

2003 MOST ENDANGERED

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The Waters of New Mexico, Statewide

Significance: From the first human's entry into present New Mexico until now and into the infinite future, water has been and will be the primary determinant of where, how, and whether people will live. The earliest known structure in this State is a well made perhaps 10,000 years ago at Blackwater Draw, and is evidence of the profound human drive to take action with regard to water in order to live here. Human recognition of water as giver of life made it a cultural, as well as a natural resource. Blue Lake, Zuni Salt Lake, and other waters are held sacred by indigenous cultures. Water sources are focal points that both enable and limit human activity. Acequias—more than mere distribution systems, became human associations, cultural traditions, and the foundations of legal systems. The significance of water is evident in the locations and distribution of ancient habitation sites; road and trail routes; farms and field



patterns; greenlines and tree rows; windmills and the cattle they support; and the locations of villages, towns, and cities. Water has become so completely a "cultural" resource that many people now consider its natural sources mere utilities, forgetting their greater roles in shaping human activity and supporting the interlocking systems upon which all life depends.

Threat: The famous spring that gave Portales its name has been dried by wells into a crusty rock shelf. The Hope that named an Eddy County town is poignantly memorialized in dry ditches and dead orchards. The mighty Rio Grande, fourth longest river in North America, is sometimes dry less than half way to the sea. Institutions and legal systems that governed water use in earlier times have ceased to be effective, ignoring links between surface sources and aquifers and allowing water rights to exceed actual water. Public officials and private enterprise, focusing on short-term gain rather than sustainable possibilities, have not confronted the facts. Growing profligate uses threaten acequias, small farms, and other uses deeply rooted in heritage. As New Mexico prepares to address these problems, there is danger that a crassly utilitarian approach may reduce her waters to a simple element of economic production or a component of infrastructure. The true value of New Mexico's waters can only be understood, and humane solutions found, within the context of her history and cultures.

St. Vrain Mill, Mora County

Significance: Built in c. 1854, the mill began operation in 1855 as a white frame building. The building was burned and rebuilt of stone in 1864. After Fort Union was established in 1851, gristmills were built in Mora Valley and Cimarron to supply flour for distribution to southwest military posts and for local use. Some flour was sold to wagon trains on the Santa Fe Trail and some was shipped to New Mexico and Colorado mining camps.

Threat: The building is not being maintained and is in a state of deterioration. Mortar is cracked and stones are falling loose from the walls. Unless preservation intervention is made soon, the building could be lost.



The Gutierrez-Hubbell House, Bernalillo

Village of Pajarito, NM

Significance: The house symbolizes the mixing of Anglo-American and Spanish- American influences during New Mexico's territorial period. The house and property were the center of large family hacienda that evolved into a well-known trading enterprise throughout the American Southwest. John Lorenzo Hubbell, son of James (Santiago) Hubbell and Juliana Gutierrez, went to Arizona in 1876 to establish the Hubbell Trading Post in Ganado. The Hubbell Trading Post is a National Historic Site and is modeled after the South Valley structure. The house also symbolizes southwestern heritage and frontier entrepreneurship and resourcefulness since it has served as a mercantile center, post office, Pajarito Village gathering place, and private residence in its 150+ year existence.

Threat: Bernalillo County acquired the property in November 2000, thereby preventing the previous owner from developing the historic house into a restaurant and the adjacent land into one-acre residential lots. Threats of inappropriate development are gone under public ownership and physical threats are being addressed through planned rehabilitation, however, the lack of sufficient funds for phased rehabilitation remains a concern. A new roof is desperately needed along with related improvements such as wall stabilization and proper grading around the perimeter of the structure. The sooner the Bernalillo County can complete phases of rehabilitation and get the house occupied by users involved in agricultural education, the sooner a permanent presence can be established. This presence will translate into quicker access by the public to learn about and enjoy the rich history of the property, its architectural beauty and the new Bernalillo County Open Space program



Chaco Culture National Historical Park, San Juan County

Located in the San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico.

