The Bluff River Trail: A Community Land Ethic

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The Bluff River Trail: A Community Land Ethic

by

Kelly Finley Davis


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Acknowledgements

At the University of New Mexico, a giant ocotillo plant looks through the west-wing windows of Zimmerman Library. I am grateful for that plant. As a creature of habit, my class and thesis work happened in the same library chair. I measure my growth against the consistency of that ocotillo. I certainly see the world differently. I know this because of who used to sit there and grow over the ocotillo view – and who sits here, now.

My thesis committee is a collective of radical teachers. All three members graciously supported and challenged my scholarship. Dr. Peele-Eady, my chair and advisor, you taught me how to write. Asking critical questions is one of your superpowers. A question from you, many times, granted me a new perspective and revived my curiosity. You noticed what sparks me and guided my learning style. You told me “when you dance with your data, something happens.” From your observations, my thesis work became complimentary to my artistic process. Dr. Peele-Eady, your expectation of unwavering excellence challenged and fostered irrevocable personal growth.

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To the Bluff River Trail Committee, who graciously allowed me to collaborate, you all are a gritty and gutsy collective of Bluff elders. To my mother, Deborah Westfall, who read and re-read many drafts of this thesis, I could not have done this without you! This work transformed because of your pragmatic mind.

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Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that my research site, Bluff, Utah is within the seized, occupied and now territorialized lands of the Hopi1, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Uinta and Ouray Ute, Paiute, Rio Grande Puebloan2 and other Indigenous Tribes (U.S Department of Art and Culture, 2019). Settler violence, through implementing reservations and Indian Schools, unsuccessfully tried to eradicate the Hopi, Diné, Ute, Zuni, Western and Rio Grande Puebloan, and other Indigenous languages (Lomawaima, & McCarty, 2006). I recognize that throughout this study, I use English, the language of the settler class, to discuss an Indigenous landscape.

Settlers are not the sole purveyors of history; consequently, I avoid calling Bluff a “prehistoric landscape” (Wolfe, 2006). This term consigns current Indigenous land tenure to the past (Hunt, 2014). I will not represent Indigeneity as something that happened (Echo-Hawk, 2000). Instead, my research acknowledges the continuing interaction of Indigenous People with the historic and modern Bluff landscape and the larger 4-Corners region (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015).

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1 Sekaquaptewa and Washburn (2009) define the Hopi Peoples as “a settled agriculturally based group of twelve Pueblo communities in Northern Arizona” (p. 195). These twelve communities are respectively situated on first, second and third mesa. While Young (1996) differentiates tribes by dryland farming techniques, referring to the Western Pueblos as “Hopi, the Tewa community of Hano on the Hopi’s First Mesa, Zuni and Acoma.”

2 Comparatively, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center (2014) refers to the Rio Grande Puebloan Peoples, as nineteen separate Pueblo Communities located west of, or along the Rio Grande. They are: Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, Sandia, San Felipe, San Idelonso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Taos, Tesuque, Zia and Zuni Pueblos.
The Bluff River Trail: A Community Land Ethic

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Abstract

The Bluff River Trail (BRT) is a future 10+ mile trail along the San Juan River corridor in the 4-Corners region of the Southwestern United States. By asking, what is the land ethic of the Bluff Community? this qualitative study identifies behaviors and beliefs, or land ethics, between seven Bluff residents and the San Juan River corridor. A land ethic contributes to the social re/production of space; therefore, third space theory contextualizes intersecting and contradicting spatialities evidenced in data. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. I used a qualitative content analysis pulling from grounded theory to analyze semi-structured interview and questionnaire data. I used a template analysis to analyze focus group data. Through exploring local, place-based relationships, I describe how seven Bluff community members socially re/produce their land ethics. This research punctures the privileging of land ethics at a national scale.

Keywords: spatiality, cosmographies, land ethic, 4-Corners, rural Utah
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Section 1: The place, its people and my research

The San Juan River is a continuous water source in the desert. It travels through the 4-Corners region of the Southwestern United States and sustains Bluff, Utah’s local lifeways. Rimmed by towering sandstone cliffs, 258 Bluff folks are sequestered by the river on a valley floor within an expansive canyon setting (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Here, the people treasure the canyons and the river helps carve the canyons. The late Ellen Meloy (2019), a local writer, reminds us that looking “through the window of river lies a path to the true stories of place” (p. 44). The San Juan Watershed contributes to regional habitats through incessant subsidence, constant flowing and seasonal flooding. The San Juan River persistently forms and informs Bluff’s physical and social terrain.

This research study investigates local relationships between Bluff society and the San Juan River corridor. The relationship between a rural, desert community and their home river is best described as a land ethic. Thus, the research question guiding this study is: what is the land ethic of the Bluff Community? I define a land ethic as a local process, or a social condition, composed of place, behavior, and belief (Soja, 1996, 1989). As a social phenomenon, a land ethic asks, “what are people doing outside and how do these behaviors influence meaning?” A land ethic assumes that belief, takes place (Charmaz, 2014). Bluff’s land ethic is a local phenomenon created by Bluff community members. People engaging in their own land ethic is how the landscape becomes a substantiated social product. The articulation and practice of a land ethic becomes the simultaneous creation and re/production of the land ethic itself. It is a dialectic. Figure 1 and 2 locate Bluff, Utah, on a micro and macro scale. Figure 1 locates the 4-Corners region in the Southwestern United states and globally. Next, Figure 2 show Bluff’s position within the San Juan Watershed.
4-Corners Region of the Southwestern United States

Note. The 4-Corners is a region in the southwestern United States consisting of the southwestern corner of Colorado, southeastern corner of Utah, northeastern corner of Arizona, and northwestern corner of New Mexico. The area is named after a quadripoint where the boundaries of all four states meet. Certain viewsheds in Bluff, Utah encompass landmarks from all four states, such as the Shiprock Formation of New Mexico, the Sleeping Ute Mountains of Colorado, and Monument Valley of Arizona.
Figure 2

Bluff, Utah’s location within The San Juan Watershed

Note. With tributaries supporting rivulets of life in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, The San Juan Watershed is a 4-Corners resource. The San Juan River travels through Colorado and New Mexico before reaching Bluff, Utah. For San Juan County, Utah, the San Juan River designates the boundary of the northern Navajo Nation. Complimentary with Bluff’s 4-corners views encompassing Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, its southern views also includes the sovereign Navajo Nation.
The Bluff River Trail (BRT), a future trail along the San Juan River corridor, galvanized my research interest in local land use. Most segments along the forecasted trail are impossible tangles, densely thicketed with Russian Olive and Tamarisk trees. Some sections open into expansive Cottonwood tree galleries. The forested corridor is a rich ecosystem composed primarily of more-than-human life. The corridor was my girlhood home, I know it well because I shared it with feral cows and other beings of the 4-Corners wild.

The BRT will be Utah’s first accessible route along the San Juan River. The accessibility segment, named Sand Island Loop, will comply with Americans with Disability Act (ADA) criteria. The BRT connects historic routes to existing social and established trails. Currently, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and some private landowners oversee this area. Local use is largely recreation or agriculture. The BRT has four stakeholders: The Bluff River Trail Committee (BRTC), The Bluff Historic Preservation Association, The Grand Canyon Trust, and The Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The BRT started with Gene Foushee, who was a Bluff local, historic preservationist and geologist. The current volunteer-based BRTC trio, Krutsky, Hook and Westfall, continue Foushee’s posthumous vision. The BRTC is part of the Bluff Historic Preservation Association. These two local groups forged partnerships with the BLM and the Grand Canyon Trust. Together, these four agencies form a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) for the planning and implementation of the BRT. As of September 2020, the proposed route for the trail is in statis, pending public comment regarding the
BLM’s Environmental Assessment.³ Figure 3 shows the BLM’s proposed route of the Bluff River Trail.

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³ Please visit the BLM’s website to review the Environmental Assessment Document https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/68197/510
Developing signs, pamphlets, field guides, and other interpretive materials for the trail is not a current priority. The BRTC’s lack of interpretive materials presented my research problem. To help the BRTC create interpretive materials, my aim in this thesis is to identify the land ethic of Bluff. This means both understanding and using the community’s local practices as the public example for walking along, or other uses, of the trail. Once established, locals and tourists will visit The Bluff River Trail; therefore, the Bluff River Trail Committee and I see this as an ideal opportunity for community practices to author local spaces (Basso, 1996; Tuck, 2009).

This research is my responsibility as a community member and effort to support the Bluff River Trail Committee. Following the conclusion of this study, I plan to hold work sessions with the BRTC, the Bluff Town Council and the Mexican Water Chapter House on the Navajo Nation. Together, we will channel local desires and dreams regarding interpretation and translation of my findings surrounding Bluff’s land ethic.

The Research Question’s Site Context

My research question, what is the land ethic of the Bluff community? includes a site context with three main factors: the Bluff community, San Juan River corridor, and its surrounding landscape. The Bluff community members are the actors re/producing the land ethic. The San Juan River corridor and its surrounding landscape are the locations or “land” when I ask: what is the land ethic of the Bluff community?

In 2018, Bluff, Utah transitioned from a census designated place (CDP) into an incorporated town. Incorporation efforts compounded with the 2017 recession of Bears Ears National Monument (BENM), which edges Bluff’s western boundary (Obama, 2016; Trump, 2017). The political hype surrounding BENM brought Bluff into the national spotlight, and
thus, ignited an onslaught of tourism. Bluff must now consider the boom of tourism within initial planning and zoning as a town. Given this, considerations for the BRT are imperative and must include a local voice, which is rooted in a land ethic.

Due to its previous CDP establishment, Bluff’s boundaries were defined by the simultaneous presence and absence of geopolitical borders. The 2019 established town boundaries of Bluff include a mere 16% of private land. Within the town “a significant amount of Bluff, 84% is public land, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (47%) and Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) (37%)” (Bluff General Plan, 2019). Bluff intersects the sovereign Navajo Nation, federal and state lands. The presence of differing national, state and local land ethics makes Bluff more of a debated intersection than a town.

Land use debates are common conversation because the 4-Corners region is a federal and state territory of contested assets. Because federal and state bodies oversee much of Bluff’s landscapes, these institutes create geographies prone to the discourses of resource management. Government bodies, via the extractive industries, perpetuate environmental oppression under the pretense of resource management, which is primarily crude oil and uranium extraction (Laduke, 1999; Verzino, 2016). The landscape is reduced to profit and the lifeways thriving within the landscape, prevent revenue. This is evidenced through the current battle between the extractive industries and Chaco Canyon, the continual debate over Bears Ears National Monument and the presence of Dennison Mines Uranium Mill in San Juan County (Podmore, 2019; Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015).

On a local scale, resource is not always synonymous with profit. Bluff society’s personal and communal relationships to their landscapes diverges from national and state
practices. Through exploring local place-based relationships, I answer, what does a San Juan River corridor taxonomy look like from a local perspective? The local attitude of this research punctures the privileging of national land ethics. The impacts of living in an isolated region, heavily surveilled by government agencies are felt, seen and lived by small, rural populations, like Bluff society. Bluff’s unique positionality paired with its small population makes its local land ethics a precious and understudied phenomenon. In the next section, I define a land ethic drawing on the research literature describing its origins and the ways regional cosmographic design functions within it.
Section 2: Review of Literature

In 2020, most academic literature about people and their places fuses geographic and sociological perspectives. As Mark, Turk, Burenhult and Stea (2011) claim in the text *Landscape in Language*, “until recently, there has been relatively little scholarly research on how landscape is conceptualized, that is, how a continuous land surface, a landscape, becomes cognitive entities, and how these entities are represented in language and thought” (authors' italics, p. 1). Research involving a social theory of geography is strongly influenced by post-structural thought and creates what Soja (2010) calls the “spatial turn” where geographies become “filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives” (p. 19). In the spatial turn, design, education and community planning fields are vetting and/or celebrating different pedagogical systems, these works diversify mapping and planning techniques (Lipsitz, 2011; Wilkins, 2007; Harjo, 2019; Enote & McLerran, 2011).

Lipsitz (2011) and Wilkins (2007) apply social theories of geography to explain racialization, or the social production of race, in architecture and urban cities. Lipsitz (2011) proposes a shift in urban planning, in which a “Black spatial imaginary” can be used as a pedagogical tool to “clear up confusion about the relations between people and property, independence and interdependence, materialism and mortality, race and place.” (p.256). Within a similar, triumphant essence, Wilkins (2007) defines and resists what he calls “spatial profiling” in the architectural field (p.22). He explains spatial theory for two audiences with two literacy platforms. First, in parlance diagnostic of the architectural field, he describes how the built environment excludes the Black community. Next, he rearticulates with “remix sections,” which are based on “the lyrical, expressive, and candid language of the hip-hop generation” (p.xix). By weaving two literacy platforms, he carves out a new
space his community. Here, the Black community, or other People of Color, can resonate
with his racialized experience while accessing spatial concepts which are usually gatekept by
the architectural field.

Comparatively, Harjo (2019) uses existing community symbology to rearticulate
Mvsvoke planning agendas. By activating Mvsvoke knowledge systems, she encourages her
community members to “[map] speculations to the next world” (p. 81). Harjo (2019)
harmonizes with Wilkins’ (2007) “remix sections.” She, too, challenges the proprietary
nature of academic language. Both scholars use community literacy, such as local symbols or
music, as planning. They elevate community members as experts of their own planning
agendas. Harjo (2019) transforms her work into a classroom and offers praxis-based planning
activities, where community members can:

use this community knowledge to coalesce and invoke a different kind of power- not
a hegemonic power, but a collective power that cares about kin and community and
that is used to make one another’s lives and community better. (p. 37)

In a likewise fashion, Enote and McLerran (2011) developed community maps for the Pueblo
of Zuni, New Mexico that “give reference to our places of origins” (p. 4). In celebration of
Zuni spatial knowledge systems, they share that “the rest of the world may still want their
conventional maps, but to evolve as a global society we need to challenge what is
conventional and legitimate” (p. 8). In another critique of mapping, Kelley and Francis
(2000), claim that “all maps, tangible or not, are constructions of accumulated cultural
knowledge filtered through the maps producer(s), and they therefore carry multiple layers of
meaning” (p. 86). When maps are viewed as knowledge systems, they can yield colorful
representation, resounding with a “sense of place” (Basso, 1996) or “topophilia” (Tuan, 1974).

The spatial turn influences this research; therefore, the term “land ethic” from my research question blends social theory and geography. By linking land and ethic, I assume that the environment is not a resting, neutral container unaffected by sociocultural activity. All behaviors and beliefs happen somewhere. Ethics take place. This makes the term, land ethics, dialectical. Place (land) and politics (ethics) cannot be separated, they simultaneously re/create each other. Smith (1989) echoes this point, by claiming that a “mutual interdependence of social theory and geography” will lead to “a more serious and long overdue reexamination of the landscape that moves beyond the narrow descriptive, aesthetic, and idealistic confines” (p. 109). To contextualize current sociological and geographical literature, two key questions guide my discussion of the literature: what are the common orienting behaviors and origin places that exist between southwest cosmographies? And further, how do these align with data findings and observed land ethics found in Bluff? I begin by citing modernist, or pre-spatial turn, stances on land ethics, and then pair these modernist stances with post-structural critiques in two main categories: ethics and placelessness and national land ethics.

**Ethics and Placelessness**

In 1949, Aldo Leopold, stemming from a modernist ecological framework, coined the term “land ethic” as a phenomenon that “enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively: the land” (p.202). Leopold’s land ethic asked audiences to question the meaning of community. For him, a land ethic meant symbiosis between human and more-than-human ecosystems. Conversely, Leopold
problematically defines an “ethic” as “the differentiation of social from anti-social conduct” (p. 147). Yes, Leopold frames an ethic as a social phenomenon, but he does not name the ethic’s actor. An actorless ethic is a false consensus between social and anti-social. In other words, who creates Leopold’s ethic? Within the realm of ethical norms, nothing is universal. There is no default human, there is no default ethic. Knight and Riedel (2002) state that Leopold’s contemporaries called him “the spiritual father of ecosystem management” (p.5). What is at stake if do not question his positionality? Bhabha (1994) implicates Leopold’s modernist framework by arguing that “cultures are never unitary in themselves” (p. 52). Bhabha’s (1994) perspective reveals that assuming a de facto social ethic becomes “the attempt to dominate in the name of cultural supremacy” (p. 51). Leopold’s positionality sterilizes variance. Within the same ilk as Leopold, Light and Smith (1999) position an ethic as “a moral approach, meaning: the approach is prescriptive, that is, it issues in prescriptions, such as ‘do this’ and ‘don’t do that’” (p. 2). Light and Smith (1999) expand the definition of an ethic to include prescriptive behaviors while neglecting to position a who or a where. When an ethic is a generalizable phenomenon it erases the presence of communities, or the actors performing the ethics. Escobar (2001) calls this stance “placelessness” where ethics live in an “atopia” meaning they are merely conceptualized without location (p. 140). Disaggregating ethics from place abstracts behavior, implying an assumed normal. Critiques of Leopold (1949) or Light and Smith (1999) resist placelessness by asking land ethics to include a who and where. This, in turn, requires land ethics to consider place, belief and behavior. Placelessness is a saboteur for small, local communities because it positions national land use ideology as the given. It is no surprise that land ethics in the United States have a national presence.
National Land Ethics

National, tribal and state institutions manage the majority of Bluff’s landscape. Land ownership means land use ideologies. Land ethics can be perceived as deviant or complimentary—but are always enacted by people and usually abstracted by institutions. Roth (2000) explains that national management of land is designed to be “firmly bounded territorial units that facilitate centralized management from afar” (p. 374). Institutions, such as the Department of the Interior, benefit because they have an actorless presence. Responsibility slides off institutions while individuals and/or communities feel the grievances.

Aton and McPherson (2000) associate this tension with the San Juan River. They state “since the San Juan includes so much federal land, national values have often shaped management decisions and laws” (p. 161). Deyhle (2009) also critiques national land ethics by exploring the politics of border towns; she opines “the history of this place – San Juan County and the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation is a history founded on the contestation of space and place” (p. 55). Similarly, Denetdale (2016) studies border towns along the Navajo Nation. She comments on emotionality of displacement experienced by Navajo Peoples, in that “even though Gallup, like other border towns, is established on aboriginal Diné lands, the town’s space is rendered as a foreign territory, and Diné are cast as the invaders and aliens who threaten white civilization” (p. 113). Diasporic border-towns overlap differing and usually contradictory histories and narratives.

Leon (2009) argues that border-towns create volatility, which can be harnessed for radical change, because “diaspora comes to signal the liberating aspects of interrelationships and a resistance to the monologic thought and oppression that colonialism represents” (p.
This leads me to ask: at the national scale of land use, in a border-town, who is the assumed actor in Bluff’s land ethics? This becomes, who is the assumed public within public land? (Harjo, 2018). I answer these questions by critiquing the Department of the Interior’s 1906 Antiquities Act, which actively informed the creation of the 2016 Bears Ears National Monument and currently impacts Bluff’s Indigenous Populations (Obama, 2016). I use current research literature to expose how the 1906 Antiquities Act functions as a civil document that claims to regulate care and designation of places with historic or cultural importance.

The Racialization of Preservation

Within the 4-Corners region, national preservation of land is often racially motivated and rooted in beliefs of settler superiority aimed at delegitimizing and erasing local, Indigenous place-based practices (Dehyle, 1999; LaDuke, 1999; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). The origins of the continually used 1906 Antiquities Act depend on the perception of ‘the Indian’ being something worth preserving, but not the actual lives of the Indigenous Peoples themselves. It would take another twenty-two years after the Antiquities Act of 1906, for Native Americans to gain citizenship in 1924 (Prucha, 1975). But it would only take one year, 1907, to make Chaco Canyon of New Mexico, found within the 4-Corners Region, a national monument. The Antiquities Act preserved Native culture before Native Peoples were seen as deserving of the rights awarded by citizenship (Buick, 2017). Thus, the Act privileges representations of Indigeneity, but not actual Indigenous lives themselves. Hunt (2014), a Kwagiulth (Kwakwaka’wakw) scholar from Canada, calls this trend epistemic violence, which she explains as “the work of discourse in creating and sustaining boundaries around what is considered real and, by extension what is unable to be seen as real (or to be
seen at all)” (p. 29). Hunt locates violence within epistemology, an imperative tactic, because dominance over land is dominance over idea. Wolfe (2006), echoes this concept, discerning “invasion is a structure and not an event.” Hunt and Wolfe’s perspectives define settler violence as a current and superimposed epistemological structure. Their analytics reveal how the preservation practices (or land ethics) of the 1906 Antiquities Act re/produce settler knowledge systems through the commodification of Native culture.

In a comparable analytic, Phillips (1998) and Deloria (1998) argue that representations of Indigeneity create fetishization and simultaneous erasure of current, Native Peoples. Phillips (1998) examines material representations of Indigeneity, which can be dolls/miniatures or replica structures sold in Southwest tourist hives. She explains that “many miniatures continued to make reference to a free, nomadic hunting life rather than to the process of modernization that was actually occurring” (p.92). While the 1906 Antiquities Act is more surreptitious than a miniature moccasin, both artifacts favor a pre-contact Indigenous America, erasing the impacts of settler violence. Rosaldo (1989) calls this phenomenon “imperialist nostalgia,” in which the oppressor is in “the process for yearning for what one has destroyed as a form of mystification” (p. 4).

Mystification creates a distinct Southwestern Native identity, which Deloria (1998), explains as:

one group of Indians is material and real - a diverse set of tribes and individual with whom Europeans have interacted with for the past several hundred years. The other set is ideal-a collection of mental images, stereotypes, and imaginings based only loosely on those material people Americans have called Indians. (p. 20)
For-profit objects proliferate in the Southwest reinforcing Deloria’s (1998) definition of “Indian” (p. 20). Bunten (2015), who is an Alaska Native (Tlingit), and previous tour guide, explains how commodification of culture is also a tactic of economic oppression. She states that “Natives always played an important role in the cash economy, but they never controlled it” (p. 82). Relegating Indigenous identity to the past, a trend in preservation and the tourism industry, is a spatial privileging of history. It allows settlers, and their knowledge systems, to exist in the present moment. A perfect example of Hunt’s (2014) epistemic violence, in which certain populations are “seen and unseen.” (p. 26). Bluff’s geographic positionality is an interstice of differing institutions. Leon (2009) would call Bluff’s unique location a “disjunctive space” (p. 55). Disjunctive spaces happen from a disunification of perspectives, which, consequentially, reveal schisms of belief. These schisms are windows of disharmony, signifying the presence of multiple land ethics. Collectively, these scholars embolden me to ask: can Bluff’s disjunctive land ethics reveal alternatives to national practices?

**Local Land Ethics**

A land ethic is also a local phenomenon (Enote and McLerran, 2011; Kelley and Francis, 2005). In *Moral Geographies*, Smith (2000) argues that “moral attitudes are social in origin if not altogether culturally specific” (p. 45). Moral or ethical judgements percolate from cultural norms. King (1999) echoes this point by adding “shared conventions help to structure the conceptual and practical framework within which a person is enabled to investigate nature” (p. 209). Communities, indeed, share conventions, which are socially constructed cultural norms. As a consequence of phenomenon, Bluff folks create locally specific land ethics shrouded by a geography of national agendas. This points to the coexistence of national and local land ethics creating divergent land use norms. As shown in
Simpson’s (2017) and Basso’s (1996) research, local perspectives are alternative practices that challenge the canon of national land ethics. In service to her Anishinaabe community, Simpson (2017), claims that theories, meaning cultural responses to phenomenon, are both adaptive and place-based practices. She states “theory is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community and generation of people. Theory isn’t just an intellectual pursuit. It is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence, and emotion. It is contextual and relational (p. 151). Simpson’s work positions a land ethic as both specific and emergent within her community. In the same vein, Basso (1996), who studied the influence of landscape and identity within the western Apache, positions places as informing specific behavioral responses. He refers to these unique geographies as “sensing places” (p. 107). Both scholars base land ethics in local convention. By highlighting different land use practices, their work shows how different populations form land ethics. Taken together, Simpson (2017), Basso (1996) and King (1999) illustrate a land ethic as a socially re/produced local phenomenon. Their perspectives position a land ethic as a social and local phenomenon that occurs and is continually and dynamically occurring.

Current literature related to nationally scaled land ethics presumes borderland intersections diagnostic of disjunctive spaces (Leon, 2009). These divergent practices can re/produce systemic, racialized violence (Deyhle, 1995, 2009; Denetdale, 2016; Hunt, 2014; Wolfe, 2006). Or, as we see in Simpson (2017) and Basso (1996) works, some divergent practice disrepute deficit-based perspectives by championing communities as thriving in their own land ethics. Current literature positions Bluff’s land ethics in differing ways; however, all perspectives establish that land ethics are social practices that have material
consequences. All perspectives unify in an epistemology of geography. In that, we learn who we are based on where we go, and what we believe about those places, combined with what we do in those places. This equation is called a spatiality and is something Bluff folks practice (Soja, 1996).

**Land Ethic as a Spatiality**

A land ethic is a spatiality because it contributes to the social production of space. Soja (1994) explains that geography is material, imagined and experienced. He describes material geographies, i.e. places that can be empirically measured, as *conceived* space. Ideological realities, such as beliefs, social constructions and the imagination are *perceived* space. The interplay of perceived and conceived space creates human experience and is called *lived* space. These concepts form a trialetic, which is a three part formula composed of conceived, perceived and lived space. Soja’s (1994) trialetic explains how geography is socially re/produced. In this way, spatiality encompasses both real and imagined geographies.

Viewing space as a social construction leads to studies of spatiality as a social justice prerogative. If spaces are socially constructed, then they can also be reconstructed, questioned, burned down and read anew. To illustrate, Soja (1989) argues that human geography, is thus a competitive arena for struggles over social production and reproduction, for social practices aimed either at the maintenance and reinforcement of existing spatiality or at significant restructuring and/or radical transformation. (p. 130)

Studies of spatiality are designed to interrogate structural and social practices aimed at either transforming or continuing the status quo of society. Spatial theorists use spatial imaginaries to impart this concept.
What are Spatial Imaginaries?

Simply, a spatial imaginary is an ideological perspective that contextualizes a material place. Some spatial imaginaries teach how dominant spatialities naturalize themselves into the landscape (Soja, 1989; Harvey, 2000), or contrast strategies of resistance (Wilkins, 2017; Lipsitz, 2011), or explore certain communities’ spatial epistemologies (Harjo, 2019; Enote & McLearran, 2011). Spatial imaginaries are teaching tools, or heuristic devices, that impart ways of knowing, being and acting. As a burgeoning social theory, spatial theorists rely on metaphor to convey concept. Bhabha’s (1994) stairwell and Soja’s (1996) Aleph are spatial imaginaries that describe identity and resistance.

Spatial Imaginations that Move and Resist

Bhabha (1994) uses a stairwell’s design as a spatial imaginary. A stairwell’s use is a metaphor for identity formation. He calls spatiality an “interstitial passageway” by claiming that relationships between people and place are constantly changing. While traveling through “the hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities” (p. 5). In a stairway, you are unstable. The user is neither here nor there (not settled) but in a state of movement between locations. The interstitial passageway, or stairwell, represents an alive and negotiated spatiality.

In application of Bhabha’s spatial imaginary, Recollet (2015), a Cree scholar, analyzes how Canada’s Idle No More resistance movement used a flash-mob round-dance to contest colonial conventions of space. Her research takes place in downtown Toronto. She explains that the round-dance is a tool to “create interstitial passageways within urban landscapes and temporarily reshape the main corridors of diasporic movements” (p. 133).
Through adapting and reusing the road, the round dance reversed a superimposed circulation pattern. The gridded road network, which is a design artifact of settler space, dissolved. Similar to Recollect, Roth (2008) examines resistance spatialities between national land ethics and local Indigenous practices. Her work investigates Thailand’s Mae Tho National Park and the land tenure of the Karen peoples from the Nira and Insom villages. She calls national land ethics “the moment of spatial reorganization” and implicates that phenomenon as responsible for “dispossessing rural peoples of their land and resources, for spatially separating people and their livelihoods from their landscape (p. 374). Despite the difference in location, both studies explore how spatialities of resistance challenge the dispossession of Indigenous lands. Bhabha (1994), Recollect (2015), and Roth (2008) use a spatial imaginary to implicate existing power structures by celebrating resistance spatialities.

Soja’s (1999) Aleph, is a heuristic lens instilling infinity into place. It is a dilating perspective experienced through the senses. Contrary to Bhabha’s stairwell, an Aleph has an ephemeral materiality, it is better understood as an infinite intersection. If one finds a visual Aleph, one experiences all perspectives simultaneously by seeing “every angle of the universe” (Borges, 1945, p. 3). Soja (1999) describes an Aleph as:

the space where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear; but also, a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be seen and understood, an ‘unimaginable universe.’ (p. 56)

Alephs are held in physical places, are transformative, and capture multiple spatialities simultaneously. An Aleph is a refracting entity. Moles (2007) uses this spatial imaginary in her work, *A Walk in 3rd Space*, to inquire about local relationship to Phoenix Park in Dublin,
Ireland. By having her interviews take place in her site of inquiry, whilst walking, her analysis uses location as a data source. She describes the relationship between her research subjects and the park as “facilitate[ing] movement into new places; new spaces of narrative” (p. 8). Similar to Moles, Simpson (2014) implores the researcher to locate place during inquiry, she says “if you want to learn about something, you need to take your body onto the land and do it” (p. 18). This research responds to this call by holding interviews in the site of inquiry, the landscape. Moles (2007), Recollect (2015) and Roth (2008), in using Bhabha (1994) and Soja (1993) spatial imaginaries, boost confidence in the power of change. They provide examples of how the assertion of identity, or celebration of, is an incredible source to reinvent how space is believed to function. A spatial imaginary is not empirical, especially if it is a local phenomenon; rather it is a concept used to make meaning out of material space. Local, cosmographic perspectives can reinvent existing national land ethics.

