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Andy Cloud
cbbs.sulross.edu

DREW: You're tuned to 93.5 FM, KRTS Marfa, I'm Drew Stewart. This is Talk at Ten, our morning talk and interview program. And I'm very pleased to be joined in the studio now by William Andy Cloud. He is the Executive Director of the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross State University. It's an archaeological research organization, an appropriate way to describe it.

ANDY: Right.

DREW: Archeology's something we've explored quite a bit at this station. There's a lot of exciting things going on at the Center and we're glad to have him in to talk. Andy is a native Austinite and received both his B.A. and M.A. in archaeology at the University of Texas in Austin and has been with the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross for 13 years. Before that he worked at the Texas Office of the State Archeologist and came to the Center with Robert Mallouf who served as the Executive Director until the end of August and Andy took over on September 1st. And he's been kind enough to come by the station and talk with us about some of the things that are going on at the Center and in the world of archaeological research here in the Big Bend and Davis Mountains region. Thank you so much, Andy, for coming by.

ANDY: You bet.

DREW: Well, there's so much to talk about. One thing Bob Mallouf talked about when he started this thing that's called the Trans-Pecos Archaeology Program—this area, despite its archaeological diversity and a lot of fascinating history, is one of the most understudied parts of the State of Texas in terra incognita. Archaeologically speaking, a lot wasn't known about this area.

ANDY: Yes. I guess as archaeology progressed and a lot of projects occurred around the State in relation to reservoirs, and things like that, as Federal and State mandates both required archaeology, this West Texas area was kind of left out, in left field, so to speak, in that regard during that time of flourishing of archaeology in the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s.

DREW: Because it's often those government projects, that's where the money comes from, they're required to do an archaeological survey before they build a reservoir, or a new road...

ANDY: Exactly. And archaeology is very expensive, to really get to the nuts and bolts of things. To really learn a lot of things requires excavation, and excavation is not only time-consuming but expensive. Then we have analysis and eventual write-up to complete the full complement of research.

DREW: The TAP, Trans-Pecos Archaeology Program, is a very ambitious project and the Center was able to raise a good chunk of money to undertake that project. The ambitions of it are vast and I guess it was originally designed as a five-year project to fill in some of the holes in our understanding of the pre-history and history of the region. Do you see it extending beyond that five-year period?

ANDY: We're certainly going to try to extend it on. We're just about done with our fourth year of the program. We've got another year of some foundation funding coming in. We are actively trying to continue the program for at least another five years and, I hope, beyond that period as well.

DREW: Some of the areas that were specifically targeted in the project, and there's so much information—we could talk about this for hours—but we'll try to keep it somewhat concise. One area that has been of great interest to the Center, and specifically to Bob Mallouf for many years, is the question of Paleoindian presence in this region, the most ancient human activity, I guess, dating back to 8,000, 10,000 years B.C.?

ANDY: Yes, it goes back close to about 10,000 B.C. [That] is when the earliest Paleoindian people we call Clovis Culture were in the area. Now, we don't find a whole lot of Clovis manifestations out here. There are a few projectile points, spear points, that have been found, but we don't have a Clovis site to date.

DREW: These are folks that were hunting mammoth or giant bison or saber-toothed tigers or something?

ANDY: That's right. In other areas of the state and in North America we do have association of Clovis and mammoth remains as well as giant bison, a few of the other mega fauna from the late Pleistocene.

DREW: That was one target of the TAP, to see if you could find some evidence of either those Clovis or, I guess, somewhat later Folsom Paleoindians in this region, and there's some evidence of at least the Folsom presence but still scant.

ANDY: There's a little stronger evidence of Folsom in the area. There was a major Folsom campsite out near Van Horn, on the edge of the Marfa plain, that area, where over 100 Folsom points had been found through some work back in the 1950s and the 1960s. That site was recently revisited by SMU and they did some research in that regard. John Seebach, who is on our staff, spearheaded some work through SMU at site a few years ago—about maybe five, six years ago now, something like that. They did not find really good intact deposits so that site is not going to tell us what we really need to know about that period.