Significance: Chaco Culture National Historical Park is not only one of the most outstanding cultural resources of the United States, but is recognized globally as a World Heritage Site. Long recognized for extraordinary architecture, a rich archeological record, and a series of magnificent roads that demonstrate its role as a center of important activity eight to twelve centuries ago, Chaco in recent years has come to be understood for its value in Archeo-astronomy. Many major Chacoan structures inside the park and throughout a wide surrounding area are now known to have been built in specific relationship to the sun, moon, planets, and stars. More than mere solstice markers, these relationships have much to tell us about the knowledge and beliefs of the Chacoan people. At few places is our custodial responsibility as great, not only to ourselves as New Mexicans and to all Americans, but to the family of humankind. At few places on earth is the crystal clear Night?and Daytime?Sky as important for understanding our past.

Threat: The clear sky over Chaco Culture National Historical Park is in danger. A coal-fired power plant is proposed for construction on private land only twenty-four miles to the south of Chaco Park Headquarter and five miles to the east of Kin Ya?a?a Chacoan Outlier. The best available technology for limiting pollution is not required to be utilized in the proposed power plant because of its location on private land and its use of privately owned coal. The owners are not held to federal environmental law. If such a plant were constructed, the plume of pollution issuing from the stacks could blot the horizon, screen the sunrise from view and diminish the clear night sky, severing the ancient connection between Chaco and the universe its people struggled to understand.



La Bajada Mesa and Escarpment, Santa Fe

Significance: La Bajada represents a key landscape demarcation between what the Spanish colonial world termed the Rio Abajo and Rio Arriba regions of New Mexico--the lower and upper lands with their distinct ecologies and climates. It also represented the greatest single obstacle for movement across the land as signified by the many pathways that



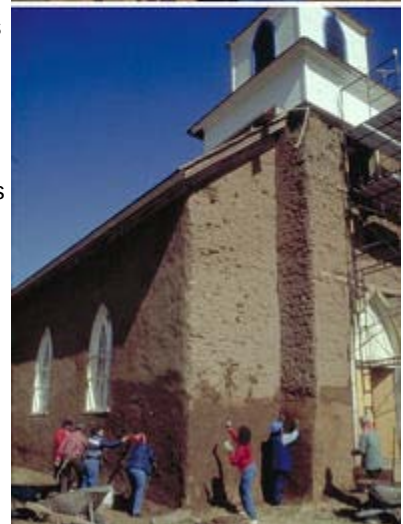
early travelers used to climb or descend the escarpment. These various paths stretch for miles along the escarpment eastward beyond the Cerrillos Hills to the Galisteo Basin and westward to the Canon Santa Fe. The wagon and, later, automobile roads passing near the village of La Bajada recall historic (and prehistoric) north and south movement. Early engravings and, later, postcards celebrated the escarpment and the challenges it posed to transportation. Many of these early images convey a sense of the grandeur of undisturbed open spaces, altered only by the engineering feats of modest roadways scaling the escarpment.

Threat: Mining and development could disturb the view shed of the entire escarpment. Any disturbances of the land (including cell towers) will diminish the capacity to appreciate the significance of the space. Retaining an undisturbed as possible view shed is essential to retaining a feeling for this important landscape and what it has meant historically for defining New Mexico's southwestern character.

New Mexico's Historic Earthen Architectural Tradition, Statewide

Significance: New Mexico's earthen architecture characterizes and in large part defines the cultural heritage of the state. Beginning with troglodytic habitations, evolving through the use of fieldstone in the high architectural style of Chaco Canyon, to the introduction and evolution of adobe at the time of European contact, earthen buildings more than any other man-made constituent characterize New Mexico's unique adaptation to place. The loss of use of the traditions and materials surrounding the construction of earthen buildings reflects the breaking of continuity with cultural underpinnings. Conversely, the preservation of the same traditions reinforces the association of a resident with both the tangible and intangible aspects of place and cultural context.

Threat: There are forces working inadvertently in concert that threaten New Mexico's assemblage of earthen buildings. They are loss over time of local knowledge that tells how to manipulate available materials into structural components, and the corresponding loss of appreciation of the economic and environmental and aesthetic values of earthen buildings.