**Cosmographies of the 4-Corners Region**

Within the 4-Corners Region, spatial imaginaries trend with cosmographic principles. Cosmogony, as a philosophical science, studies the origin of the universe.\(^4\) One dimension of geography, as social science, measures and describes physical and cultural features on earth. In Latin, *geo*, means world and *graphy*, means to write. Geographies are literacy, or knowledge systems, about physical and cultural elements of earth. To be human is a geographic affair; however, not all geographic identities are cosmographic. Little (1999) clarifies that cosmographies are “a conjuncture between *cosmology* and *geography* whereby cultural visions of the world (cosmos) are inscribed (graphy) into geographical areas”

\(^4\) To clarify, some cosmographies associate with astrophysics, i.e. Big Bang Theory and the nature of the contraction and expansion of the universe. I focus on regional cosmographies of the 4-Corners region, which operate in a different blend of mythos and materiality.
Cosmographies claim that physiographic entities, such as canyons, mountain ranges, or rivers, played a role during the origins of the universe. This means that certain geologic, atmospheric and/or sentient kingdoms inform a vital order. The term cosmography is more specific than the general term “world view” because it is “invariably linked to specific geographical locations with unique biophysical characteristics” (Little, 1999, p. 3). Locals claim that the San Juan River, a constant water source in the desert, is the primary reason for Bluff’s existence. Brabyn and Mark (2011) remind us that “the classification of landscapes is complicated by the fact that it involves both human perception and physical reality (p. 398). The common association with the San Juan River as a casual and life sustaining entity points to how cosmographies, as social practices, help to categorize the landscape. Cosmographies; then, are place inspired knowledge systems that organize spatial understanding. They are locally practiced land ethics.

Cosmographic principles are evident in global cultures (Rappengück, 2013). However, Southwestern cosmographies are primarily linked with Indigenous knowledge systems. Based solely on material culture, the oldest known Navajo hogan in San Juan County dates to 1620 (BLM, 2007). Thus, as of 2020, Navajo cosmographies have been continually practiced in Bluff for 400 years. Additionally, the first iteration of a Bluff community was established by the Ancestral Puebloans in 650 A.D. (Cameron, 2009). Thus, as of 2020, Western and Rio Grande Puebloan cosmographies have been continually practiced in Bluff for 1,370 years. Indigenous cosmographies exist before and after European contact, making them the most historic and continually practiced land ethics in San Juan County.
The archaeological record for San Juan County indicates widespread and ancient Indigenous occupation of the area between 6000 B.C and A.D 1300 (BLM, 2007; Cole, 2009; Cameron, 2002, 2009). Archaeologists differentiate this time span by designating the Paleoindian, Archaic and Formative Periods (BLM, 2007). The latter, Formative period, marks the beginning of the Anthropocene, in which early Peoples shifted to agriculture. This shift resulted in an evolution of more sophisticated dwellings reaching a pinnacle of design, evidenced in the Bluff Great House Site (Cameron, 2009). The peoples of Formative period that trended in data collection are the Ancestral Puebloans.

The Ancestral Puebloans are ancient Peoples whose existence predates current tribal identities. Migration patterns and eventual settlement of the Ancestral Puebloans resulted in different tribal entities, sometimes referred to as the Rio Grande Puebloans and Western Puebloans whose difference is marked by language and location (Ortman, 2002). The term “ancestral” creates a multi-tribal connection to Bluff’s landscape through deep time (Echo-Hawk, 2000). To describe current Navajo, Western and Rio Grande Puebloan (shortened to Pueblo/an) cosmographies I ask, what are the perceived boundaries of the cosmos and how is

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5 Crow Canyon Archaeological Center (2014) refers to the Rio Grande Puebloan Peoples, as nineteen separate Pueblo Communities located west of, or along the Rio Grande. They are: Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, Sandia, San Felipe, San Idionso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Taos, Tesuque, Zia and Zuni Pueblos.

6 Sekaquaptewa and Washburn (2009) define the Hopi Peoples as “a settled agriculturally based group of twelve Pueblo communities in Northern Arizona” (p.195). These twelve communities are respectively situated on first, second and third mesa. While Young (1996) differentiates tribes by dryland farming techniques, referring to the Western Pueblos as “Hopi, the Tewa community of Hano on the Hopi’s First Mesa, Zuni and Acoma.”

7 Whilst Ute, Ute Mountain Ute and Paiute tribes have ancestral and current ties to Bluff, I stay close to my data to delimit my review. These tribes were not mentioned with popular frequency during data collection. Occluding Ute, Ute Mountain Ute and Paiute cosmographies limits this study. Demographically, in San Juan County, Utah, these tribes have smaller populations. The Sovereign Ute Mountain Ute Lands have less area than the Navajo Nation. These factors, combined with other socio-political histories, could result in why these histories are often neglected.
it believed to function? And further, how do these align with data findings and observed land ethics found in Bluff? I cite literature that uses material culture, encompassing the natural, built, and written/oral histories, to explain cosmological form, or cosmoform.

**Cosmological Form**

Cosmographies are expressed in the built environment; therefore, scholars use material culture to evidence cosmographic beliefs. Cosmographic material culture can be: maps (Kelley & Francis, 2005), geometry curriculum (Pinxten, Dooren & Soberon, 1989), architecture (Swenzell, 1999, Ortiz 1969; 1972; Geertz 1996, 1984; Dykeman & Roebuck, 2008), petroglyphs (Cole, 2009), roads (Till, 2017) and ceramics or basket weaving (Greeburg, 1975; Swenzell, 1999; Pinxten et. al, 1989; Dykeman & Roebuck, 2008).

Furthermore, Indigenous cosmographies are also expressed in stories, songs, and prayers. In response to NAGPRA (Native American Graves and Repatriation Act) the anthropological field elevated oral traditions, such as emergence stories, songs and prayers, as substantive tribal claims to deep history within the 4-Corners region (Echo-Hawk, 2000; Dykeman & Roebuck, 2008; Keeley-Galin, 2014; Ortman, 2002; Hunt, 2015, Klah & Wheelwright, 1942, Sekequaptewa & Washburn, 2013). This shift, as explained by Echo-Hawk (2000) espouses “an approach that treats oral documents as respectable siblings of written documents” (p. 267). Ethnogenesis stories are primary accounts, powerful enough to dissolve Eurocentric notions of Indigenous folks as a prehistoric people. Locals who practice oral traditions continue the most historic knowledge systems of San Juan County, Utah.

Cosmographic principles become material culture. For Rappenglük (2013) cosmographic design means that “structures worked as lively microcosm figuring the macrocosm and allowing interaction with the world by using a symbolic and ritual approach”
When the built environment is a cosmographic vehicle, design principles establish the ambiits of cultural beliefs. Caquard and Cartwright (2013) argue that spatial epistemologies, or cartographies, need to “provide insight into what their world was really like and what limitations and perceived boundaries existed” (p. 102). An object and its design articulate a center and periphery of cosmographic beliefs. Figure 4, is a diagrammatic summary of local cosmographies, as shown by Hunt (2015), Geertz (1984; 1996) Ortiz (1969, 1972), Swentzell (1990), Rappelgulk (2013), Pinxten et al. (1989) and Kelley and Francis (2005). All scholars discuss cosmographic form, or cosmoform. They also mention four main spatial concepts: the center place and its periphery, planes in the sphere, a six directional system, and an axis mundi.
Figure 4

Seperate and Holistic Cosmographic Form

A.

Cosmoform

The Center Place and Periphery

Planes in the Sphere Horizontal (Middle), Below, Above

Axis Mundi

B.

The Zodith or Above Direction

Center Place

Horizontal Plane

North

The Nadir or Below Direction

Axis Mundi

Note. Section 4A, shows cosmoform and seperates four cosmographic elements. Section 4B shows cosmoform holistically. Form, is the both the shape and movement of an entity. Form has kinetic potential. Cosmoform; then, is the behavioral impression of the known universe. Regional cosmographies synchronize with four main spatial concepts: the center place and its periphery, planes in the sphere, a six directional system, and an axis mundi.
Current, regional cosmographic literature differs in detail, such as emergence locations or physiographic actors (Klah & Wheelwright, 1942; Hunt, 2015; Sekequaptewa & Washburn, 2013). However, they are similar in cosmographic form. I separate these similarities into seven categories: the center, the periphery, the middle or horizontal plane, the below direction, how the center place synonymizes with community, the axis mundi and the above direction.

**Cosmoform**

Form, is the both the shape and movement of an entity. Form has kinetic potential. Cosmoform; then, is the behavioral impression of the known universe. Navajo and Puebloan perspectives claim that cosmoform is changing cyclic movement – the environment is process. Loops, not lines. Place, not points. As, Pinxten et al. (1987) share:

> the earth, like everything else in the Navajo universe, is changing continuously. In the first place, it is expanding in a gradual spiraling movement, which started from the exact center of the earth (upon the moment of Creation). The air is revolving in the sense of directions, yielding a cyclic pattern. (p. 9)

The authors use arcing and angling verbs to establish circular terminology. The absence of a beginning and ending, produces impressions of an embracing ebb. Cosmoform is comparable to whorls and corollas containing interpenetrating spirals – shattering concepts of linear representation, petitioning holism. Swentzell (1990) expresses this concept by adding, “the myths, stories, songs and prayers tell about the Pueblo cosmos as vital and inclusive containment, within which opposite forces are brought together and united by that energy, which flows through everything and everybody” she later adds, that “there is cyclic movement on the horizontal plane, movement that is spiral and leads inward to the center
place of emergence” (p. 26). Similarly, Leon (2009) likens spirals to the Hopi universe. She makes connections between cosmoform and identity creation, by claiming that, “centripetal motion constitutes an ever-closing spiral that leads inwards to a centre while centrifugal movement throws the self-outward away from the centre. Alternating movements create dynamic dialogue between self and external world” (p. 57). Leon (2009), Pinxten et. al (1987) and Swenzell (1990) name cosmoform as contracting and expanding corollas, whorls, or spirals. The movement of cosmoform implies its boundaries; designating a center and periphery.

**The Center**

The center moves. It is not a point, that is why it is called a place. Cosmoform loops. The center place is a moving intersection within a containment. The center is a spiral’s impetus. The spiral’s impetus happens from “the center place of emergence” (Swenztell, 1990, p. 26) or the “exact center of the earth” (Pinxten, 1989, p. 9). Center places are often associated with diaphanous qualities and transformative experience. They are where “where time and space meet” or “where illusion and reality meet” (Swenztell, 1990, p. 26). Center places are reticulating thresholds. The existence of a center place with a spiral’s impetus establishes peripheral places, which are: a sphere that has a six directional system with multiple center places and corresponding axis mundi. I use volume to describe periphery.

**The Periphery**

A spirals impetus takes shape and shapes have volume. Volume is how much space a shape contains. In three-dimensional space, a spiral is a sphere. This pattern shows up in community design (Ortman, 2002, Cole, 2009; Dykeman & Roebuck, 2008), the Navajo wedding basket (Pinxten et al., 1989) and some Puebloan ceramics, such as the sky basket.
Cosmoform is akin to corolla like tessellations forming an encompassing spherical container. However, in Figure 4, I establish periphery by using a simple spiral expressing itself as a 3-dimensional sphere. The center place is the spiral’s impetus producing a peripheral sphere. The sphere created by the center place has three planes.

**Planes in the Sphere**

Ortiz (1969) calls the planes in the sphere a “Tewa classification of horizontal space” that contains “three cosmic levels: the below, the middle and above” (p. 23). The planes have differing place names: the above, is sometimes the zenith, the middle is sometimes the horizontal plane, and the below is sometimes the nadir. Pinxten et. al (1989) locates the center place within the horizontal planes, claiming that “this center goes from the nadir or center of the earth up into the zenith or center” (p. 11). While their place names differ, the sphere’s three planed volume is the same, producing a cosmoform whose volume contains a below, middle and above. The middle plane is now.

**The Middle, Horizontal Plane**

Humans occupy the horizontal, or middle, plane. Here, they observe a six-directional system, which includes the 4-directions (east, south, west, north) linked with the above and the below. However, when anthropological literature translates Indigenous spatial practices into English, the cardinal directions become a superimposed construct (Hieb, 1979; Hamilton, 1964). Hamilton (1964) states that “N.E.S.W, may have overlaid the older conception, which was based upon the four extreme points of the rising and setting sun during the year” (p. 171). The 4-directions, then, are better understood as solar patterns. They are often based on solstices and equinoxes, drawing from the sun’s “daily journey from east to west, establishing two directions, and then he makes his annual trip from south the north
again” (Hamilton, 1969, p. 171). Kelley and Francis (2005) liken but do not synonymize a Navajo cosmographic frame with a North arrow. They argue that the six-directional system, paired with a certain place names, serves to “function much like the north pointing arrow on Euro-American maps” (p.93). Whilst most text describing cosmoform use the phrase “four directions” as a reader, one should channel deep history and reject the divisions of compass. In Bluff’s cosmographic context, the four directions are arcing hemispheric movement. Bluff’s orienting systems exist on the horizontal plane, which has implied vertical history, associated with the below direction.

The Below Direction

Emergence stories are ethnogenesis epics. They often include a physical and transformative journey through multiple worlds from the below direction. Ortiz (1969) claims that “most of spiritual existence is attributed to the below, and all human existence occurs on the middle level” (p.23) The verb, emergence, rejects notions of stop, go, end. Swenztell (1990) argues for a looping perspective, in that, emergence “cannot be seen as indicative of a general upward thrust or movement but rather, must be viewed as a part of larger movement that turns back into the earth and to the place of beginning” (p. 26). Her emergence description petitions an inclusive holism. The below direction is accessed through center places. Cole (2009) and Ortiz (1969, 1971) refer to the center as a Sïpâapuni, and either translate it to hatchway or earthnavel. Klah and Wheelwright’s (1942) version of the Bahané, or Navajo ethnogenesis, refers to the center place as Hájinei, or the place of emergence. Their account of the Bahané, recognizes the creation the Zuni and Hopi peoples, implying the existence of other ethnogenesis stories, and their subsequent center places. Ortiz (1971) explains that “usually there are many different centers because sacred space can be
recreated again and again without ever exhausting its reality” (p. 132). Further, the center place is an “intersection of the six directions, with the seventh being the center itself” (Ortiz, 1971, p. 132). Cosmographies influence community design – because the center place is the ultimate intersection – it is often synonymized with community (Ortiz, 1969; Swentzell, 1990).

**Center Places Synonymize with Community**

If the center place is the spiral’s impetus, it creates the spherical container, informing and sustaining the community. Swentzell (1989), Ortiz (1969) and Pinxten et. al (1989), argue that the center place influences community layout and building design, so much so, that the center place becomes synonymous with community. Ortman (2002) hypothesizes that physical geography of many Ancestral Puebloan settlements, located in canyon-rimmed villages surrounding springs or other water sources, influenced cosmographic principles. He argues that these principles are espoused in bowls (a hemispheric shape), as a material metaphor, for community function. Just as Swenztell (1990) describes cosmoform as a “vital and inclusive containment” (p. 26) Ortman (2002) argues that “the community is a container” (p. 222). If emergence happens from center place, it is responsible for the creation and transportation of community into this current, horizontal middle world. The constituents of the centerplace reflect this connection in spatial knowledge systems, by viewing the center place as both direction and community center. The vehicle of emergence, called the axis mundi, is a connective tessellate rod that operates through all seven directions.

**The Axis Mundi**

An axis mundi, or the world’s axis, is an ephemeral road between the below, middle and above. Through conducting the spirals impetus, it is a passageway to the reticulating
threshold, the center place. As Swenztell (1999) describes “the central vertical axis that connects the above and below is not a fixed or static axis but rather a path of energy flow” (p. 25). Wheelwright and Klah (1942), Swenztell (1990), and Ortiz (1969, 1971) link the axis mundi with water-based plant life. A hollow river reed is a passageway between the below, middle and above planes. It has roots in the earth and water, which grow into the below direction. It also grows up, into the sky, or the above direction. Its tryptic form occupies the earth, water and air. The reed’s hollow air passageway between all three planes signifies the axis mundi. As Swenztell (1990) describes “it is along this path that the people traveled to the fourth world. They traveled sometimes through a bamboo plant, or reed, and at other times up a ladder” (p. 25). Likening the axis mundi’s form with a ladder is similar to Bhabha’s spatial imaginary of “stairwell” (p. 5). When one is climbing a ladder, you are not fixed in place but transitioning between zones, or worlds. Till’s (2017) analysis of Chacoan roads, materializes the path of axis mundi in association with the Bluff Great House site. He considers how herraduras (c shaped shrines) and the topographic path of the road “might symbolize the transition from the lower, ancestral, wet world(s)” (p. 37). Till (2017) uses Chacoan roads to locate current Indigenous occupation on this horizontal plane, which is domed by the above direction.

The Above Direction

The above direction is arching atmospheric movement. It is also an immemorial connection to ancestral orienting factors. As previously established by Hamilton (1964), solstice and equinox markers predate compass contact. Celestial entities, such as the sun, moon, stars and constellations occupy the above direction. Rappenguilk (2013) calls these entities “luminaries” (p.4). Contrarily, Geertz (1984) refers to the above direction as the
astrosphere and calls celestial agents “beings of the astrosphere” (p. 231). The actors in sky, of course, are always in motion. The dark sky designation of the Bluff, then, becomes imperative when considering its material history. Bluff folks can still view the dark sky and its luminaries. Thus, the population can witness how the sky behaved during pre-contact for both ancestral Puebloan and Navajo occupation of the Bluff Valley. Kelley and Francis (2005) explain that “cosmographic frame” within Navajo oral and rendered maps, recognizes “the cardinal directions and center (zenith and nadir)” (p. 99). All of the aforementioned elements in a cosmographic frame are considered moving places. Thus, these regional cosmographies have features that function as both place and direction.

Place Naming

Place naming is a social activity, such that meaning is inscribed onto a geographical entity in order to locate it within our understanding (Mark, et. al. 2011). Place names are not common nouns, such as river, mountain or mesa. Place naming elevates geographical entities into proper nouns. Sometimes, place names signify origin, such as “the Center Place.” Sometimes, place names signify use, such as Bluff’s colloquial “Cemetery Hill.” By naming places, we distinguish from the ensemble, designating difference. Place naming reveals cultural values, because they point to what is and what is not articulated about the landscape. Basso (1994) notes that “naturally occurring depictions of places are treated as actualizations of knowledge that informs them, as outward manifestations of underlying systems of thought” (p. 110). For cosmographies, place names situate physical entities within an ephemeral order. This highlights local systems of knowledge and values, or land ethics. Similar to Basso, Alderman (2008) in Place, Naming and the Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes emphasizes that collective place names “conflate place and group identity
because of the shared context of using as referring to toponyms” (p. 196). Thus, the mention of origin places implies community values. It means that people believe these places exist, and are thus, influenced by their impact. Taken together, Mark (2011), Basso (1994) and Aldermen (2008) guide researcher’s understandings to critically ask, what systems of thought are revealed in local discussion of the landscape? Land ethics; however, are not only defined by place names, they are also defined by how people navigate the landscape.

**Directions as Orienting Ideologies**

Directions are tactics of wayfinding techniques. Kevin Lynch coined the term “wayfinding” as “the process of determining and following a path or route between an origin and destination” (as cited by Wiener, et al. 2009). Directions, as wayfinding, are conceptual guides that people employ to navigate their surroundings. They relate to how places are defined because they expose local uses of orienting knowledge systems, revealing what behaviors then re/create the space.

Directions are not places, but rather, orienting ideologies that are projected onto place. The east, as a place, does not exist. It is mere concept. However, because directions are geographic constructs they have material consequences. Directions, are thus, expressions of geographic knowledge systems. Drawing from Pearce and Louis (2008) directions could be considered “cartographic language” and because they are a form of literacy, they contain “a multitude of ontological assumptions, any of which may be altered in order to express a geographic concept better” (p. 113). This becomes an important discernment, because Navajo and Puebloan cosmoform create other directions, i.e. the above and below. Further, these directions associate with origin place names adding materiality to their existence.
Bluff’s cosmographies are ancestral and continually practiced pedagogies. These perspectives, too, contribute to the social production of space. Bluff is an intersection in a tenuous network of sovereign, state, national, and private land. National land ethics, such as the Antiquities Act of 1906, tend to erase the presence of rural Indigenous communities. As exemplified in Roth (2008), Recollet (2015) and Moles (2008), when a land ethic does not come from the voice of the community the location becomes depoliticized. I see that tension in Bluff. As established by Basso (1996) and Simpson (2017), social practices are delightfully place-based and specific to regional customs and attitudes. Bluff’s land tenure provides an interesting backdrop to explore community practices. As a response to this, I ask what is the land ethic of the Bluff community? This work contributes to the largely undocumented phenomenon of rural people defining rural places. In conclusion, this work is a twirl in spatial turn. I investigate Bluff’s social theory of geography, which is best described as a land ethic.
Section 3: Site Context

Boundaries and Physical Geography of San Juan County, Utah

The Northern Navajo Nation encompasses the southern region of San Juan County. The Ute Mountain Ute Nation is located on White Mesa between Bluff and Blanding. San Juan County’s eastern boundary is the state of Colorado, its northern boundary is Grand County, Utah. The west and south boundaries are defined by the Colorado and San Juan Rivers. Combined, these two rivers weave through all 4-Corners states.

A vertical tour of San Juan County could start from the highest peaks of the Abajo and Navajo Mountains and shift into a middle vantage point atop a mesa, most of which are covered in juniper and cedar trees, some of which are named: Dry, Cedar, Mustang, Black and Tank Mesas. Next, the tour could settle into the red rock canyons of Valley of the Gods, Monument Valley and Comb Ridge. San Juan County also features Goosenecks and Monument Valley State Parks, Canyonlands National Park, Manti-La Sal National Forest, Natural Bridges, Hovenweep and Bears Ears National Monuments.

Population and Race Demographics of San Juan County, Utah

As of the 2010 Census, the population of San Juan County, Utah was 14,745. Blanding, which is twenty-six miles north of Bluff, has the largest population with 3,375 inhabitants. The ethnic majority of San Juan County are Indigenous Peoples. The Navajo Tribe and a small percentage of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe represent the majority of Indigenous peoples who live in the area.\(^8\) Racial demographics include: American Indian at

\(^8\) It is important to note that the U.S. Census does not recognize land tenure and use as occupation. So while the Census claims that San Juan County is home to two sovereign Nations, multiple tribes have ancestral claims to the area (Hall, 2008).
49.4 percent, White at 47.4 percent, and those who identify as “two or more races” is 2.1 percent (United States Census Bureau, 2010). The vast and dynamic landscape of the county totals 7,819 square miles with a population density of 1.9 people per square mile (United States Census Bureau, 2010). To live in San Juan County means a lifestyle wrought with the challenges of isolation contrasting the stark, dramatic landscape. For Bluff specifically, Azil would say “living in this region is not easy, and sometimes the river’s not easy” (Focus Group #2, November 21, 2019).

**Education and Racial Violence in San Juan County, Utah**

Within the San Juan School District teachers are primarily white women; this continues the legacy of Indian schools where the settler nation controls the standards of education (Dehyle, 1995, 2009). Further, sexual and violent crimes trend in San Juan County at the intersection of race and gender. This makes Indigenous women the most vulnerable population, which is evidenced through the regional endemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous women (Razack, 2002; Women’s Earth Alliance & Native Youth Sexual Health Network, 2017). White people, especially white women, are positioned as symbols used to uphold the iconography of settler constructs (Bell, 1992; Deloria, 1998; Fanon, 1952, 1963). White woman contribute to the re/production of the settler nation through class gatekeeping. The regional economy is ruled by whites, who own most of the trading posts and heritage tourism sites that sell an authentic Indian experience (Bunten, 2015; Phillips, 1998; Rosaldo, 1989). With all this in mind, there are few positions more dangerous than a white woman researching the historic and current landscapes of the Ancestral Puebloans, Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Unita and Ouray Ute, Rio Grande Puebloan People and other Indigenous tribes. This is because when white women work within a landscape that has been
territorialized via the continual dispossession of Indigenous land, it serves to naturalize settler violence into the landscape.

**Demographics and Boundaries of Bluff, Utah**

Bluff may be a far out, rural town, but it is organized. Before incorporation, the Bluff Service Area Board (BSA), established in 1994, was a volunteer-based civic system. Board members made planning decisions and corresponded with San Juan County regulations about Bluff’s: water, solid waste, septic and sewer systems, mosquito abatement, cemetery services, and parks and recreation. Bluff’s 2018 incorporation shifted its civic structure into a volunteer-based town council, composed of five council members and a mayor. As of 2020, the town council is transitioning responsibilities between San Juan County and the BSA, Bluff Water Works and the Cemetery District. San Juan County services also include Bluff’s Emergency Services (fire and ambulance) and law enforcement. Bluffoons are commonly members of multiple, local organizations, such as the Bluff Animal Rescue Committee (BARC)\(^9\) or the Bluff River Trail Committee (BRTC).

Bluff is surrounded by DOI, state and sovereign lands, so it does not have urban sprawl potential. Further, its location in a canyon and use of septic systems curb population growth. There is no sewer system and effluence is transferred to septic tanks of each household. This prevents large scale building construction. To live in Bluff means that you haul all your own garbage to the nearest dump 15 miles north. Locals drive three hours round trip to get groceries. The nearest hospital is about twenty-five minutes away in Blanding, Utah.

\(^9\) If readers are interested in adopting an animal, please visit their website at: [https://www.bluffanimalrescuecommittee.org/](https://www.bluffanimalrescuecommittee.org/)
Bluff is a coterminal place, such that it exists in dynamic social and geographic boundaries. Coterminal environments have complex networks of land tenure (Anderson, 2013). Due to its previous census-designated-place status (CDP) Bluff has porous borders. Where the town began and ended was established by its coterminal surroundings; therefore, Bluff has historically operated as more of an intersection than a place. Again, before incorporation, it was defined by the simultaneous presence and absence of borders. Bluff’s town sign acknowledges its coterminal presence on Indigenous lands and reads “established 650 A.D.” According to the 2010 Census, Bluff’s population was 258. The census; however, neglects to represent Bluff as a conflating hub. Due to its services and location to the Northern Navajo Reservation (it has a school, a post office, alfalfa farm, gas station, restaurants) Bluff has a dilating population.

The San Juan River, which contributes to coterminous nature of Bluff, has an irrevocable impact on the community. Bluffoons feel the river’s vapors, hear its trickling and are active members of the delicate ecosystem formed along the river corridor. Meloy (1999) shares “the San Juan River flows by my home and is so familiar, it is more bloodstream than place” (p. 89). Intimacy with the landscape, especially the river, is part of Bluff’s sense of place. The San Juan River has a palpable presence; transpiring from this presence are examples of Bluff’s land ethic.
Section 4: Research Participants

To qualify for this research study participants were adult aged (18+) community leaders living along the San Juan River corridor. I define a community leader as: an active member of local society playing a necessary role for the wellbeing and survival of the Bluff community. In August 2018, I met with the BRTC and we collectively identified twenty-five community roles within Bluff. Some examples where: teachers, emergency first responders, members of the town council, business owners, etc. I reduced this number to ten (i.e. 40%) to strengthen saturation and variance. Although I aimed to include ten participants, I successfully recruited seven community leaders.

In June 2020, I wrote a description of each research participant. I delivered the descriptions via email or visited each household individually. When I shared the descriptions, I asked three questions. First, I said “this is how I described you, is this how you would describe yourself to a stranger?" Second, “is there anything you would like me to add?” Third, “is there anything you would like me to take away?” This layer of member checking is important to me – because people, rightfully so, are sensitive about identity representation. I was grateful for an opportunity to receive corrections and learn more about my community members. Here, I present each research participant coauthored description with their pseudonym.

Azil

Is an Anglo woman in her early sixties who has lived in Bluff for thirty-three years. She runs a trading post, is a member of the Bluff Historic Preservation Association, and is an only parent. Her life-long friendships with regional and local weavers, ceramists,

10 A question my advisor and chair, Dr. T. Peele-Eady, recommended I ask.
photographers and traditional artists, especially from the Navajo and Zuni tribes, replenish the trading post collections. As she described “the trading post is my lifeblood, it continues to be primary in the definition of my life” (personal communication, June 8, 2020). She began the trading post in 1986 – and the following year expanded it into a restaurant. For over two decades, Azil collaborated with a local team of women to serve eclectically inspired and delicious dishes. Her cherished community that grew around the trading post still helps care for her son – a special needs child, with an incredible gift for language and song. He sings in Navajo, beautifully. The trading post also functions as a venue for various art performances, large potlucks, and the occasional wedding. She claims that living in this “rugged place” means “we have a lot to care about” (semi-structured interview, October 29, 2019). Her personal list of cares includes the San Juan River corridor, the uranium traveling through our town, Bears Ears National Monument and Comb Ridge. She defined the river as “a life thread that is an oasis,” and pays special attention to it as a “migratory flyway, wildlife corridor, and an inspirational trail system” (questionnaire, November 15, 2019). Azil is a family friend.

**Hyrum John**

Is an Anglo male in his early-fifties and has lived in Bluff for twenty-seven years. He is an archaeologist, radio-DJ, museum curator and father. He first arrived in Bluff as a field archaeologist contracting with Abajo Archaeology, a local cultural resource management company. He describes the importance of rivers to the region, as “singular precious entities” explaining that “rivers here expand out into a slender corridor of life (concentration of plants + critters)” (questionnaire, October 24, 2019). Hyrum John is my family’s closest neighbor in Bluff– who is also trusted to watch our dogs while we are away. I enjoy asking him questions
because he retorts with ease. When asked, “what does the San Juan River mean to the Bluff community?” He replied, “…the river and its confluence with Cottonwood Wash provided for the establishment of Puebloan farm communities [which] provided the water and soil for several apparent iterations of a “Bluff Community” (questionnaire, October 24, 2019). Hyrum John uses Bluff’s evidenced deep history to define community. Furthermore, he observed that for Anglo residents, “it might be simpler and less challenging to understand (or project understanding on) past corn-growing societies than it is to engage modern, living people” (questionnaire, October 24, 2019). In future planning for the river trail and the town of Bluff, he urges Anglo Bluff folks to include modern, Native perspectives.

Lily

Is a Diné woman in her late sixties. When asked “how long have you lived in Bluff?” She responded, “all my life” which is 67 years (questionnaire, October 30, 2019). She is the caregiver of four generations living in the surrounding area, which includes her mother, siblings, children and grandchildren. For over two decades, she taught early childhood education for the San Juan School District. She was my pre-school teacher. Now, she is enjoying retirement. Lily also served on the Bluff Service Area Board and continually volunteers and organizes functions at St. Christopher’s Episcopal Mission of Bluff. While discussing the San Juan River, she earnestly said “the community loves the river, and all the trees” (questionnaire line, #31). In girlhood, the river is where she learned to swim. Her family still uses the water to irrigate their crops. Furthermore, she noticed how the course of the river traveled over her lifetime of nearly seven decades. She said “it meandered. I think it’s a lot closer to us than before when I was a little girl. Because I remember walking quite a
ways to get to the river” (questionnaire, lines # 16-18). Lily has all of the qualities of an excellent teacher, she deliberate, playful and gentle.

