



Historic Human Remains Detection Dogs in Archaeology

Presentation by Karen Paquette and Mark Paquette



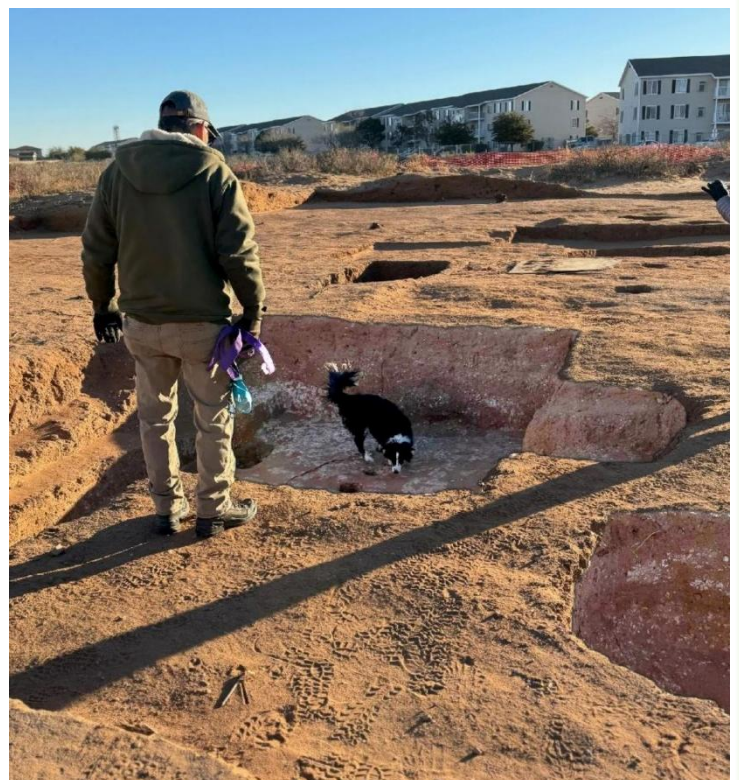
It is well known that dogs are incredible odor detectors. Quite recently, dogs are being employed to detect very old human remains – aged hundreds to thousands of years from present. While many dogs can be trained to locate relatively recent human remains (these are cadaver dogs), only a few are specialized to indicate the presence of aged and historical human remains.

Left: K9 Polly indicating a location of buried human remains at Arizona's Dagoon Springs Stage Station archaeological site, October 2025

In Old Pueblo's December 17 Third Thursday program, Karen and Mark Paquette, members of the F.I.R.S.T. Detection K9 nonprofit organization, will share their definition of historic human remains detection (HHRD) dogs and inform how these HHRD dogs are economical, flexible, and noninvasive detectors applicable to a vast array of archaeological research projects and needs.

They will discuss and illustrate these canines' capabilities as well as limitations and will talk about the ethics of using HHRD dogs on sensitive archaeological sites.

*Right: Mark Paquette and K9 Breicne at Firecracker Pueblo kiva, El Paso, Texas, January 2026
All photos courtesy of Mark & Karen Paquette*



(See next page.)

Thursday December 17, 2026

7 pm Mountain Standard Time

To register for the Zoom program, click on this link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oIOkJUcOQJ2CI-B5vITLJQ

For more information contact Old Pueblo at info@oldpueblo.org or **520-798-1201**.

Historic Human Remains Detection Dogs . . .

F.I.R.S.T. Detection K9 HHRD dogs have been employed for consultation since 2019 by organizations such as Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Parks and Wildlife, New Mexico Department of Transportation, railroad companies, archaeological firms, and independent historic explorations. F.I.R.S.T. Detection K9's HHRD dogs also are utilized by law enforcement agencies in cold case investigations and have been employed in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. K9 Rip and K9 Breicne have confirmed locations of precontact graves up to 3,900 years old.



Polly giving her indication during her first archaeological search in Norco, Louisiana, January 2022



Mark and K9 Breicne during search in Fayetteville, Arkansas, March 2026

Presenter Karen Paquette began her Search and Rescue career in 2003 in Tucson, Arizona and deployed on numerous searches in wilderness, urban, water, and in support of law enforcement investigations. She is now training with her sixth canine partner learning about tracking/trailing. Karen served as Training Director with the Pima County, Arizona volunteer K9SAR team (2014-2024) and serves on the team's Board of Directors. She has assisted with the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS) K9 workshops since 2013 serving as wrangler, assistant instructor, and instructor.

Karen began training Historic Human Remains in 2017 under the guidance of Ann Lyon Christensen. She and Polly helped search for possible Civil War burials in January 2022 and have deployed numerous times in support of F.I.R.S.T Detection K9 requests.

Presenter Mark Paquette is a K9 handler for F.I.R.S.T. Detection K9. His current partner is K9 Breicne, who specializes in Historic and Archeological in addition to cold case searches. Mark has been active in K9 Search and Rescue for over 20 years and has experience in a variety of search disciplines including area search, water search, evidence search, and human remains detection. He is active with F.I.R.S.T Detection K9 in these areas as well as providing logistical support and planning (Head Wrangler) for the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS) K9 seminars.



Mark is also a K9 handler, search coordinator, and current President of Southwest Rescue Dogs inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Tucson. Additionally, he is a board member of the Search and Rescue Council Inc. (SARCI), the parent organization of Search and Rescue assets in the Pima County (Tucson) area.

The Third Thursday Series

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center's Third Thursday Food for Thought Zoom webinars on the Third Thursday evening of each month feature presentations about archaeology, history, and cultures.

If you would like to be added to Old Pueblo's list of persons who receive semimonthly email announcements about Old Pueblo's Third Thursday and other activities (and other southwestern archaeology organizations' activities), you can visit www.oldpueblo.org, scroll down to the Subscribe box, and enter your name and email address there. One can unsubscribe from our emailing list at any time.