Melvin W. Mills House, Colfax



Significance: The Mills House and the man who built it are major elements in the cultural heritage of Springer and northern New Mexico. The house is built on a terrace overlooking the Cimarron River near the east end of Main Street when the village was a rail-head for mining towns in Moreno Valley and for shipping agricultural products. Mr. Mills was an attorney, banker, Territorial legislator, entrepreneur, rancher, Canadian River fruit and vegetable farmer, and stagecoach line operator. His Springer house was arguably the most elegant home in rural Northeast New Mexico. It has been described as architecturally "unique in the Nation" for bringing together French Second Empire style, Anglo-influenced porches, and Spanish adobe construction.

Threat: The house has been vacant for a number of years and has undergone major deterioration. Sewer and water systems are non-functional. The electric wiring is too dangerous to

use, adobe bricks are eroding from the walls, exterior ornamental wood trim is heavily weathered, and porches are beginning to sag precipitously. The roof was given minimal repairs in 2001 and several chimneys were taken down for safety. The cost of repairs is beyond the means of the present owner. Without intervention, the Mills House will soon be lost.

Tucumcari Metropolitan Park — 5 Mile Park, Quay

Located west of Tucumcari on old Route 66.

Significance: The park and bathhouse are a part of Tucumcari's unique cultural history; they represent the New Deal era. The building and pool were a part the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) projects completed in 1940. The CCC supplied the manpower; the architect for the bathhouse was Trent Thomas, Senior Foreman Architect of Emergency Conservation Work for the National Park Service. The Spanish-Pueblo Revival style includes modest exposed vigas, corbels, and lintels that were adapted from the same design as La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, which Trent Thomas designed. The bathhouse is a one-story building with concrete foundation, brown stucco over adobe walls and a flat asphalt roof. Flagstone coves the portal floor as well as the interior reception room. The building, pool and park are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Threat: The bathhouse north wall is almost totally deteriorated and on the verge of collapse. The interior is infested with termites and exposed beams are also in danger of collapsing.



New Mexico's Greater Otero Mesa Area, Otero

The federal part of Southern Otero County, 75 miles northeast of El Paso, Texas and 85 miles west of Carlsbad, New Mexico. It encompasses approximately 1.8 million acres, a large percentage of which is public land.

Significance: New Mexico's Greater Otero Mesa is culturally and historically important because certain areas within the Mesa are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places including Cornudas Mountain and Alamo Mountain. Both mountains lie



along the Butterfield Trail and ruins of the Butterfield Trail Ojos de los Alamos State Station lie at the base of Alamo Mountain. There is also an extensive El Paso Phase Jornada Mogollon site with petroglyphs on the northwest face of Alamo Mountain.

Threat: The oil and gas industry has proposed drilling for oil and gas on over 250,000 acres of Otero Mesa. Currently the Bureau of Land Management is posed to release a Final Environmental Impact Statement for the area that could eventually allow full-scale oil & gas development to occur on the entire 1.8 million acres. Hundreds of miles of new road, power lines, pipelines, drill pads and toxic waster ponds would fragment the Greater Otero Mesa and forever destroy its wilderness potential and an irreplaceable piece of New Mexico's cultural heritage.

Historic Roadside Markers of New Mexic, Statewide

Located along roads and at historic sites throughout New Mexico.

Significance: New Mexico?s roadside markers inform the public about the rich history and heritage of the state. As such, they serve a valuable public service to both the citizens of New Mexico as well as visitors to the state about who did what where and even sometimes why it was done.

Threat: There are two dangers. First, the physical conditions of the markers in some of the districts are in a serious state of disrepair. They are faded, covered in graffiti, and even destroyed. Second, the text on some of the markers is outdated and at times too brief. As the highway department replaces the signs, new updated and expanded text needs to be written to fully convey the historic event or place marked by the signs. There is also no comprehensive and accurate list of where all the markers are and what each marker says.