**Neon**

Is a Diné/San Carlos Apache male in his mid-thirties and has lived in Bluff for thirty-five years. For over a century his multi-generational family has continually farmed, worked, and thrived in the region. Neon is a father, has worked in the medical and design fields, and is also a musician, DJ, and activist. His work celebrates Indigenous practices and sheds light on settler violence, especially police brutality and the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Check out his music at [https://soundcloud.com/neonnativez](https://soundcloud.com/neonnativez). He called the San Juan River, “the center of life here” and traveled through time and cultures to measure its importance by saying “I mean, obviously that’s why my family settled over there cause, the water, and that’s why, the Anasazi settled there and that’s why the Pioneers settled here, cause the river. It was the center of life, it still is” (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019). I heard Neon’s music before I met him – prior to our interview we did not have a pre-existing relationship. Upon first meeting, I was struck by his grounded, calm and kind nature.

**Rita**

Is a Diné female in her mid-thirties who has lived near Bluff, on the Navajo Nation, for three years. She is a daughter in a multi-generational family with deep ancestral ties to Bluff and the region. During childhood travel from Colorado to the Navajo Nation, crossing the San Juan River became “a joyous symbol - I was either on my way to “town” or on my way to see my grandparents” (questionnaire, November 8, 2019). She works for a local NGO
related to land-use and preservation of Bears Ears National Monument. Rita has a critical mind and a contagious laugh. For her, the future river trail can become “a tool to connect the community to the river and also to each other” (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019). She wishes to hear more conversations between Bluff and its Navajo Nation neighbors about river accessibility and see follow-ups that are based in “respect and movement in a positive manner” (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019). When asked about public behavior and the landscape, her responses were rarely personal, rather than speaking from an “I” perspective, she provoked a proverbial “we.” Speaking personally, she said that Comb Ridge possesses a profound, awe inspiring beauty. Then Rita immediately cited remembered Comb Ridge narratives, adding “other tribes, or other Natives connectivity to it is important to me” (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019). Rita locates value and behavior in larger shared-networks. Previously, Rita and I worked together at a restaurant in Bluff – and our families are close friends.

**Sister Juniper**

Is an Anglo female in her late forties and has lived in Bluff for twenty-two years. She is an only parent, assistant fire-chief of Bluff, EMT, massage therapist and a nurse. She responds to emergency calls in the surrounding region – along with saving lives, she also has a love for theatre. She is the co-founder of The Players, Bluff, the community theatre association. During her travels and residencies across Arizona and the Navajo Reservation she eventually landed in Bluff and decided to take root. During the COVID-19 era, she organized the Bluff Citizen Response team, which is an all-volunteer network of callers, who provide daily check-ins for people in isolation due to the Corona Virus. Sister Juniper describes the San Juan River corridor as “holistic” and a “teacher” and asks people to
consider “what is important to the river?” (questionnaire, November 9, 2019) She is my closest friend in Bluff – and I admire her love of the arts and her gutsiness as a medical practitioner and first responder.

Vi

Is an Anglo female in her late thirties and has lived in Bluff for 15 years. She has facilitated educational initiatives throughout the region, including after school and summer sessions for area youth, educational exchanges for private school students, and exposures to higher education for area high school juniors and seniors. Vi currently serves on the volunteer-based Bluff Planning and Zoning Commission, Navajo Nation's Community Partnership for Health Equity, and is also an Emergency First Responder. She excels as an emergency vehicle operator, because she retains a smooth familiarity with haphazardly addressed and often unlit-backroads on nearby Navajo Nation. She speaks Navajo, Spanish and English, and incorporates all three languages during her out-of-school-time instruction at Bluff Elementary. She first arrived in Bluff as a VISTA Volunteer. In describing the San Juan River corridor, she situated it as a “lifeway” connecting multiple communities – that are “regulated by the holy ones, people and prayer” (questionnaire, October 30, 2019). Vi is a dreamer, a radical educator and a community organizer. She calls every Bluff resident “neighbor.” She and I have worked together in theatre productions and during the afterschool program.
Section 5: Methodological Design

This is a qualitative study. Qualitative research is a paradigm concerned with the construction of multiple, opposing realities or the “pluralization of life worlds” (Flick, 2014, p. 12). I use a qualitative model to investigate a land ethic, which is a social phenomenon that cannot be distilled into a simple cause and effect equation. As Flick (2014) shares “most phenomenon cannot be explained in isolation-a result of their complexity in reality” (p. 15). Immeasurable relationships, such as the relationship between people and their home landscapes, are evident in Bluff’s site context. Therefore, a qualitative paradigm is the best approach for this research study.

Spatiality as a Theoretical Lens

Third space theory (Soja; 1989, 1996) and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) scaffold this research study. Corbin and Strauss (1998) explain that a theoretical framework is “closely aligned to what is being discovered in the researcher’s present study” and due to this alignment, I use theory “to complement, extend or verify the findings” (pg. 39). Soja’s (1996) third space theory is a social theory of geography that lacks methodological discipline. Grounded theory addresses this gap and provides practical, step by step analytic guidance.

What is Grounded Theory?

Grounded theory is a research methodology used for theory generation. Theory, loosely defined, is the explanation of a phenomenon. Grounded theory is analytically appropriate when the researcher is “aiming at developing a new theory where so far a lack of theoretical knowledge exists” (Flick, 2014, p. 401). Land ethics appearing on a national scale creates disparate representation, usually occluding small-scale local practices. Grounded
theory is appropriate because there is no current theory that explicates how the community members of Bluff, Utah create a land ethic.

Grounded theory methodology is inductive through timing. This timing is like naming children. Grounded theory is the parent and the data set is the child. The grounded theory parent names the child after its grown into a theory that suits its behavior. This is opposed to deductive parents, who name the baby during incubation. I hear grounded theory asking, “does the theoretical framework influence data analysis so much that analysis merely re/produces the theory itself?”

**Grounded Theory and Third Space Theory**

Catch 22, despite grounded theory’s aversion to a theoretical framework, most research questions contain a lineage of theory. My research question uses third space theory, which imparts the literacy to understand the social re/production of space related to a land ethic (Soja, 1996). Grounded theory, as the name implies, is a research methodology that is also considered a theoretical framework. The necessity of harmony, therefore, lies in the shared analytical assumptions of both third space theory and grounded theory.

The subject/object dialectic, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as symbolic interactionism, conceptually align third space theory and grounded theory. Charmaz (2015), a grounded theorist, describes the analytic assumptions of symbolic interactionism:

symbolic interactionism views human actions as constructing self, situation, and society. It assumes that language and symbols play a crucial role in forming and sharing our meanings and actions. Symbolic interactionism views interpretation and action as reciprocal process. (p. 262)
In practice, grounded theory dialectically attributes human action (behavior) with ideology (interpretation). I represent symbolic interactionism, as a dialectic, in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Dialectics of Symbolic Interactionism*

Interpretation is ideology. In terms of a land ethic, it is the philosophy of what the landscape is.

The manifestation of the belief. In terms of a land ethic, it is what people do (verbs) in the landscape.

**THE SOCIAL RE/PRODUCTION OF MEANING**

*Note.* Symbolic interactionism assumes that meaning is a socially re/produced phenomenon composed of action and interpretation. The interpenetrating arrows in Figure 5 communicate the interdependence and simultaneous occurrence of action and interpretation. Researcher’s using grounded theory contextualize their research site by assuming that humans socially re/produce meaning dialectically.
Symbolic interactionism is an equation explaining the social construction of multiple lifeworld’s. Bhabha (1994), a spatial theorist, also takes this stance, arguing “the meanings and symbols of culture have no primordial or fixed unity” (p. 157). Both theories assume a heterogenous, constantly negotiated world. People engaging in their own land ethic is how the landscape becomes a substantiated social product. The articulation and practice of a land ethic becomes the simultaneous creation and re/production of the land ethic itself. It is a dialectic.

**A Tryptic not a Dialectic**

Third space theory is a tryptic not a dialectic. Dialectics abstract geography. Looping relationships between ideology and behavior all happen in an environment. Dialectics take place. Dialectics happen; therefore, third space theory inverts dialectical reasoning by asking *where*? All places are constantly emerging, thus, when dialectics are given a site context, they are divested of their fixed qualities. This process, coined by Soja (1996), is called “thirding as othering” (pg. 60). This is because a dyad, implies a triad. The articulation of a dyad produces a third alternative and its infinite other. In regards to a land ethic, a triad considers belief, behavior and place. In translation, Soja (1996) would frame belief as perceived space, behavior as lived space, and place as conceived space. This theory inserts a third and its infinite other into a dialectic. I represent this shift in Figure 6.
Figure 6

The Triadetics of Spatiality

Epistemological Triadetics of Spatiality

CONCEIVED SPACE
The who or where, material space that is measurable.
In relation to land ethics, these are physiographic elements, measurable entities like landmarks or rivers. Conceived space answers, what is outside?

PERCEIVED SPACE
Beliefs about the who or where.
In relation to land ethics, these are local beliefs about what the physiographic elements are, such as landmarks or rivers. Perceived space answers, what do people believe the river is?

LIVED SPACE
Behaviors or daily practices.
In relation to land ethics, this is action and interpretation in one (symbolic interactionism). Lived space inserts location and answers, what are people doing when they are outside?

THE SOCIAL RE/PRODUCTION OF MEANING

Note. By asking, where do dialectics do happen, the triadetics of spatiality assumes meaning is socially re/produced through conceived, perceived and lived space. Third space theory inverts dialectical reasoning by asking where? Dialectics, as shown in Figure 5, tend to abstract geography. Third space theory grounds behavior in place. Spatiality, in plain language is this: we learn who we are based on where we go, and what we believe about those places, combined with what we do in those places. Where we go, is material or conceived space. What we believe about those places, is perceived space. What we do in those places, is lived space.
Bluff is a distinct place with complex modalities. By inserting location, Bluff’s social dialectics, become trialetics (Soja, 1994). Taken together, both grounded theory and third space theory position society and culture in a state of constant negotiation and re/production. In asking, *what is the land ethic of the Bluff community?* I, in turn, ask the data: what are people doing? These are processes, behaviors or patterns of use. I also ask the data, how do these processes, behaviors or patterns of use relate to the landscape? Within an inductive process, supported by grounded theory, I inquire spatially. From these theories, I investigate the social construction of a land ethic by researching community practices.

**Diagrammatic Summary of Data Collection and Analysis**

I collected data through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. I analyzed semi-structured interview and questionnaire data through a qualitative content analysis pulling from grounded theory methodology. Focus groups served as simultaneous data collection and analysis. Each focus group authored two separate statements of use, which I analyzed using a template analysis. *Figure 7* is a flow chart showing data collection and analysis.
Figure 7

Data Analysis Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source:</th>
<th>Method of Analysis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I conducted seven semi-structured interviews outside in viewed sculpture named <em>The Terminal</em>. My questions were about the treatment and use of the San Juan River’s surrounding landscape.</td>
<td>Qualitative Content Analysis pulling from Grounded Theory Methodology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source:</th>
<th>Method of Analysis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I received 6 questionnaire responses. My questions related to individual and community practices along the San Juan River corridor.</td>
<td>Qualitative Content Analysis pulling from Grounded Theory Methodology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source:</th>
<th>Method of Analysis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Focus Group Statement of Use #2 Focus Group Statement of Use</td>
<td>Focus Group Statements of Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The focus groups engaged community analytics through discussion of questionnaire content.</td>
<td>Template Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Analysis + Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups analyze Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two focus group discussions functioned as simultaneous data collection and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I facilitated a discussion of questionnaire responses. During discussion, focus groups populated blank templates about current and future use of the San Juan River Corridor. I culled these data sets statements of use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group #1 took place in the evening with four research participants: Hyrum John, Neon, Lily and Vi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group #2 took place in the morning with three research participants: Sister Juniper, Azil and Rita.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Figure 7 is a flow chart detailing my methods of data collection and analysis.
Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

From October 24th – November 8th 2019, I conducted seven, semi-structured interviews. Each interviewee participated in a one-on-one, singular, interview that averaged one hour. Because this is a study of land ethic, data collection must be place-based, meaning that interviews happen in the landscape (Moles, 2008). The San Juan River is a subsidiary force currently carving Bluff’s canyons, it is not divorced from its respective landscape (Simpson, 2014; Basso, 1996). I built a sculpture, The Terminal, to facilitate data collection regarding the San Juan River’s relational landscape.

The interviews took place in The Terminal, which is a viewshed sculpture located on Bluff’s Cemetery Hill. A viewshed is a perspective from a certain vantage point. I installed The Terminal on Cemetery Hill because the viewsheds from this location include the San Juan River corridor and its tributary features, such as Cottonwood Wash. Figure 8 shows The Terminal with the town of Bluff in the background.

The Terminal’s shape mimics cliffs and the movement of the San Juan River. The lapiz lazuli color mimics the tones from Bluff’s Fall shadows. The frames were used to guide interviewees in a systemic circling of the landscape. Seven perspectives co-exist within the frames of this material object. The co-terminal perspectives transform the sculpture into an Aleph. In Soja’s (1994) Aleph as a spatial imaginary, one can experience all perspectives simultaneously by seeing “every angle of the universe” (Borges, 1945, p. 3). The presence of seven narratives, refracts different angles, or perspectives of use.
Figure 8

The Terminal Sculpture

Note. Photograph captured 11.23.2018. Seven semi-structured interviews took place in The Terminal sculpture. It is located on Cemetery Hill, southeast of the Great House Site interpretive kiosk in Bluff, UT. Photographer faces southeast while model looks northwest. The background displays the southern bluffs, called Casa Del Echo. The town of Bluff, Utah is nestled in the river valley with yellowing Fall trees.
A semi-structured interview asks interviewees open ended questions (Flick, 2014). During a semi-structured interview, Glense (2011) suggests asking a series of follow up questions or prompts that guide the interview, she describes researchers as “patiently probing” (p. 127). The open-ended questions were designed to discover what Bluff community members value within the landscape. Value points to meaning, which is upheld by behavior. I asked three questions in each cardinal direction.

First, I asked as you face south* today what comes up? The constant within the individual interviews is The Terminal sculpture. Research participants’ response to this question is a glimmer of their heterogenous spatiality. This question is open ended and serves to break the ice and helps to reveal what people see when they look in their chosen direction.

Second, I asked, what is important to you in the south* landscape? The term “important” points to an ethic. People disclosing what they view as important frames their values as related to the land. This question also points to material relationships.

Third, I asked, how do you expect others to treat the south* landscape? This question points to behavior, which is the praxis of an ethic. It is the what and the how and the movement within the landscape. Behavior can also be a belief system. Behavior impacts material reality.

Once we covered all cardinal directions, I opened up the interview and asked participants: are there other directions that are important to you? This was the most fruitful question, because research participants expanded past The Terminal and included other directions of importance, such as the center place or the above and below direction.
**Data Collection: Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a data gathering tool in written format. Charmaz (2014) refers to questionnaires as “elicited documents” in which the questions may “elicit thoughts, feelings, and concerns of the thinking, acting subject as well as give researcher’s ideas about what structures and cultural values influence this person” (p. 47). Without an interviewer, research participant’s have time to think, they are alleviated from feeling on the spot. A questionnaire format supports reflective thinking and allows research participant to be more frank in their responses.

I delivered seven questionnaires but received six questionnaires in return. In using a questionnaire format, I sought to illicit responses about what Bluffoons value about the San Juan River. The questionnaire asked two questions. The first question was, *how is the San Juan River meaningful to you?* This question interrogates how the San Juan River matters. Meaning is associated with value, which points to community norms and beliefs about what should be considered valuable.

The second question was, *what do you think the San Juan River means to the Bluff community? In what ways does it matter to others? In what ways does it not matter to others?* The second question interrogates how research participants compare their experience to others. It is explicitly behavioral because it asks research participants to describe how the river matters, which reveals patterns of use. Questioning the ways in which the San Juan River does not matter, points to locally acceptable and unacceptable land use practices.

An obvious flaw in questionnaires is that I cannot ask follow-up questions to the respondents’ answers. For example, if there is a response that is unclear, or leads me to
deeper questioning, the answers stand alone. Focus groups solved the lack of closure from questionnaires.

**Data Collection: Focus Groups**

The first focus group was in the evening with four participants: Hyrum John, Neon, Vi and Lily. The second focus group was in the morning with three participants: Azil, Sister Juniper and Rita. Questionnaire responses were the topic of focus group discussion. I read each respective questionnaire aloud. Participants followed along with their own copies and underlined phrases that stood out to them. Then, we discussed underlined or salient segments from the responses. During and post discussion, we populated a statement of use regarding the San Juan River corridor. The statement of use is a blank template reflecting response patterns in questionnaire data. Two, separate focus groups resulted in two populated templates.

**Statement of Use Templates**

The statements of use were initial patterns of decelerations and occlusions in questionnaire data. I observed four deceleration themes: *The San Juan River Is*, *We share the corridor with*, *And we use it for*, and *Please abstain from/do not*. Participants took time to define the San Juan River. They described its location, its qualities and how it functioned. This became the section: *The San Juan River Is*. Participants named groups of beings and entities that share the corridor, this became the section: *We share the corridor with*. Participants named patterns of use by describing what they did at the river, this became the section: *And we use it for*.

11 To refresh the reader regarding our focus group discussion, the questionnaire asked two questions: *How is the San Juan River meaningful to you? How is the San Juan River meaningful to the Bluff Community? In what ways does it matter in what ways does it not matter?*
Questionnaire responses lacked, or participants occluded, explicit requests for others behavior. Focus groups provided a way for me to ask to follow up questions regarding questionnaire data. Participants described what they did, but I could not assume that was equivalent to what they wanted people to do. I wanted to ask: how do you want people to engage the San Juan River corridor? This became the section: While in this environment/place/corridor we ask that you consider the x, and take time to x. Both statements of use defined the who, what, when, where, why and how of the San Juan River corridor. Focus groups defined what the San Juan River is, who Bluff folks share the corridor with, described current local uses, which were paired with desires and prescriptions for future use. Blank and populated Statements of Use are displayed in Figure 9 and Figure 10.
**Figure 9**

*Blank Statement of Use used to Facilitate Focus Group Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The San Juan River</th>
<th>While in this environment/place/corridor, we ask that you consider the</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And take time to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We share the corridor with</td>
<td>Please abstain from/ do not:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And we use it for</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Figure 9 modifies the original 11.21.2019 document from landscape to portrait. The Statements of Use reflect initial occlusions (what was not being said) and decelerations (what was being stated as belief or fact). The Statements of Use are thematic patterns in questionnaire responses. Two, separate focus groups populated the document.
Figure 10

Population Statement of Use

Note. Figure 10 modifies the populated 11.21.2019 from landscape to portrait. Research participant from focus group #2 uses questionnaire responses and discussion to populate the Statement of Use.
In contrast to my other methods of data collection, focus groups felt the most collaborative. I held focus groups because I wanted research participants to analyze a data source. The Bluff River Trail will be a community space; therefore, my methods needed to access community, or group, funds of knowledge. During discussion of the questionnaire, participants became co-analyzers of their own data. Asking research participants to engage in analysis is a way to “take ideas back to participants for their confirmation” which is a method commonly referred to as member checking (Charmaz, p. 210, 2014). Because I researched local beliefs and behaviors about the landscape - who better to participate in the analysis of their data, than the people under investigation themselves? Focus group co-analysis of questionnaire data provided immediate feedback. Research participants confirmed, denied and expanded on the established themes from the populated template.
Section 6: Data Analysis

Analyzing Semi-Structured Interview and Questionnaire Data with Content Analysis pulling from Grounded Theory

My research question, *what is the land ethic of the Bluff community*, explores how Bluff community members re/produce a social phenomenon. I employed a content analysis (White & Marsh, 2006; Coffey & Atkinson, 1967; Hiseh & Shannon, 2005) pulling from grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014), to analyze both questionnaire and semi-structured interview data.

Pulling from Grounded Theory Methodology

Charmaz’ (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory*, provided practical, in-depth analysis steps for data analysis. However, I did not use theoretical sampling principles, which are a unique method to grounded theory. During theoretical sampling, grounded theorists rely on insight from initial codes to inform subsequent data collection and analysis. My analysis happened after the completion of data collection.

A full grounded theory approach requires a lot of time and resources. These factors were not available to me, nor are they usually available to graduate researcher’s trying to complete their master’s thesis projects. Cho and Lee (2014) compare content analysis and grounded theory methods. They argue “because of theoretical sampling and saturation, anticipating the length of the research period is difficult” (p. 17). Cho and Lee (2014) also critique content analysis on behalf of novice researchers. Content analysis can be inductive or deductive, this method’s adaptability can lead to a “lack of established analysis procedures” (p. 17). I addressed the weaknesses of both methods by blending content and grounded theory methodology to analyze semi-structured and questionnaire data.
Grounded theory helped me answer: what are Bluff folks doing outside? I needed to identify behavior. I utilized a grounded approach based in symbolic interactionism (which harmonizes with spatial theory) through the heuristic device of coding via gerunds (Charmaz, 2014). Within analysis, this means that I focused on coding behavior (gerunds) instead of thematic coding. This technique helped me identify apparent behaviors found in questionnaire and semi-structured interview data.

**Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a research method within textual analysis. Content analysis describes phenomenon. I employed its methods at the pinnacle of extracting categories from data. Once behaviors become clear, via grounded theory methods, I asked: what are the shared or divergent behavioral themes related to a land ethic? Content analysis describes meaning thematically (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; White & Marsh, 2006). A theme, as used content analysis, is “something relevant for the research question which can be seen on some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Flick, 2014, p. 421). Patterned behavior reveals the relationship between the content (what is actually said) and theme (spatiality, i.e., behavior and meaning related to material and ideology).

**Same Analysis Method, Two Data Sources**

I used the same analysis methods for semi-structured interview and questionnaire data. Source content differed which resulted in different findings. Audio-recorded interviews vs. written questionnaires created minimal variance in data management. First, contrary to semi-structured audio data, questionnaires were hand written. Transcribing questionnaires was easier than audio-data. Second, because I could not listen to research participants read their questionnaires, I did open-listening by using the Read Aloud option on Microsoft Word.
Starting with the research question, analysis followed this pattern: data transformed from open listening into initial codes. Next, initial codes elevated into focused codes, which were then scrutinized by a second-round of focused coding resulting in category generation. Then categories were linked together thematically. Finally, categories found thematic resonance within cosmographic principles. I used constant comparison methods, a looping activity where different coded sets, i.e. initial, focused, second-round focused codes, categories and themes, are scrutinized against each other. Memo writing was another concomitant task. I asked questions of the data and answered in reflective journaling. Phases one through five, below, detail data analysis stages.

**Phase 1: Becoming Familiar with Data**

I approached each data set through open listening and reading. With semi-structured interview data, I listened to the recordings. With questionnaires, I read the responses and used Microsoft Word’s Read Aloud option.

**Transcription, Open Note Taking and Drawing**

I transcribed all audio and written data. I aligned the data on the left side of a Microsoft Word Document with a blank three-inch margin to the right. Three-inch margins allow space for drawings, memo-writing and eventual codes. Next, I numerated the data lines. While listening to the content, I engaged open note taking and drawing. This looked like underlining text segments that stood out to me and free drawing symbols that popped into my mind’s eye.

**Initial Coding**

Open note taking led to the first wave of initial coding. My first attempt at initial coding was with NVivo, a qualitative research software. Initial coding is a fragmenting
process, where sets of data receive a name that captures their content. In Charmaz’ (2015) grounded theory approach, initial codes are synonymous with open codes. Initial coding isolates data. Fragmenting, or isolating data, establishes new roads to other isolated fragments. I initially coded sentence by sentence. Next, I compared initial coded data to each other. Comparison, as an analytic, is described by Glesne (2011) and LeCompte (2000) as scrutinizing data for variation and frequency within the range of similarities, differences, omissions and declarations. Initial coding is clandestine and requires discipline. It is tedious fission and fusion. Nascent connections eventually emerged, which elevated my initial codes into focused codes.

**Phase 2: Initial Codes Distilled into Focused Codes**

Focused coding is “a selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate and organize large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). Focused coding is when patterns between the isolated initial codes are linked, revealing a pattern. The term pattern means different things. Patterns can be: frequency, similarities, declarations and omissions (Glense, 2011; LeCompte, 2000). Patterns were also consequential. Some declarations (participant observations) were related to or caused other codes. Charmaz (2014) adds that the elevation from initial coding into focused coding is supported by “concentrating on what your initial codes say and the comparisons you make with and between them” (p. 140). Next, data elevates into meaningful clusters.

**Botched Focused Coding**

My data was too botched to elevate into meaningful clusters. My codes merely summarized content. Coffey and Atkinson (1967), in citing Strauss, warns against a “summary approach” in coding data. Meaning that researchers should avoid indexing or to
“cod[ing] words merely to mark and retrieve segments of data” (p. 49). Codes should avoid summative descriptions. The focused codes felt severed. This result was comorbid with data management.

I should have treated each semi-structured interview as a separate data set. Instead, in NVivo, I made a master document that cumulated all initial codes. I learned from this mistake and did not repeat it with questionnaire data. The quantity of master document codes caused me to forgot the code’s source. I did not know who was saying what. Further, because the Nvivo platform does not translate numerated lines from Microsoft Word, my coded data segments were not numbered. This made my data very difficult to retrieve. It became clear that the data was not sophisticated enough to grow into focused codes.

**Reflection of Botched Phase**

I credit the botched phase to my novice understanding of coding and not treating each interview as a separate data set. When I returned to Charmaz' (2015) section of “Coding for Topics and Themes vs. Coding with Gerunds” my codes came alive (p. 120). Coding with gerunds activated the data. A land ethic is a spatial behavior, created by patterns of use. Asking “what are people doing” revealed behaviors, actual verbs, rather than thematic summaries.

**Phase 3: Coding with Gerunds**

I returned to initial coding. I ditched Nvivo. On paper, I coded semi-structured interviews to reflect action. I followed the same approach for questionnaire data. Charmaz (2014) pulling largely from Glaser, comments on the evocativeness of gerund-based coding. The verbing of data helps the researcher to “gain a strong sense of action and sequence” (p. 120). Until I was immersed in my own data, I never understood the phrase “staying close to
the data.” My first attempt at coding created a botched set. My codes were noun based because I summarized content. Gerund coding is what participants say they are doing, or what actions took place during data collection. This is how I stayed closed to my data.

**Initial Codes Distill into Focused Codes**

On paper, I grappled with language, playing with different ways to represent data happenings. I frequently asked myself, “does this code truly capture the action/behavior of what the participants are saying?” How do I frame their words as active? Am I creating synonyms for the same behavior? For both data sets, I circled back to my open listening notes and the original recordings. I used the following Charmazian (2014) memo prompts during coding. I asked: what processes are evident here and how can I define them? And what are the consequences of the process? (p. 169). Then, I gave the data a spatial spin and asked: do these beliefs already impacted existing spaces? What happens when these behaviors are not practiced? Answering questions resulted in my initial codes transforming into focused codes. I treated each interview and questionnaire as a separate data set. I transferred the written, first-round focused codes onto each respective set.

**Reducing Data through a Focused Code Catalogue**

In Microsoft Word, I reduced the data by assigning salient verbatim passages to support each focused code. Most of the focused codes were *in vivo*, which are verbatim codes. *In vivo* codes can be nuanced and/ or regionally specific phrases, place names, symbols, etc. *In vivo* coding preserves local place names and the way the locals described themselves. Charmaz (2014) shares that using verbatim language as code will “anchor your analysis in your research participants worlds” (p. 135). My focused code catalogue was a
word document of alphabetized focused codes paired with their respective verbatim passage underneath.

**Round 2 of Focused Coding**

Armed with my focused code catalogue, I reduced the data by second-round focused coding. I did this by hierarchical organization. When the codes collapsed, I wrote the first-round focused codes underneath the new, second-round focused codes. This way I could visually recall the accordion of meaning. Some of the first-round focused codes did not change. I pulled from Charmaz (2015) and asked the data: What do your comparisons between codes indicate? What kind of theoretical categories do these codes indicate? (p. 140-141). Answering these questions helped to elevate the second-round focused codes into meaningful clusters.

**Meaningful Clusters**

While debating meaning and relationship, I softened my focus and connected different second-round focused codes by arranging them into meaningful clusters. I pinned up butcher paper and I assigned each research participant a color correlated sticky note. I hand wrote all second-round focused codes. At first, my data clusters looked like a segregated color wheel. When meaningful clusters reached saturation data looked like the scales of a rainbow fish. I saw matrices. Next, I defined each second round-focused code.

**Phase 4: Defining Second-round Focused Codes**

Due to the large amount of data and the shapeshifting nature of analysis, I did not define my initial codes, nor my first-round focused codes. When second-round focused codes grouped into meaningful clusters, I defined each code. Now, my data was a defined comparative network. I saw categories, which were thematic connections between behavior and meaning. Next, I defined my categories.
Defining Categories

I used Charmaz’ (2014) writing prompts to define categories. I answered “under what conditions does this category arise, how is it maintained and how does it change? (p. 190). I answered, “what are the consequences of this category, and how do these consequences relate to other categories?” (p. 190). I defined the category and explicated its properties. The codebook for semi-structured interviews and questionnaire is available in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Phase 5: Theoretical Sorting and Theme generating

While I was defining categories and explaining their properties, connections between other categories was a natural byproduct. For other categories the connective tissue needed more contemplative time to reveal itself. The connections became themes that essentialized each category. Ultimately, themes that made their way into data findings were sorted per their relevance in regard to my research question. In the next section, I detail my template analysis methods. Next, in the subheading “knitting themes together across all data sources” I preview how apparent themes axially connected across all data sources. I explicate their properties in Data Findings A and B.

Template Analysis for Focus Groups Statement of Use

I analyzed each statement of use, through a template analysis, which is a deductive method that structures first contact for initially coding a data set. During template analysis segments of raw data are initially coded with an a priori coding scheme. According to King (1998), this method of analysis is when “the researcher produces a list of codes (a ‘template’) representing themes in their textual data” (p. 118). Because I collaborated with focus groups, this data set already had a priori themes. During focus group discussion, research
participants populated statements of use, which were blank forms that reflected questionnaire themes. From the blank, and then populated statements of use, the data set was already organized thematically. Template analysis was the most suitable method to analyze focus group data.

Template analysis was my third and final method of analysis. My initial template was my questionnaire codebook. The scholar, Books, within Brooks et. al. (2015) employed a similar technique with her data. Contrasting other approaches to template analysis, she did not draw from theory to establish her template. Rather, she pulled from “salient findings from the first stage of [their] work to inform the selection of important a priori themes” (p. 214). Salient findings from my questionnaire analysis produced a sophisticated codebook, which I used to initially code focus group data. The final template analysis code book is available in Appendix C.

**Becoming Familiar with Data**

I transcribed seven handwritten templates. I numerated and the aligned the documents in a three-inch margin. Three-inch margins allow space drawings, memo-writing and eventual codes. Then, I conducted open reading of each data source.

