



# Cliff Notes

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## THE HIDDEN RIDGE ARCHAIC SITE

Although Tonto National Monument was set aside for the impressive cliff dwellings in 1907, human occupation of the Monument has occurred for thousands of years ...

Three archeological inventory surveys have occurred at the monument in the last century:

William Bromberg in 1958, Ron Ice in 1967-68, and Martyn Tagg in 1985. Combined, the surveys identified 65 sites within the monument boundary. The majority of the sites contain masonry that is easily identified by archeologists. Some locations contain several periods of occupation at different times.

In 2004, monument archeologists conducted a comprehensive assessment of the condition of all 65 sites. This was one of the most ambitious archeological projects undertaken in the park. An intensive backcountry site mapping project followed on the heels of its completion in 2006. During both projects, Archaic period projectile points were identified in the field.

Artifacts collected from the surface at the site were examined by one of the foremost experts in Paleoindian and Archaic period sites in the Southwest. He notes that excavation could change the picture of prehistory in the monument considerably, but comments:

*"The overall impression I gained from the artifact assemblage was that this site seemed to be a camp at which hunting activities were occurring. It is likely that deer were the principal target as the site is positioned within present-day biotic communities that are favored by deer. The presence of hackberry trees at the site implies that a consistent flow of groundwater, resulting in one or more seep springs persisting in the area over thousands of years, may have attracted the Archaic hunters to this place."*

*Bruce Huckell, University of New Mexico,  
Maxwell Museum of Anthropology*



*This Great Basin style spearpoint was discovered by Randy Haas of the Western Mapping Company in 2006. It is the earliest known artifact discovered in the monument, dating between 10,500 to 7,500 BP (before present).*

*NPS Photo*



This Late Classic Period side-notched arrow point represents later bow and arrow technology versus spear throwing. Other artifacts identified at the site included spearpoints, knives, scrapers, and a few grinding stones. The assemblage was dominated by hunting tools and those used to process game, with only a few items that would have been used for preparing plants.

The discovery of the 8 acre Hidden Ridge Archaic site and an early spearpoint nearby confirms 10,000 years of human occupation at the monument. To date, 40 artifacts have been collected from the site.

*"The discovery of the Hidden Ridge site could not have come at a better time. The monument recently began revision of its visitor center exhibits and content that has been on display for over forty years."*

*Duane Hubbard, Chief of Resource Management,  
Tonto National Monument*

## ARCHITECTURAL STUDY

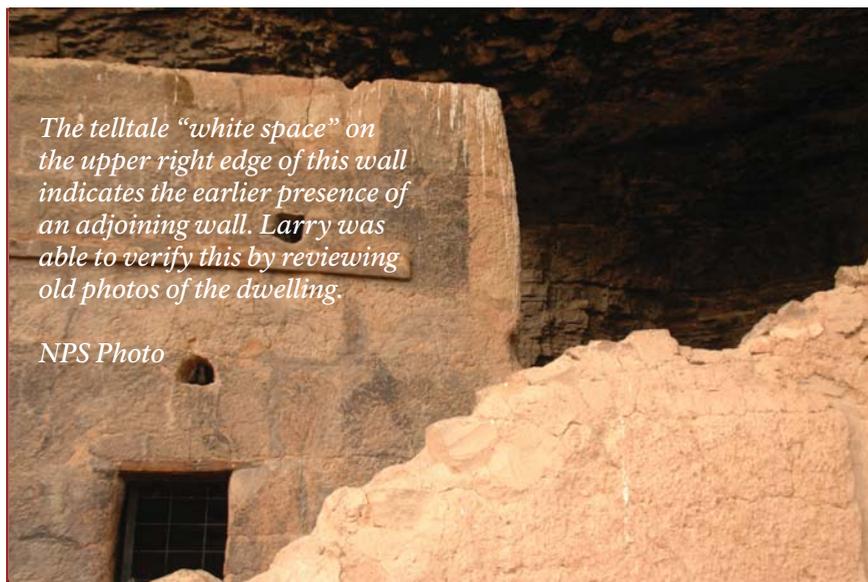
In 2006, Larry Nordby, a retired NPS archeologist, began a study that treats the architecture at the cliff dwellings as an artifact and aims to define how prehistoric people viewed “architectural space.” This type of approach can provide us with insight as to who built the dwellings. Many people assume that the cliff dwellings were built in one effort, but Larry’s work indicates that while the upper and lower cliff dwellings are contemporaneous (from the same time period), they were constructed over several years and were constantly changing.