DREW: So what would you all like to know about the Paleoindian period here in our region?

ANDY: Well, [in] archaeology nowadays, the focus is trying to learn how the people behaved, getting into their heads, what was driving them, how long they stayed in an area, what kind of stone sources they were using for their stone tools, what they were eating, all different aspects of daily life is what we would like to know. Now, finding the right site that's going to tell us even bits and pieces of that thing has been very elusive for that period.

DREW: But for some other periods you can find—you can excavate a site and really learn, get a pretty rich sense of how the people lived—

ANDY: How they lived, things about the environment they were living in, all different aspects of what they were going through in their daily lives.

DREW: Well, just to run real quickly down the list of six general areas that TAP was focused on. There was the Paleoindian facet, trying to find evidence or information about the oldest human habitation in the Trans-Pecos, and then adaptations during the period that followed that, a very long period of time, the Archaic Period. How long did that period last?

ANDY: Well, the Archaic goes from about 6500 B.C. to about A.D. 700, so you're talking over 7000 years. An extremely lengthy period where we saw slow change, progression, adaptation to a changing environment, a somewhat changing environment anyway, new techniques of processing some of the plant foods around is one thing we have seen through our excavations.

DREW: But there's some continuity throughout that period, all the people were using spear-points or atlatls to kill prey rather than a bow and arrow.

ANDY: That's probably one of the main distinctions with the Archaic and the subsequent periods where we get the bow and arrow. Earliest evidence in this area for bow and arrow is about A.D. 700–800, somewhere in that timeframe. Previous to that they were using an atlatl or spear-thrower and hurling a spear with a stone projectile on it, what we call a dart-point or a spear-point. Common nomenclature out there in the public, they're calling all of these things arrowheads, and that's a kind of a mis-statement.

DREW: Because the arrowheads are more recent, from the last 1000-1300 years, where these other points you'd find would have been part of a spear that was thrown rather than shot.

ANDY: Absolutely. We really call even what they call arrowheads arrowpoints.

DREW: Another area of research is in what I guess is called the Livermore Phase people and their ritual life. And this is in the Davis Mountains, a lot of fascinating rock art there and evidence of pretty rich ritual activity there in the Davis Mountains. And that's been, I know, a strong interest also of the former Director Bob Mallouf, that's something he's particularly interested in learning more about. You've also looked at farmers and nomads and some of the farming societies that lived at La Junta.

ANDY: Right.

DREW: And also exploring in the historical period the evidence of Spanish exploration and missions here in our region, as well as rock art. There's been a lot of activity with rock art in our area.

ANDY: Absolutely.

DREW: There's a lot of projects going on. You guys are working on a lot of different ranches and different properties around the region. Talk a little about what's most exciting to you now, that you're all involved with.

ANDY: Well, right now we've got a site we're working on down south of Marfa on Alamito Creek where we have four–five hearth features, where they were doing their cooking, and this particular site dates back to about 7100 years ago, or 5100 B.C. We have two radiocarbon dates from two separate hearths and the dates were secured from two separate labs so we're pretty confident that we have a secure date for that particular site.

DREW: So you're taking some burned material out of the hearth and you're having it tested and they can date that material?

ANDY: That's right, through the radiocarbon analysis.

DREW: And these hearths are the evidence of something 7000 B.C.E, so 9000 years old, is that right?

ANDY: No, these are 7000 years old, about 5100 B.C.

DREW: These are not on the surface, is that correct?

ANDY: Well, these particular hearths, there's at least one or two that were barely exposed on the surface, on a little bench, along Alamito Creek.

DREW: And this is what would be called the Early Archaic?

ANDY: Right.

DREW: What's your sense of how these people were living? Or what was the Big Bend like when they were here?

ANDY: Well, this particular site has given us some data in that regard. We had some of the charcoal that was dated, analyzed, and it came back as mesquite. So that throws us back at least 3000 years earlier than we had previously had mesquite identified from an archaeological site. Now, there has been some pack-rat midden identification down at Big Bend National Park of mesquite for an earlier period but that is actually further down in the desert. So this is kind of exciting information. We also had some pollen information indicative of cactus and other

modern things that we see in the vegetal community such as cockleburrs, things like that. So this is throwing the modern vegetation and climate back a little earlier than we had previously been able to go.