**Coding with the Initial Template**

I applied the initial template and organized through hierarchical coding. This technique allows for axial connections, between higher level codes and sub codes, or what Brooks et. all (1998) calls “lateral relationships across clusters” (p. 204). Coding with my initial template produced segments of uncoded data in the focus group data set. My initial

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12 Within the methodological design section titled “Data Collection: Focus Groups” blank and populated statements of use are displayed in Figures 9 and 10.
template was not exhaustive. This was not a surprise because an initial template merely begins the coding process for raw data. An initial template does not stay fixed in its application; rather it is an adaptive heuristic device constantly changing in its approach to code a data set.

The points of disharmony between the template and the initial coding, were met with a process of what King (1998) calls “insertion, deletion, changing scope and higher order classification” (p. 125-126). Insertion is when “the researcher identifies an issue in the text of relevance to the research question, but not covered in an existing code” (p. 125). Deletion is when an initial code is no longer necessary and is removed from the template. Changing scope is when the top tier of a hierarchical code is arranged in an appropriate relationship based on the saturation of themes inductively discovered in data. Higher order classification is when a code needs to be changed to more appropriate fit relevance in patterning, related to the research question. A template analysis involves an organic, inductive naming of new pieces of data that exist outside of the initial template.

**Modifying the Initial Template**

I defined each new code. This tactic is a Charmazian (2015) heuristic device. Readers can see how I, the analyst, assumed meaning for each code. It reveals researcher’s positionality and cuts through ambiguity. A code is an essentialization of data, and the understandings of such essentialization should be made clear through defining each code.

**Integrative Themes and the Final Template**

King (1998) warns researchers, in searching for saturation, that a template can be reduced *ad infinitum* (p. 127). I continued to elevate links between hierarchical codes and discovered integrative themes across the hierarchal data set. Integrative themes, or themes,
are the connective tissue between each data set within the final template (King, 1998). My analysis looked like a matrix of rich data directly related to my research question. I arrived at a final template. My use of template analysis helped me to discern themes regarding land ethics related to the San Juan River corridor.

**Knitting Themes Together Across All Data Sources**

Data analysis across all sources, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, developed into themes. A foundation of codes, which went through multiple rounds of distillation and definition, supported my categories. Charmaz (2014) explains that categories “explicate ideas, events or processes in your data – and do so in telling words”\(^{13}\) Relationships between categories creates themes. Because I focused heavily on coding via gerunds across all data sets, my categories are rich in behavioral examples. I axially interrogated the relationship between themes across all forms of data collection. This helped to supply examples of kinesthetic engagement, i.e. what people do in the landscape. Categories reflected a correlative network between behavior, belief and place. The social construction of space happens through a volleying of different verbs. By treating data this way – themes, which are relationships between categories, emerge. Flick (2014) states that themes “reassess the category system against theory and material” (p. 431). My use of spatial theory, paired with grounded theory, provided the theoretical foundation to ask questions of the data. My data collection is a prodigious source and researcher’s cannot tell the entire story. The corralling themes within Data Findings A and B are limning and Bluff’s Axis’

\(^{13}\) Appendices A, B, and C feature my code books for each data source where I defined each code and category.
Mundi: The San Juan River. These behaviors highlight the relationship between Bluff people being outside and constructing meaning with their home landscapes.
Section 7: Limitations, Delimitations and Assumptions

On a national scale, my research study is limited and affected by the racialization of state and federal land use regulations (Laduke, 1999; Powell, 1983; Podmore, 2019). On a local scale, my role in this research study is limited by systems of structural oppression re/produced in San Juan County through gendered and racial violence, educational discrimination and white class privilege (Dehyle, 1995; Denetdale, 2016).

This study is also limited by the local intersections of race and place evident in Bluff. Regional beliefs in white supremacy racialize space, causing racial hierarchies to manifest geographically. Mills (2014) explores the racialization of space as a method to preserve, what he describes as, “the racial contract” (pg. 1). Mills (2014) argues that whiteness is contingent upon an epistemic ignorance that requires isolation and the creation of a racial hierarchy. In other words, racial identities are deeply place based, formed by occlusion paired with where one feels they should and shouldn’t go. Whiteness becomes a geographical border associated with safe or civilized space (Lipsitz, 2011). In contrast, Indigenous People and their places are often associated with what Razack (2000) calls “degenerate spaces” (p. 127). When racialized spaces are located on contested borders with resources (i.e. crude oil or uranium ore) the landscape and the people who live on it become dehumanized because they stand in the way of the profit. Thus, the region of my research study is limited and affected by the environmental racism of the extractive industries (Laduke, 1999). I delimit the impact of the federal and state industrial complex by speaking honestly and strategically as possible about the extractive industries.

My race and gender create limitations for this research study. I, as a white woman, have power, voice and social mobility that Others do not. If I say I feel unsafe in a space, the
police force in San Juan County looks like me, will believe me and help me. The same is not true for people of color living within San Juan County.

I am limited by the exploitative history of the whiteness having the power to define and create public spaces. From being raised by academics paired with the familiar conventions found in English (my first and only language) I speak the language of the settler class. People speak the Hopi, Navajo, Ute, Zuni, Rio Grande Puebloan and other Indigenous languages within Bluff’s landscape; however, I delimit my study by asking research participants to answer my data collection questions in English.

I delimit my study though using settler concepts of the cardinal directions (north, south, east, west). The cardinal directions are contemporary and historic constructs that translate geography into settler epistemologies. When I used these bounded, territorialized concepts, I asked my research participants (who operated in a different epistemologies of space) to make themselves legible to my settler concepts. Further, without collaboration from my research participants I chose the location of The Terminal. My choice limited the agency of my research participants because I, as a singular community member, found the viewshed inspiring.

The academic realm limits my research study. As a queer white feminist, I am the academy’s poster child. Meaning, I am intersectional enough to be edgy, but I am not viewed as dangerous enough to challenge the white glass ceiling. White femme-presenting queer feminists, such as myself, uphold the conventions of whiteness and present enough gender and sexual difference that diversity quotas are met. This method prevents people of color from entering in the equation, and thus, the academy is safe guarded.
I make several assumptions in conducting this study. First, I assume that my research participants answered my questionnaire and semi-structured interview prompts honestly and factually. I assume that my research participants have a healthy, trusting relationship with me and other folks participating in this study. I do this under the pretense of social etiquette; however, I do not know what existing social tensions that research participants have with each other. I assumed that focus groups provided a comfortable and successful setting; however, there could be underlying community tensions that I am unaware of.

Within my capacity to delimit the study, I refuse to be complacent or have my work hijacked by white fragility (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). To negate this potential my Literature Review and Site Context described the racial, gendered and territorial conflict of San Juan County. I am not interested in pastoralizing my community. To take a leaf from the critiques of the “Truth and Reconciliation” projects within Canada, there cannot be reconciliation without truth. This means that if I neglect to acknowledge the structural violence within my home, I negate the truth. Discussions of violence, though, tend to frame people of color within a deficit lens (Tuck, 2009). My descriptions must not fetishize violence while still recognizing the historic and current impact of settler violence. I tried my best to mitigate the delimitations that I could control by approaching my research participants with humility and love. I constantly reminded myself that it is my role within this research to graciously represent the land ethic of the Bluff community.

In terms of my positionality as a researcher, I have to consider the sovereignty of my data. What does it mean to inherent narratives, interpret them, and then proliferate findings? When Kelley and Francis (2005) documented Navajo Cosmographies, they warned about mistreating mapping principles. As they describe, documentation or “‘putting on the record’
always seems to accompany Indigenous loss of resources and the oral tradition itself” (p. 104). What is the risk of documenting a place whose cultural resources depend on secrecy? I deliberately left out specific place names and their identifying wayfinding routes to protect research participants’ loved places. Bluffoons can share their special locations on their own terms, this research will not. When Pearce and Louis (2009) mapped Hawaiian cartographies, they dreamed of a future that “maps the Indigenous without leaving the Indigenous behind, and simultaneously transforms the way non-Indigenous people read, interpret, and make use of maps of Indigenous cultural knowledge” (p. 123). Bluff, should not take this research, nor should I, and claim any type of white saviorism by mistreating knowledge systems that are not my own. This research marks the beginning of many conversations where I can ask “what is the best way to integrate cosmographical perspectives into our future as a town?”
This study documents Bluff societies’ land ethics. I write about daily life, or as Neon would say “like, how we do here” (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019). Limning, is an umbrella verb, or hypernym, that classifies similar and interconnected behaviors. Limning has eight different taxonomies, which are: turtle rocking, angling, shadowing, echoing, directions as spheres, skyline/ridgeline/horizon, cliffs limn azimuth, and subterranean trust. All these examples are beliefs and behaviors, or land ethics between Bluff people and their home landscapes, or homescapes.

What is Limning?

To limn, means to outline in light. It is a commonly practiced painting technique. Artists usually depict the divine limned by light. It is a transitive verb, the entity, i.e. the Buddha, receives limning. While outside, Bluff people trace outline and form. They use limning to determine where sandstone monoliths or their respective shadows begin and end. These are kinetic practices.

The theme limning began as the code tracing. During a Bluff sunrise or sunset, Azil shared that she “draws the horizon” (line #224). All seven research participants, across all forms of data, traced landscape outlines. Azil describes this common phenomenon, by saying:

14 Categories and codes for all data sources are available in Appendices A, B and C. The numerated lines correspond with this thesis document and not with the Codebooks A, B and C. During analysis, I transcribed all data sources then I aligned numerated lines to left, leaving a large margin for notes. The formatting style of this thesis document in Microsoft Word causes line numbers to differ.
224. Sometimes, when it’s twilight, I take my finger and I… I draw the horizon.

225. It’s like I seat it in my head, I do it up Cow Canyon too.

226. I just draw, it’s a magnificent setting we live in. (semi-structured interview, October 29, 2019)

Coding Azil’s data segment as “tracing” lacked an ephemeral tone. Tracing felt too dense. Tracing does not imply seasonal light and shadow or “twilight” (line #224). In search of the perfect verb, I turned to my mother, Deborah Westfall, who is also a Bluff resident. I described how my participants traced. She told me “it sounds like they are limning – it means to trace a boundary with light” (personal communication, November 19, 2019). Light supersedes boundaries, it illuminates all. And, for Bluff society, all viewsheds relate. When executed, limning traces boundaries. When one limns, one negotiates where an entity begins and ends. Conceptually, limning is a moment of enunciation (Bhabha, 1994). Limning answers, what are Bluff people doing outside? A local example of a limned entity is the Navajo Twins formation featured in Figure 11.
Figure 11

Limning the Navajo Twins Formation

Legend 11A.

Navajo Twins Formation

Note. Limning, is a verb, meaning to outline in light. Limning traces boundaries. When one limns, one negotiates where an entity begins and ends. Bluff folks trace the lines, or limn, the sandstone cliffs and the rockfall on the talus slope. While tracing the mineral world’s lines and abstract shapes, they assign place names to familiar shapes. Figure 11 shows the Navajo Twins formation, a commonly limned entity.
The Navajo Twins are Bluff’s most iconic geographic feature. They are frequently photographed and appear on postcards and local murals. The sandstone shape itself is remarkable. It stands out, making it a regional landmark and a commonly limned entity. Limning and meaning-making intersect at the Navajo Twins landmark. Its placename is associated with the Hero Twins, who, in Navajo Cosmology, were taught by the holy ones to defeat the monsters present in the 4th world (Klah & Wheelright, 1942). Bluff folks associate the Hero Twins, who are actors in the Navajo ethnogenesis epic, the Bahané, with this rock formation. Limning, ultimately, produces and represents local icons.

Participants described their own behavior, offering different taxonomies of limning as: “turtle rocking,” “angling,” “shadowing,” “echoing” and “skyline/ridgeline/horizon.” I discern three additional limning behaviors as: directions as spheres, cliffs limn azimuth, and subterranean trust. Bluff people connect their viewsheds by tracing the perceived beginning and endings of features, such as the Navajo Twins. As a behavior, limning depends on the perceived lines within the cliff ringed valley. The physiography of the canyons informs place-based behaviors; therefore, limning is a canyon epistemology.

Throughout Data Findings A, I trace examples of limning onto landscape photographs. This medium roots behavior to place. Bluff River Trail maps only exist in aerial views. Limning; however, happens on the valley floor and on top of the cliffs. Traditional, cartographic aerial perspectives can erase local practices (Pearce & Louis, 2008). The nuances of limning as they happen for Bluffoons can, and often do, happen simultaneously. I separate them here to articulate their subtly. I use an east facing arrow in my diagrams because Bluff Folks use the sunrise as a way to orient themselves. In the next sections, limning has two viewsheds: the valley floor and on top of the cliffs, locally called the Bluff
Bench. Turtle rocking is an instance of limning, and it happens when locals name traced places.

**Limning as Turtle Rocking**

Limning as turtle rocking happens when locals trace shapes, often from the mineral world, and assign place names to their perceived shapes. One limned place that Bluff folks frequently reference is the Navajo Twins. Less familiar shapes found within the canyons, such as Locomotive Rock, the Twin Alcoves, Turtle Rock, or other locally known shapes are based on one’s familiarity with the canyons. Discovering limned icons is contingent upon time and observation. Bluff people enjoy spending time outside tracing the cliffs. Neon explained that:

201. *there was like this rock formation just like this* [traces shape of turtle with finger]
202. *on top of our house, and then there was a rock, shape of a turtle*
203. *and we used to call it turtle rock.* (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019)

Turtle rocked places, are private, intimate locations, accessed through insider knowledge. As we learned from Neon, his turtle rock formation was “on top of our house” (line #202) meaning that within his home viewshed, above his residence “there was a rock, shape of a turtle” (line #202). In contrast to the tourist or visitor, local folks spend lifetimes surveying and tracing the landscape. A turtle rock, as a limned entity, might arise when one is walking outside and a particular position of rock reveals itself. Or, depending on where folks live in the valley, their turtle rocks might be based from their home viewsheds. Finally, a turtle rock might be learned. Whilst outside with a friend, they might ask “do you see how that rock on the talus slope is shaped like a turtle?”
From their lived perspectives, locals pour their attention into the landscape, creating turtle rocked places. They tend to feel for, or sometimes love, these entities. Neon described losing a turtle rock as deeply painful:

204. and when they made that park public, I don’t know who climbed up there, but that that, that, the head of the turtle was gone
205. So I was like no. That bummed me out so bad. (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019)

Neon attributes the increase of tourism “when they made that park public” (line#204) to the loss of turtle rock. Destruction of turtle rocked places causes grief because it is an irrevocable loss. Locals feel the loss of a loved one. Non-locals, when visiting Bluff, have not learned the turtle rocked places. A consequence of this ignorance can be devastating. If visitors climb on the shifting talus slopes, where rocks are precariously situated, a simple weight transfer could demolish cherished, community places. Destroying “the head of the turtle” (#206), permanently changed Neon’s home viewshed. Limned entities are brought into existence, or we are made aware of their existence, through the act of tracing the canyon. Limning animates landscape icons, and locals tend to love these icons.

*Figure 12*, is a personal example of a learned turtle rock, called the Old Man with an Eagle on his Shoulder. It is located east of the Navajo Twins formation. Every time I view this shape, I am flooded with tender feelings associated with girlhood. I learned to see this particular turtle rock, from a friend in 1st grade (age 7).
Figure 12

_Limming as Turtle Rocking_

Note. Limning as turtle rocking happens when locals trace shapes in the mineral world and assign place names to their perceived shapes. Figure 12 traces two turtle rocked places named the Navajo Twins and the Old Man with an Eagle on his Shoulder.
Turtle rocking is relationship building between people and place. For me, the Old Man with an Eagle on his Shoulder, immediately transports me to childhood. For Neon, turtle rock symbolizes home. For the Bluff Community, the Navajo Twins relate to the Bahané, or Navajo ethnogenesis story. Turtle rocked places hold community story and memory. Turtle rocking is a local land ethic. It is important to distinguish that not all turtle rocks have to be readily accepted symbols to have value. The abstract and organic shapes of the rocks are also valued. This happens through limning as angling.

Limning as Angling

Limning as angling happens when landscape features, such as the Navajo Twins, change shape and/or become related to other landscape features. Angling requires motion and usually happens in three steps. First, folks are either walking, running, floating down the river, or driving outside. Second, the viewer’s perspective of a landscape feature changes shape. Third, when the landscape feature changes shape, it becomes related to other places in the valley. Members of Bluff society walk outside and focus on the canyon walls. Then, their limned entities change from different angles. Limning, as a verb, traces the boundaries of where an entity begins and ends. Angling coalesces seemingly unrelated features. Consequentially, angling makes viewshed codependent. By angling, locals create a homescape where landscape features do not begin and end, they inter-relate. Vi describes limning as angling:

664. I also love how when you look in different directions

665. how, you see, these, same formations from like a different angle and you see

666. different things in them, you see different um, I don’t know, something anthropomorphic,
667. *something like a bird, or whatever.* (semi-structured interview, October 30, 2019)

While surveying the landscape, geologic features change based on position; this is limning as angling. Vi suggests that the “same formations from a different angle” (line #665) results in a dynamic, yet connected viewshed where the spectator “see[s] different things in them” (line #666). Shapes change with perspective. Angling does not render more value to one perspective over another. Due to Bluff’s position in a cliff ringed valley, views of familiar landmarks are understood in relation to each other. Turtle rocking and angling happen together. The enclosing cliffs create an interconnected ring of features. This linking relationship is captured in the foreground and background of *Figure 13*. My angle shows the Navajo Twins and also captures another town landmark, Locomotive Rock.
Figure 13

Limning as Angling

Legend 13A.

Navajo Twins

Locomotive Rock

Notes. Limning as angling happens when landscape features, such as the Navajo Twins, change shape and/or become related to other landscape features. Figure 13 shows Limning as Angling in two ways. First, the Navajo Twins, from the perspective atop the Bluff Bench, take on a different shape compared to Figures 11 and 12. Second, from this vantage point, the viewer aligns the Navajo Twins with another feature, Locomotive Rock.
The Navajo Twins have a viewshed relationship to other limned entities, this is called angling. Bluff’s landscapes boast a multitude of dependent limned places. However, I delimit this research by showing four apparent and connected landmarks. Figure 12 shows The Old Man with the Eagle on his Shoulder east of Navajo Twins. Figure 13 shows Locomotive Rock west of the Navajo Twins. Finally, south of Locomotive rock, you see the Twin Alcoves, shown in Figure 15 and Figure 23. Participants, especially during semi-structured interviews, connected landmarks occluded from view. To illustrate, when I asked Lily about important places in the North, she referenced the Abajo Mountains, which are not part of the viewshed. She said:

117. I guess it would be that mountain, it’s called Dził Dit’oowii in Navajo (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019).

Angling includes the intuitive landscape. These are not imaginary places, but locations just out of sight. Like Lily, who looked north and saw the Abajo Mountains or “Dził Dit’oowii” (line #117) participants frequently angled around landscape features. This means they would, through channeling memory and experience, see beyond the solid sandstone masses by creating connections to other places out of sight. Vi, who when looking east, explained this behavior:

11. Like the tiny piece of the Sleeping Ute Mountain that’s like barely showing itself,
12. which is like kind of the mystery. Like you live here long enough that you know
13. some of those cool features exist and at times you can’t see them
14. they’re blocked by other features. (semi-structured interview, October, 30, 2019)

The eastern viewshed from The Terminal, shows the toe, or the “tiny piece of Sleeping Ute Mountain that’s like barley showing itself” (line #11). Angling connects different viewsheds
– and it happens if “you live here long enough” (line #12). Turtle-rocking, creates landmarks that hold community stories. Through angling, these landmarks become linked to other landmarks, establishing a unique, storied landscape. Participants organize space this way. Turtle-rocking and angling are behaviors that research participants fundamentally count on to gain a sense of place in Bluff. Another limned phenomenon that changes shape in the Bluff valley, are the shadows produced by the giant sandstone masses. Local people trace these cast shadows, through limning as shadowing.

**Limning as Shadowing**

Limning as shadowing happens when locals trace cast shadows. Shadows are an ephemeral phenomenon between atmosphere and solid masses. Shadows distort proximity. As shown in *Figure 14*, the Navajo Twins are seemingly unmovable; however, they embrace in the moving shadows. Based on one’s position within the valley, shadow shapes morph and connect; therefore, shadowing is subject to angling. The interplay of sunlight and seasons creates familiar shadows in the landscape. Azil and Vi, referenced the same shadows made by two recessed arches in the cliff face of Casa Del Echo, sometimes called the Twin Alcoves. I illustrate this relationship in *Figure 15*. 
Figure 14

Limning as Shadowing with the Navajo Twins

Legend 14A.

| Traced Shadow of Navajo Twins Formation | Shadow of Navajo Twins Formation |

Note. Limning as shadowing happens when Bluff folks trace cast shadows.
Figure 15

Limning as Shadowing with Twin Alcoves

Legend 15A.

Twin Alcoves

Legend 15B.

Twin Alcoves

Note. The Twin Alcoves create a reductive arch in the cliff face. Image 15A shows the Twin Alcoves illuminated by the western Fall sunset. Image 15B shows the Twin Alcoves during an overcast Winter day.
The shadows produced by the Twin Alcoves, another limned place in Bluff, are important to Bluff society because they hold community stories. Azil and Vi referenced the same place-based story associated with shadowing.

210. the two alcoves, the twin alcoves, so these are very special... for

211. I see them from my window, from my house, and I look at them often.

212. It’s magnificent and when they [traces with finger].

213. When Uncle Ralph, was alive, he would say, you know it looks just like

214. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, you know and that’s

215. when they’re light...and you’ll see. You check it out.

216. [Davis: Okay, I’ll look for it now].

217. I always kind of smile because its Ralph, you know, talking to me. (Azil, semi-structured interview, October 29, 2019)

Next, Vi tells the shadowing story but with a different U.S. President.

327. Oh well the first thing, these two, these two [points to twin alcoves] the ones

328. when like Eisenhower shows up, based on the shadow. (Vi, semi-structured interview, October 30, 2019)

Both participants reference the same place (the Twin Alcoves) and their shadows. Then they liken the shadows to profiles of previous U.S Presidents, or as Vi says, “the ones when like Eisenhower shows up, based on the shadow” (lines #327-328). These two data segments reveal the continuation and adaptation of community knowledge. Azil, cites a deceased community member, “Uncle Ralph” (line #212). She recognizes his shadowing lesson, by saying “when he was alive, he would say, it looks just like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln” (line #213). Due to Bluff’s small population of 258 residents, it is highly likely that
Uncle Ralph shared this information with multiple people, creating a thread of knowledge. Who knows which is the correct presidential profile. Does that matter? Neither Eisenhower, Washington, or Lincoln, lose relevance because, as of 2020, it has been over 20 years since Uncle Ralph passed away. The cast shadows become a direct connection to deceased and loved community members. Uncle Ralph spent time, like most Bluff folks, observing the shadows cast by the sandstone masses. Limning happens because the canyons exist, and people use the canyons to express turtle rocking, angling, and shadowing. Taken together all three instances are ways that Bluff people perform their land ethics. When they do this, they are maintaining generations of local knowledge.

Limning taxonomies are sensuous and kinetic. Locals are outside seeing, moving and tracing. Turtle rocking, angling and shadowing are transitive verbs, where locals limn onto the landscape. Sometimes, the limning actor is reversed. Locals can be limned by phenomenon, such as sound. Canyon sound boundaries wrap you. Canyon sounds surround your surroundings. This means that Bluff folks are limned by echoing.

**Limning as Echoing**

Limning as echoing happens when locals feel surrounded by canyon soundscapes. Canyons warble and distort sound, all sounds. Sandstone cliffs masses create unusual acoustic waves, resulting in glockenspiel winds. The sandstone cliffs create a reverberating setting, a unique soundscape. A pebbled sized rockslide is akin to thunderous boulder plummets. It is easy to echo in Bluff. For sisterhood revenge as a youth, I often screamed with abandon. My cries were resounding enough that multiple neighbors called, inquiring about sibling torture.
From 1986 to 2017, Bluff hosted the Utah Navajo Fair. Locals did not have to leave their houses to go to the rodeo. The announcer’s voices were clear and articulate from the front porch. Human voices, even without electric amplification, are loud in Bluff. They compete with and successfully drown out other canyon sounds. Bluff folks value silence, human silence that is, because Bluff is loud with echoing. In the Bluff hush, folks listen above, beneath and around themselves. A common circumstance that all research participants shared was spending time alone outside. Sister Juniper described being quiet in the landscape with more-than-human life.

91. *I often walk north when I want to really escape, when I want to feel isolated, when*

92. *I want to feel removed from the humans, or humanity.*

93. *When I wanna be like encompassed by the rocks I go north, right.* (semi-structured interview, October 26, 2019)

When respondents discuss silence, they are not discussing a place void of sound. Bluff is a distorting canyon soundscape where people can “really escape” (line #91) and experience feeling “removed from the humans, or humanity” (line #92). Bluff’s soundscapes are active, full of ecological noise, and treasured without human sounds. When the canyons are quiet, Bluff folks are limned by echoing.

Bluffoons orient sound as being above, beneath and around things. This is similar to how they understand and describe directions. Just like sound travels above and beneath in a reverberating canyon, Bluff’s immersive soundscape is akin to Bluff folks’ wayfinding, or orienting behaviors. To illustrate, I focus on a wayfinding technique, which I call “the directions as spheres.”
Directions as Spheres

Directions as spheres happens when Bluff people orient themselves through a cosmographic frame. Research participants called the celestial and terrestrial directions different names. For Vi, it was “the above and below” (semi-structured interview, October 30, 2019) For Lily, the “up and down direction” (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019) or for Hyrum John the “zenith and the nadir” (semi-structured interview, October 24, 2019). The above direction, or zenith, is celestial, which is the sky or the cosmos. The below direction, or nadir, is the earth. Below can be subterranean; however, the below direction does not always imply down. Bluff is surrounded by vertical sandstone cliffs; therefore, the below direction is also found “up” within the enclosing of the canyon walls.

The above and below direction are not fixed vertical points designating above or below. They are better understood as arcing hemispheric movement. Research participants often described what they valued in the landscape without pausing to separate north, south, east or west. They traced spheres. The Terminal’s design and interview questions divided the landscape into the four cardinal directions.15 The Terminal imposed wayfinding techniques, as north, south, east and west, which are dominant concepts of direction. Figure 16 illustrates imposed views created by The Terminal.

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15 I repeated these three questions in each cardinal direction. When you look south* what comes up? What is important to you in the south*? How do you want the south* to be treated? Then I asked, are there other directions that are important to you?
Figure 16

**Imposed Viewsheds from The Terminal**

16A.

16B.

Note. 16B shows four of The Terminal’s viewsheds. The sculpture frames east, south, west and north. I sought to provide a constant variable between seven research participants by establishing clear boundaries during a systematic circling of the landscape. However, the sculpture’s shape and design imposed a cylindrical frame onto instances of spherical orientation. In other words, the shape did not include the above and below directions, as shown in 16A. The Terminal’s design, then, became a moment of articulation where participants deviated from separating directions, instead they described a directions as spheres, akin to cosmographic design.
I held seven semi-structured interviews in *The Terminal*. Its cylindrical form became a point of departure for research participants who arced around the sculpture’s shape to include the above and below directions. Participants refused to abstract their homescapes into orderly frames. Instead, as an expression of local knowledge, they knit the landscape together as a sphere.

Bluffoons describe features as being above, beneath and around things. This is how a cosmographic imaginary becomes action. Bluff folks use the above and below direction to distinguish between the skyline, ridgeline and horizon. This became limning as ridgeline/skyline/horizon.

**Limning as skyline/ridgeline/horizon**

Limning as skyline/ridgeline/horizon happens when Bluff folks name or trace different horizon perspectives. In a canyon, there are multiple horizons, ridgelines and skylines. The horizon is where the earth and sky appear to meet. The ridgeline is solid and mineral. It is the sandstone’s monolith shape or talus slope’s shape. The ridgeline continues in a subterranean fashion towards the below direction. The skyline is above the ridgeline. During the day, the skyline can be blue. During the night, the skyline can be bright and starry. It is the above direction.

The intersecting sky and earth, together, create humanities current place: the horizontal plane. It is here, now. In a canyon, there are multiple horizons within any given perspective. This is captured in *Figure 17*. 
**Figure 17**

*Limning as Skyline/Ridgeline/Horizon*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legend 17A.</th>
<th>SKYLINE</th>
<th>The skyline is the atmosphere tracing, or limning, the cliffs or talus slope’s solid shape. In a canyon, there are multiple skylines.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RIDGELINE</td>
<td>The ridgeline is the cliff’s or talus slope’s solid shape. In a canyon, there are multiple ridgelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HORIZON</td>
<td>The horizon is where the sky and earth appear to meet. Sometimes, the horizon is composed of a ridgeline/skyline. In a canyon, there are multiple horizons with different compositions hence the taxonomic necessity to distinguish skyline/ridgeline/horizon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Limning as skyline/ridgeline/horizon happens when Bluff folks name or trace different horizon perspectives.
The ridgeline/skyline/horizon is a dynamic intersection embodying several physiographic actors. Hyrum John explains:

231. So we’ve got the horizon, which I, I treasure
232. [winds pick up Davis: woo]
233. Yee-haw! Winds from the north, a wind from the north
234. [Davis: yes, laughs]
235. So yeah, so I see Comb Ridge there intersecting with the San Juan River Valley,
236. I see the river canyon starting to develop there. On that ridgeline, I know that
237. there on the skyline, I know there’s a, somewhere out there, on that skyline I
238. know there is a place that 13,000 years old. A place where people had been
living, 13,000 years ago.
239. Hunkering down and looking down into this valley that we’re appreciating now
from the east. (semi-structured interview, October 24, 2019)

In a canyon setting, the horizon is like a stegosaurus spine, a complicated pattern of intersecting ridgelines (line #236) skylines (line #237). The western viewshed from The Terminal, is an example of this craggy depth, where Hyrum John sees “Comb Ridge there intersecting with the San Juan River Valley” (line #235). Skyline/ridgeline/horizon can be discussed separately; however, they are dependent perspectives, never disentangled.