*This filled in doorway at the Lower Cliff Dwelling is evidence not only of architectural change, but may indicate changes in the social dynamics within the village as well. Note the wood lintel at the top of the original door.*

*NPS Photo*

By carefully studying the architectural features on a wall-by-wall and room-by-room basis, Larry was able to determine the construction sequence at the cliff dwellings. This helps us understand when certain rooms were constructed, how they were built, the possible uses of individual rooms, and the layout of the village. It also helps determine the order in which some rooms deteriorated (collapsed) following their discovery in the late 1800s. Larry is also helping us to reinvestigate previously unrecognized or misidentified features at the dwellings based on more current knowledge. In the near future, visitors to the Monument will be able to view a computer animation demonstrating both how the dwellings were initially constructed and how they have changed over the last century.



*The telltale “white space” on the upper right edge of this wall indicates the earlier presence of an adjoining wall. Larry was able to verify this by reviewing old photos of the dwelling.*

*NPS Photo*

## TREE RING DATING STUDY

Harold Gladwin, an archeologist from Gila Pueblo, was the first to obtain tree-ring samples from the cliff dwellings in 1930. Early datable samples were also obtained in 1935 by archeologists E.B. Sayles and Emil Haurly, providing a range of dates for when the dwellings may have been built.

The ability to obtain accurate dates from tree tings is hampered by multiple factors. Many of the samples were obtained from juniper roof beams. Juniper does not grow in distinct rings, making it difficult to determine the age of the beams. Most of the beams were cut during a wet cycle, which means that there is little variability in the rings (they are all wide), making it difficult to fit them into a particular time period. During a 2006 study of structural wood conducted by Tom Windes, a retired NPS archeologist, new samples were obtained and sent to the Tree Ring Laboratory in Tucson. It will take at least a year to get the results of their analysis.



*The presence of ties in this roof in the Lower Cliff Dwelling are important construction details that rarely survive 700 years.*  
*Photo by Tom Windes*

## CERAMICS AND OBSIDIAN STUDY

Patrick Lyons, head of archeological collections at the Arizona State Museum, began reanalyzing the monument’s ceramic collection in 2005. The focus of the study is to reexamine pottery collected at the dwellings during the 1940 and 1950 excavations as well as recent data recovered from the Tonto Basin concerning source locations for clay and obsidian. Ninety-one per cent of the obsidian samples in the study came from the Government mountain area near Flagstaff; the other nine per cent came from the Superior area. Preliminary results of the ceramics study indicate that the materials are dominated by items dating from the Gila Phase (AD 1350 to 1450). The pottery types examined indicate that the cliff dwellings were occupied at the same time as the Schoolhouse Point and Cline Terrace platform mounds, which are located on the east and west ends of Roosevelt Lake respectively, and within a dozen or so miles of the Tonto Cliff Dwellings.

