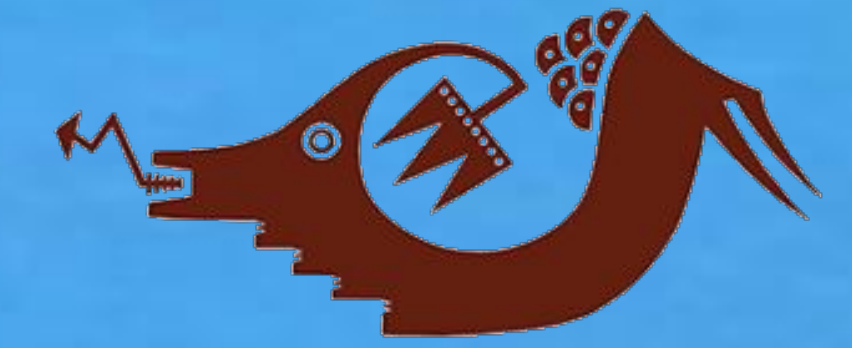# Northern Rio Grande Public Archaeology: The Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project
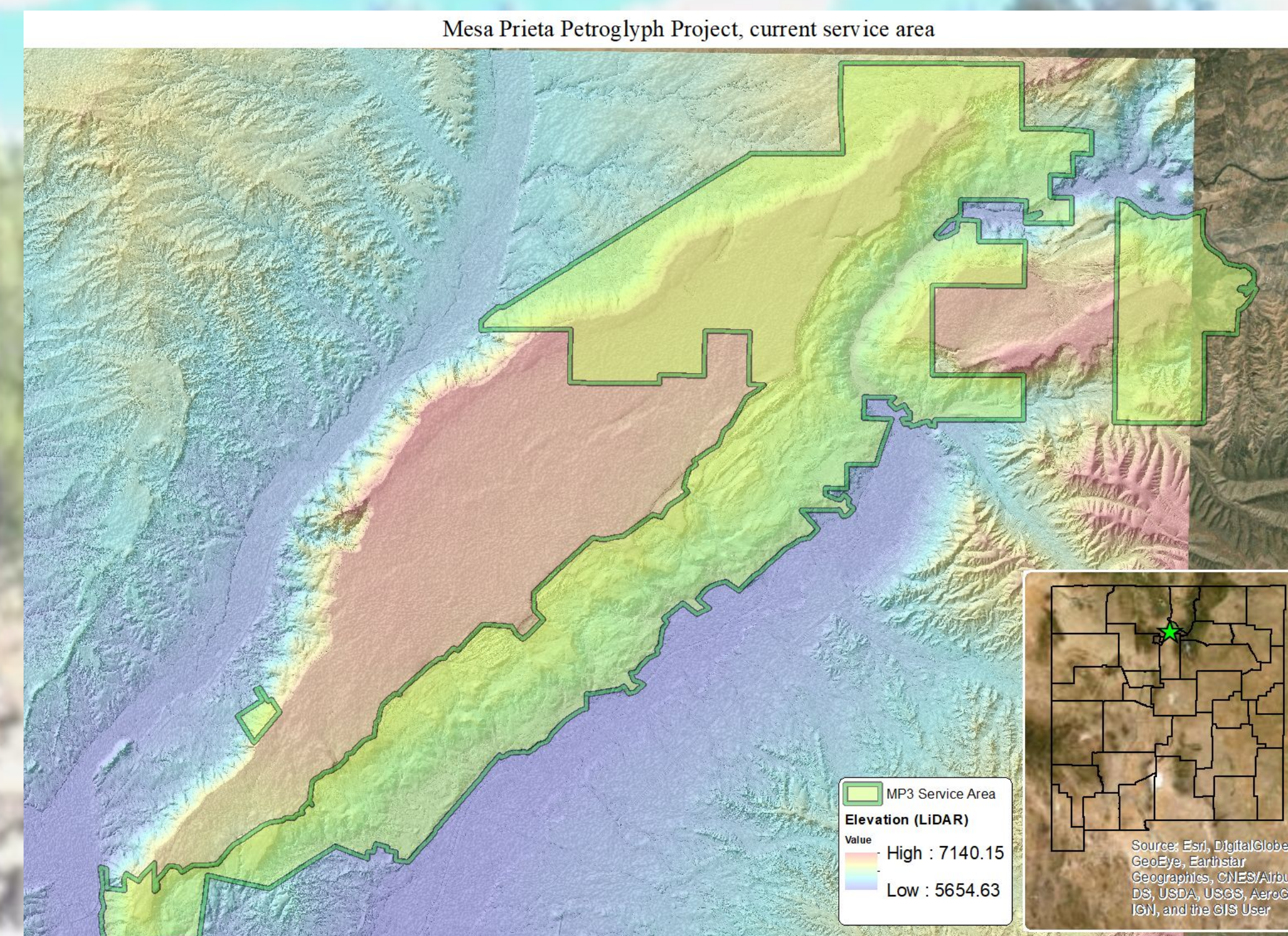
Chester R. Liwosz, PhD (Project Archaeologist)