Locals perch on various ridgelines. Sometimes, they post on the Bluff Bench, Comb Ridge, or other precarious heights. While outside, local kinetically trace the ephemeral road between ridgeline/skyline. They embody their horizons. Like trapeze artists, Bluff folks walk and sometimes run along the cliff’s crests. The ridgeline’s path is not a trail, it is just slick,
solid sandstone offering deathly falls. Lily describes this activity by locating the “top” (line #82) of the sandstone edges along Bluff. She shared:

81. I walked those areas like the Comb Wash, Comb Ridge and you know, kind of towards the river, yeah, I’ve even gone up on top just to walk around. (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019)

When she goes to “Comb Ridge” (line #81) or the Bluff Bench, referred to as the “top” (line #82), Lily’s footprints are a topography of ridgeline/skyline. Tracing perilous heights is a liminal game most Bluff folks play. If a visitor, unfamiliar with vertical stratigraphy, wants to embody their horizons, Bluff style, they must be meditative and hyper aware. Non-locals, and locals alike, cannot be wanton in the skyline. It is too dangerous.

The skyline morphs. All research participants referenced the cosmos, i.e. light and shadow, sunrise and sunset, and star gazing as a treasured and informative phenomenon. Locals rely on the ridgelines. They use the ridgeline’s constant silhouette to measure the movement of sky, both during day and night, throughout the seasons. This behavior is called the “cliffs limn the azimuth.”

Cliffs Limn the Azimuth

Cliffs limn the azimuth happens when Bluff folks measure the position or movement of celestial entities, such as the sun, moon, or constellations, against the constant ridgeline. In geography, this concept is called the azimuth, which can be plainly defined as the observer’s perceived direction of a celestial object (Peat, 2020). The azimuth is a perspective. Locals see the azimuth through using the canyon lines to measure movement. Cliffs limn the azimuth happens in the day and night, as shown in Figure 18.
Notes. Cliffs limn the azimuth happens when Bluff folks measure the seasonal movement of celestial entities, such as the sun, moon, or constellations, against the constant ridgeline. As shown in 18B, the azimuth is an atmospheric perspective. When an individual observes the position or direction of a celestial object in the sky, they are observing the azimuth. As shown in 18A, Bluff’s unique geology inspires locals to use the ridgeline as a measuring tool to mark the seasonal position of celestial objects. This diagram is not a photograph of an actual place. The positions of the sunrise and the Big Dipper are pure conjecture.
The sunrise was the most referenced celestial event – it is something that all participants regularly watch. Rita said “I love the sunrises, generally” (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019). In Bluff, watching the sunrise is a daily event. A sentiment echoed by Neon, who when looking east, instantly said “this is exactly where the sun comes up, right here [motions]” (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019). Neon, like most Bluff folks, will watch the seasonal journey of the sun from northern ridgeline to southern ridgeline. Some participants, like Lily, view the sunrise as an ontological phenomenon where the east is “like a beginning of life” (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019). The sun, and its relationship to Bluff, should be “treated with respect and I guess, awe, awesomeness.” (Lily, semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019). The azimuth is a local perspective, totally unique because of the canyon layout. These perspectives depend on the arcs of the atmosphere, or the above direction.

Local practices, whose origins rest in Navajo and Puebloan cosmographic design, require dark sky access. Bluff’s landscapes contain precise azimuths for solstice and equinox alignments. The visibility of celestial alignments teaches an ancestral pedagogy of place. The dark-sky visibility of stars connects us to a pre-compass world. When Bluff folks continue these knowledge legacies, they vivify the most historically practiced spatial imaginaries in San Juan County (BLM, 2007; Till, 2017; Echo-Hawk, 2000). Without current expansive viewsheds, that offer clear access to the night sky, these knowledge systems could cease to exist. As of 2020, the solstice and equinox alignments are still visible and clear.

Bluff is an evidenced, continually occupied Indigenous landscape. It saturated with finite ancestral sites, resting in the earth with no signs, no declarations, but a quiet subterranean trust. Multiple archaeological sites were referenced during interviews, the
sovereignty of these places demands silence. Subterranean trust arises because of Bluffs small population, its proximity to the Navajo Nation, in combination with national, but primarily local preservation efforts.

**Subterranean Trust**

Whilst echoing in the canyons, as established by limning as echoing, the inter-tribal storied landscape is evident. Folks tread with care because they share the landscape with history. This connection is evidenced by Azil, who during semi-structured interviews, reminded me that:

> 382. there’s a prehistoric road that crosses where we are. What is in the ground truly matters. (semi-structured interviews, October 29, 2019)

Azil links the “prehistoric road” (#line 382) to the below direction, or “what is in the ground” (line #382). Remember, the above and below direction are not fixed points but looping hemispheric movement. Similar to the rotation of the above and below direction, research participants time loop and bring history into the now. In Bluff, history is not an abstracted event. Instead, it informs perception. When asked about how the landscape should be treated, Neon suggested:

> 23. Well, obviously with respect and consideration of the people still living there,
> 24. those are ancestral lands, I mean, there were people there before Navajos came here and we still respect them, you know? (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019)

Within this data segment, Neon time loops, by saying “we still respect them, you know?” (line #25). For Neon, “respect and consideration” (line #23) bridges the past and present. Bluff’s “ancestral lands” (line #24) are both a historic and current phenomenon. Similarly,
focus groups, asserted that anyone who visits or lives within the rivering valley, “shares the corridor with history, story and future” (Focus Group 1, November 12, 2019). In Bluff people see through historic apertures, everywhere. Engaging with a subterranean trust means that history pierces the present.

Subterranean trust creates a feeling of secrecy that I call the Bluff hush. Locals want some places to be private and generally inaccessible. An example of the Bluff hush percolated from Rita’s semi-structured interview. Whilst discussing the old pond, Rita and I dreamed about its return. Maybe there could be a swimming hole in Bluff that was a local’s only place. She shared:

239. I mean it would probably be impossible because I feel like there’s things that are
240. already... should be, like not be told and they are, so. I think, and with it
241. being right in town, it would be kind of impossible for it to be completely kept secret. (semi-structured interview, November 8, 2019)

Places where people used to go to be alone, or to see other locals, are being shared through public and social media platforms. Rita attributes the loss of privacy to the spilling of secret places, because people are saying “things that should not be told” (line #240). Based on some grief, such as the loss of turtle rock, locals don’t tend to trust the regular tourist who does not listen below or above themselves. There is a collective understanding that good roads bring bad people.16 As I established in the Site Context Section, the political hype surrounding Bears Ears National Monument brought Bluff into the national spotlight, and thus, ignited an onslaught of tourism. Now, some private places are leaking into the public sphere, where

_________________________

16 That’s not my line. The phrase “good roads bring bad people” was told to me by a friend of the Bluff Community, who I cite under the pseudonym the Status Crow.
they are “impossible … to be kept secret” (line #241). Perhaps, if visitors understood a
canyon epistemology, they would be gracious enough to maintain the Bluff hush.

In summation, limning is a corralling verb for similar and interconnected behaviors.
Limning happens in eight different ways: turtle rocking, angling, shadowing, echoing,
directions as spheres, skyline/ridgeline/horizon, cliffs limn the azimuth, and subterranean
trust. Consequently, local limning connects with and continues intergenerational knowledge.
This looks like learning placenames, seeing history pierce the present, and expressing
cosmographic design. The verbs; however, do not stand on their own. These behaviors
happen because Bluff folks project meaning onto the landscape. How they color their reality
speaks to what they believe reality is. Limning is how Bluff folks believe the cosmos
function. Humans pull from their social and historic pasts to animate their environments.
Limning happens because people perceive the land as animate, alive and holistic. Research
participants condemned nothing as unimportant, less valuable or meaningless. Instead, they
spoke about the viewsheds as totally alive and equal. Locals, because of who they are, give
agency to the landscape. They express a loving ecology. For Bluffoons, landscape plus self
creates identity. Self becomes synonymous with the canyons, so much so, that the canyons
become animate teachers. Again, people use who they are to describe the landscape. For
Bluff people, the canyons are a part of themselves. The canyons teach them about who they
are. The canyons create community epistemology, but the river carves the canyons. In the
next section, Data Findings B, I explain how the San Juan River is Bluff’s axis mundi.
Section 7: Data Findings B

Bluff’s Axis Mundi: “We are here as a consequence of that river”

In cosmographic design, the axis mundi is an emergence vehicle. The axis mundi is the channel into and from the center place. The center place has two meanings: it is an emergence location and is synonymous with community. The San Juan River is Bluff’s axis mundi connecting locals to each other and with their more-than-human community. Bluff folks define the San Juan River as an axis mundi in two thematic ways. First, locals described the isness, or nature of the river. Second, they defined the river by what it provides. The section, Bluff’s axis mundi: “we are here as a consequence of that river” discusses the nature of the river with two supporting categories titled: *the San Juan River is an undeniable force* and the *San Juan River is a cascading lifeway*. The section, Alignment, discusses what the river provides with two supporting categories titled: *spontaneous and intuitive place* and *inspiration, contemplation and prayer*.

What people do at the river is informed by what they believe the river is. The ambits of social belief are declarations binding the river’s limits. During analysis, I asked: how do locals define the San Juan River? And what do they do there? Focus groups agreed, that as a community “we are here as a consequence of that river” (Focus Group 1, November 12, 2019) Data Findings A, established that Bluff folks practice a canyon epistemology – and the San Juan river helps carve the canyons. Or, as Vi would say:

553. geologically, it’s the river that even carved out this place to begin with, the river made this [motions to the valley]” (semi-structured interview, October 30, 2019).

Vi, sees the river as a causal force because “the river made this” (line #553). Sister Juniper calls the river a habitat maker because it is “what makes Bluff habitable, without it I would
not stay” (questionnaire, November 9, 2019). Without the river, some locals would leave. Without the river, Bluff’s canyon epistemologies, would cease to exist. Rita, synonymizes the river with community, she argues:

32. *the San Juan River means community to Bluff*

33. *I think every person interacts with it someway* (questionnaire, November 8, 2019).

Rita sees the river as a collective phenomenon. It is the common within the community, and yet each individual “interacts with it” (line #32) in their own way. Like an axis mundi, the San Juan River is an ephemeral road connecting the community, because it creates the community. It a creative and sustaining source.

**The San Juan River is an Undeniable Force**

Focus groups defined the San Juan River corridor as a place that “demands respect” because it can “take life or give it.” (Focus Group 1, November 12, 2019). Such is the precipitous feeling when engaging with the natural and spontaneous. The river can be a frightening and awesome place. Sister Juniper, Rita, and Azil, called it an “undeniable force,” and laughing, remarked the river “might spank you, might skewer you” (Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019). The river, as sentient, cannot be denied. It has a pulse, a percussive rhythm, pervading the canyons. Its ultimate importance is believed to be the origin or source, creating community. When asked if the river does not matter. Rita explained:

39. *I do not really know how the river wouldn’t matter to people. I can definitely see*

40. *people being indifferent towards it- but I don’t know for why.* (questionnaire, November 8, 2019)

In other words, to deny the river would be an incomprehensible act. Bluff folks “do not really know how the river wouldn’t matter to people” (line #39). This is because the San Juan River
corridor impacts all beings within Bluff, making it the universal within the known universe. It is a cascading lifeway.

**The San Juan River is a Cascading Lifeway**

The river corridor has cascading relationality; it was never defined as an isolated entity. Bluff folks tended to ramify while describing the river’s nature. When asked, “what does the San Juan River corridor mean to the Bluff community?” Lily answered:

31. *The community loves the river. And all the trees that grow up, the cottonwood,*

32. *they turn nice and gold in the / in autumn.* (questionnaire, October 30, 2019)

Lily cites the communities’ profound love of place and immediately links the river to other entities and natural phenomenon, i.e. the trees (line #31) and seasons (line #32). Bluff folks, as shown in Lily’s response, understand that rivers, by their nature, are casually affiliate and linking sources. Research participant’s words mimicked the river, like a constant current across all forms of data collection, locals described the river as a combining entity. Or as Azil says “[The San Juan River] geographically defines and links us” (questionnaire, November 15, 2020). Bluff folks position the isness, or ontology, of the river as a circumscribing and connecting actor.

The San Juan River is an axis mundi within a spherical cosmography. From this given, I ask, how does linking operate spherically? On a flat surface, ripple currents are easily hierarchical based on their radius. But, within a six directional sphere – ecosystems have refracting impacts. Bluff folks are not at the center of the ecosystem, in fact, they assert themselves as coterminous beings sharing the corridor.

If San Juan River corridor is a coterminous place, who are the beasts of the coterminus? What entities have ways of life in this lifeway? Across all data sources –
research participants cascaded ecosystematically because they value more-than-human-life as cohabitants along the corridor. A point captured within focus group populated templates, stating:

9. [The San Juan River is] A place – for all things -animals · winged · 2/4 legged ·


(Focus Group 1, November 12, 2019)

Linking, as an observed behavior, makes the river a connective and causal place. Participants referenced groups in lifeway, such as: migratory bird networks, trees and seasons and holy beings. Diyin, or the holy ones, contribute to the ecosystem. So much so, that the San Juan River is believed to be “regulated by the holy ones” (Focus Group 1, November 12, 2019) To “regulate” is to bring or restore balance. If the holy ones regulate the corridor, we don’t share it with them, they share it with us. In regards to a Bluff land ethic, this means that metaphysical beings share the corridor. Their role in the corridor is to maintain balance.

Perhaps this is why Bluff people use the river as a rehabilitative space. When visiting the river, Bluff folks seek alignment.

**Aligning with Bluff’s Axis Mundi**

Alignment is a restorative phenomenon and it happens at or in the San Juan River. It can, and does, happen in other places. Alignment is what the San Juan River provides.

Alignment is what the San Juan River gives to the Bluff community. It is an altruistic gift. When locals connect with the river, they are aligning with Bluff’s axis mundi. Alignment is finding the click in the lock. It is the perspective moment when everything feels perfect, free and orchestrally synchronized. Azil, shared an example of alignment. At times, looking west during sunset, Cemetery Hill, is ablaze in a wash of light as it catches marble headstones.
73. the cemetery there, and in the evening it lights up, like like stars, when the sun sets the light
74. catches the [motions], just right and everything lights up and you feel the, the
75. pulse of death and life in the universe. (semi-structured interview, October 29, 2019)

Sometimes, locals visit the river feeling out of sorts and return aware and in-step. They feel, as Azil describes “the pulse of life and death in the universe” (lines #74 -75). Alignment brings inspiration and/or restoration. It feels like a subtle or obvious change. Regardless of its potency, alignment it creates an emotional mark, designating a before and after. I always feel different after visiting the river. Aligning moments are examples of how Bluff folks use the river as a healing place.

**Spontaneous and Intuitive Place**

When locals visit the river they adorn a searching, or journeying attitude – they feel open to spontaneous guiding. This is evidenced by focus groups, delineating:

79. that if you come here, you often end up where you end up. You don’t necessarily
80. decide. (Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019)

Allowing yourself to do what feels right in the moment is a consequence of alignment. Unchartered visiting, where “you often end up where you end up” (line #79) reveals an intense trust and deep familiarity. Folks who are not desert denizens – for their safety and the risk of getting lost or dehydrated - should not simply journey to their hearts content. But for locals, visiting the river is an intuitive journey because they “don’t necessarily decide” (line #79) their final destination. When folks are outside – they are also watching inside, measuring and listening to their internal experiences.
Inspiration, Contemplation and Prayer

The word inspire, comes from the Latin word, *inspirare*, meaning to breathe or blow into. To be inspired, then, means to respire, to breathe in and out. During life’s intense moments, humans often feel conscious of their pounding hearts, and therefore, the breath. The San Juan River inspires feeling. It has been known to illicit a spectrum of intense emotions, such as love or grief. As Sister Juniper describes

12. *In that river, I have thrown anger, sorrowful cries, my tears blending with its* 

13. *waters- carried away.* (questionnaire, lines November 9, 2019)

Locals need the river to process feelings, “to throw away anger, cries, and tears” (line #12). They need the river to breathe. Sometimes, they are taken by spontaneous joy, or childlike wonder, where they “become ten again” (Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019). Beside or in the river, participants feel compelled and comfortable to process loss or extreme joy.

Participants also use the river’s solace for contemplation. While watching the river, Bluff people sit and watch their thoughts. Participants feel reluctant to leave the water, they ponder “what it would be like to stay in one place for 24 hours and watch?” (Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019) They yearn to linger in the corridor. The changing scenery fuels curiosity, leading them to wonder, “what is the color of the river?” (Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019). The river’s color changes often.

Prayer is another style of reflection. The river’s water sustains some of Bluff’s agricultural fields, spanning from alfalfa, to modest home gardens with “corn, squash and watermelon” (line #19). Corn crops also provide pollen, which is used in sunrise prayer. As Lily explains:
18. And, today, this time my mother uses it, the water, for, watering her crops during  
19. the summer, and she does the basic corn, squash, watermelon, you know, that we  
20. eat. From the corn we get our, what we call our Tádídiín. Which is our medicine  
21. that we pray with every morning before dawn. (questionnaire, October 30, 2019).

The San Juan River waters the corn crops; therefore, it facilitates worship. The corn creates  
“tádídiín, which is our medicine that we pray with every morning before dawn” (lines # 20-  
21). Recent environmental pollution contaminated the river’s water, locals could not water  
crops. Neon, shared

98. I mean, we used to irrigate to our land and then after the spillage we just kind of,  
99. like not took a chance anymore. (semi-structured interview, October 27, 2019)

The referenced “spillage” (line #98) was the 2015 Gold King Mine accident (Verzino, 2016).  
Toxins from copper mining contaminated the Animas river, a tributary of the San Juan. This  
tragedy disrupted agrarian ways of life, where “after the spillage we just kind of like, not  
took a chance anymore” (lines #98-99). This disaster severed the relationship between crops  
and worship. Despite effects of environmental damage, Bluff folks continue to use this axis  
mundi as a connector between themselves and the community. When the San Juan River  
corridor was the topic of conversation, respondents were never at a loss for words. Their  
enthusiasm, and sometimes reverence, mocks apathy. All waxed in either subtle or obvious  
rapture, united in a deep respect of the river as a creative force.

Again, theambits of social belief are declarations binding the river’s limits. Bluff  
folks claim that the river is responsible community origin. In cosmographic design, the axis  
mundi connects to community, which is synonymous with the center place. Research
participants claimed that the San Juan River is an origin source, meaning, it is the reason for community existence. This makes the Bluff’s axis mundi the San Juan River.

Landscape descriptions reveal cultural values, because they point to what is and what is not articulated about the landscape. Bluff folks, while outside, are fascinated with and moved by the rivering valley’s ecology. They inscribe meaning into the landscape, animating it as an interconnected system, where humans are coterminal creatures. Limning and aligning are expressions of these local beliefs, and they happen on the Bluff River Trail.

Mockups: Limning and Aligning on the Bluff River Trail

I isolated Bluff societies’ land ethics to articulate their nuance. I separated behaviors that usually happen simultaneously. Now, in Figures 19-25, I put the landscape back together. Limning and aligning behaviors happen together on the Bluff River Trail. Limning and Aligning on the Bluff River Trail, focuses on two trail segments, which are: Section #3, named the Slot Canyon Connector Trail and Section #8, named Red Dike Loops.17

The context of Figures 19-25 relies on the argumentative thread of this document’s Data Findings, Literature Review and Site Context. These mockups do not stand on their own as interpretive materials. Instead, they hold this work in statis by providing a design platform to launch into interpretive materials. The strict formatting requirements of a Microsoft Word Document paired with requirements of publication via the American Physiological Association (APA) are not permissive enough for zine, website, or other multi-media interpretive materials. Post approval of this thesis, I will launch design strategies that do not require academic permission or formatting. The potential interpretive materials, named

17 Reference Figure 2, in the introduction, for the proposed route of the Bluff River Trail.
“Mockups 1-7” displayed in *Figures 19-25*, summarize Data Findings A and B by teaching readers how aligning and limning behaviors happen together along the Bluff River Trail. Similar to other thesis figures, I impose my data onto a landscape photographs to ensure that behavior is rooted in place.
Bluff locals limn their land ethics.

**What is limning?** Limning, is a verb, meaning to outline in light. Limning traces boundaries. When one limns, one negotiates where an entity begins and ends. Limning, for Bluff locals, expresses cosmographic design and coalesces seemingly unrelated features. Limning, is an umbrella verb, or hypernym, that classifies similar and interconnected behaviors. Limning has eight different taxonomies, which are: turtle rocking, shadowing, echoing, subterranean trust, cliffs limn azimuth, directions as spheres, skyline/ridgeline/horizon, and angling.

1. **Turtle Rocking**

**Definition:** Limning as turtle rocking happens when locals trace shapes in the mineral world and assign place names to their perceived shapes.

**Example:** In 19A, I trace the shape of two, almost identical sandstone formations named the Navajo Twins. In 19B, on the Bluff River Trail Section #3, I trace the shape of a gorilla face found on the canyon walls.
Figure 20

Mockup #2 Shadowing, Echoing and Subterranean Trust, BRT Section #3: Slot Canyon Connector Trail

2. Shadowing
Definition: Limning as shadowing happens when locals trace cast shadows.

4. Subterranean Trust

Definition: Subterranean trust happens when Bluff folks feel like they are limned by history.

Example: Along this path, I know there are multiple archaeological sites. My imagination transports me in time. I share the corridor with history, making these sites alive and agentive. I keep these sites secret, they rest in subterranean trust.

3. Echoing

Definition: Limning as echoing happens when one feels surrounded by canyon soundscapes.

Example: I can hear the San Juan River echoing in the slot canyon. I am limned by its sound.
5. Cliffs Linn Azimuth

**Definition:** Cliffs Linn azimuth happens when Bluff folks measure the position or movement of celestial entities, such as the sun, moon, or constellations, against the constant ridgeline.
Mockup #4 - Directions as Spheres, BRT Trail Section #8: Red Dike Loops

Section 22A shows cosmoform holistically. Section 22B shows cosmoform and separates four cosmographic elements. Form, is the both the shape and movement of an entity. Form has kinetic potential. Cosmoform; then, is the behavioral impression of the known universe. Regional cosmographies synchronize with four main spatial concepts: the center place and its periphery, planes in the sphere, a six directional system, and an axis mundi.

6. Directions as spheres

Definition: Directions as spheres happens when Bluff folks orient themselves through a cosmographic frame.

Example: I am walking on the horizontal plane, feeling the directions as spheres. I am headed west and thinking of the sun’s journey from east, above, west and below.
7. Skyline/Ridgeline/Horizon

**Definition:** Limning as skyline/ridgeline/horizon happens when Bluff folks name or trace different horizon perspectives.

The horizon is where the earth and sky appear to meet.

The skyline is above the ridgeline. During the day, the skyline can be blue. During the night, the skyline can be bright and starry. It is the above direction.

The ridgeline is solid and mineral.

**Example:** It is raining along the western horizon. The southern ridgeline is limned by the cloudy skyline.

8. Angling

**Definition:** Limning as angling happens when landscape features, change shape and/or become related to other landscape features. Angling requires motion and usually happens in three steps.

1. Folks move outside, as shown in the movement from 1C to 1D.
2. The viewer’s perspective of the landscape feature changes shape.
3. When the landscape feature changes shape, it becomes related to other places in the valley.

**Example:** While walking along the trail, the angle of Twin Alcoves and Locomotive Rock are limned together across the valley.
Figure 24

Mockup #6- Bluff’s Axis Mundi, BRT Section #3: Slot Canyon Connector Trail

24A.

Bluff’s Axis Mundi (what the river is/the river’s nature)

Definition: An axis mundi is an ephemeral road linked to the six directions. The axis mundi channels into and from the center place. The center place has two meanings: it is an emergence location and is synonymous with community.

Example: The San Juan River is Bluff’s axis mundi connecting locals to each other and with more-than-human entities. As a creative and sustaining source, the San Juan River connects the community, because it creates the community. Research participants defined the nature of the river in two ways: as an undeniable force and a cascading lifeway.

1. The San Juan River is an Undeniable Force.
   Definition: Moments when you felt the river’s power.

   Example: I went into the river barefoot. I fell because the rocks were slippery and a Russian olive thorn went through my toe. I remembered that “the San Juan River might spank you, might skewer you” (Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019).

2. The San Juan River is an Cascading Lifeway.
   Definition: Moments when you saw or felt connected to more-than-human life.

   Example: The river was foggy this morning. Fog is Di'vin, “the San Juan River is regulated by the holy ones” (Focus Group 1, November 12, 2019).
Figure 25

Mockup #7 - Aligning with Bluff’s Axis Mundi, BRT Section #8: Red Dike Loops

Alignment (what the river gives us)
Definition: the moment when everything feels free, perfect and orchestrally synchronized.
Example: Research participants described alignment as what San Juan corridor gives them. Alignment is altruistic
certainty given to locals from the San Juan River Corridor. As established in Mockup #7, Bluff’s axis mundi is the
San Juan River. So, when locals visit the river, they are aligning themselves with the axis mundi. This happens in two
thematic ways: spontaneous and intuitive place and inspiration, contemplation and prayer.

1. Spontaneous and Intuitive Place
Definition: Moments when you feel spontaneous and intune.
Example: I swam in the river’s eddy and felt my girlhood self. The San Juan River is
“where I become ten again”
(Focus Group 2, November 21, 2019)

2. Inspiration, Contemplation, Prayer
Definition: Moments when you prayed, felt inspired or contemplative.
Example: This morning I offered tâdîdîin to
the east sunrise. Now, I walk west and
observe how the sun carried my prayers
through the sky. The San Juan River waters
local crops. Or as Lily would say:
“And, today, this time my mother uses it, the
water; for, watering her crops during the
summer, and she does the basic corn, squash,
watermelon, you know, that we eat. From the
corn we get our, what we call our tâdidiin.
Which is our medicine that we pray with
every morning before dawn. (Questionnaire,
October 30, 2019).
Section 10: Conclusion

The Bluff River Trail Committee seeks to provide outdoor access for all. Accessibility for the Bluff River Trail, as per BLM trail design, happens on Trail Section #2, named Sand Island Loop. People with different mobilities inspire accessible trail design. Accessibility design uses material and cultural artifacts to encourage comfortable enjoyment of nature. This can look like but is not limited to: paved trails for wheelchair access, extra wide corridors for folks who speak sign language, or braille on the trail heads. These are all valuable, material design strategies; however, what does accessibility mean in terms of this research?

Accessibility means that communities access their own, local knowledge systems. Accessibility, means that I, as part of the 4-Corners Region community, can see myself reflected in trail design. It means that I see myself in the places I visit. Research data for *The Bluff River Trail: A Community Land Ethic*, shows how cosmographic design inspires local land ethics, which, per the literature review, are current Puebloan and Navajo spatial imaginaries. This research documents how these practices happen in Bluff, by Bluff Community members. Now, interpretative materials can reflect a cosmographic pedagogy of place. If this happens, Bluff’s local spatial epistemologies are available to anyone who visits the trail. Trail visitation could encompass a community, regional and global scale.

The majority of non-local guests visiting the Bluff River Trail most likely hail from urban environments. This is because the majority of humankind live in urbanscapes, which are built and contrived environments. National Geographic (2010) predicts that by 2050, 68 percent of the world’s population will live in megacities, with populations of over 10 million inhabitants. Megacities contrast Bluff’s population of 258. The San Juan corridor rests in a
subterranean trust and Bluff folks spend their lifetimes outside in generally undisturbed
environments. Here, local familiarity leads to uncharted exploration. People access vast and
untrailed places that are predominantly comprised of more-than-human life. In contrast,
when urbanites are exploring, they travel planned environments, such as parks, sophisticated
trail systems, or even neighborhood walks around the block. Bluff’s land ethics are precious
because they represent a small population, stewarding an expansive untrailed landscape.

Bluff’s land ethics exist in-between different literature sources. Deyhle (1995; 2009)
and Dentedale (2016) research the intersections between race, education and their impacts on
border towns. These scholars add broad strokes about the racialization of space within the 4-
Corners Region. Bluff’s presence is implied when Hunt (2014) and Wolfe (2006)
contextualize epistemic power as a tactic of settler violence. Or, Bluff’s economic context
can be inferred when Bunten (2015) Rosaldo (1989) and Deloria (1989) critique the tourism
industry. Sociological and geographical scholars such as Leon (2009), Bhabha (1994, 2006)
and Soja (1996, 1989, 2010), are in the twist of the spatial turn, and offer analysis of
intersectional places, which can be applied to Bluff’s political situation. Despite these
scholars’ wonderful applicability, Bluff’s local land ethics are an unstudied phenomenon.
There is no existing literature about the social construction of a land ethic for the Bluff
community.

Most literature about Bluff and its landscapes relate to Navajo and Puebloan
occupation of the valley (Cameron, 2009; Cole, 2009; BLM, 2007). These sources motivate
preservation in the region; however, they are often based in past occupation. While these
sources provide a scope of inhabitation, which is necessary for archaeological record, they
can inadvertently neglect current, Native practices. Contrarily, some anthropological or

We learn who we are based on where we go, and what we believe about those places, combined with what we do in those places. This equation is called a spatiality (Soja, 1996). In Bluff, people’s spatialities are related to cosmographic principles, this is evidenced in the belief of a six-directional system paired with the San Juan River as an axis mundi. Research participants use a cosmographic spatial imaginary, they relate physiographic features, rivers, canyons, stars, ect., with creation and origin. They live this imaginary through aligning and limning.

Aligning happens when locals visit the river. In Bluff, the San Juan River is an altruistic entity. When locals are near it, they are intuitively inspired to play, pray, contemplate and journey. They feel “the pulse death and life in the universe” (Azil, semi-structured interview October 29, 2910). Alignment happens because the river is held in the highest esteem. Bluff folks define the San Juan River a casual source. It is an axis mundi creating community and sustaining life.

Limning creates icons. Tracing the beginning and endings of the canyon happens in eight ways: turtle rocking, angling, shadowing, echoing, directions as spheres, skyline/ridgeline/horizon, cliffs limn azimuth, and subterranean trust. Limning behaviors are
how locals orient themselves and how they learn community stories. This makes limning a canyon epistemology. Limning and aligning are embodied behaviors that require physiographic actors (the river and the canyon) to exist.

Escobar (2001) describes ethics – or prescriptive behaviors – at a national scale as “placeless” creating an “atopia” (p. 140). Antithetically, Bluff’s land ethics are place-based. Bluffoon practices are a kinesthetic map. They challenge the national production of Escobar’s “atopia.” Limning and aligning, as local land ethics, have holistic consequences. In Bluff, the landscape arcs and angles, moves and knits. While discussing their homescape research participants refused to designate a beginning and ending. The San Juan River does not begin and end, it creates. The east is not a division; instead, the east becomes associated with the sun, which travels above, west, below and seasonally between north and south. Local land ethics are contrary to the discourses of national land ethics, which require, as Roth (2000) would describe “firmly bounded territorial units” (p.374). For a place, commonly described as a border-town, Bluff folks have porous practices. Locals inter-relate the river as a cascading phenomenon. Or, they coalesce and notice seemingly unrelated features, such as the shadows of sandstone monoliths across the valley.

