Excavating Rock Art in California

The **Enculturating Environments Project** is a field school based on the Wind Wolves Preserve in South-Central California. As the largest private preserve in the American West, it is rich in wildlife and dedicated to the protection and restoration of the native environment. It is a beautiful landscape with sandstone mountain peaks, open oak woodlands, grassland potreros, beguiling rock formations and some of the most spectacular rock paintings found anywhere in North America.

These fragile, often multicoloured pictographs are found on sandstone surfaces; as irreplaceable works of art, it is essential that they are properly recorded and researched in controlled and careful circumstances. Our work aims to educate the need to conserve these vital expressions of the native artistry. Found close to these paintings are complex archaeological sites with evidence of a range of associated activities.

Our international collaborative project includes rock-art specialists, historical archaeologists, and environmental archaeologists. We are investigating the past context of these enigmatic works of Native art through digital survey techniques, excavation, and geo-archaeology. The prehistory of this landscape is only now beginning to be explored; excavations focus on pigment quarry sites and middens containing abundant material culture such as lithics (i.e. arrow heads and other chert tools and manufacturing debris), ground stone (i.e. mortars, pestles, manos, metates), cooking waste (small mammal, deer, river muscle), and importantly beads (both prehistoric shell and historical trade beads). As an historical landscape, the region itself is famous for Native resistance to Spanish and Mexican incursions, as a refuge for Mission Indians after the coastal revolt of 1824, and later, for its ranchero operations, even as a hideout for outlaw gangs such as the infamous Joaquin Murietta, the 'Mexican Robin Hood' of the 1850s.

Students are invited to apply for places, which are limited. As a six week field school, we will teach you rock-art recording, digital survey, field excavation, geoarchaeological investigation, and laboratory analysis while you learn about environmental conservation and the wildlife of this spectacular habitat.

You also will learn regional archaeological sequences and the historical development of Western landscapes, including the American and Modern periods, with the development of 'big business' agriculture, water manipulation and oil extraction, in one of the most intensely transformed environments ever to be attributed to human impact.

Equally, you will be part of an international expedition, with students and staff from many universities both local and distant, including University of California Los Angeles, Southampton (England), University of Central Lancashire (England), and others. You also will meet and learn from local professional archaeologists, rock-art conservators, preserve personnel, and biologists.

**As part of the UCLA Archaeology Field Program, this is an accredited fieldschool with a full summer quarter's allocation of credit.**

For further information, see the new on-line free access Project Page just published on *Antiquity*:
http://antiquity.ac.uk/projgall/robinson323/

To sign up for the field school, go to:

For inquiries, contact Dr. David Robinson (dwrobinson@uclan.ac.uk).
http://www.uclan.ac.uk/scitech/forensic_investigative/files/sci_fz_doc_enculturatinglandscapes.pdf

For further information on the Preserve, visit:
http://www.wildlandsconservancy.org/twc_preserve_wind_wolves.html