

**ACROSS THE COLORADO PLATEAU:  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES FOR THE  
TRANSWESTERN PIPELINE EXPANSION PROJECT**

**VOLUME VIII**

**NAVAJO COUNTRY—DINÉ BIKÉYAH**

by

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Chapter 5. Bailey and Bailey's (1982) findings about long-term changes on the mesa are in Chapter 13.

## MESA DE LOS LOBOS

Mesa de los Lobos (Lobo Mesa) at the south end of the San Juan Basin is rich in post-Adobolador phase sites. Numerous families live on and around the mesa. While archeological research and historical studies have been carried out in the area prior to the present project, Brugge (1972a) summarized the little that was known, based on the Navajo Land Office survey. Additional sites were discovered during the pipeline project. What has emerged is a picture of a pinyon and ponderosa pine landscape that played, and continues to play, a significant role in the lives of the Navajo people.

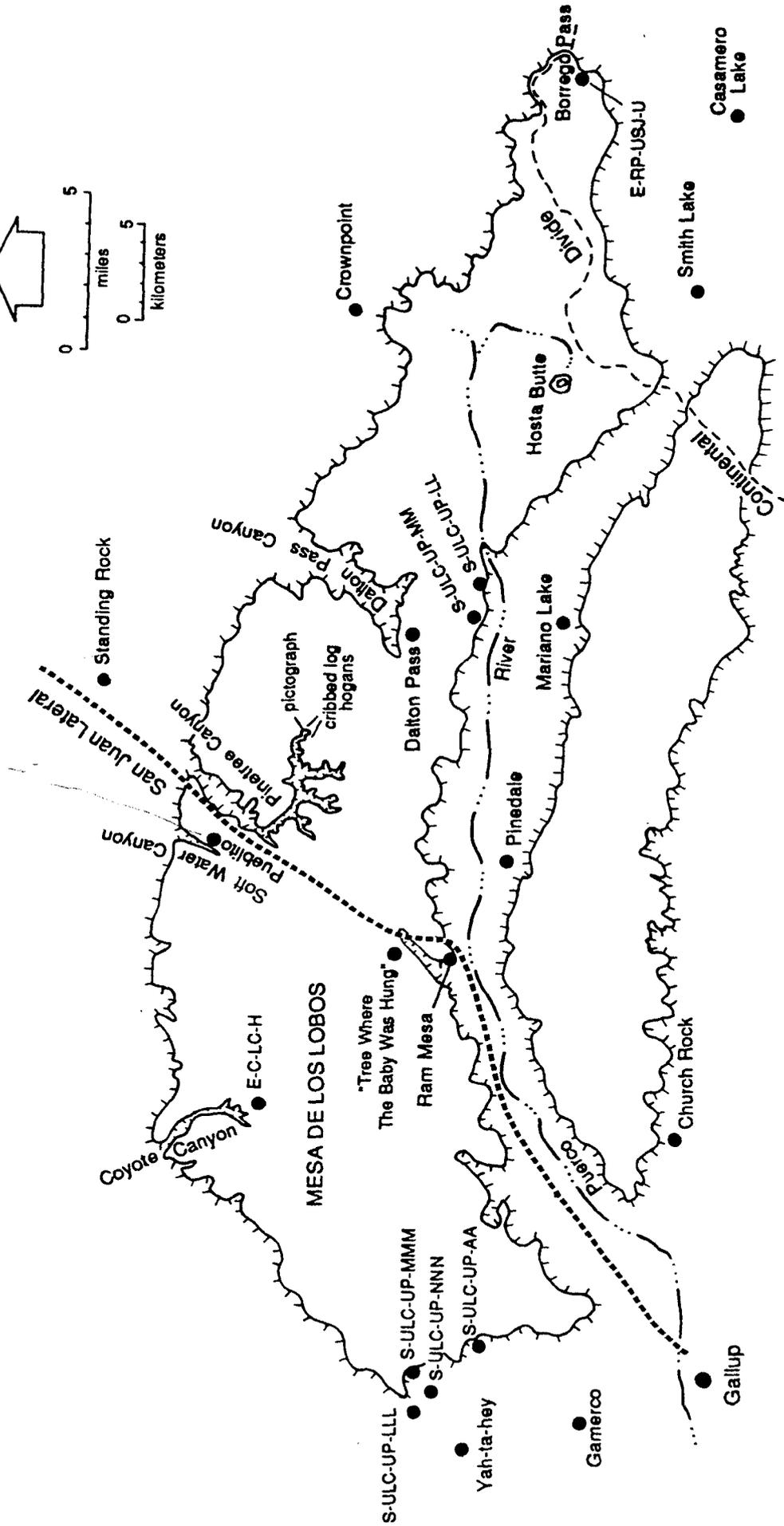
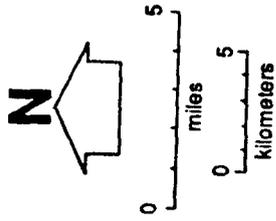
Adobolador phase sites on and around Mesa de los Lobos were described by Brugge (1972a) as the "exodus" of Navajo emigrants from the *Dinétah* in the 1750s and 1760s (Brugge 1972a:2). A previous section in this chapter described how the Navajo culture originated in the *Dinétah* beginning about A.D. 1450. For several hundred years little contact existed between the Pueblo Indians and the early Navajos. But after the Pueblo Revolt in 1680 and the Spanish Reconquest of New Mexico in the 1690s, Pueblo refugees introduced weaving, silversmithing, masonry, and a number of important concepts, including . . . ceremonial objects, prayer sticks, use of corn meal, and perhaps the origin myth, and perhaps other aspects of the Pueblo matrilineal system. A number of contemporary Navajos "had their origins in groups of Pueblo refugees who stayed with Navajos—for example, the Jemez Clan, the Zia Clan, the 'Blue Sheep' reportedly derived from San Juan Pueblo (Mogt 1961:301).

