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Bringing the Past to the Public

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Bringing the Past to the Public

Engaged Learning Project

Submitted April 2014

By Ghazala Janmohamed

Mentor: Dr. Mike Adler

Project Overview

The purpose of my Engaged Learning project was to make history alive to general audiences. Being an anthropology major, I decided to use the subfield of archaeology in order to attract people to all the rich history that can be found.

My Journey

I began working with my mentor, Dr Mike Adler in the spring of 2013. He helped me to come up with a game plan and reach out to the leaders of the Picuris tribe. We decided to focus this project on Picuris Pueblo because it is located close to Taos where the SMU campus is. Taos Pueblo has lots of visitors and attention, however; Picuris Pueblo does not so we thought it would be appropriate to help bring attention to it.

In the summer of 2013, I attended the Taos Collaborative Archaeological Program (TCAP) which is a field school hosted by SMU in Taos. I did this so I could get the full experience of what I was trying to attract people to come see. We excavated under the guidance of Dr Kit Nelson and Alan Rutherford who have conducted many digs and field schools. At the end of the six weeks, I had learned and gone through the entire process of excavation. This including surveying a site to determine potential dig sites, the initial clearing of a site, actual excavation, cleaning and processing materials, and storing them.

Once I had a better understanding of this process, I began talking to the leaders at Picuris Pueblo. Luckily, Dr Adler and previous members of SMU staff had a good rapport with the leaders so they were willing to meet with me. I got the necessary permissions needed to conduct this project from the leaders and continued on.

The Result

The end result of this project was a poster that can be displayed in libraries, tourist locations, and other similar locations. The poster has pictures of items excavated and some background information on them. I also created a pamphlet to introduce people to some of the basic archaeological remains that we typically find in pueblos.

Hopefully these informative pieces will encourage people to tour Picuris Pueblo and other archeological sites. This will continue tourism and help to preserve culture.

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