven research is a logical response to the manifold challenges of global change and to the retreat from large scale experiments with social and biophysical engineering. Sovereignty-driven research includes limitless opportunities for serving and integrating the needs and interests of indigenous and non-indigenous citizens, communities, institutions, and researchers with social and “softer” biophysical science expertise ranging from, anthropology, economics, geography, law and political science to agriculture forestry, hydrology, and watershed management, etc. Designing and implementing research using the four attributes derived from Apache reactions to Grasshopper and intended to bolster one or more of the five pillars of tribal and local government sovereignty offers a path to not merely avoiding harms but achieving research relevance, benefits, and meaning on individual, disciplinary, and communal levels.

I close with the suggestion that anthropologists assess research designs, project legacies, and even...
careers not only in terms of knowledge gathered and applied—that is, what has been taken from research contexts—but also in terms of knowledge and capacity left behind to catalyze and sustain further inquiry, understanding, and local development. I appeal to all who have benefitted from Grasshopper and other Arizona Anthropology on Apache lands—a list that surely includes every holder of an advanced anthropology degree from the University of Arizona—to learn more and consider doing more to assist the White Mountain Apache Tribe in their efforts to survive and prosper in the wake of intensive and prolonged engagements with Euro-Americans and Western institutions, including anthropologists and anthropologies.

**Afterword: One Way to Help**

The Fort Apache Heritage Foundation is the non-profit arm of the White Mountain Apache Tribe dedicated to the preservation of the Tribe’s tangible cultural heritage (especially the Fort Apache and Kinishba Ruins National Historic Landmarks) and the perpetuation of Apache culture and language. The Foundation provides scholarship and leadership support to Apache youth and interpretive and outreach programming for Apaches and visitors to the Nohwike’ Bágowa (House of Our Footprints) Museum. Visit www.fortapachearizona.com for more information or to donate.

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