



Vanishing Treasures

Garrett Homestead



Archaeologists record the size and placement of each rock in the structure. This baseline data will be used to assess its condition in the future.

Located on the gravel road to Sandstone Bluffs Overlook, the Garrett Homestead was built between 1935 and 1937. It is a tangible example of one of the last homesteading episodes in the United States. Many of the homesteading families of El Malpais were victims of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression who traveled to this area to begin new lives in the American West. The Garrett Homestead consists of a residential structure with standing architecture and the ruins of several out-buildings. Other features include a possible dug-out structure, hornos (ovens), rock alignments and walls.

Beginning in 2001, El Malpais National Monument's Tres Piedras Vanishing Treasures program began historic preservation activities at the homestead. Phase I of the project conducted a thorough documentation of the site's architecture and artifact assemblage. Elevation drawings made during this phase document each stone within the standing architecture of the homestead's main structure. Phase II of the project will focus on bringing the site to good condition by repointing mortar joints and preventing erosion within the walls of the main structure. These efforts will reduce the impact of New Mexico's harsh weather on the architectural remains of the site. Phase III will include annual visits to the site to assess its condition and to conduct historic preservation activities when needed.

The efforts of the Vanishing Treasures program assures that this chapter of the American experience is not forgotten.

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A Legacy in Ruins

What is Vanishing Treasures?

After 20 years of inadequate funding, backlogged treatment needs, and a lack of information on condition, thousands of prehistoric and historic ruins at the 44 National Park units in the arid west are threatened with severe deterioration and collapse. These architectural resources, some of which are World Heritage sites, are important to our national heritage, and hold significant meaning for a number of traditional communities as well. In addition, only a few highly skilled preservation craftspeople are employed in the National Park Service today, and many of those are retiring after 30+ years in the service. The lack of funding has prevented their specialized knowledge from being passed on to a new generation of craftspeople.

“Vanishing Treasures: A Legacy in Ruins” is a grass roots initiative designed to address both the devastating destruction of these irreplaceable historic and prehistoric structures as well as the impending loss of preservation expertise.

Tres Piedras Vanishing Treasures Program

The Tres Piedras Vanishing Treasures (VT) Program conducts historic preservation activities at El Malpais National Monument, El Morro National Monument and Petrified Forest National Park. The Tres Piedras VT Program is part of the larger Vanishing Treasures Program of the National Park Service. The Tres Piedras VT Program protects and preserves a diverse array of prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Examples of these include the Garret Homestead at El Malpais National Monument, Atsinna Pueblo at El Morro National Monument and Puerco Ruin at Petrified Forest National Park.



A Vanishing Treasures mason applying new mortar in order to help stabilize this structure. These efforts ensure that future generations will also be able to study and enjoy these pieces of the past.

For more information on Vanishing Treasures, visit the web site at:

www.cr.nps.gov/aad/vt/vt.htm

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