

D R A F T

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2008 Clovis First Conference FORMAT AND PROTOCOLS

Science advances when evidence and interpretations are verified or rejected according to the epistemology of the particular discipline engaged in the research. In the case of archeology, the rules of evidence are largely subjective, each body of evidence is unique, and interpretations tend to be influenced to a significant degree by the idiosyncrasies of the investigator. These very real circumstances foster disagreements that are not easily resolved and there is no formal mechanism for arbitrating the disagreements beyond peer review of funding proposals and publications, neither of which is flawless. This all leads to divisiveness and polarization in regard to many controversial interpretations.

Nowhere within the discipline of archeology have these unfortunate characteristics of our science been more apparent than in the debate over the archeological evidence for the peopling of the Americas. Scholarly disagreement, debate, and promulgation of competing interpretations are beneficial to the discipline, but divisiveness and polarization are not.

This conference aims to convene scholars bearing a wide spectrum of views on the question of the peopling of the Americas for the purpose of furthering *reasonable, professional, constructive, and civil* dialogue toward improving our research methods, standards, and results. The tenor of the conference is crucial to its success—we will not have another debacle like the one that unfolded at the *Clovis and Beyond* conference in 1999.

A slate of imminent speakers will raise evidentiary and methodological issues in prepared presentations and these speakers will comprise a panel who will discuss issues broached in the papers. Subsequently, members of the audience will have the opportunity to participate in further discussion. Finally, post conference, members of the panel will prepare for dissemination a statement on the accomplishments of the conference.

Speakers are encouraged to address broad substantive issues, regional syntheses, or theory. They are asked not to rehash old presentations but to focus on topics that can further research efficacy beyond any particular site. The goal is to generate a higher level of confidence in the evidence and interpretations accounting for the peopling of the Americas.