Supplementary Materials Description of Chaco Resources

The central portion of the canyon has the greatest concentration of cultural remains, and Pueblo Bonito is the largest of all the great houses within the canyon. Its central location, as well as its placement opposite a southern gap into the canyon, has led some scholars to identify it as kind of a gatehouse. (I point out the South Gap at this point, and direct eyes from that entrance to Pueblo Bonito) The gateway would have enhanced the appearance of Pueblo Bonito as pilgrims entered the canyon. Considering Pueblo cosmologies, I’ve used Ann Marshall and Rina Swentzell’s writings (see Resources) on the significance of central locations to sacred centers such as the sipapu or axis mundi, the place where Puebloan people emerged from beneath the earth into this world. “Members of Santa Ann Pueblo believe that prehispanic Chacoans settled in the canyon ‘because they were searching for a place of high religious and spiritual meaning, what they considered to be the center of the universe.’” (Stoffle, et al cited in Marshall, p. 13) Anna Sofaer’s chapter on “The Primary Architecture of Chaco Canyon,” in Chaco Astronomy is also very useful for fleshing out these relationships and meanings.

Roads also played an important role in reinforcing Chaco Canyon’s centrality. (At this point the projector can be moved out and up to follow what can still be seen of the north road) The Great North Road extends the north/south axis 35 miles from Pueblo Alto to Kutz Canyon. It has its origin in several routes from Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Ketl. The road was overbuilt from a utilitarian perspective. It averages 30 feet in width and does not appear to lead to other major population centers or structures. Pueblo cosmology once again provides insights into the significance of the northern cardinal axis to origins, migrations, emergence, and ancestors. (See Swentzell and Sofaer, et al, “The Great North Road: A Cosmographic Culture in New Mexico,” in Chaco Astronomy).