Brugge (1972a) describes this fusion in his *Review of the Dinétah*:

The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the Spanish Reconquest of the 1690s ushered in

more far-reaching changes. With the collapse of Pueblo resistance in 1694 and the failure of a poorly organized second revolt in 1696, large numbers of refugees arrived in Navajo country bringing with them their own religious beliefs, new skills and probably some of their livestock from mission herds. During the first half of the 18th century the area known as the *Dinétah* on the headwaters of the San Juan River east of present-day Farmington saw a cultural florescence with a hybrid vigor that would soon spread in more dilute form throughout the Navajo world. Complex new ceremonies that were based on the knowledge of Pueblo priests fleeing the wrath of the Christians displaced much of the shamanistic ritual. A somewhat more sedentary life took hold, with more permanent architecture, primarily hogans, but including a few stone structures that are today called pueblitos, "little pueblos." There was expanded agricultural dependency, greater use of ceramics, a weaving tradition based on the wool from small herds of sheep and Pueblo style looms, and new clans derived from the foreign origin of the immigrants, possibly even the introduction of the clan system itself [Brugge 1992a:32].

This cultural florescence and the construction of defensive pueblitos in the *Dinétah* ended between 1748 and 1754, at the same time that sites attributed to Navajo emigrants appeared on Chacra Mesa, Big Bead Mesa, and Lobo Mesa, as well as farther west at Manuelito, Klagetoh, and Ganado. Certain of these locations also had earlier *Dinétah* Phase Navajo sites, and it is likely that the emigrants moved into regions already occupied by "less-Pueblo-ized Navajos" (Brugge 1972a:2). However, the presence of emigrants from the *Dinétah* is clear and striking, as shown by stone hogans, masonry pueblitos, defensive locations, and ceramics.



This exodus was brought about by Ute and Comanche raids and drought (Brugge 1992a:33). Spanish missionary activities around Mt. Taylor may also have been involved, but whatever the cause, the Navajos returned to a somewhat more mobile way of life, as herds of sheep and goats increased in number, and woven items became the major trade items with the Euro-Americans. The culture began to approach "what is today regarded as the traditional Navajo lifeway" (Brugge 1992a:33).

The San Juan Lateral threads its way across Lobo Mesa, following what may be the prehistoric and early historic counterpart of the Togay Wagon Trail, which later linked Fort Wingate with Fort Lewis (see later discussion in Chapter 5). None of the eight sites documented by the Land Claim Survey are in the immediate area, but five nearby sites reflect the exodus, and the eight provide a valuable comparative baseline. Certain of them also figure into local Navajo traditions. As noted under the place names section in the previous chapter, a location called "Tree Where the Baby Was Hung," dates to a Comanche raid. All of the following information is from Brugge (1972a), with some of his references added.

Beginning at the northwestern corner of Lobo Mesa (Figure 29), there is a pueblito known as *Tseghaa 'Kini*, or Site E-C-LC-H in the Land Claim Survey numbering system. This small three-room masonry structure near Coyote Canyon (Bitsui 1965) was built on the rim of *Tòh Tlìzhini* Canyon. A notched-log ladder, an eagle trap, two stone hogans, a corral, a lamb pen, and Dinetah Transitional Variety ceramics occur with it. Local Navajos state that the pueblito is associated with the *Tsi 'naajinii*, an obscure clan often attributed to Zuni ancestresses. The site is said to have been used as a refuge from Utes, Spaniards, and Mexicans up to the time of Fort Sumner.