# Calendar of Special Events and Tours 2007-2008

## December

Saturday 8th 3 pm Ranger Talk - Rim Country Arch. Society (Payson)  
 Wednesday 12th 6:30 pm Lecture - Cobre Valley Center for the Arts (Globe)  
 Saturday 15th 2 pm Schoolhouse Platform Mound Tour  
 Wednesday 19th 100th Anniversary of the Park! FEE FREE DAY  
 Saturday 29th 2 pm Besh Ba Gowah Talk

## March

Saturday 8th 9 am Schoolhouse Platform Mound Tour  
 Sat.-Sun. 15th-16th OPEN HOUSE  
 Friday 21st Evening Program (to be announced)  
 Saturday 22nd 10 am Besh Ba Gowah Tour  
 Saturday 29th 2 pm Ranger Talk at Windy Hill (Roosevelt Lake)

## January

Monday 7th 6:30 pm Lecture - Cobre Valley Center for the Arts (Globe)  
 Saturday 12th 2 pm Schoolhouse Platform Mound Tour  
 Saturday 19th 2 pm Cline Terrace Platform Mound Tour  
 Tuesday 22nd 5:30 pm Upper Cliff Dwelling Full Moon Hike  
 Wednesday 23rd Evening Program (to be announced)  
 Saturday 26th 2 pm Besh Ba Gowah Tour

## April

Saturday 5th 8:30 am Schoolhouse Platform Mound Tour  
 Saturday 12th 10 am Besh Ba Gowah Tour

## May

Saturdays 8 am Early Bird Upper Cliff Dwelling Tours

## February

Saturday 9th 2 pm Schoolhouse Platform Mound Tour  
 Saturday 16th 2:30 pm Ranger Talk at Windy Hill (Roosevelt Lake)  
 Tuesday 20th 5:30 pm Upper Cliff Dwelling Full Moon Hike  
 Saturday 23rd 2 pm Cline Terrace Platform Mound Tour



**Call the Monument for further information and directions to off-site tours: (928) 467-2241.**

## UpperCliff Dwelling Tours

- Tours of the Upper Cliff Dwellings are offered every Saturday and Sunday from November through April. Mondays and Fridays are added as the season progresses to accommodate demand. See page 4 for more details.
- Early Bird tours of the Upper Cliff Dwelling are offered on Saturdays at 8 am in October and May.
- Full moon evening hikes to the Upper Cliff Dwelling will be offered during the winter months. Hikers need to be fit to do this tour because of the quicker pace and darkness.

## Open House

- Twice a year, the Upper Cliff Dwelling is open to visitors without a guide for an entire weekend. Uphill travel on the trail is allowed between the hours of 9 am and 2 pm. Regular fees will be charged both days during Open House weekends. There is no fee if you have an Interagency Annual Pass, Interagency Senior Pass, or Interagency Access Pass.

## Ranger Talks

- Scheduled ranger talks will include a variety of topics such as making twine out of native plants, learning about rattlesnakes and Gila monsters, and medicinal and edible uses for native plants.

## Off-Site Tours

Off-site tours are offered through agreements with Tonto National Forest and Besh Ba Gowah Archaeological Park in Globe.

- The Schoolhouse Platform Mound site is unique in that it was occupied for over 100 years while most other settlements in the basin were smaller and were occupied only briefly. People from neighboring villages apparently moved to the Schoolhouse Platform Mound. Why?
- The Cline Terrace Platform Mound site is similar to other sites along the Salt River but it also has several distinct characteristics. There is a massive compound wall around the complex, and many walls are faced with white gypsum. Why? The site must have been quite impressive in the moonlight.
- Besh Ba Gowah is a reconstructed ruin located in the city of Globe. You can walk in the rooms, climb recreated ladders, and enter a typical living area. There is also a museum and ethnobotanical garden at Besh Ba Gowah. The site is on flat ground and there is a \$2.00 per person entry fee.



