Whiterock Canyon Raft Trip

On Saturday and Sunday, June 19 and 20, 2010 fourteen (14) intrepid site stewards from around the State of New Mexico spent two fantastic days on the Rio Grande River rafting through Whiterock Canyon exploring seldom visited archaeological sites. This adventurous trip down the canyon included visits to petroglyph panels, agricultural fields and features, and pueblo sites.

Anne Baldwin, Supervisory Archaeologist for the Santa Fe National Forest Espanola/Coyote Resource Area, provided us with on site education and extensive reference material. Anne taught us about each individual site we visited as well as how to interpret what we saw, how to complete a site survey form, ceramic and lithic identification, ways to view the settings of the sites on the landscape, and many more aspects of archaeology too numerous to list. Anne also provided us with information on how the Forest Service handles fire forests, a very timely subject.

Jon Asher, a previous SFNF Site Steward for river corridor sites through Whiterock Canyon and expert river guide, was our head river guide. Jon provided us with extensive information on the Rio Grande, geology, native flora and fauna, the history of Cochiti dam and its impact on the river and archaeological sites along the river, and much rafting and river lore. Jon was instrumental in locating and guiding our boats to the remote sites we visited and our beautiful camp site on a bench overlooking the river.

Our entire group had a wealth of archaeological as well as life experience that was generously shared at our site visits, around the camp site and in the rafts as we floated down the river.

Los Rios River Runners, www.losriosriverrunners.com, staff made our journey safe, fun, educational and provided us with all the river and camping gear we required as well as delicious meals.

Thank you very much to all our group members and Los Rios River Runners for making this trip so educational, adventurous and enjoyable!

A steep hike back down to the river from a pueblo site. Right to left: Cynthia Baughman and Jim Mickle. Photo by Isabel Carvalhal.
River guide Jon Asher rowing and Jim Mickle. Photo by Beth Parisi.

Pueblo Site - left to right: River guide Jon Asher, Grant Luckhardt, Archaeologist Anne Baldwin, Beth Parisi. Photo by Isabel Carvalhal.