An unnamed site (E-RP-USJ-U) at the opposite end of Lobo Mesa, not far from Borrego Pass, consists of 10 forked-stick hogans and a lookout on a narrow mesa with a wall blocking the only approach. Ceramics include Dinetah Utility and Dinetah Transitional Variety. The

site is said to have withstood attack, as shown by bullet holes in a rock near the defensive wall.

Two small fortified mesas near Mariano Lake on the southeast side of Lobo Mesa also have sites of this period. One (S-ULC-UP-LL) contains nine forked-stick hogans on top of the mesa, and two or three at the base. Ten of the 14 tree-ring dates from the site fall between A.D. 1759 and 1764 (Stokes and Smiley 1966:8-9). Dinetah Utility ceramics predominate.

The other nearby site, S-ULC-UP-MM, has one forked-stick hogan on top of the mesa, and a cribbed-log hogan at the base. Three of the four tree-ring dates fall between A.D. 1758 and 1762 (Stokes and Smiley 1966:8-9). All seven sherds noted at the site are Dinetah Utility.

Four sites at the west end of Lobo Mesa are near the location of the old Powell Trading Post at Toligai (*To Lakai*). One (S-ULC-UP-MMM) has five dwellings and a defensive wall on a high ledge. Three of the dwelling rooms are contiguous stone hogans, with the defensive wall forming their rear walls. A fourth stone hogan and a forked-stick hogan are also at the site. Another stone hogan is below the site. Local Navajos call the site the same as the one near Coyote Canyon: *Tseghaa 'Kini*. It contains Dinetah Transitional Variety sherds.

Nearby is S-ULC-UP-LLL, with seven stone hogans, a corral, a lamb pen, and Dinetah Transitional Variety ceramics. Local Navajos claim that the occupants of the hogans used the nearby defensive site in times of war.

Another site (S-ULC-UP-NNN) near Powell Trading Post consists of three apparent forked-stick hogans at the base of a fortified crag. Most of the sherds at the site are Dinetah Transitional Variety.

Between Rock Springs and Powell Trading Post is S-ULC-UP-AA, with two forked-stick hogans, a hogan ring, and a stone house. The one tree-ring date from the site is A.D. 1755 (Stokes and Smiley 1966:8). Ceramics include Dinetah Transitional Variety.

Figure 29 demonstrates how these eight Gobernador phase "exodus" sites ring Lobo Mesa, and suggest many more may be found in its rugged canyons and cliffs. Indeed, while carrying out the pipeline excavations and ethnological studies, local Navajos guided us to five more sites of this time period, all within a few miles of the pipeline right-of-way (Figure 29). They include a defensive pueblito overlooking upper Soft Water Canyon, a number of forked-stick hogans, other structures, and a defensive wall and trail on Ram Mesa, two structural sites above the head of Pinetree Canyon, and a pictograph of men on horses hunting deer in Pinetree Canyon. Summaries of these sites are presented below, from Brugge (1992b) and the author's field notes. The sites have yet to be recorded.

#### SITE 1

This small village consists of the remains of eight structures on the top of Ram Mesa. Three are forked-stick hogans, measuring about 3 m in diameter; others include the remains of an apparent ramada, two cribbed-log hogans or windbreaks, a lean-to or windbreak, and two shelters. Additional features are three middens, a rock circle or "watch pit" on the rim of the mesa, a hearth, log and rock walls around the north edge of the mesa and at the trailhead, a trail up the northeast corner of the mesa, and many old stumps felled and trimmed by burning. Ceramics include sherds of probable eighteenth century Hopi and Zuni polychrome, Micaceous Variety Dinetah Gray, Transitional Variety Dinetah Gray, and Navajo Gray.

Brugge (1992b) concluded that the mesa top has been little disturbed since the Navajo wars, and that there are many ancient standing and fire-felled trees that could have supported additional lean-tos and shelters. The trail up the mesa corner has steps cut into it at the top, but they are probably more recent, dating to when Ram Mesa received its English name, as a ram pasture. The top of the mesa is easily defended, and the structures would have been well-concealed. Chapter 5 presents additional information about this important location.