Aerial perspectives occlude most instances of limning, especially shadowing. Cartographers who map land ethics can integrate viewshed maps to support data findings. Pearce and Louis (2008) employ viewshed maps in Indigenous Hawaii to document perspectives and relationships between shadows and place-naming. For Bluff, shadows hold community stories and connect unmovable physiographic features. Shadowing is a largely underexplored landscape phenomenon. Data findings related to shadowing contribute to this gap in the field.
Methodologists collecting data about land ethics can draw from Simpson (2014, 2017), Basso (1996), Moles (2008), and Soja (1996), who inspired me to use place-based interviews and construct *The Terminal*. Holding interviews in the research site puts participants in a state of action, rather than reflection. It is a method of data collection that grounds local geographies. Also, to support member checking fidelity, I asked research participants co-analyze their own questionnaire responses. Researcher’s must create suitable and supportive environments to activate local knowledge systems. I was inspired to do this from Harjo (2018, 2019) and Wilkins (2007) who argue that communities are already experts of their own spatial experiences. With a population of 258, Bluff’s land ethics are often overlooked. This study offers insight into the lives of seven Bluff people – and how they believe the landscape functions. Their insights provide context for the future Bluff River Trail.

My research goal was to use local land practices as interpretive materials for the future Bluff River Trail. Interpretive materials are pieces of literature that inform the public. Sometimes, they are signs, websites, field guides, or simple trail heads. All interpretive materials give context – and sometimes behavioral suggestions – about recreational use. My findings show that Bluff folks are sensuously engaged with their environment. *Figures 19–25*, are mockups holding research in statis until I can meet with the respective planning organizations for their feedback on my findings.

Can Bluff’s burgeoning planning include cosmographic design to celebrate existing practices? We achieve this in a consensual way, that avoids tokenism and appropriation, by including our neighbors on sovereign land. As of 2020, Bluff is in its third year as a town. I
ask, what would a map of the San Juan River corridor look like with cosmographic frame including the six directions and Bluff’s axis mundi?

The future Bluff River Trail will provide access to the San Juan River corridor. As of 2020, only small sections of the river are available to the public. Before the Bluff River Trail committee moves forward with interpretive materials, they plan to hold collaborative meetings with the Bluff town council and Mexican Water Chapter House. Within the Navajo Nation, Chapter Houses function as community centers. They provide resources and hold meetings about local happenings for their respective constituents. The Mexican Water Chapter house is the closest facility to Bluff. I offer my research as a point of conversation and potential departure, either confirming local practices, adapting or adding different perspectives to my findings. I suspect after connecting with these three organizations, there will be, no doubt, other stakeholders to consult. This research is a small window evidencing the Bluff’s community land ethics. Interpretive materials for the future Bluff River Trail can either occlude local practices or be a platform for the continuation of Bluff’s spatial imaginaries. This work launches future conversations and planning initiatives to take care of Bluff’s most precious resource: the San Juan River corridor.
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Appendices

Appendices A: Semi-Structured Interviews Code Book

1. **Category:** Agency is not synonymous with human being.
   **Definition:** the landscape has a consciousness that supersedes human constructs or loving the landscape as kin.

2. **Category:** Equating change with loss or hurt
   **Definition:** felt histories of research participants associated with changes or loss within the landscape

3. **Category:** Limning
   **Definition:** to trace the boundary

4. **Category:** Moving slow enough to hear the storied landscape
   **Definition:** research participants, while moving through the landscape, are mindful of Bluffs archaic history and move slow enough to notice and experience deep history.

5. **Category:** Outside these canyon walls
   **Definition:** creating differences, observing, contrasting Bluffs social life with outside life, or commenting on humanity as a whole

6. **Category:** Performing (re/producing) across
   **Definition:** Across is a regional verb for the Navajo Nation - it is an example of local place naming related to how people perform or re/create borders.

7. **Category:** Prescriptions for future use
   **Definition:** prescriptions are behavioral in nature, and point to how people act in the landscape.
8. **Category:** The Bluff River Trail is like a swinging bridge  
**Definition:** research participants describe the socio-cultural life in Bluff, describe Bluff life and answer what’s it like to live in Bluff?

9. **Category:** The center place/ axis mundi  
**Definition:** the center place is a symbolic orienting tool associated with an origin, wellspring, and/or reason for the existence of life, or the motivation behind a livelihood.

10. **Category:** To ramify a sphere  
**Definition:** understanding space three-dimensionally through the zenith and nadir (the above and below direction) Bluffoons orient themselves spherically.

11. **Category:** Weeps with water  
**Definition:** research participants all recognize the impact of water within the region and equate it with different colors of importance/meaning, all surrounding origin or its relationship in larger systems.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions
**1 Category:** Agency is not synonymous with human being.

**Definition:** Understandings of agency can occlude ecosystems, mineral, plant or more-than-human beings. The landscape has a consciousness that supersedes human constructs, its consciousness is epistemological. This is accessed through protecting or loving the landscape as kin.

**Autotomizing, Positioning Landscape as Agentive Codes + Definitions:**

#Can’t the rocks just be the rocks?: desiring a “pure” landscape where nature is allowed to be nature. This also positions landscape as a foil to human constructs. Merged #Comb Ridge doesn’t know where the parcel boundary is: using landscape as a foil to human constructs

« Vi. #can’t the rocks just be the rocks? (846-857) the land doesn’t know the difference, the land doesn’t know what is on the plat map, the earth doesn’t know like, when at the county it says the demarcation line, it says that 17 degrees duh duh duh now that belongs to, like the land doesn’t care, the waters going to flow where it flows and the winds going to blow the wind doesn’t’ stop for the parcel boundaries and the water doesn’t stop you know, like, who are we? Trying to think that we can do something about this? It’s like, we’re fibbing ourselves. So, oh, okay. Anyways.

« Sister Juniper #can’t the rocks just be the rocks? (150-157) You know, just like? Can the river be the river? And can the rocks be the rocks? And can the sun be the, you know, can they just be what they are without us having to own them and control them and manipulate them? And, and put them on display? And brag about them and you know I mean? I would like, in my perfect dream world, they would just be, forever.

#Ensoulment: loving the landscape in a reciprocal manner


#Equating healing with time spent in landscape: turning to the land as a place to emotionally process

« Sister Juniper #Equating healing with time spent in landscape (28) I would also say the river, the river has not to sound cliché, but is has been a place of healing for me I mean this whole place has, I think, I go to the river to cleanse
#Is it in danger of us human beings, being like (Vi, 824-826): positioning humanity as a threat to the landscape, or the landscape in need of protection. Implicating humans.

« Neon #danger of us human beings, being like (291-293) being Navajo, and especially being Navajo people, we are land people, I mean, so. This is, we have to protect this.

#Sanctifying silence: equating silence with holiness

«Azil #sanctifying silence (413-415). When my niece was coming she was born on the 22nd, I came to the Great House and made an offering. It’s not my culture but I feel that it’s a sacred place. I’m not a religious person, but I can get quiet there. It’s subterranean.

#Inspiring awe: a feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear or wonder

« Rita #Inspiring awe (76-78) I think, kind of just based on the beauty of it, is extremely awe inspiring to me.
2 Category: Equating change with loss or hurt

Definition: felt histories of research participants associated with changes or loss within the landscape

Codes and Definitions: Equating change with loss or hurt

#Equating change with hurt: reliving hurt moments, describing the impact of loss

Azil #equating change with hurt (248): *and certainly up, Cow Canyon, there’s a big development it’s very hard um*

#Losing the Comb (SITLA): losing a section of Comb Ridge, a place where we all “felt our feelings”

« Vi. #Losing the Comb (815-828) (SITLA) *that’s our playground that our like best part, like you know, like we all had 44.42 our moment there when you’re like I love my life you know, I love my life, we have our spots we have our places where we like, spend our moment, we get rejuvenated, we like cry it out, or whatever we’ve got to do we all have our spots and to have that chunk of the spine again, cut out, it’s like what the heck? Like, I worry then, what does that mean for this whole surround? Is it all in danger? Is it all in danger of being developed, is it all in danger of us human being being like I know what we need here, another, eh, and like yeah, sorry that got a little heated.*

#Gold king mine spillage: referencing historic event as creating devastation

Neon #Gold King Mine spillage (98-100) *Oh yeah, for the farm and ¶ I mean, we used to irrigate to our land and then after the spillage we just kind of like, not took a chance anymore.*
#Measuring irreverence/damage: river runners, ATVs, oil, gravel quarries

«Azil. #Measuring irreverence (119-141) I was invited to be a, a, shuttle driver, and I thought, oh, I’ll go do that and I really disliked it and it tainted it from then on, but I got down to Mexican Hat and the people were about 2 hours late, they were drunk, and there were, the gnats had eaten me alive, and I thought you can’t pay me enough to do this job and I just thought, it is irreverent. There’s a mentality, I’m not saying to all river runners, but some. That I find, some, I don’t, there’s too much baggage, too much emphasis on comfort, I suppose. Overall, I’m a little weary of recreation, overload. Too much gear, too much, it’s it’s // It’s a lifestyle? ¶ // It’s um, yeah, it’s a privilege thing that kind of rubs me the wrong way sometimes.

«Hyrum #Measuring irreverence (55-67) One modern installment of the southern view is that tower, on the horizon and that chaps my hide and has chapped my hide for a while, I’d like to see that go away. Laughs. If not, if not now then later on. Laughs. Yeah, It stands on, the other thing is stands on or right next to the twins there and that, pisses me off. Laughs. So it’s, uh, it is an intrusive feature there, and I think it’s intrusive mostly because it’s right there there naked and exposed on the sky line. I mean certainly we’ve got other intrusions to the south of us and below us here but, uh, these are all kind of trying to blend in to dive into the now, the people.

#Missing places that are gone: mourning places that are no longer here

«Rita #missing places that are gone (226) I miss the swimming hole.
#Recognizing loss of life: EMS stories, especially highway 191

« Sister Juniper #recognizing loss of life (291-301) There’s a lot of ghosts out that way, for me. There’s a lot of ghosts out on that side of the ride, that I don’t avoid it, you know? There was a point in time where, 191, I guess that still rings true, if I am headed west or south, or whatever, out. I, a lot of people go through 191 and around to Kayenta. But I like, refuse too because there’s been like, there’s so many ghosts on that road for me that I really would avoid it plus, why would you not, like drive through Monument Valley? Every opportunity, you know.

#Reticent about growth: equating growth with feelings of reluctance

#Losing Turtle Rock: losing a limned relationship

«Neon #losing Turtle Rock (204-206 + 226+231) when they made that park public, I don’t know how climbed up there, but the head, the head of the turtle was gone (204-206). So I was like, oh, no- That bummer me out so bad, when I first came back, I told my mom, I said “Mom, what happened to the rock?” And she was like “what rock?” and I’m like “the turtle rock” and she’s like “oh, I don’t know!” Yeah. It was just like, we noticed it, when was it, shortly after when I came back. (226-231).
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

3 Category: Limning  
**Definition:** to trace the boundary

**Codes and Definitions: Limning**

**#Angling:** when a landscape features, usually rock formations, change shape based on position of viewer.

« Vi. #Angling (664-670) I also love how when you look in different directions how, you see, these, same formations from like a different angle and you see different things in them, you see different um, I don’t know, something anthropomorphic, something like a bird, or whatever

**#Distinguishing between skyline/ridgeline/horizon:** horizons usually are associated with east (sunrise) and west (sunset). The ridgeline is the top line of the Bluff, solid and material. The skyline above the ridgeline, the blue during the day and the black during the night.

« Hyrum John. #Distinguishing between skyline/ridgeline/horizon (231-240) So we’ve got the horizon, which I, I treasure [winds pick up] Davis: woo. Yee-haw! Winds from the north, a wind from the north. Davis: yes, laughs So yeah, so I see Comb Ridge there. Intersecting with the San Juan River Valley, I see the river canyon starting to develop there. On that ridgeline, I know that there. On the skyline, I know there’s a, somewhere out there, on that skyline I know there is a place that 13,000 years old. A place where people had been living, 13,000 years ago hunkering down and looking down into this valley that we’re appreciating now from the east.

**#Ringing:** describing the geological Bluffs as holding, encompassing, encapsulating, ringing in the valley.

« Sister Juniper. #Ringing (94-97) When I want to be like, encompassed by the rocks, I go north. When I want to be absorbed and forgotten and disappear into the wilderness into the reason why I live here. I go north
« Hyrum John. #Ringing (129-131) we’ve got a really lovely landscape with the Bluff cliffs, which help ring in the valley

#Seventh Boulder/Intuitive Landscape: referencing geographical locations one cannot see but knows are there. These are not places of memory, nor imaginary places, but locations just out of sight that research participants know are there.

« Rita. #Seventh Boulder (311-311) then I love how you can see the La Platas once you get close to Blanding, and that’s nice too.

« Lily. #Seventh Boulder (117-118) I guess it would be that mountain, it’s called Dził Dit’oowii in Navajo

« Vi. #Seventh Boulder (11-18) 11. Like the tiny piece of the Sleeping Ute Mountain that’s like barely showing itself, which is like kind of the mystery. Like you live here long enough that you know some of those cool features exist and at times you can’t see them they’re blocked by other features.

#Shadowing: based on the season and position of the sun, the shapes of shadows that are created by the rocks.

« Azil. #Shadowing (215-219) it’s magnificent and when they, Uncle Ralph, when he was alive, he would say, it looks just like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and when their light, you’ll see.

« Vi #Shadowing (670-677) everyone has a minute when the shadow is right and you’re like, ah there’s an old lady in that, or whatever, you know right. We, we acknowledge that you know, what we see and allow our eyes to, you know kind of transition and fade and whatever, and like focus and oh my gosh, do you see that, that’s an alligator, like huh? Right. So I think that’s fascinating.
#Tracing: observing the liminal interplays of Bluff, this ranges from literally walking atop the Bluff bench, observing how the sunsets/sunrises change the skyline/ridgeline, or literally “tracing” landscape features with a finger.

« Lily. #Tracing(81-83): I walked those areas like the Comb Wash, Comb Ridge and you know, kind of towards the river, yeah, I’ve even gone up on top just to walk around

« Azil. #Tracing (224-227) Sometimes, when it’s twilight, I take my finger and I, I, draw the horizon, it’s like I seat it in my head, I do it up Cow Canyon too, I just draw, it’s a magnificent setting we live in

#Turtle Rocking: when shapes found in the rock formations become organic place names, such as, turtle rock, or the old man with an eagle on his shoulder.

« Neon. #Turtle Rocking (201-203): there was like this rock formation just like this [traces shape of turtle with finger] on top of our house, and then there was a rock, shape of a turtle and we used to call it turtle rock.

#Aligning: (note: still not sure if this belongs in this category) finding the click in the lock, the perspective moment in the landscape when everything seems to be orchestrated perfectly. For example, within the vicinity of the farm, looking west during sunset, sometimes the light catches the marble headstones of Cemetery Hill and it appears that the hill is on fire.

« Azil #Aligning (73-77) the cemetery there, and in the evening it lights up, like like stars, when the sun sets the light catches the [motions] just right and everything lights up and you feel the, the pulse of death and life in the universe.
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

4 Category: Moving slow enough to hear the storied landscape

Definition: research participants, while moving through the landscape, are mindful of Bluff’s archaic history and move slow enough to notice and experience deep history.

Moving slow enough to hear the storied landscape Codes + Definitions:

#Appreciating the quiet: enjoying the silence

#Being alone in the landscape: describing being alone in far out, or easily reached places.

«Lily #being alone in the landscape. (87-91): Why is it important to me? Well, it’s not ...it’s not what do you call it? Populated. You know you can be out there and by yourself in silence or in you know somebody else you see all the vegetation and the animals and the stuff like that you know. Laughs

« Sister Juniper #being alone in the landscape (91-94) 91. I often walk north when I want to really escape, when I want to feel isolated, when I want to feel removed from the humans, or humanity. When I wanna be like encompassed by the rocks I go north, right.

#Maintaining evidenced history: connecting with history, outside of a museum, evidence of rock-art, potsherds, lithics.

« Hyrum John #Maintaining evidenced history (175) You know, there again I feel like we’re neatly surrounded by this fantastic storied landscape that’s old old old so uh, I want to keep appreciating that

« Neon #Maintaining Evidenced History (27-31) The Anasazi ruins and what draws me to this, is obviously where the sun comes up, echo house ruins, cause you know, that’s where a lot of my family in that field in the front of the echo house ruins
Moving with the archaic ones: sharing the landscape with history. This happens while out on hikes, or just simply living in Bluff submerged in an archaic landscape. This is evidenced by recognizing pre-historic roads or finding artifacts.

«Azil #Moving with the archaic ones (5-11): Well, it’s Cottonwood. But it’s a travel corridor. And, because I’ve lived here for 33 years, I feel the it’s the prehistoric corridor of people moving through this landscape, and I’m astounded that I can sense it so well when I’m walking, you know. It seems like even places that are highly traveled I’ll find sherds or flakes, it’s like I can, I’m tuned it.

Orienting through archaic use: recognizing archeoastronomy, or the storied landscape of Puebloan and Navajo cosmology associated with landscape features.

« Vi (148-158) The historic the archaic the old school people figured out this connection with sun and watching where it comes where it it where it rises and its midpoint and where is its endpoint on the left side and its end point on the right side and connecting that to land features and connecting that to like art work or production like if they made a house with a wall in it or a spiral on the rock or whatever, whatever was their way to show that connection

Time looping past as active, respect is a continuum: referencing the archaic ones, or friends/family members who have passed, within the present moment. A collapsing, and simultaneous rejection of present=importance. History becomes the present, meaning that the archaic ones, or friends/family members who have passed are still here and we continue to respect them.

« Neon #Time looping past as active (23-27)Well, obviously with respect and consideration of the people still living there, those are ancestral lands, I mean, there were people there before Navajos came here and we still respect them, you know?
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

5 Category: Outside these canyon walls

Definition: creating differences, observing, contrasting Bluffs social life with outside life, or commenting on humanity as a whole

Codes and Definitions: Outside these canyon walls

#Avoiding travel to north: abstaining from going North, feeling like it’s a place I don’t want to go.

«Rita. #Avoiding traveling/visiting the north (201-202) I always like to be like Bluffs as far north as I like to go. Laughs

«Vi. #Avoiding traveling/visiting the north (888-897) you know that beyond this is...the things I don’t want to be a part of, which, sounds disrespectful, but at the same time it’s like, that’s the man made system, to to, that’s what I think about when I look North, that’s the man made system of like, the church and the government and the, all of the things that like set the rules, set the agenda, and write on paper that you own that or you don’t own that, or they charge you this many dollars to live here or whatever, like, to me, looking, this this in itself can just stay here as a beautiful beautiful place in the landscape.

#Comparing Bluffs pace with other paces/places: describing other places/paces as frenetic making Bluffs pace slow and stable

« Azil (255-262) There’s so much in the world, and even more so in the last 30 years that’s, frenetic, it’s frenetic energy, people come here and they want to return because they can take it down a couple notches. You walk, you know, people don’t. They’ll come to my trading post, and say, oh. “we walked here” and I’m like, “really, that’s fantastic!” you know
#Disliking “selfie-generation”: technology, current social media representations, plugged in

«Sister Juniper. #Disliking selfie-generation: (244-254) But like, the exploitation, like the, almost like the something, there is something grotesque about the whole selfie generation. You know, like, not the generation but, you know what I mean, the movement, the..I’m flying around to every location to get as many pictures as I can and I don’t even know what I’m taking pictures of, I’m posting it because it colors, because it, you know, or? You know people that are climbing the rocks because they have to conquer them.

#Equating north with erasure: “I didn’t have anyone to sing with”

« Neon #equating north with erasure (138-152) I noticed that, when I went up there. I became one with the rest of everyone I felt like I lost a sense of identity and I didn’t realize it until I came back home, yeah, it was really weird, like transitioning culture shock, going up there and then being assimilated too, not necessarily assimilated but kind of just being like, familiar getting into this routine of city life and then, you know, specially not speaking Navajo or practicing Navajo traditions, there you know, I’m just kind of lost a lot of it. I used to know a lot of the Yei’bi’cheii songs when I was a kid, and I don’t know any, so. Cause when I lived in Salt Lake for 15 years, I didn’t sing Yei’bi’cheii songs because I didn’t have anyone to sing with.

« Vi #equating north with erasure (932- 955) it does feel like the further north you go, like, western mainstream structure, you have to be a part of, you have to dress a certain way or act a certain way, or talk more somehow, ehhh, you know, you’ve got to act a part when you go this way, it’s like welcome back, not even welcome, like, it’s
just like, you’re back in the mainstream, you’ve got to pay your taxes and you’ve got to follow the rules and you’ve gotta look out for law enforcement on the highway, you know, like, that’s how I feel like the north is like there’s way more of that the manmade, western, mainstream structure, although, we all know, there’s a lot of there are a lot of people who have traditional stories, traditional information, traditional knowledge about these places, and to pretend like it never had indigenous feet, indigenous hands and minds and thought, is erroneous 100 percent, just feels so developed, it feels so governed by mainstream western ways of knowing and doing it’s like, whaa, its hard sometimes to see the, at least for me, it’s hard to see some of those like, nope, they’re have been tribal feet, running wild as fire, you know? That’s from a song, that’s not my line.

#Humanity disconnecting: losing knowledge of natural cycles, losing the ability to connect with nature

« Vi #humanity disconnecting (219-228): I feel like we’ve disconnected from those super those very natural occurrences that happen everyday right that the way the sun comes up the way that the sun sets the way that the stars are how they rotate with the with the seasons like people have studied that have know that that has resonated with them for like millennia and we’re over here like well let me pull my IPhone app so I can make sure, “is that the north star?” like we don’t even know on the whole, right?"
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

**6 Category:** Performing (re/producing) Across

**Definition:** Across is a regional verb for the Navajo Nation, it is an example of local place naming related to how people perform or re/create borders.

**Codes and Definitions:** Performing (re/producing) Across

**#Abstaining:** “will tourists and visitors know that showing respect is you not being there?”

«Vi. #abstaining (483-493) especially if you’re a tourist or like people who aren’t familiar people wouldn’t know that’s Navajo Nation, boundary, territory, as it exists on a map as it exists on the political map, without somebody telling you and then I think like will tourists or will visitors know that you know by showing respect is you not being there unless you have a local person with you, so I think that would be another piece is, the making sure visitors knew that we’re not really, that’s it’s not just a free for all.

«Neon. #abstaining (254-264) Yeah. That’s what I was telling, Nizhoni, I was like holy crap, I was like, I was showing her the BLM, the BLM map, because we have a lot of tourists that come in and they ask like where they can camp and like, I was like like, you guys can camp on the footbridge, but only on the this side, you can’t go to the other side, and they’re like why not? And I’m like, that’s our side. That’s the Navajo side. You can go over there, but you can’t camp there. And if you want to go to the ruins you have to get a permit.

**#Across is physical geography:** describes how the material designation of the border “casa del echo” creates two separate cultures
«Vi. (418-436) I’ve lived here it’s been like that so I think like the physical geography of this place has allowed for for basically two cultures to develop and I know it’s not just two it’s separated just by by pure physical geography that separated like where people are, number 1, where they’re living where they’re at but what they’re thinking what they’re doing and if if all these roads extended across just like pretend that this grid these streets that made sense, like if everyone one of those streets is connected up there they’d all end up more or less at 5 point. it would be a very very different world that to me you go to Rez, that’s privacy I mean you have like nobody is coming to visit you from this side anymore, with the bridge gone. Like nobody is, this is the protection you know it’s like the physical feature that creates distance really, between these two ways of knowing, being, thinking.

#Casa del echo: geologic feature that creates the border

«Neon #casa del echo (327-332) Earlier with that question you asked me, looking south, I was thinking way above. Keeping it home base, the Bluff because that is the border of the Navajo Nation, and that’s home, again. Laughs.

#Cultural and social boundary: describes human constructs, ideological space

«Hyrum John #cultural and social boundary (35-40) We know that the Navajo community, the Navajo Nation is behind all that there, what we have here in front of us, is, this special little other entity that is pressing up against that larger, larger larger community on the other side of things there.

#Across are friendships: “I have dear friends who live across”

«Azil (98-100) I love to point with my lips and say across, so I have dear friends who live across

#Home as across: across is a described as a home place

«Lily. #Home as across (35-40) When I look to the south it’s where my, uh, all my aunties and my uncles they they live that way and it’s at Grey Point, oh it’s behind
there, it’s called Grey Point and they live at the base of it and there’s just kind of scattered around that’s what I think of, you know, when I think of, when people say across the river that’s where I think.

« Rita #Home as across (4-6) Home comes up for me, mostly because I live south of here, also to the river and the mesa represent the Rez to me as well, so. Yes.

#School, traveling is across: across is described as coming and going from school

« Neon. #across is coming to school/traveling (75-79) My Mom was the headstart bus driver and so, would always drive across the river, every single day, just to got to school and to pick up all the other kids, and so looking this way it’s home too.
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

7 Category: Prescriptions for future use

Definition: Prescriptions are behavioral in nature, and point to how people act in the landscape.

Codes and Definitions: Prescriptions for future use

#Prevent Change: participants explain that they would like to prevent changes from happening

«Rita #prevent change (177-178) I mean, honestly, the same way. I don’t want anything to change. Laugh. Stop everybody.

«Sister Juniper #prevent change (40-43) I want to stay the same. I mean if we are speaking idealistically I know that things change, I want it to stay the same.

«Lily #prevent change (128-129) Well, just like everything else treated with respect and not to have too much growth, just the same

«Azil #prevent change (79-83) I don’t want to see things change too much, um, it’s a rugged place don’t try to make it grassy and sprinklers, which, some people want. Um, from other parts of the state, or towns.

« Rita #prevent change. (239-242)I mean it would probably be impossible because I feel like there’s things that are already things that should be not told and they are, so. I think, and with it being right in town, it would be impossible for it to be kept secret

#Maintain: participants explain what they would like to see maintained

«Hyrum #Maintain the treed landscape (82-87) right now looking into the valley, we’ve got this really beautiful dappling of green and gold I would like to see that that
treed landscape somewhat maintained in anyway. I like the open places in here but I also like the trees the cottonwoods and they speak to the again to the river and the rivering setting here.

«Lily #Let it be (99) Just be nice and let it be the way it is.

#Behavioral Requests: participants give examples of behaviors they would like to see in the landscape

«Neon #Behavior (43) In a perfect world, like how we do, here

«Rita #Behavior (26-28) Just with respect. And with the, like, process of movement in a positive manner, you know, like. Where things are happening for the good

«Vi #Behavior (488-495) will tourists or will visitors know that you know by showing respect is you not being there unless you have a local person with you, so I think that would be another piece is, the making sure visitors knew that we’re not really, that’s it’s not just a free for all, cause when the waters low it’s not that hard to get across right?


« Sister Juniper #Behavior (256-258) Just go for a walk, you know? Take a couple pictures, fine, you know, I’ll do it. Just use a quiet voice and soft feet.

« Neon #Behavior (334-342) Again, with respect and consideration of the people that are there, I mean, it’s not hard. I mean, just be respectful and like if I were to go to another country, it would be an asshole move of me to not learn their language, at least, you know, at least, take that into consideration when you come here, learn a
little bit, not a lot. Just like, of what we know here. I mean, not everyone is going to see eye-to-eye I think everyone has a common ground.
8 Category: The Bluff River Trail is like a swinging bridge.

Modified from “Bluff is like a swinging bridge” to “The Bluff River Trail is like…” I want to represent the relationship of the river connected to the town, rather than the town being connected to the river.

Definition: research participants describe Bluff life. What’s it like to live in Bluff?

Codes and Definitions: Bluff is like a swinging bridge.

#Bluff Life: descriptions of Bluff as a place

#Appreciating community care: stories of community care, describing the community as genuine and connected, or the opposite stories of the community not caring.

«Azil. #appreciating community care (269-275): Yeah, we have different ways, but this community, when when someone dies or when someone’s in need or someone’s getting married or whatever, there’s a, a genuineness that comes out and that’s that’s um, that’s admirable and you want to pass that to other people, on to other people, right?

«Sister Juniper #Appreciating community care (Community Care, surrogate Bluff family) (173-176) I had family out here too, but different, surrogate, the Bluff family, which I imagine, would have been as supportive as my family would have been

#Bluff is stubborn: examples of resistance

«Rita #Bluff is stubborn (113-116) I think that it just seems like, that if Bluff wants change then it like, I don’t know, then it only wants it how it wants it type of thing, you know? It’s not looking to compromise in a lot of ways
#Scaling inclusivity: measuring Bluffs inclusivity

«Sister Juniper. #Scaling inclusivity (396-406) And I’m sure you’re finding that out, particularly. You know, when people say, “keep Bluff, Bluff” But that’s different for everyone and always has been I remember having this conversation twenty years ago about people talking about Bluff, being Bluff and that and wanting to protect Bluff, but what people want to protect is their idea of Bluff, myself included, my version I want to protect my vision, my version and I know that’s not right or fair or even necessarily legitimate

#Patterns of use

«Neon. #Patterns of use (Describing the agriculture, traveling from Swinging bridge) (29-35) that’s where a lot of my family in that field in the front of the echo house ruins my grandma planted there, and my mom remembers, she tells me stories of when she used to help, my mom, my grandma help harvest going across the footbridge all way to the mission to my house

#Being informed by beauty: recalling, or actively appreciating the beauty of the landscape

« Rita #being informed by beauty (70-77): Pretty much the Comb is like the most significant thing when I look to west, which is incredibly important to me, and yeah. //In what ways is it important to you? ¶ //I think, kind of just based on the beauty of it, is extremely awe inspiring to me.
#Emergency Services

«Sister Juniper #Emergency Services (372-377) We’ve, we’ve tied into the river community to the river runs, to the reservation community, we’ve tied into the travel the tourism, from ten twenty countries, we’ve tied into every single town within 200 square miles, communities, they’re not really towns, development areas, yeah.

«Vi #Emergency Services (733-739) A Hogan collapsed on a person to like there’s like a fire at the community building to someone’s having a heart issue you know like EMS calls they’re they can be anything, but I always feel that they are so complex and multifaced and halfway spiritual or something like there’s like some element of of the unknown in all those calls

#Bluff political life (local engagement)

«Azil #Bluff Political Life (335-346) it’s kind of a funny, but people would say, well what’s it like to live in Bluff? You must be bored. And I said, “well actually, I’ve never been to so many meetings in my life” and you know! The politics. When you think back to the monitored retrieval storage facility, to the dump, to the selling of Comb Ridge to, to, you know name it. There’s lots of angst and energy, and issues, that come up too. Right. I’m looking at this big building, the Bluff School, from down below I have a hard time, I’m like, oh it’s much too tall. I don’t like that one, that one wall is too high, to me.