DREW: There's some thought that maybe things were lush, wetter, there was a different sort of flora in this region thousands of years ago and things have changed as livestock were introduced and that sort of thing. But this implies that some of those things had been here for some time.

ANDY: I think it actually does. Now, if we go back into the Paleoindian period, we definitely get lush environment. Some of the trees that we now see only in little isolated reserves up in the higher mountains were down on the flanks of the mountains, and maybe extending out to the plains in some regard. So we did certainly have a lush environment there. Now, there was what was known as the Long Drought, or the Altithermal, that went maybe as early as 6500 B.C., started about that time period, or maybe around 5500 B.C., within a thousand year period there. This Long Drought went for about 4000 years, so it was a very, very long and intense drought that affected the southwest United States, into northern Mexico as well. There's still some debate on exactly how affected our area was, and so we're hoping to be able to address some of that with work at the site perhaps.

DREW: Before that drought would have happened, you might have had these large mega fauna, as you say, the mammoths or the large bison, moving around here, but after that drought the climate would have changed and those creatures wouldn't have been here anymore?

ANDY: The climate was really changing a little bit before that and we lost the mega fauna that we typically associate with the Paleoindians, probably 1000-1500 years before that this site was occupied.

DREW: If you're just joining us I'm speaking with Andy Cloud. He is the Executive Director of the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross State University. He took over in that position just a couple of months ago, September 1st of this year, and talking with us now about some of the very varied and exciting research that's been going on at the Center and in our region here. I know you all have been involved in a pretty long-term number of projects on the O2 ranch which is located in both Brewster and Presidio Counties. It's a very large ranch south of Alpine. You drive south on [highway] 118 and you get out of the hills and go through that sort of long flat stretch with Santiago peak to your left... a lot of that is the O2 Ranch.

ANDY: Right.

DREW: What's going on at the O2 these days?

ANDY: Well, we did do a major project there a few years ago and had a publication come out on a site that we called the Paradise site. This is up in the headwaters of Terlingua Creek. That particular site gave us some of the best information we've been able to secure from the period we

call the Middle Archaic. And the Middle Archaic occurred from about 2500 B.C. to 1000 B.C. That particular site was dated to about 4000 years ago. Right now we've shifted the concentration to two different rockshelters that we've been working on down at the O2 Ranch. One of them is known as Tranquil Rockshelter and the other is Rough Cut Rockshelter. Both shelters were used during Archaic and what we call Late Prehistoric times, or Arrowpoint times, but most of the activity at both shelters occurs during the later period or the Arrowpoint times.

DREW: What kind of activity was going on at these sites?

ANDY: [At] both sites we have an interesting arrangement of things. At Tranquil Rockshelter we have evidence of maybe a rudimentary shelter of some type within the shelter. So this is something we have some remains of—what we called daub. This is where mud has been plastered over some kind of a stick framework and helped to secure to make a little hut. So it looks like we have a little hut inside a rockshelter.

DREW: When you think about Native Americans in this region, the names that come most readily to mind are the historic tribes like the Comanche and the Apache, and maybe we know something about the agricultural societies that existed at the confluence of the Conchos and the Rio Grande. Do you have any sense that the people using these shelters—they're not Apache or Comanche?

ANDY: No, they're previous to that. We can only apply these names for individual tribes after the Spanish showed up and started writing in their records what the people called themselves or applied a name to the people or something along those lines. Before that period we have to give them names, we have to create a little box so that we can create a discussion as archaeologists and between archaeologists.

DREW: So it's really hard to tell whether, over these thousands of years, there was a distinct group of people or various groups of people that were coming in and out of the area or whether these people were pretty much staying in the area or moving through the area? These are all big questions, and maybe difficult to answer.

ANDY: They are absolutely big questions and they are very hard to answer. We're dealing with little bits and shreds of evidence and trying to apply things that we see similar in one area to, say, the lower Pecos region or the High Plains and we can propose some possible hypotheses about movements of peoples and things like that. In some cases we have a lot of trouble and in other cases we have some bits and shreds of evidence that at least lead us down a path that we can make some deductions in that regard.