#### SITE 2

The southeast head of Pinetree Canyon has three early Navajo sites associated with it. One, just west of the canyonhead, consists of the remains of three to four old windbreaks or shelters, with circular arrangements of fire-felled tree limbs and slightly depressed floor areas. One has a slab-lined bin or hearth in it. Sherds associated with several of the structures include Navajo Gray, a possible Acoma type, and an unspecified Navajo type. The structures may represent a concealed camp, located near the only accessible way down to a spring in the canyonhead.

#### SITE 3

This consists of the remains of one fairly large, old cribbed-log hogan and several other wooden structures east of the canyonhead. No artifacts were observed in association with them.

#### SITE 4

The canyonhead alcove with the spring in it also has charcoal pictographs on the rear wall just west of the spring, which include men on horses hunting deer and several geometric features. The horses have plumate tails, converging legs, and round hooves (or hoof prints). The riders hold reins, quirts, bows and arrows. The deer have branching antlers and one has a cross-hatched body. Most of the figures are painted solid black, with some outlining. Most are badly weathered, though there are a few that are well-preserved.

#### SITE 5

This well-preserved masonry pueblito at the rim of Soft Water Canyon consists of three large rooms on top of a boulder (Figure 30). One of the rooms has a partial roof that may have supported a second story. Six notched-log ladders and tree trunks provide access to the top of the 15 ft (4.7 m) high boulder. Hundreds of gray Navajo ceramics, along with burned bone, lithic artifacts, and fire-cracked rock occur in a dense ashy area near the boulder. One red-on-yellow sherd, collapsed masonry



**Figure 30. Eighteenth-century Navajo pueblito above Soft Water Canyon on Lobo Mesa.**

and fallen roof beams can be found elsewhere at the site, which is on a point where a small tributary joins Soft Water Canyon.

#### **DEFIANCE DRAW AND BLACK CREEK VALLEY**

The upper reaches of Defiance Draw begin at approximately 7,000 ft (2,134 m) above sea level on the Manuelito Plateau, a sagebrush, canyon and juniper-covered highland about 15 mi (24 km) west of Mesa de los Lobos (Figure 21). Defiance Draw runs southeast then south for 15 mi (24 km), until it joins the Puerco River west of Gallup. No permanent water is on the plateau, aside from a few small springs, such as Coyote Drinking Water, Bubbling Spring, and Smiley's Spring.

The western border of the plateau is prominently marked by a north-south running monocline composed of several vertical hogbacks and "haystacks." Several small drainages, such as Tse Bonita Wash, have cut through the hogbacks and run west into the Black Creek Valley. In contrast to the Manuelito Plateau, Black Creek Valley has a permanent stream running south into the Puerco River.

As part of the McKinley Mine ethnological and archeological project, Kelley (1982a, 1986) studied the land-use histories of four to six groups of post-Fort Sumner Navajo settlers and their descendants, who made up 24 residence groups by 1978. Use areas of several residence groups are cut through by Loop E of the

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Archaeological Research Section  
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Catalog of Dated Native American Sites