«Vi #Bluff Life (390-39) the piece of the rock there that fell off and how like it was like earthshattering
#Equating home with importance: I live here, people live here, so it’s important to me.

Personal scale equals importance.


Home. Yeah. It’s mostly home.

#In a canyon + broad horizons: describing geology

« Hyrum #describing geology (290-297) Looking down you know and I’m aware of this gravel topped terrace um and am reminded of that much profound history in in this country the geologic history uh and I think about the Wiley San Juan River running tens of thousands of years ago hundreds of thousands of years ago putting these, dropping these rocks down coming from glaciers to the west of us, excuse me to the east of us, and in the Colorado Rockies, flowing down here, so I am inspired to think about a history that is much deeper than human beings.

#Invoking kin knowledge + memory: recalling families history here, or other members in the community.

« Neon #invoking kin knowledge + memory (31-36): my mom remembers, she tells me stories of when she used to help, my mom, my grandma help harvest going across the footbridge all way to the mission to my house and so, yeah, just that’s what I want people to do is be respectful and considerate

#Making a modest little mark: describing personal impact on landscape

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Hyrum #making a modest little mark (71-76) heck I’m one of those folks you know, so I’m going to make my own modest little mark on this place my own funny little pock but that’s that’s a little egregious so I would like to keep, or maintain that, that otherwise quite pristine skyline

#Traveling in memory: telling stories related to place, place association

#Valuing community connection: appreciating Bluff’s social dynamics of community care

Rita. #Valuing Community Connection (79-85) It’s also, I don’t want to say, not that it’s not sacred to me from a cultural point, but I don’t hold that as one of the like, main things for it for me. Though, it is important to me, but it’s definitely not the biggest catalyst in it. So. I think the beauty in more so, other tribes, or other natives connectivity to it is important to me.
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

9 Category: The Center Place – Or Axis Mundi

Definition: the center place is a symbolic orienting tool associated with an origin, wellspring, and/or reason for the existence of life, or the motivation behind a livelihood.

The Center Place Codes + Definitions:

#Beginning: the beginning is associated with a cosmological occurrence, the east becomes synonymous with the beginning and with prayers, stories, and songs.

« Vi #Beginning (56) The beginning is the East

« Lily #Beginning (17-19) “I guess it’s just like a beginning of life, like everything you’re supposed to do is supposed to be to the east, you know, prayers early in the morning.

#Centering: The center associated with community production or a source sustaining the community.

« Azil. #Centering (254-263) you know, we have a lot to care about, the Bears Ears National Monument, what that means. Where we sit, to White Rocks, to where we are to other communities, what about the uranium that coming through here, you know?

On September 28th, you know the people from Hopi that came here, it was fantastic, just to have young people care about what’s happening in a bigger broader sense, this is a huge highway, massive amounts of people come through here. Um. So.

Center of the universe. Right?

« Azil #Centering (74-77) when the sun sets the catches the x just right and everything lights up and you feel the pulse of life and death in the universe

« Neon. #Centering (88-94) It was the center of life here, I mean, obviously that’s why my family settled over there cause, the water, and that’s why, the Anasazi settled there
and that’s why the Pioneers settled here, cause the river. Well, I don’t still know if it is the center of life but it was the center of life, it still is. We still, for you guys too

« Sister Juniper #Centering (390-392) This has been the most affecting piece of my history besides becoming a mom. I think, really, like really, Bluff is a character in my story

« Sister Juniper #Centering (212-214) But I’m not so sure about how to live outside of these rock walls. It’s, you know, it uh, I eventually just come back.

« Sister Juniper #Centering (17) the river is always south, so that was always my anchor

« Hyrum John #Centering (190-198) and of course the Bluff Great House right there it’s kind of the from what I’ve I’ve learned about this place it’s kind of the thing that ties a lot a lot of this valley together at least in terms of the human occupation of this place this is the center place, laughs, it reminds me that this has been a center place for a long time for farming and post farming peoples so yeah a real a real amazing feature here.

« Rita #Centering (17-21) Everything really, you know that’s kind of like, my center, um, kind of the entire reason I’m here, a lot of my time and energy go into everybody over there, not just everybody, well, I think kind of, it is a little more people centered. But um, yeah.

#To ramify a center: understanding that the center is connected, in a larger network of life
« Azil. #Centering as ramification (323-333) in incorporation that we as a group of people collectively sought to dream big and the boundaries are big and that is fantastic because Bluff sits, Bluff sits here but it also because there are, um, there are caring people here and there are smart people here that realize that they’re stewards here, so to take, to take the initiative create a boundary, much further away than your little spot is saying, to the world, welcome, but, it’s interconnected, right?

#East with awe: east is the beginning of life, associated with early morning corn pollen offerings (tadidiín). The process of sanctifying the sunrise.

« Lily #East with awe (15-25)

Davis: So, when you look east what is important to you? ¶
I guess it’s just like a beginning of life, you know everything you’re supposed to do it’s supposed to be east you know, prayers, early in the morning, so.
Davis: So when you look to the east and all that it stands for, for you. How would you like it to be treated? ¶
Treated? Well, treated with respect and I guess, awe, awesomeness. Like I don’t know what else to say.

#Measuring Infinity: different scales of infinity

« Vi #Measuring infinity (230) the stars, time immemorial

#Origin: references to Navajo, Hopi or Puebloan emergence stories or recognizing ecological systems or directions as the processes that make life possible.

« Vi #Origin (554) The river made this

« Vi #Origin (1073-1074) (Davis notes: about the above and below) I think both are super essential for all that they have and all that they offer. And, and, they’re both the, the balance and the reason why we exist

« Hyrum John #Origin (280) Ancestral Wet Place
« Hyrum John #Origin (133-148): how the Bluff sandstone comes into contact with the lower lying shales that are impermeable to water and you can see, seeps forming at that contact and we do, up over here and that’s a really interesting and cool feature of this landscape our, our valley literally weeps with with water you know. and that makes this place a really special place and I think that is has you know even more deep historical resonance because it’s a wet place you know I think of that the the lower wet ancestral world of the the Pueblo People and Navajo folks and I think about how this landscape really reverberates with those old potentially very old sentiments
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

**10 Category:** To ramify a sphere

**Definition:** understanding space three-dimensionally through the zenith and nadir (the above and below direction) Bluffoons orient themselves spherically.

**Codes and Definitions:** to ramify a sphere

**#East is up and west is down:** understanding the zenith + nadir and a sphere, east is the up direction and west is the down.

« Lily. #east is up and west is down (137-140) Well in Navajo when you, when you say up and down it’s you know it’s up this way or up this way (east) and when you say it’s down it’s down this way or down this way (west)

**#Locating the Zenith + Nadir (Above Direction + Below):** situating the arcs within the below direction.

« Vi. #Locating the Nadir, below direction (1059-1061) Sure! Probably the ground #1, the earth itself is it’s own direction, like what is below us, and it’s contrast what’s above us

« Vi. #Locating the Nadir, below direction (1063-1073) I acknowledge that below us is the ground, below us is, is, uh, our existence really, without the earth we wouldn’t be here, without all that it provides for us, we wouldn’t be here. So the below direction. The above direction is really, is like, that’s where the stars are, that’s where the milkyway shows up and that’s where like, the sun hangs out all day and warms us and lets us, lets our plants grow, uh, and I think both are super essential for all that they have and all that they offer (Vi)

« Lily. #Locating the Zenith + Nadir (149) Down, the mother earth, it’s solid, you’re standing on it

« Azil. #Locating the Zenith + Nadir (376) But also, certainly, the ground that we’re on.
« Azil. #Locating the Zenith + Nadir (382) There’s a prehistoric road that crosses where we are. What is in the ground truly matters.

« Hyrum John. #Locating the Zenith + Nadir (274-288) There is the Zenith and Nadir. That’s what this place is all about you know the Bluff Great House were up here we are in the upper dry modern world we are here you know in the terms of Pueblo and Navajo cosmology we are here at the top and underneath us the nadir, the valley floor the low, is the ancestral wet place again were back to the wet. So up above us the sky you know which is free and democratic and available to everybody we are rich in the turquoise here, so, when I look up and get the turquoise and when I look down I get the red and you know again kind of draping ourselves in the really deep history of this place and the zenith and nadir have a lot of resonance for me.

#Respect 360 Degrees: resisting researchers’ promptings to differentiate between directions and creating a sphere of importance, regarding respect.

« Neon. #Respect 360 (112-117) Same, same as the east. There is really no other way to put it it’s just, I mean. I’m not here for a long time, but the time that I am here I do want to, you know, be respectful towards the land, you know cause my kids are going to be here and their kids are going to be here and

« Lily. #Respect 360 (128-129) Well, just like everything else treated with respect and not to have too much growth, just the same

« Sister Juniper. #Respect 360 (138-140) Again, right? I think I am going to have the same answer in all four directions, you know I’d like to see. Less is more

#Situating the cosmos: ranging from observation of the sunrise, day sky, sunset and night sky
« Lily. #Situating the cosmos (6-10) I just saw a mountain and that’s what I used to, I used to, you know when you wake up you go outside and that’s the first thing I saw and it’s behind there

« Lily. #Situating the cosmos (78-80) Usually the sunset when when you’re looking that way the only time I look that way is for the sunset you know, we have beautiful sunsets over here

« Rita. #Situating the cosmos (302) Always the sun because I love the sunrises generally.

« Azil. #Situating the cosmos (224) Twilight

« Azil. #Situating the cosmos (336) Just look at the sky, it’s phenomenal

« Neon. #Situating the cosmos (348-349) And, it’s also, the direction that I’m looking, that so cool. I’ve got to get a picture.

« Neon. #Situating the cosmos (7) Yeah, home. It’s actually the direction where the sun comes up this is exactly where the sun comes up right here

« Vi. #Situating the cosmos (47-52) we have to go by the sun right? And we know that by by Spring like Summer like the sun is coming up waay on this west side over here and by uh solstice winter solstice the sun is coming up waay on this right side of me and so like that’s east, right?

« Sister Juniper. #Situating the cosmos (84) The east is the portal, the sun rises there

#Valuing the night sky: stargazing and appreciating low light pollution.

« Lily. #Valuing the night sky (140-145) so it’s I guess it would be the sky, you know yeah, especially at night you look at the stars and uh my. neighbors came from big town where he couldn’t see the stars and uh he likes it out here where you know you can just walk out and see the stars and not be hampered by all the lights so yeah that’s really pretty at night

« Azil. #Valuing the night sky (34-37) I feel that with Bluff incorporating and the night sky being very much talked about and welcomed into this community, as a, to
preserve the night sky so, it’s you can come up here and see stars that just, magnificent,
Semi-Structured Interviews: Categories, codes and definitions

11 **Category:** Weeps with water (renamed Situating the meaning of water)

**Definition:** research participants recognize the impact of water within the region and equate it with different colors of importance/meaning, all surrounding origin or a relationship in larger systems.

**Codes and Definitions:** □Weeps with water

#Ancestral wet place (merged with origin) origin place of archaic ones, Puebloans, Hopi, Navajo.

#Geology as origin: recognizing that “the river made this”

«Vi #geology as origin (553-555) geologically you have to acknowledge that that happened geologically it’s the river that even carved out this place to begin with, the river made this

#Loving wildlife: linking wildlife with San Juan River corridor

#Movement creates growth: the constant flow of the San Juan River becomes a reference to growth – movement – consistency

« Rita (47-57) it’s like a powerful connection, to where you have so much movement going through, that’s it’s important to be connected to it, you know? 4.15. So, movement, what do you mean by that? ¶ I think just movement, growth, and the fact that rivers are constantly moving so, there’s no real stopping, other than dams of course, laughs. So I think that’s important to me, especially here

#Ocean seed: using internal water origin as a contrasting tool

«Azil (162-164) I’m an ocean, my my background comes with the ocean, so when I see a river, I’m I’m still a newcomer to it, even though I’ve lived here 33 years.
#Weeps with water

« Hyrum #Weeps with water (131-139) I think about a comment that my friend, our friend (redacted name for privacy) that made about how the Bluff sandstone comes into contact with the lower lying shales that are impermeable to water and you can see, seeps forming at that contact and we do, up over here and that’s a really interesting and cool feature of this landscape our our valley literally weeps with with water you know."
Appendices B: Questionnaire Code Book

1. **Category:** Across: The space that difference makes.
   
   **Definition:** How borders are spatialized based on difference.

2. **Category:** Comfort in the river’s consistency in change and contrast.
   
   **Definition:** Participants define the river as a contrasting and changing place and are comforted by the changing nature of the river.

3. **Category:** How the river doesn’t matter
   
   **Definition:** Descriptions of ways that the river does not matter to people.

4. **Category:** River is another word for human history
   
   **Definition:** Human occupation of Bluff’s rivering valley is because of the river.

5. **Category:** Sanctifying and Communing
   
   **Definition:** The San Juan River is a holy being; thus, it becomes a place for communing.

6. **Category:** The San Juan River creates existence
   
   **Definition:** Research participants credit the presence of the San Juan River as creating existence.

7. **Category:** The San Juan River inspires feeling
Definition: The San Juan River corridor is a felt place.

8. Category: The San Juan River is a place for all things.
   Definition: Research participants dilate the river's meaningful between the micro and macrocosm, creating a rippling understanding of importance rather than a hierarchy.

9. Category: To watch, to measure, to gauge
   Definition: The river becomes an orienting place where research participants learn about themselves or the natural world.

10. Category: Tourists pay and visit the government's river
    Definition: Locals creating insider outsider use based on recreation and permitting.

11. Category: What is the river?
    Definition: Describing the qualities of the river, what it does and where it is.
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

1 Category: Across: The space that difference makes

Category Definition: How borders are spatialized based on difference.

Codes and Definitions: Across: The space that difference makes.

Different lifestyles, contrasting spatialities: different ways of life from different ethnic groups produce different understandings of what the SJR means

« Hyrum Different lifestyles, contrasting spatialities (101-105) Traditional sensibilities and modern historical narratives no doubt result in many different kinds of understandings of the river corridor, well beyond my knowledge and well beyond the understanding and knowledge of the modern Anglo inhabitants of Bluff.

#It creates an earth island: viewing different landmasses separated by the river as earth islands.

« Vi #It creates an earth island (39-40) A boundary ^ Of the islands of this earth

#It is a physical barrier to cross to see the people I love: it is a landmark, that signals when you are close to the ones you love

« Rita #it is a physical barrier to cross to see the people I love (5-8) The San Juan River has always provided a mental and physical barrier to my home. When I visited as a child, it was a joyous symbol-I was either on my way to “town” or on my way to see my grandparents.

#It’s a border, but my friends live across: it isn’t framed as an impenetrable container, friendships make the river border porous, it softens in association

« Azil #it’s a border, but my friends live across (11) A border, “across” live close friends

Racialization of history (antiquating living people) (Hyrum): By-and-large, I don’t think these Native perspectives “matter” as much to the valley’s Anglo inhabitants. For that matter, I don’t expect the Navajo community to be as concerned w/ the deep history represented along the Bluff valley river corridor either. * In a rather screwed up way, I expect the Anglo Bluff community to be more concerned or interested in the ancestral past of the San Juan River corridor than it is on the modern Navajo perspectives. ** (I hope I’m wrong about both of these notions). (Hyrum 110-119)
#Minimizing the border: understanding the border literally, as a body of water that restricts people from crossing

« Vi #minimizing the border (97-99) just some “restrictive geography” to figure out how to cross

#Respecting through abstaining: framing the border as respecting land usage agreements

« Vi #respecting through abstaining (41-43) A boundary maybe it’s psychological to “not cross” cuz then you’ll get wet! But being wet…or it’s respect for modern day politics & “treaties” of land usage agreements

#I should not go there: a felt difference, a true boundary a place that “I” don’t go.

« Hyrum #I should not go there (39-43) The river is a constant reminder of a cultural-political boundary. Or perhaps, it’s really the cliffs of Casa del Ecco that presents an unscaleable wall into the Navajo Nation, but I know the river is there, moat like, defining a place I shouldn’t go.

#The San Juan Rivers connection supersedes: the swinging bridge connected people to Bluff, it created a dry crossing from the restrictive geography

« Vi #The San Juan River’s connection supersedes: (77-78) Place to cross Swinging Bridge > connecting the people, despite the “restrictive” geography
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

2 Category: Comfort in the river’s consistency in change and contrast.

Category Definition: Participants define the river as a contrasting and changing place and are comforted by the changing nature of the river.

Codes and Definitions: Comfort in the river’s consistency in change and contrast.

#Comforting through walking: experiencing comfort through walking along the river.

« Azil #Comfort through walking (42) A place of solace/walking trail

#Contrasting quality of river water with ocean waters: creating a contrast between familiar bodies of water, some people are raised on rivers some are raised on the ocean

« Azil #Comfort through walking (26) A sense of identity-Easterner (Oceans) Westerner (Rivers)

#Contrasting river with ocean of desert: the San Juan River is water in the desert, creating a contrast to the normally harsh, parched environment.

« #Hyrum Contrasting river with ocean of desert (17-20) I quickly understood rivers to be singular precious entities. “Rivers” here expand out into a slender corridor of life (concentration of plants + critters), and are starkly contrasted w/the huge ocean of surrounding desert.

#Evidencing the dichotomy: the San Juan River is a place where dichotomies are obvious, such as solid into crumbling earth, the river corridor becomes the transitory place that creates the contrast

« Vi #Evidencing the dichotomy (61-71)
=.Solid·Crumble.
=.Wet·Dry.
> A DICHOTOMY
> A FORCE <
=natural. “man”·manipulated
=.slow·fast.
=.Hot·cold.
=.clean·dirty.
=.transparent·opaque.
#Peace through observing change: experiencing comfort through observing the changes found in nature, such as the sounds of the river, the colors and the seasons

« Azil (21) My solace/its changing sounds and colors/the seasons

#Personal, private-time experience: I am alone at the river, or I am the only human.

« Hyrum #personal, private-time experience (33-38) I do enjoy walking along the river, which I do with some frequency south of the Davis/Westfall farm (the “ol Curtis Jones Farm”). It’s a break from the desert while still enjoying the desert: I enjoy the immersion into two worlds this way. My dog loves the walk, too, and I revel in her enjoyment of that environment.

#Respite: associating resting with time spent at the river

« Sister Juniper #respite (37-38) respite for others

#Subsidence and Emergence: the process of slow erosion caused by the river, an example of constant change

« Hyrum #Subsidence and Emergence (63-72) The river is victorious. It is and will be the old man that survives us all. It will survive the dam. It may well survive the construction of future dams. The river will keep running, flowing. The San Juan’s saw will continue to gently cut, make more canyon, and fill down to the sea. That consistency brings me solace and peace. The continuity of something bigger than myself, but familiar and understandable, and always in action, moving. I think that comfortable feeling helps keep me tethered to these banks.
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

3 Category: How the river doesn’t matter

Definition: Descriptions of ways that the river does not matter to people.

Codes and Definitions: How the river doesn’t matter.

#Human impact of pollution: pollution is framed as a disregard to the river

«Azil #Human impact of pollution. (25). Worry, pollution

#Littering and partying: littering and partying are framed as disregard to the river

« Lily #Littering and partying (57-64) Hm, I don’t…really know. Maybe people just throwing trash in the river, or something. I don’t know. I know there used to be like a lot of drinking parties up at where the old footbridge used to be and there used to be just trash up there, you know. So, that’s probably only way that it wasn’t being used properly. But, other than that, yep.

#No reality outside of river: when asked about how the river “doesn’t matter” it was incomprehensible

« Rita #No reality outside of river (39-41) I do not really know how the river wouldn’t matter to people. I can definitely see people being indifferent towards it- but I don’t know for why.

#Racialization of history (antiquating living people) (Hyrum): a pattern in racialized history deals with the epistemological power to represent other cultures. Anglo (white) people can become experts in past-histories but are not willing to relate to modern-real tribes. This power dynamic becomes associated with the whitewashing of history, where Native folks are relegated to a thing of the past.

« Hyrum #Racialization of history (antiquating living people) (110-119) By-and-large, I don’t think these Native perspectives “matter” as much to the valley’s Anglo inhabitants. For that matter, I don’t expect the Navajo community to be as concerned w/ the deep history represented along the Bluff valley river corridor either. * In a rather screwed up way, I expect the Anglo Bluff community to be more concerned or interested in the ancestral past of the San Juan River corridor than it is on the modern Navajo perspectives. ** (I hope I’m wrong about both of these notions).
#Others don’t slow down to notice (pace of place): people moving too fast to even know there is a river in Bluff, because you cannot see it from the highway.

« Azil #Others don’t slow down to notice (pace of place) (58) Many visitors are oblivious to the River or the trail, so intent are they on destinations like Monument Valley and the Grand Canyon. Few take the time, slow enough to explore and sense the essence of the environment of Bluff including the River.
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

**4 Category:** River is another word for human history

**Definition:** Human occupation of Bluff’s rivering valley is because of the river.

**Codes and Definitions:** River is another word for human history

**#Agriculture is human history:** the life altering history of humans shifting to corn growing societies from hunter gather societies

« Hyrum #Agriculture is human history (87-92) *In terms of the valley’s deep history, the river and its confluence with Cottonwood Wash provided for the establishment of Puebloan farm communities. These two drainages provided the water and soil for several apparent iterations of a “Bluff Community” that seems to have started in the late AD500s.*

**#Bluff’s history is tied to the river:** rivers connect us to the history of humanity

« Vi #Bluff’s history is tied to the river (48) *Settlements that once existed, and left and others that remained, & joined*

**#Continual use, providing through irrigation:** Bluff is an agrarian landscape, within recent history which is related to the archaic ones, who were also farmers.

« Lily #Continual use, providing through irrigation (38-41) *And it’s been, ever since I was a little girl, I remember walking into Bluff with my grandmother and we used to bypass those farms, and they use the water - to water the crops.*

**#Orienting through archaic use:** the river corridor has evidence of humanities history related to the Ice-Age, there is rock art of animals that no longer exist

« Azil #Orienting through archaic use (13) *A corridor of rock art, perhaps the oldest in North America, the mammoths at Sand Island*

**#History can be problematic, based in projection:** is it easier to engage in Peoples that cannot speak for themselves?

« Hyrum #History can be problematic, based in projection (127-130) **Again, politics. In some ways, it might be simpler and less challenging to understand (or
project understanding on) past corn-growing societies than it is to engage modern, living people.

#Using river to measure personal growth: on the scale of personal history, the river is a place where lifetimes are spent.

« Lily #Using river to measure personal growth (4-5) I grew up on the river because my parents just live right off on the North side of the river.
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

5 Category: Sanctifying and Communing

Category Definition: The San Juan River is a holy being; thus, it becomes a place for communing.

Codes and Definitions: Sanctifying and Communing

#Navajo cosmology: the San Juan River’s position within Navajo Cosmology, such as its role in the emergence story and representations of the Diné Universe

« Vi #Navajo Cosmology (45-46) Baahané >Stories &/histories Water monster

#Providing and linking to worship: examples of how the San Juan River provides a place to worship, either through baptism or its relationship to watering corn, whose pollen is used in sunrise prayer.

« Lily #Providing and linking to worship (18-23) And, today, this time my mother uses it, the water, for, watering her crops during the summer, and she does the basic corn, squash, watermelon, you know, that we eat. From the corn we get our, what we call our Tádidíín. Which is our medicine that we pray with every morning before dawn.

#Pueblo and Navajo 4th World: the emergence narratives, where Navajo and Pueblo societies emerged from a lower, wet world into the current dry, upper world.

« Hyrum #Pueblo and Navajo 4th World (92-98): Understanding the basic emergence narrative of Pueblo and Navajo societies, I can’t help but project a sense of some of that likely narrative here: the valley could represent that lower, wet ancestral world in contrast with the upper dry modern world. I can’t deny or forget San Juan’s role in this remarkable and profound history.

#Transformative: the San Juan River is a place that alters an individual’s understanding of their position in the world. A transfigurative event, where parts of the psyche are removed or transformed resulting in a feeling of unity with nature.

« Sister Juniper #Transformative (5-7): I go to the river to forget my humanness + connect with beauty. With the natural world. To see myself init to remember we are one.

#Praying: communications or offerings related to the divine

« Vi #praying (14, 29) by prayer
6 Category: The river creates existence

**Category Definition:** Research participants credit the presence of the San Juan River as creating existence.

**Codes and Definitions:** The river creates existence

#A slender corridor of life: the Bluff River Trail section of the San Juan River is in a canyon setting, producing a “slender corridor of life” because water in the desert is life sustaining

« Hyrum #slender corridor of life (17-20) quickly understood rivers to be singular precious entities. “Rivers” here expand out into a slender corridor of life (concentration of plants + critters), and are starkly contrasted w/the huge ocean of surrounding desert.

#Confluence: describing the river as a junction place where waters meet

« Sister Juniper #Confluence (35). *It catches the floods*

#Connector-a conduit: describing the San Juan River as a pulse, constant, beating life.

« Azil #Connector- a conduit (10) *An energy pulse*

#Demanding respect: demands respect because it is a creative force

« Vi #Demanding respect (74) *demands respect. can take life. or give life.*

#Habitat making: claiming that the river is responsible for making Bluff livable

« Sister Juniper #Habitat making (11-12) *It’s what makes Bluff habitable. Without it I would not stay*

#No reality outside of river: when asked about how the river “doesn’t matter” it was incomprehensible

« Rita #No reality outside of river (39-41) *I do not really know how the river wouldn’t matter to people. I can definitely see people being indifferent towards it- but I don’t know for why.*
#Sustaining - it “feeds us” which is a human need, also a metaphoric feeding, the river sustains us emotionally and literally waters the crops.

« Sister Juniper #Sustaining (34) It’s important to the community. It feeds us!

#Synonymizing water with life: equating water with life.

« Vi #Synonymizing water with life (7-8) Tó éi ina áté, dajinni [But it’s so true] LIFE!

#The river creates the feeling of Bluff: the constant movement of the river and the feeling associated with it is named as the origin of Bluff’s sense of place.

« Rita #the river creates the feeling of Bluff (33-37) I think there is a powerful connection with the movement of the river and its town’s personal vibe. I think this vibe/energy matters to everyone. People are here because of the laid back & carefree feelings & the river directly supports this.
7 Category: The San Juan River inspires feeling

Category Definition: The San Juan River corridor is a felt place.

Codes and Definitions: It inspires feeling

#Feeling place, processing place: it is a place to process emotions

« Sister Juniper #Feeling place, processing place (12-14) In that river I have thrown anger, sorrowful cries, my tears blending with its waters-carried away. Drowned my past.

#Grieving place: a place to process death, a final resting place

« Azil #Grieving place (55) A place to scatter ashes of loved ones/funerary.

#It inspires: the feeling of inspiration, opposite of being stuck, feeling like you are in the swing of life

« Azil #It inspires (12) An inspirational trail system along its banks

#Loving the river: community members love the river, feelings of tenderness

« Lily #Loving the river (31-33) I think that the community loves the river. And all the trees that grow up, the cottonwood, they turn nice and gold in the / in autumn.
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

8 Category: The San Juan River is a place for all things

Definition: Research participants dilate the rivers meaningful between the micro and macrocosm, creating a rippling understanding of importance rather than a hierarchy.

Codes and Definitions: The San Juan River is a place for all things

#Correlating river with linking and connecting: understanding the river as a verb based on what it does, which is connects and links all who benefit from it together

« Azil #Correlating river with linking and connecting (46) It geographically defines and links us

#Describing the interplay of humans and ecosystems: the blossoming, ramifying list when describing all things that are within the SJR as a place.

« Vi #Describing the interplay of humans and ecosystems (20-36) A place – for all things -animals · winged · 2/4 legged · zero legged -migratory ones -plant kingdom -little insects & organisms. -boaters & tourists -locals & skinny dippers -fishing, hunting -cooling off in summer’s sun -prayer, observation, of all seasons and times -crying, laughing, living, loving -to wash away. -to erode -to freeze, expand, continue -to flow -where the cottonwoods grow -play

#Equalizing: this code is the product of linking/connecting and sharing. Because it is related to and responsible for so much, the river becomes a common factor. It unifies in its importance because it is “a place for all things”

« Vi #Equalizing (20) A place – for all things

#Holism: understanding that the river is an entire ecosystem, complex, shared and interwoven together.

« Sister Juniper #Holism (6) Holistic

#Linking river to birds: identifying that the birds share the San Juan River Corridor

« Azil #Linking river to birds (20). A migratory flyway

#Linking river to macrocosmic universe: defining the river as a butterfly effect, the cause and effect of what happens at the river in turn affects everywhere.
"Vi #Linking river to macrocosmic universe (108) & what happens there affects us all. "and everywhere.

#Linking river to trees and seasons: identifying that the San Juan River corridor is home to trees that are affected by the seasons, linking the river to the trees and love.

"Lily #Linking river to trees and seasons (31-33) I think that the community loves the river. And all the trees that grow up, the cottonwood, they turn nice and gold in the / in autumn.

#Linking wildlife networks: identifying that the San Juan River corridor is home to a wildlife network

"Azil #Linking wildlife networks (5) A wildlife corridor – bobcats, mountain lions, bears, beavers, big horn, blue heron, egrets, ducks, red tail hawks, bald eagles, golden eagles, peregrine, kestrel.

#Sharing with other communities: communities are not just human, it includes more than human being, mineral, plant and holy beings. Sharing with other communities is related to the rippling effect that responses evidence.

"Vi #Sharing with other communities (103-105) It’s shared w/ so many communities & “legal jurisdictions” that it’s hard to say its “ours” – as it matters to so many humans, municipalities, plants, animals, etc. Further – it’s constantly flowing-at least that’s the ideal dream-so we can’t ever capture or tame it, hoard it or keep it for ourselves.

#Synonymizing river with community: observing the San Juan River is a common experience thus, it is synonymous with and creates community.

"Rita #Synonymizing river with community (32-33) The San Juan River means community to Bluff. I think every person interacts with it someway.
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions

9 Category: To watch, to measure, to gauge

Category Definition: The river becomes an orienting place where research participants learn about themselves or the natural world.

Codes and Definitions: To watch, to measure, to gauge

#It teaches by providing answers: it provides answers to seasonal woes.

« Sister Juniper #It teaches by providing answers (7-9) In the summer it refreshes, saves me. In the winter it gives me hope. In spring it makes me curious again- What will summer bring? Will it be safe enough to play?

#Learning place: a place to observe, for different vocations that deal with the natural world

« Azil #Learning place (53) Wildlife biologists, a place to study.

#Learning to swim (Lily): it is a place where you can learn to swim

« Lily #Learning to swim (6-8) That’s where I learned how to swim. I remember when I was a kid, we would roll up our towels and walk over there and sit. Sit in the water, and you know.