DREW: When you think about El Paso and that area more closely linked to New Mexico and the Pueblo societies, and then there's this very distinct thing in the lower Pecos River region where the Pecos comes into the Rio Grande in this really striking and very old rock art and Peyote

tradition of some kind. Is there something distinct about our region? Do you get a sense of the people that lived here prehistorically?

ANDY: We seem to be very distinct. If you look back through prehistory and history, the historic period, the proto-historic period, what's going on in this area, the Big Bend, the eastern Trans-Pecos region is—it's kind of got bits and shreds from adjacent regions. It seems almost like a crossroads, that we had distinctive people living here, and somewhat probably related to the distinctive environment that is here.

DREW: Rock art is something that, for a lay person, is easy to get intrigued by, and it's striking, and can be beautiful or mysterious, and I know there's been a lot of rock art research you all have been doing over the last number of years. Tell us all a little about that.

ANDY: We are concentrating on rock art and that is one of our research domains in the TAP program. We have been out actively recording rock art, that is with various means of photography, in some cases digital enhancement that is available to researchers nowadays, where you can use Photoshop and one thing or another to try to help bring out some of the things that have faded. So there is some exciting work in that regard. We have also recently employed a researcher out of Austin who does some unique recording. He calls it kite arial photography. In this case we had a flat limestone bedrock exposure on a hill—going around a hill. We had petroglyphs that had been etched, or pecked, into the limestone. That's a very large site and there's hundreds of individual motifs. Trying to connect those all together, we go in and record those by hand, individual one-by-one meter squares, very painstakingly photographing and drawing and measuring and doing scaled drawings of those motifs. But here, this researcher was able to go in there and take 1,500 photographs and stitch them together with some high-priced software that he has. We're able to see the whole thing on the computer where you can look at the big picture and then zero in and see the relationship of things very much in a way we couldn't do before.

DREW: This is done from the air. Did it give you a different sense that there was a pattern or some sense that this had--

ANDY: You can see the whole pattern there together a lot easier than trying to take our individual drawings or individual photographs of these one-by-one meter squares. It's really incredible if you can look at this thing on the computer and you can zoom in and zoom out and see the relationship of one motif to another.

DREW: Is there a sense that the rock art— are there certain places where you're likely to find it? I know the question of what it's for is a difficult question, but are there typically locations where you'd find [rock art]—high points, near water, scenic locations?

ANDY: Rock art, by the very name, needs to be on rock. We have to have outcrops of stone. In many cases it's protected outcrops where the paint would not... if paint was used. Now, we use

rock art to say both what we call pictographs—that's where there's actually painting involved, creating of a paint and then applying the paint to the rock—and then we have petroglyphs where, what I was talking about before, where they've actually been pecked or chipped into rock. So we get different kinds of rock art. We also get what we call portable rock art where maybe stones that could be carried around from one place to another—the Lower Pecos is well known to have these little painted pebbles, what's known as painted pebbles. We actually have seen some etched pebbles down at La Junta that go into this realm. We've also had some painted pebbles recovered from the Big Bend. Not as many as what have been reported from the Lower Pecos area but we have actually collected some of these ourselves through several different projects.

DREW: What would be painted on a pebble?

ANDY: For the most part they're abstract designs. Trying to get into the head of the maker, it's kind of hard to say what they were trying to say. Probably had some kind of ritualism involved. In at least one case, a rockshelter cave up in the Davis Mountains, one of these items was secured from up there, and it was in a little nested area of grass. Probably had some kind of ritual meaning. Another one we found down along lower Terlingua Creek and this was on an open site, one of the few that I know of that have been recovered from an open site. We got an associated Late Archaic date, I believe, around A.D.300, something around those lines, at that particular site.

DREW: You mentioned this Davis Mountains research and I know there's a very impressive and dramatic rock art site there, the Tall Rockshelter site. Describe that for us. It's very high...