The Archaeological Conservancy
Preserving the past…for the future.

Purpose & Mission

The Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project (MP3) is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to recording, preserving, and educating the public about the petroglyphs, archaeology, and history of the eponymous landform outside of Española, NM. To reach these goals we offer public tours, online educational materials, train citizen scientists, and rely on around 100 active volunteers. MP3 also works directly with the NM Laboratory of Anthropology, the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, universities, private landowners, and the State of New Mexico to pursue this mission.

Land Acknowledgement

This study addresses colonized lands within the traditional territory of Tewa-speaking pueblos. Specifically, the colonial toponyms "Mesa Prieta" and "Black Mesa" refer to a place and landform traditionally called Tsikwaye. As an effort to recognize and address the impacts of colonization on indigenous communities, this study integrates information from consultation and indigenous-authored primary accounts. I and MPPP recognize the vitality of living indigenous cultures including Tewa, Tiwa, Comanche, and Jicarilla Apache whose cultural heritage we study.

Public Engagement

MP3 recognizes that we cannot achieve our mission goals without public support. We disseminate our work and broader topics of archaeological interest through several outlets: public and private petroglyph tours, online educational programming, youth education, and many volunteering opportunities. For information on upcoming public programming (including online events) scan the QR codes below:

Monthly Newsletter   Facebook Page

Volunteers/Citizen Scientists

Our archaeology recording program relies on trained citizen-scientists who both survey and record petroglyph panels & other archaeological evidence on a 50mi² mesa.

Recently, we have begun to roll out updates to bring our recording program into the 21st century. Our tablets can integrate field data in a GIS app.

Youth Education

MP3 strongly emphasizes youth education, particularly as a means of engaging local children and teens in their cultural heritage. We provide a grade school curriculum about the local history as told through the petroglyphs to area schools. Apart from that, our flagship educational program is the Summer Youth Intern Program, in which local earn dual credit in a STEM and Humanities curriculum studying the petroglyphs and archaeology.

Lectures & Public Programming

Lost Glaze Technology with Judith Habicht-Mauche
Jan 2022 (S3E02) *Chat with the Archaeologist*

Youtube Channel

In addition to public and private tours, MP3 also regularly release free and open-access online educational content. Our monthly webcast, *Chat with the Archaeologist*, features guest speakers on popular topics, and is completing its third season on air. We also partner with Los Luceros State Historic Site to put on the public lecture series *Mesa Talks*, which for 2022 will run as hybrid events. To view our latest video content and to subscribe, scan the QR code above.

Indigenous Involvement

We are deeply committed to the ethical principles of indigenous collaboration and decolonization. We consult directly with tribal government offices and with community elders on our undertakings. We also engage the pueblo communities in the process of developing land management strategies, including cultural access and stewardship plans. Our archaeology recording program is working with indigenous archaeologists from these communities to provide access to tens of thousand of records for research purposes as well.

Current & Future Research

As one of the densest, most prolific rock art sites in North America, Mesa Prieta is rapidly transforming into a hub for research. MP3 supports several private and academic partners interested in archaeological research on this remarkable landscape. Recent and ongoing studies advance methods in UAV aerial reconnaissance, archaeoacoustics, and virtual heritage management, and are contributing to developing archaeological theories. We disseminate results in conferences and peer-reviewed publications, as well as through public programming. For examples, scan the QR codes listed below:

VR Tours   Sketchfab