*Visitors enjoy a tour of Besh Ba Gowah with Park Ranger Eddie Colyott.*

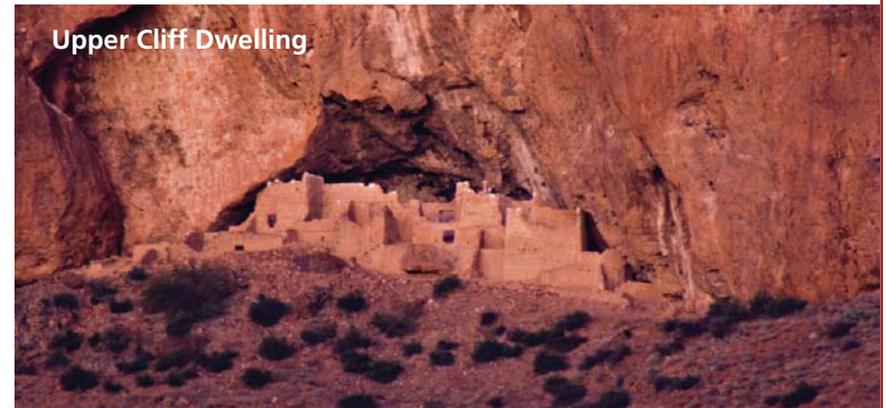
## Plan Your Visit

Tonto National Monument is located 30 miles northwest of Globe on Highway 188. Driving time from Phoenix, Scottsdale or Mesa is approximately 2 to 2 1/2 hours; from Tucson or Flagstaff, 3 to 3 1/2 hours.

The Visitor Center has a small museum, bookstore, viewing deck, and 18 minute orientation video and is open daily (except Christmas Day) from 8 am to 5 pm. The park also has a picnic area for your enjoyment with restrooms.

### Self-Guided Lower Cliff Dwelling Trail

A paved trail winds its way through the Sonoran desert to the Lower Cliff Dwelling. You will climb 350 vertical feet, so be prepared for a steep climb. Signs along the trail provide information about the desert plants, geology of the area, and the lives of the ancient Salado. Sit on one of several benches along the path and enjoy the beautiful view of Roosevelt Lake. Once you arrive at the dwelling, walk through homes that were last occupied 700 years ago. On your return walk, the Cactus Patch Trail branches off the main trail and ends in the parking lot. Learn how desert plants have adapted to arid conditions and how the Salado used these plants to provide food, shelter, and clothing. Bring water, sunscreen and a hat with you. The one mile roundtrip walk takes about an hour to complete so plan to arrive at the park no later than 4 pm. Allow extra time to visit the museum, bookstore, and watch the video.



### Upper Cliff Dwelling Tours

During the winter season (November through April), rangers give guided tours to the Upper Cliff Dwelling. Tours are offered every weekend. Additional weekday tours are added as visitation increases. This 3 mile roundtrip backcountry trail travels through a riparian area by way of a creekbed, then gains 600 feet in elevation via switchbacks. The tour lasts 3-3 1/2 hours. Full moon hikes to the Upper Cliff Dwelling for experienced hikers are offered in the winter months. Reservations are required for all Upper Cliff Dwelling tours. See page 3 for a *Schedule of Special Events and Tours*.

FOR RESERVATIONS OR INFORMATION CALL THE MONUMENT AT (928) 467-2241.



### WNPA Bookstore

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) was founded as a nonprofit organization in 1938 to aid and promote the educational and scientific activities of the National Park Service, thereby helping to preserve our cultural and natural heritage for future generations. By publishing and distributing educational materials, funding scientific research, and providing financial grants, WNPA strives to promote a greater public understanding and enjoyment of the special places preserved by the National Park Service. All net proceeds from bookstore sales support the interpretive and research programs of the National Park Service.



The bookstore is open daily (except Christmas Day) from 8 am to 5 pm.

[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)

#### *Your Benefits as a Member:*

- A \$25 yearly membership entitles you to a 15% discount on purchases in the WNPA bookstore (20% discount for seniors 62 and older).
- Discounts are honored at many other cooperating association bookstores in national park visitor centers nationwide.
- Your membership contribution directly supports research and educational programs at Tonto National Monument.

#### *Past and Present Projects at Tonto National Monument:*

- Operate bookstore outlet at Tonto National Monument
- Publish trail guides, park newspaper, and Junior Ranger booklets
- Funding for Student Conservation Association employees
- Funding for Cultural Demonstrations
- Grant funding for 2004 Arizona Black Rattlesnake Study
- Grant funding for 2004-'05 Gila Monster Study