ANDY: That is a most impressive panel, about 17 feet high. You can see it from across the canyon. Very vibrant colors too. It almost looks like it was painted last week. As we were recording that particular panel, having to use ladders to painstakingly measure, and then do a scale drawing, and all those kind of things, I could see, right up on the edge, that it had been over painted. So they had painted it at least one time, and then the paint had faded; they'd mixed some new paint up and then repainted it. Whatever binder they had used, probably animal fat or blood or something along those lines, seemed to work pretty good the last time they used it because it's very, very vibrant in color.

DREW: So whoever painted this, it was important enough, over time, that they might have come back years later, generations later, and repainted this site.

ANDY: Probably so. Bob Mallouf has done a lot of research at this particular site, excavated a little area below ground surface at the edge of the panel and found that the rock art actually went below the surface. There had been deposition subsequent to that lower portion. This is a lot of color vertical lines, there's yellow and red, there's some green, a kind of odd rock art color that we don't see very often, unusual anyway, a little bit of green in there, some other colors, but most of it, there's vertical lines. But at the very top of these 17-foot panels there are these kind of circular things that resemble heads, and we think those are anthropomorphic representations, or

representations of man in some regard. A lot of this rock art has the feel that it's from the plains perhaps or some kind of connection. Bob thinks it goes with the Livermore Phase people that we think came into the area as early as A.D.700-800 and one of the theories is that they came off the plains.

DREW: And set up residence in the Davis Mountains, in and around that area.

ANDY: That is the focal point for the Livermore Phase, in and around the Davis Mountains, extending down into Northern Chihuahua, but that is the central focus.

DREW: The cache of points that was found on Livermore Peak, that highest point on the Davis Mountains, is that associated with Livermore?

ANDY: Absolutely. And that's where the whole name came to be applied to the Livermore Phase and the Livermore point, which is a distinctive little Christmas tree-looking point with right-angled barbs, very distinctive point. That cache was found back in 1895 by a couple of cowboys and apparently there was a cairn up there. Word spread, people disassembled the cairn, [and] came up with close to 2000 arrowpoints, most of those being what is now called the Livermore Points.

DREW: So no hunting purpose for caching a bunch of points on the top of the highest mountain in the Davis Mountains?

ANDY: Almost certainly ritualism associated with this particular find.

DREW: If you're just joining us we're speaking with Andy Cloud, the Executive Director of the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross. We talked about the Tall Rockshelter. There are some images of it on the Center's website.

ANDY: I believe so.

DREW: You can Google "Center for Big Bend Studies" and see that image. Well, I know you have to get out into the field pretty soon and we could keep talking for a long time. I don't want to detain you overlong but do you feel that the TAP [program] has—are you and the other folks at the Center happy with how this is helping fill out the picture of the archaeological scene here in the region?

ANDY: We've been able to make some enormous strides in research in all these six domains that we talked about a little earlier. In each and every one of them we have made significant progress through the program so far. But as you go forward, oftentimes we answer certain questions, but we create more questions for each one of these domains. This is one of these things. I can't ever see TAP ending, in some regard because there's always something else out there that's going to tell us more and more about what we're trying to learn about the behavior of the people.

DREW: Well, we're running out of time and I know you need to get out into the field but I don't want to wrap out without mentioning the Conference which is coming up. The Annual Conference of the Center for Big Bend Studies which is a great way to learn more about the things we were talking about and all these different areas of research that's going on at the Center. Tell us a little about that, that's coming up the 7th and 8th of November.

ANDY: We do have an Annual Conference. The one coming up this year is our Fifteenth Annual Conference. It is on November 7th and 8th. It starts Friday afternoon on the 7th and then is all day on the 8th, on Saturday. We throw a banquet on Friday night and our banquet speaker is West Texas author Patrick Dearing, and he's going to be talking about historical events and things along the Pecos River. It's the focus of his research. We usually fill up our banquet so if anybody's interested in coming they should try to get to us sooner rather than later.

DREW: What's the best way to register for these events?

ANDY: Trying to get in touch with our office. (432) 837-8179 is our main, direct number and that would be a good way to find us.