Sorted on State/Quad  
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State/Quad	Site Name/Number	Culture	Period	UTM East	North	Elev	T	S	R	Num	EC	Late	C
NMB24801	WOLAJINI RUIN	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 295350	4050250	6810	2	0	2	15	1711	1712	1
NMB25201	LA 16209	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 259495	4090800	6540	2	0	1	23		1621	
NMB25401	LA 72747	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 257040	4082260	6500	2	0	1	32	1615	1622	1
NMB25501	LA 72767	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 261820	4078720	6250	2	0	1	11	1677	1679	1
NMB25601	LA 72766	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 261880	4078620	6250	2	0	1	1		1621	
NMB26301	LA 79290	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 250400	4085520	6300	2	0	1	8		1526	
NMB26401	LA 79462	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 258680	4085980	6450	2	0	1	23		1770	
NMB26601	LA 82984	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 255990	4079360	5800	2	0	1	2		1568	
NMB26901	LA 74243	NAVAJO	DINETA	13 258800	4079300	6340	2	0	1	2		1580	
NMB27301	LA 68953	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 261880	4080090	6240	2	0	1	2		1654	
NMB27401	LA 72765	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 262020	4078600	6240	2	0	1	2		1647	
NMB27501	LA 83529	NAVAJO		13 273000	4069840	6700	2	0	2	6		1748	
NMB27701	LA 100353	NAVAJO	DINETA	13 253920	4092400	6720	2	0	1	2		1580	
NMB27801	LA 100354	NAVAJO	DINETA	13 293950	4092420	6820	2	0	1	4		1580	
NMB27901	DEER HOUSE	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 269410	4021730	6810	2	0	2	7		1739	
NMB28001	TOWER STANDING GOD	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 271310	4019100	6930	2	0	2	5		1722	
NMB28101	STAR ROCK REFUGE	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 259850	4050405	6600	2	0	2	1		1708	
NMB28201	BUFFALO MASK	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 262280	4061300	5720	2	S	2	13	1673	1692	1
NMB28301	HIDDEN HOUSE	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 274330	4063850	6550	2	0	2	16	1743	1754	1
NMB28302	HIDDEN HOUSE	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 274325	4063855	6545	2	0	1	6	1746	1751	1
NMB28401	HANGING POT RUIN	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 267680	4010930	7390	2	0	1	2		1747	
NMB28402	HANGING POT RUIN	PUEBLITO	GOBERN	13 267680	4010930	7390	2	0	1	2	1746	1751	1
NMCO3101	SITE AR-4	NAVAJO	GOBERN	13 371000	4014000	6300	1	0	3	4		1760	
NMCO3102	SITE AR-33	NAVAJO	CABEZO	13 371100	4014000	6300	2	0	1	2		1850	
NMCO3103	SITE AR-132	TEWA	RECENT	13 371200	4014000	6300	2	0	1	1	1860	1860	
NMCO3104	SITE AR-513	TEWA	P5	13 371000	4014000	6300	0			1		1887	
NMCO4001	LA 12065	JEMEZ	RECENT	13 334926	4034105	7600	2	S	1	2		1667	
NMDO1302	PICURIS PUEBLO	TEWA	RECENT	13 436461	4006371	7360	2	0	3	13	1578	1920	1
NMDO1801	TVSS 64	APACHE	RECENT	13 449900	4013450	7680	2	0		5	1862	1862	1
X NMG01301	SITE K3:260 (ZAP)	ZUNI		12 695750	3885000	6330	1	0	1	8	1756	1758	
X NMG01302	SITE K3:261 (ZAP)	ZUNI		12 695750	3885000	6330	1	0	1	5		1571	
NMG01303	LA 64689 NUTRIA MINE	ZUNI	RECENT	12 713000	3902000	6720	1	0	1	4		1896	
NMG01304	LOWER PESCADO FARM	ZUNI	RECENT	12 719000	3888000	6750	2	0	1	8		1931	
NMG01305	LOWER NUTRIA	ZUNI	RECENT	12 719000	3903000	6760	2	0	1	38		1931	
NMG01501	PINEDALE AREA	NAVAJO		12 732000	3942000	7500	2	0	1	3		1854	
NMG03001	NLC-S-ULC-UP-B	NAVAJO		12 711000	3925000	7200	2	0	1	1		1866	
NMG03101	NLC-S-ULC-UP-C	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 711000	3925500	7100	2	0	1	4	1918	1918	
NMG03301	NLC-S-ULC-UP-E	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 710900	3024000	7000	2	0	1	2	1886	1886	
NMG03502	NLC-S-ULC-UP-T	NAVAJO	CABEZO	12 687000	3895000	6890	2	0	1	5		1856	1
NMG03602	NLC-S-ULC-UP-U	NAVAJO	CABEZO	12 687000	3896000	6900	2	0	1	4		1857	
NMG03801	NLC-S-ULC-ZR-B	NAVAJO		12 720000	3881000	7000	2	0	1	1	1837	1837	
NMG04001	NLC-S-ULC-ZR-F	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 722000	3888000	7000	2	0	1	4	1908	1909	
NMG04101	NLC-S-ULC-ZR-G	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 721000	3880000	7000	2	0	1	2		1892	
NMG04201	NLC-S-ULC-ZR-H	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 720000	3880000	7000	2	0	1	2	1909	1909	
NMG04301	NLC-S-ULC-UP-AA	NAVAJO	GOBERN	12 740000	3940000	7000	2	0	1	1		1755	
NMG04601	NLC-S-ULC-UP-JJ	NAVAJO	CABEZO	12 744000	3941000	7200	2	0	1	3		1802	
NMG04901	NLC-S-ULC-ZR-DD	NAVAJO	CABEZO	12 700000	3890000	6500	2	0	1	5		1857	
NMG05301	NLC-E-RP-USJ-B	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 765000	3918000	7000	2	0	1	11	1925	1932	1
NMG05401	NLC-E-RP-USJ-D	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 765000	3925500	6850	2	0	1	1		1892	
NMG05501	NLC-E-RP-USJ-E	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 765500	3925000	6850	2	0	1	8	1888	1898	
NMG05701	NLC-E-RP-USJ-G	NAVAJO	RECENT	12 765000	3925000	6880	2	0	1	10	1897	1912	