#Observation and translation into art: the rivering setting as a muse for art

« Azil #Observation and translation into art (54) Plein Air painters- to paint

#Orienting Event, To Watch, To Measure, To Gauge: the act of observing and comparing the river, understanding the extremes

« Hyrum #Orienting event, to watch, to measure, to gauge (27-32) Upon moving here, the river became something important to watch, to measure, to gauge. How much water is in the river? What the CFS? What the height? Is it too low? Is it too high? It is certainly a thing where we can understand extremes. Are we in danger of too much or too little?

#Teaches me about me (Rita): the river is a place where I reflect, so it teaches me about myself

« Rita #Teaches me about me (11-13) On another level it shows me profound beauty and literal reflections. I love to use the banks as a thinking place and a safe place.
#Thinking place-safe-contemplative place (Rita): the San Juan River is a place where I contemplate

« Rita #Thinking place-safe-contemplative place. (14-15) The San Juan also provides endless reflection

#Using river to measure distance: the river meanders and changes course, examples of understanding distance based on where the river used to flow

« Lily #Using river to measure distance (16-18) It meandered. I think it’s a lot closer to us then before when I was a little girl, because I remember walking quite a ways to get to the river.

#Using river to measure personal growth (Lily): growing up on the river, it being a place of childhood association

« Lily #Using river to measure personal growth (4-5) I grew up on the river because my parents just live right off on the North side of the river.
10 **Category**: tourists pay and visit the governments river

**Category Definition**: creating insider outsider use based on recreation and permitting.

**Codes and Definitions**: tourists pay and visit the governments river

**#Expensive Recreation**: the expertise and expense of experiencing a commercial float down the river. Bluff folks vs. privileged folks with expensive gear.

« Azil **#Expensive recreation (49-51)** Primary is a boaters launch site A “put in” and “take out” privileged folks with expensive gear and lots of it -A commercial float down to Mexican Hat or further

**#Locals floating down the river**: locals without permits float from the “old footbridge” to San Island. Insider knowledge.

« Lily **#Locals floating down the river (34-35)** You could even do intertubing, and I’ve done that before. I’ve gone from where the bridge, old footbridge was, all the way down to Sand Island, which is really nice.

**#No permits, our river/governments river**: locals break the permitting requirements needed to float down the San Juan River.

« Hyrum. **#No permits, our river/governments river (44-54)** it takes a lot of energy to launch such a formal expedition into the San Juan waters, especially from the launch at Sand Island From there to points downstream that’s the government’s river-they manage it, anyway. From the old^ Swinging Bridge location to San Island-that’s my river. I can float there, drift illegally I reckon, but I don’t care. My journeys there are few, infrequent, and I stay quiet about my personal jaunts. That time is meant for me, and no one else.
#Recreation: examples of recreation

« Azil #Recreation (39) A boat launch, Sand Island

#Recreation brings tourists, which brings income: recognizing the relationship between tourist recreation economically benefitting local businesses

« Azil #Recreation brings tourists, which brings income. (15) My income, a tourist attraction

#Recreation Provides Jobs: recreation is a form of employment within various DOI organizations and local outfitters who deal with the river.

« Azil #Recreation provides jobs (40) Tourist dollars/ Jobs, Guides (BLM Employees + Volunteers) (Azil 40)
Questionnaire: Categories, codes and definitions
10 Category: What is the river?

Definition: Describing the qualities of the river, what it does and where it is.

Codes and Definitions: What is the river?

#Appreciating beauty: recognizing the beautiful features of the river

« Rita #Appreciating beauty (11) It shows me profound beauty.

#Demanding respect: demands respect because it is a creative force

« Vi #Demanding respect (74) demands respect. can take life. or give life.

#Foil to humanness: claiming that humans project meaning onto water

« Sister Juniper #Foil to humanness (15) and then-it’s just a body of water it reminds me.

#It meandered: sinuous curves and bends in a river

« Lily #It meandered (16) It meandered

#Locating the River: declaration placing the San Juan River in space

« Hyrum #Locating the river (16) The San Juan River is a river in the desert.

#Power of the river: (related to #undeniable force) the precipitous feeling when looking/engaging in a spontaneous natural place. Such as standing over a cliffs edge, having a wasp circle around you, or standing on the banks of a river.

« Hyrum #Power of the river (55-56) The river is dangerous. And it is beautiful for that danger. It keeps me on my toes.

#Relieving: the joys of swimming during a hot day

« Rita #Relieving (15) The San Juan also provides endless reflection and a semi-cool relief from the heat.

#Rivers verbs: some of the expressions of the river

« Vi #Rivers verbs (31-34) -to wash away. -to erode -to freeze, expand, continue -to flow
#Undeniable force: (related to #power of river). It is an obviously powerful place When was the last time you were frightened by a river?

« Rita #Undeniable force (13-14) *It is also incredibly frightening and an undeniable force.*
Appendices C: Template Analysis Code Book

Note: This rectangular symbol ( ) in front of a code, means that it was an adaptation from the Questionnaire Codebook. Adaptations are also listed in the color purple.

Focus Group Template Analysis Themes:

1 The San Juan River (is)
Participants took time to define the San Juan River, through describing its location, its qualities and how it functioned.

Themes:
- Generative and continual lifeway
- Provides and links to worship and transformation
- The ties that bind (the use the isness)
- Measuring tool
- Consequential rivering

2 We share the corridor with:
Participants identified groups of beings or entities that share the San Juan River corridor

Themes:
- Community (Ecosystematically)
- History, Story and Future
- Inspiration and Feelings
- Employment
- Messages from The Holy Ones
3 And we use it for

Participants named patterns of use by describing what they did at the river.

Themes:

Intuitive Journey
Learning
To be with loved ones
Agriculture
Recreation and enjoyment
Worship and ceremony
Cultivate a sense of wonder

4 While in this environment/place/corridor we ask that you take time to, x

Follow up inquiry that addressed a lack in questionnaire responses, I asked “how do you want people to engage the river?” with this section.

Themes:

Respect memory by being here
This is a spontaneous and inspirational place, consider the solace
Acknowledge and realize that this energy pulse matters
By these practices
These are the beings that are here, consider them: (list)
Template Analysis Code Book

1 The San Juan River (is)
Participants took time to define the San Juan River, through describing its location, its qualities and how it functioned.

#Appreciating beauty: declarations of beauty, either by saying the term as a descriptor or paired with a feature, i.e. the river is beautiful.

«#Appreciating beauty (6) [the San Juan River] is beautiful

#Demands Respect, can take or give life: recognizing the creative and destructive patterns of the river, this creative aspect demands our respect.

«#Demands Respect, can take or give life (4) [The San Juan River] demands respect, can take life or give it.

#Consequential rivering: understanding the rivering as a casual (consequential) entity as creating multiple circumstances, one being, the reason why “I” or “We” are here in Bluff.

«#Consequential rivering (1) [The San Juan River] I am here as a consequence of that river

#Continual: despite dams, or our human impact, the San Juan river still flows. Its movement is resilient, making it victorious

«#Continual (13) [The San Juan River] is victorious

#Correlating river with linking: understanding the river as a linking entity. This is what rivers do, they are linking forces.

«#Correlating river with linking (29) [The San Juan River] is where the basketballs from upriver later surface.

#Describing interplay of humans and ecosystems: the blossoming, ramifying list when describing all beings who use the San Juan River corridor. The difficulty of listing a universe.

«#Describing interplay of humans and ecosystems (9-10) [The San Juan River is] a place for all things: animals, winged, 2/4 legged, zero legged, migratory ones, microorganisms
#Equalizing: because the river is related and responsible for so much, it becomes an entity that equalizes in importance, this is because it is a “place for all things”

«#Equalizing (14) [The San Juan River is] a connection
«#Equalizing (18) [The San Juan River is] place to be

#Generative: a source, by its virtue is generates and sustains. This is what the lifeway does.

«#Generative (30) [The San Juan River is] essential
«#Generative (31) [The San Juan River is] everything

#Habitat making: claiming that the San Juan River corridor is responsible for making Bluff habitable

«#Habitat making (27) [The San Juan River is] a habitat

#Life-way: the river is not a way of life, it is a life-way. In its movement and continual water source in the desert, it way is life.

«#Life-way (15) [The San Juan River] is a life-way

#Linking river to birds: identifying specific birds, or using the term birds, or references to flying migration patterns.

«#Linking river to birds (14) [The San Juan River is] a flyway

#Promotes and enhances life: subtle difference between a source and a resource. A resource helps to promote and enhance life, rather than a source, that just is an entity.

«#Promotes and enhances life (17) [The San Juan River is] is a resource

#Magic: an extraordinary power, associated with mystery and the unknown

«#Magic (5) [The San Juan River is] magic. MAGIC

#Regulated by the holy ones: regulate is to bring balance, to restore or synchronize. If the corridor is regulated by the holy ones, we don’t share it with them, they share it with us.
Regulated by the holy ones (5) [The San Juan River is] regulated by the holy ones. 

Emptiness (Buddhism): that the San Juan river is just a being, being. Understanding the difference between experience and the “isness” of the river. This is a perceived consequence, evident in the code #foil to humanness, which is what the river is perceived to do, which is reveal our attachment to it.

Emptiness (Buddhism) (2) [The San Juan River] Just is.

Foil to humanness: This is a perceived consequence of relating to a river. What the river is perceived to do, which is reveal our attachment to it.

Foil to humanness (4) [The San Juan River] is just a body of water, it reminds me.

Providing and linking to worship: examples of how the San Juan River provides a place to worship, through ceremony, through baptism, prayer, through its relationship to watering the corn.

Providing and linking to worship: [The San Juan River is] a reverent place.

Return to childhood: the feeling of play or wonder associated with childhood.

Return to childhood (23) ) [The San Juan River is] is when I become ten again.

Is undeniable: (related to #power of the river) it is an obviously powerful place. When was the last time you were frightened by a river? #Power of river: the precipitous feeling when looking/engaging in a spontaneous natural place. Such as standing on a cliffs edge, having a wasp circle around you, or standing on the banks of a river.

Is undeniable (17-18) [The San Juan River] might spank you, might skewer you 
Is undeniable (19) [The San Juan River is] a fearful place

Connector-conduit: describing or essentializing the San Juan River as an energy pulse, which implies a constant, animating, percussive life.

Connector Conduit (7) [The San Juan River is] an energy pulse

Power of river: (related to #undeniable force) the precipitous feelings when looking at or engaging with a spontaneous place. Such as standing on a cliffs edge, having a wasp circle you or standing on the banks of a river.

Power of river (22-23) [The San Juan River is] dangerous, and beautiful for that danger, it keeps us on our toes
#Contrasting river to ocean of desert: the San Juan River provides a water source in the desert, creating a contrast to the harsh, parched environment

«#Contrasting river to ocean of desert (21) [The San Juan River] is a break from the desert.

#Evidencing dichotomy: the San Juan River corridor is a place where dichotomies are obvious, such as solid and crumbling earth, the river corridor becomes the transitory place that creates a contrast

«#Evidencing dichotomy (25) [The San Juan River is] a contrast

#Measuring through history (modified #Orienting through archaic use). Using the San Juan river to measure history. Not just human history but geologic.

«#Measuring through history (16) [The San Juan River is] a historic record

#Subsidence and Emergence: the process of slow erosion caused by the river, an example of constant change

«#Subsidence and emergence (19) [The San Juan River is] a crevice maker

#Describing interplay of humans and ecosystems: the blossoming, ramifying list when describing all beings who use the San Juan River corridor. The difficulty of listing a universe.

«#Describing interplay of humans and ecosystems (9-10) [The San Juan River is] a place for all things: animals, winged, 2/4 legged, zero legged, migratory ones, microorganisms

#Equalizing: because the river is related and responsible for so much, it becomes a entity that equalizes in importance, this is because it is a “place for all things”

«#Equalizing (14) [The San Juan River is] a connection
«#Equalizing (18) [The San Juan River is] place to be
Evidencing dichotomy: the San Juan River corridor is a place where dichotomies are obvious, such as solid and crumbling earth, the river corridor becomes the transitory place that creates a contrast.

Learning from: subtle difference between it teaches me about me. And a teacher, that the river actively teaches us. We learn from it, rather than it just being a place where learning happens.

Locals floating down the river: locals without permits float from the “old footbridge” to Sand Island. FG Latent meaning: discussing the “locals river” through remembering the swinging bridge. The feeling of being on the river becomes an expression of freedom.

The community loves the river: people in the Bluff community love the river, they have tender feelings for it.

Regulated by the holy ones: regulate is to bring balance, to restore or synchronize. If the corridor is regulated by the holy ones, we don’t share it with them, they share it with us.

River’s verbs + is(being): quantifiable declarations about what is the river is and what it does.

Learning place: a place where you learned an important skill, or lesson.
#The space difference makes: how borders are spatialized based on difference

« #The space difference makes (8) [The San Juan River is] a boundary

#• Binding place: to make a deep commitment, either in marriage or a promise. FG latent meaning: the river becomes the ties that bind us to the region. That when we go there, we bind ourselves to this place.

«#• Binding place (24) [The San Juan River is] a binding place

#Place to celebrate: where parties and celebrations happen. People come here to have a good time.

«#Place to celebrate (21) [The San Juan River is] a party place.

#Connector-conduit: describing or essentializing the San Juan River as an energy pulse, which implies a constant, animating, percussive life

«#Connector Conduit (7) [The San Juan River is] an energy pulse

#Creates an earth island: viewing landmasses separated by the river as earth islands. FG latent meaning: Vi’s term “islands of this earth” lead to discussion of Casa Del Echo and the San Juan River as being a geographic and geologic border.

«#Creates an earth island (13) [The San Juan River is] a geographic barrier

#Emptiness (Buddhism): that the San Juan river is just a being, being. Understanding the difference between experience and the “isness” of the river. This is a perceived consequence, evident in the code #foil to humanness, which is what the river is perceived to do, which is reveal our attachment to it.

«#Emptiness (Buddhism) (2) [The San Juan River] Just is.

#Is undeniable: (related to #power of the river) it is an obviously powerful place. When was the last time you were frightened by a river? #Power of river: the precipitous feeling when looking/engaging in a spontaneous natural place. Such as standing on a cliffs edge, having a wasp circle around you, or standing on the banks of a river.

«#Is undeniable (17-18) [The San Juan River] might spank you, might skewer you
«#Is undeniable (19) [The San Juan River is] a fearful place

#Linking river to birds: identifying specific birds, or using the term birds, or references to flying migration patterns.

«#Linking river to birds (14) [The San Juan River is] a flyway
#Magic: an extraordinary power, associated with mystery and the unknown

«#Magic (5) [The San Juan River is] magic. MAGIC

#Negative human impact: forms of environmental harm, caused by humans on the landscape. Such as an oil spill, littering, or an introduction of an invasive species

«#(negative) Human impact (10) [The San Juan River is] a pollution carrier and that worries us

#Relieving: Relief, in this data set, is always paired with swimming, getting in the water or shade. Bluff is in the desert! It is a place with extreme heat.

«#Relieving (15) [The San Juan River is] relief from the heat

#Subsidence and emergence: the process of slow erosion caused by the river, an example of constant change

«#Subsidence and emergence (9) [The San Juan River] erodes, shows us subsidence

#Synonymizing river with community: observing that the San Juan River is a common experience, thus, it is synonymized with and creates community.

«#Synonymizing river with community (11) [The San Juan River is] a community builder.
We share the corridor with:
Participants identified groups of beings or entities that share the San Juan River corridor

### Corn societies: Corn societies, a term used by Hyrum John and discussed in FG#1, is another term that encompasses southwestern Indigenous tribes, i.e. the Ancestral Pubeloans, Rio Grande Puebloans, Navajo, or Hopi, or other southwestern tribes who use corn within ritual, or other life sustaining activities.

«#Corn societies (39) [We share the corridor with] corn societies

### Defining the holy ones: in terms of how to share or approach the SJR corridor. We share it with ourselves, who were taught by Diyin, who regulate the corridor. They are all around us, within the in-between and defining the in and the between.

«#Defining the holy ones: (34) [We share the corridor with] Diyin. Diyin is you. Diyin is us. Diyin is holy

### Linking river to trees + seasons: identifying that the San Juan Corridor contains trees, that are affected by seasons.

«#Linking river to trees and seasons (40) [We share the corridor with] the trees

### Locating the zenith + nadir: situating the arcs within the above and below direction

«#Locating the zenith + nadir (42-43) [We share the corridor with] the sky, the earth.

### Origin: references to Navajo, Hopi or Puebloan emergence stories or recognizing ecological systems or directions as the processes that make life possible

«#Origin (38) [We share the corridor with] Bahané

### People traveling: sharing the river with folks who drive across the bridge, with people who drive along side it and might not even know it’s there.

«#People traveling (41) [We share it with] “the highway”

### Sharing with other communities: the term community encompasses human being, mineral, more-than-human, holy and other beings. Sharing with other communities is a rippling awareness.

«#Sharing with other communities (35-36) [We share it with] it’s shared with so many communities and legal jurisdictions is hard to say it’s “ours”

### Time looping past as active: referencing ones who have passed or the archaic ones with active, present language. A collapsing and rejection of what defines occupation of life,
history in the now. History becomes present through acknowledging or having the ones who have passed communicate with us.

«#Time looping past as active (37) [We share the corridor with] history, story and future.

And we use it for
Participants named patterns of use by describing what they did at the river.

#Continual use, providing through irrigation: Bluff is a continually used agrarian landscape, from about 500AD. Agriculture is human history

«#Continual use, providing through irrigation: (54, 56-57) [We use it for] irrigation, corn growing, crop growing

#Evidencing the dichotomy: the San Juan River corridor is a place where dichotomies are obvious, such a solid rock crumbling into sand. The corridor becomes a transitory place creating contrast.

«#Evidencing the dichotomy (51) [We use it for] immersing in different worlds

#It teaches me about me: the river is a place where I reflect and contemplate, so it teaches me about myself.

«#It teaches me about me (58) [We use it for] reflection

#Personal, private time (merged with #thinking place-safe-contemplative place): I am alone, or the only human out in nature. Implies a need to be alone.

«#Personal, private time (50) [We use it for] time meant for ourselves and no one else

#Praying: communications or offerings to the divine

«#Praying (59) [We use it for] prayers, observations of all seasons and times

#Providing and linking to worship: examples of how the San Juan River provides a place to worship, through ceremony, through baptism, prayer, through its relationship to watering the corn.

«#Providing and linking to worship (53) [We use it for] baptism.
«Providing and linking to worship (48-49) [We use it for] …and from the corn we get, what we call our tâdidiin, which is our medicine that we pray with every morning before dawn.

#Taking care of ourselves: using the water for bathing, for taking care of our bodies.

«Taking care of ourselves (52) [We use it for] bathing

#Across are friends: “I have dear friends who live across”

«Across are friends (32) [We share the corridor with] our friends across

#Binding activities within # A binding place: the binds that happen there

«Binding activities (53) [We share the corridor with] Death and Matrimony

#Correlating river with linking and connecting + #Sharing with communities: understanding the river as a linking entity. This is what rivers do, they are linking forces. The term community encompasses human being, mineral, more-than-human, holy and other beings. Sharing with other communities is a rippling awareness.

«Correlating river with linking and connecting + Sharing with communities (53) [We share the river with] our neighbors

#Employment: different jobs, or fields within the San Juan River Corridor:

«Employment (40) [We share the corridor with] Biologists (natural sciences)
«Employment (41) [We share the corridor with] Archaeologists (social sciences)
«Employment (42) [We share the corridor with] Artists (the arts and the storytellers)

#Feeling place, processing place: it is a place to process emotions

«Feeling place, processing place (43) [We share the corridor with] our sorrow, our joy

#Ghosts: beings from an ephemeral realm

« #Ghosts (50) [We share the corridor with] ghosts

#Linking to wildlife networks: identifying that the San Juan River corridor is home to animals, in a wildlife network

«Linking to wildlife network (28) [We share the corridor with] Wildlife
«Linking to wildlife network (30) [We share the corridor with] Feral cows
#Names for different types of guides or experts on the river:
- River runners
- Boaters
- Rowers

#Negative human impact + #Gold king mine spill: forms of environmental harm, caused by humans on the landscape. Such as an oil spill, littering, or an introduction of an invasive species

- The memory of oil spills, when it turned yellow, when we couldn’t water our crops because of the pollution

#Personal/community history with place: memory and place association, that memories are resting in places along the corridor. Our memories, by ourselves, or with others.

- Our memories

#Potential: a future time associated with intuition or with the unknown

- Our possibilities
- With the unknown

#Sanctifying seasons and weather: climate, natural occurrences. FG latent meaning: discussing relationship between Diyin and weather, i.e. the fog. Which is diyin, a holy being. Sharing with weather then becomes a link to worship.

- Seasons and weather

#Thinking place: the San Juan River corridor is a place where I contemplate

- Reflections

#To receive messages (intercession) #Providing and linking to providing worship): that the ethereal ones, i.e. beings that lack material substance or are supernatural communicate with humans. This is an intercessional moment, an aligned moment, asking for a sign and receiving one, or knowing the signs and receiving them. I use the term intercession, because the ethereal communication was qualified as a command.
«#To receive messages (31) [We share the corridor with] *ethereal commands*

#To watch, to measure, to gauge: The river becomes an orienting place where research participants learn about themselves or the natural world.

«#To watch, to measure, to gauge (29) [We share the corridor with] *observation, I look at the river, a lot.*

#Tourist Recreation and Local Guides: formalized expeditions with local river guides, taking folks who do not live in Bluff along the SJR

«#Tourist Recreation and Local Guides (33) [We share the corridor with] *tourists*
«#Tourist Recreation and Local Guides (33) [We share the corridor with] *river runners*
3 And we use it for

Participants named patterns of use by describing what they did at the river.

#Continual use, providing through irrigation: Bluff is a continually used agrarian landscape, from about 500AD. Agriculture is human history

«#Continual use, providing through irrigation: (54, 56-57) [We use it for] irrigation, corn growing, crop growing

#Evidencing the dichotomy: the San Juan River corridor is a place where dichotomies are obvious, such a solid rock crumbling into sand. The corridor becomes a transitory place creating contrast.

«#Evidencing the dichotomy (51) [We use it for] immersing in different worlds

#It teaches me about me: the river is a place where I reflect and contemplate, so it teaches me about myself.

«#It teaches me about me (58) [We use it for] reflection

#Personal, private time (merged with #thinking place-safe-contemplative place): I am alone, or the only human out in nature. Implies a need to be alone.

«#Personal, private time (50) [We use it for] time meant for ourselves and no one else

#Praying: communications or offerings to the divine

«#Praying (59) [We use it for] prayers, observations of all seasons and times

#Providing and linking to worship: examples of how the San Juan River provides a place to worship, through ceremony, through baptism, prayer, through its relationship to watering the corn.

«#Providing and linking to worship (53) [We use it for] baptism.

«#Providing and linking to worship(48-49) [We use it for] …and from the corn we get, what we call our tádíidiin, which is our medicine that we pray with every morning before dawn.

#Taking care of ourselves: using the water for bathing, for taking care of our bodies.

«#Taking care of ourselves (52) [We use it for] bathing
#Altruistic transformation: a transformation of sorts that happens at the river, the verbatim phrase “to lose our confines” implies that the river, or the environment, takes something away or gives, meaning that there is a form of reciprocity between the individual and the river. A felt exchange, or a felt permission.

«#Altruistic transformation (68) [And we use it] to forget our material humanness
«#Altruistic transformation (69) [And we use it] to lose our confines

#Connecting with loved ones: use your immersion in this place to connect with the ones you love, either through thinking of them, writing to them, or being with them.

«#Connecting with loved ones (63) [And we use it for] friendship
«#Connecting with loved ones (72) [And we use it for] romance

#Education: a place to learn, or where learning takes place

«#Education. (70) [And we use it for] Education

#Entrancing awe + #Human Behavior: feeling awe whilst watching water move

«#Entrancing awe (60) [And we use it] to become mesmerized, to watch water move is primordial.

#Feeling place: Feeling place, processing place: it is a place to process emotions

«#Feeling place (61) [And we use it for] relief
«#Feeling place (64) [And we use it] to feel sorrow, to grieve, to get the grief out

#Intuitive Journey: that when you go to the river, you take on a searching or journeying attitude

«#Intuitive Journey (73) [And we use it for] searching

#Orienting: to understand where we are in space and place. When you find the river is becomes a reference place in the landscape.

«#Orienting (71) [And we use it] to orient ourselves

#Place to celebrate: where parties and celebrations happen. People come here to have a good time.

«#Place to celebrate (21) [And we use it for] some, for debauchery.
#Recreation: Examples of use associated with enjoyment

«#Recreation (59) [And we use it for] a playground
«#Recreation (62) [And we use it for] soaking
«#Recreation (66) [And we use it for] trails

#Recreation brings tourists, which brings income: recognizing the relationship between tourist recreation economically benefitting local businesses

«#Recreation brings tourists, which brings income (58) [And we use it for] Our income

#Thinking place: the San Juan River corridor is a place where I contemplate

#Thinking place (57) [And we use it for] endless reflection

#To be with loved ones: activities associated with sharing time with the ones you love.

«#To be with loved ones (72) [And we use it for] Romance
While in this environment/place/corridor we ask that you take time to, x Follow up inquiry that addressed a lack in questionnaire responses, I asked “how do you want people to engage the river?” with this section.

#Abstaining: not crossing the river, unless you are invited, as an expression of respect “will tourists and visitors know that showing respect is you not being there?”

«#Abstaining (68) [Take time to] show respect by not crossing

#Be deliberate in remembering: asking folks to be conscious and enter into a contemplative place, free of technological distractions.

«#Be deliberate in remembering (77-79) [Take time to] Shut off your phone and remember. Ponder life and remember. Slow down and remember.

#Connect with loved ones: use your immersion in this place to connect with the ones you love, either through thinking of them, writing to them, or being with them.

«#Connect with loved ones (76) [Take time to] write your mother

#Feeling place, processing place: it is a place to process emotions

«#Feeling place (72-75) [Take time to] cry, reflect, laugh, love

#It inspires: the feeling of inspiration, opposite of being stuck, one is in the swing of life

«#It inspires (70) [take time to] notice

#Praying: communications or offerings to the divine

«#Praying (69) [take time to] pray

#Respect memory by being here: important events have happened here, the river is always an important event, show respect to history by being here in the present.

«#Respect memory by being here (77-79) [take time to] Shut off your phone and remember. Ponder life and remember. Slow down and remember.

#Synonymizing water with life: equating water with life

«#Synonymizing water with life (67) [take time to] remember Tō eí ina, dajini, but it’s so true!
x and consider

**Across are friendships:** “I have dear friends who live across”

» Across are friendships (84) [Consider] the privacy of our neighbors

**Diyin:** How the holy ones appear and balance

» How the holy ones appear and balance (86) [Consider] Diyin

**Generative:** a source, by its virtue is generates and sustains. This is what the lifeway does.

» Generative: [Consider] (82) that rivers are singular precious entities

**Linking wildlife networks:** identifying that the San Juan River corridor is home to animals, in a wildlife network

» Linking wildlife network (85) [Consider] animals

**River is another word for human history:** that all beings within this region have been affected or impacted by the river.

» River is another word for human history (83) [Consider] The San Juan’s role in our remarkable history

**A water seed:** is an individual’s internal geography of water. Latent meaning, that when you approach a river recognize that folks have different “water seeds” that teaches them what water is, or how it behaves. That we all carry a certain “identity water seed” that orients us to ourselves. A water seed is an orienting and contrasting tool.

» A water seed (79) [We ask that you consider] the identity water seeds: my water seed is river, for some their water seed is ocean, lake, pond, creek or rain.

**Angling perspective:** flipping the questions away from human use and asking “what is important to the river?”

» Angling perspective (76) [We ask that you consider] what is important to the river?

**Don’t assume you know the river:** the river is alive and has surprises, don’t assume that you know how it is going to be. Not to pacify the river, because the region is rough so the river can be rough.
“#Don’t assume you know the river (83) [We ask that you consider that] Living in this region is not easy, sometimes the rivers not easy.

#Feeling place, processing place: it is a place to process emotions

“#Feeling place, processing place (84) [We ask that you consider] our solace

#Intuitive journey: that when you go to the river, you take on a searching or journeying attitude

“#Intuitive Journey (79) [We ask that you consider] That if you come here, you often end up where you end up. You don’t necessarily decide

#Ghosts: ephemeral realm beings

“#Ghosts (86) [We ask that you consider the] ghosts

¤#Magic: an extraordinary power, associated with mystery and the unknown

“¤#Magic (87) [We ask that you consider the] magic

#Negative Human Impact: forms of environmental harm, caused by humans on the landscape. Such as an oil spill, littering, or an introduction of an invasive species

“#Negative human impact (85) [We ask that you consider] the invasive species

“#Negative human impact (82) [We ask that you consider] your environmental impact

#Suggested Behavior: prescriptions of use

“#Suggested Behavior + #To watch, to measure, to gauge (78) [We ask that you consider] what would it be like to stay in one place for 24 hours and watch?

“#Suggested behavior# + #To watch, to measure, to gauge (77) [We ask that you consider] what is the color of the river, it changes often

and take time to x

#Be considerate: thoughtful of the feelings and rights of others

“¤#Be considerate (96) [Take time to] be considerate
“¤#Be considerate (97) [Take time to] be welcoming
#Maintain the Bluff hush (100) Be quiet so you can hear the sound of the river, or the sounds of nature around you.

«#¤Maintain the Bluff hush (100) [Take time to] maintain the Bluff hush.

#Realize this energy pulse matters: to realize is to bring into concrete existence, or to become fully aware. Realize, or realization, into the importance of the river, which is identified as an entity, an energy pulse, that it is a source.

«#¤ Realize this energy pulse matters (95) [Take time to] realize this energy pulse matters

#Know where you are: learning about the place and as Neon explained in SSI, “learn a little, not a lot, about how we do here”

«#¤ Know where you are (98) ) [Take time to] educate yourself

#Understand the finite: a non-renewable being, really contemplating how scarce some of the places are within the corridor. Understanding the consequence of a finiteness.

«#¤ Understand the finite (99) [Take time to] Be a protector of the finite of the fragile

#¤Unplug: choose to abstain from using technology

«#¤ Unplug (94) [Take time to] unplug

Please abstain from
They gave examples of behaviors or beliefs surrounding how the river did not matter.

#Do not locate: examples of leaving traces to have people access where you just were. Imploring people to not leave location data, through media and actual evidence, such as cairns.

«#¤ Do not locate (103, 105-106) [Please abstain from] Geotagging, Building Cairns, Oversharing on Social Media