



The Piro and Bosque del Apache

Jan 7-8, 2017

The 230,000-acre National Wildlife Refuge of the Bosque del Apache is best known these days as one of the most important migratory stops in all of the Americas. Sandhill cranes and snow geese flock by the thousands to the area every winter. We'll take advantage of this with our own viewings and expert interpretation during the trip.

This area was home to the Piros, who once lived in the Rio Grande Valley north and south of Socorro and in adjacent parts of the Salinas Basin. Dr. Michael Bletzer, a renowned expert on the Piro, will guide us through the most important sites and talk about whom the Piro were, where they went and why. He will also offer answers to other similar big questions.

When the Spanish first entered New Mexico, the Piros formed one of the largest Puebloan groups. In the mid-to-late 1620s, they were visited by Franciscan missionaries and "converted and saved." We will visit some of the recently excavated pueblos where Michael has been working.

The Piros lived in a number of pueblos along the Rio Grande and the southern periphery of the Salinas Basin. "Socorro" means aid or help, and was a name given to two Piro pueblos by the Spaniards. The Piros were visited by Coronado's expedition in 1540/41, by Chamuscado in 1581/82, by Espejo in 1582/83, and by Oñate in 1598. Missionary work began in earnest in the mid-1620s under the auspices of fray Alonso de Benavides. By the mid-1600s, the Piros suffered from disease, drought, the exactions of the colonial system, and Apache raids. In the early 1670s, the Salinas Piro pueblos were abandoned and their surviving inhabitants resettled at several Rio Grande Piro pueblos. During this period, too, anti-Spanish factions among the Piros attempted several revolts, but all were suppressed by Spanish force of arms. In late August 1680, a planned attack at Socorro on Spanish refugees fleeing south in the aftermath of the Pueblo Revolt was betrayed and the Spanish took several hundred Piros to El Paso. A second group of Piros was captured at Isleta during the abortive Spanish attempt at reconquest in late 1681. Many of those Piros, too, were deported to El Paso. On the retreat from that campaign, the Spanish troops burned down the remaining Piro pueblos of Sevilleta, Alamillo, Socorro, and Senecú. Aside from the Piros taken to El Paso, many Piros fled to other pueblos (e.g., Acoma, Zuni, Cochiti) or joined Apache bands. The Piros never reoccupied their ancestral pueblos. A portion of the Rio Grande Piro homeland is now known for the Bosque del Apache.

Saturday, January 7

Depart Santa Fe at 10 a.m.

Drive to Socorro.

12:30 Meet Michael Bletzer at **Sevilleta**, or **Tzelaqui**, first settlement of the Piro pueblos. Visit to **La Joya**, bird refuge to the north of Socorro

Box lunch from Santa Fe at **Sevilleta**

2:00 Continue to Socorro

2:30 Check in at **Best Western**, Socorro

3:30 Drop bags and re-board the bus to arrive at **Bosque del Apache** in time for the fly in

6:00 Return to motel, walk over for dinner at **Socorro Springs**

Sunday, January 8

4:40 a.m. Optional early-morning outing to see the cranes fly out. Those who want to sleep late can do so.

6:00 Return to motel to pick up rest of group

Breakfast at **Best Western**. On your own, breakfast is included.

8:00 Visit the **old church**, where early foundations of the colonial structure are visible

Visit **other Piro sites** as determined in consultation with Michael

12:00 Lunch at **Twisted Chile** in Socorro

1:00 Return to **Santa Fe**

Brief Biography of Michael Bletzer

Michael's main research interests are the study of frontier populations in colonial contexts and the bio-archaeology of conflict in feudal and colonial societies. Within these interests, his research focuses on the period of early native-Spanish contact across northern Mexico and New Mexico, particularly on the Piro area and adjacent regions during the period 1500 to 1700. Since 1993, Michael has worked on various archaeological projects in Europe, Central America, and the Southwestern United States. He has been investigating the history of the Piro province since 1999. His Piro project includes excavation, survey, analysis of colonial documents, and ethno-historic research. Between 2001 and 2010, he excavated parts of Site LA 31744 (Plaza Montoya Pueblo), the likely Teypana Pueblo and “original” Socorro of the Oñate period. Starting in 2012, he has been conducting archival research and archaeological testing to identify the location of Site LA 791, Pilabó Pueblo, site of the first Franciscan Piro mission (founded in early 1626), in downtown Socorro. His current main project is at the Ancestral/Colonial Piro pueblo of Tzelaqui/Sevilleta (LA774). Michael graduated with a PhD from Southern Methodist University in 2009.

Cost

\$575.00 per person

This price includes:

- Overnight at the Best Western motel in Socorro
- One breakfast, two lunches, and one dinner
- Transportation to and from Santa Fe
- Gratuities to driver
- Water on the bus
- All entry fees
- Archaeologist honorarium
- \$50 donation to SAR

Cost is based on 20 people. Single supplement is \$50.