**Station Program Offer Release**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (Date)

**New Revelations Unlocking the Mysteries of a Lost Ancient Civilization**

Logo)

 **Presents**

**WRITTEN ON THE LANDSCAPE: MYSTERIES BEYOND CHACO CANYON**

 (Airdate/Time, Channel)

**And Streaming Free on the PBS App.**

**(City, State)  ---   (Station               )** — In the scorching New Mexico heat of late June 1977, atop a butte in Chaco Canyon, Anna Sofaer made a discovery that would unravel the enigmatic astronomy of ancient America. What followed over the next four decades was a journey of profound exploration, collaboration, and revelation through the Solstice Project, shedding light on a civilization steeped in complex cosmology.

Sofaer, an esteemed American researcher and educator specializing in the archeoastronomy of the Ancestral Puebloans of the American Southwest, embarked on this journey with the rediscovery of the astronomical marvel known as the Sun Dagger on Fajada Butte in Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Through meticulous research, Sofaer and the Solstice Project unveiled a celestial calendar etched in the landscape, recording the rhythmic dance of the sun and moon.

Establishing the non-profit Solstice Project in 1978, Sofaer has since spearheaded groundbreaking endeavors, including producing peer-reviewed research papers, two illuminating documentaries that have aired on PBS stations nationwide, and the upcoming new film, *Written On The Landscape: Mysteries Beyond Chaco Canyon.* Insights from Puebloan advisers and new understandings of Mesoamerican parallels shed light on the symbolic power of cardinal directions, the interplay of vertical and horizontal axes, ritual roads, cacao, shells, spirals, and the sun and moon.

*Written On The Landscape: Mysteries Beyond Chaco Canyon*, delves deeper into the remarkable world of Chaco Canyon, and presents the latest research, in an area known for its magnificent architecture that flourished 1000 years ago, across an immense high desert of the American Southwest. **The film** **premieres on (Day  /  Date  /  Time  )      on    (Station / Channel)  \_\_\_\_\_  and is available streaming on the PBS App.**

“People with extraordinary expertise in astronomy, geology, and archaeology have given generously to our studies,” says Sofaer. “Visiting with Puebloan descendants has deepened my knowledge and inspired me through the years. They have encouraged our research into the science of their ancestors and offered sensitive insights into their historical and spiritual connections with Chaco. It is their insights that create the story of our new film”

The initial film *The Sun Dagger* (1982) is a testament to Sofaer's pioneering work, showcasing the intricate celestial architecture of ancient North American Indians. Hailed as an astronomical marvel comparable to the Pyramids and Stonehenge, the film unveiled the profound scientific knowledge of the Chacoan culture.

*The Mystery of Chaco Canyon* (1999), delved deeper into the enigmas of Chaco, revealing a civilization that meticulously designed and constructed ceremonial buildings aligned with celestial patterns. Far from a mere trade center, Chaco Canyon emerged as a crucible of astronomy and cosmology, where the landscape itself spoke the language of an ordered universe.

Now, *Written On The Landscape: Mysteries Beyond Chaco Canyon* (2024) continues the exploration of discovery of the Chaco Canyon world of magnificent architecture that flourished 1000 years ago, and unveils Sofaer and the Solstice Project's latest research, revealing how astronomical alignments and their connections to the sacred landscape in the central canyon are mirrored throughout the Chaco world. With aerial imagery, precise surveying, and LiDAR technology, the research uncovers a Chacoan region extending from Chaco Canyon across 70,000 square miles of the American Southwest --- a vast high desert known as the Four Corners. The film expands our understanding of the culture’s reach, of their ritual architecture, the enigmatic ‘roads’ across this region and explores its connections with Mesoamerica.

As the journey unfolds, the depth of the Chacoan people's knowledge and ingenuity continues to astonish, reaffirming their legacy as pioneers of scientific observation and spiritual integration. The film also serves as a clarion call to protect this ancient resource from degradations of the landscape through energy extraction and disregard for the environment.

"Every new discovery in the Solstice Project’s research holds immense significance," emphasizes Philip Tuwaletstiwa (Hopi), a pivotal member of The Solstice Project's team for over three decades. As the former Deputy Director of the NOAA’s National Geodetic Survey, Tuwaletstiwa spearheaded the Solstice Project’s precise surveys of the major Chaco buildings from 1984 to 1997. "Our ongoing research not only offers a fresh perspective on Pueblo history but also provides a profound appreciation of Native American scientific prowess. This knowledge is invaluable, especially for younger generations, as it illuminates the remarkable achievements of their ancestors."

*Written On The Landscape: Mysteries Beyond Chaco Canyon* showcases the enduring genius of the Chaco people, leaving audiences in awe of their advanced engineering skills and profound astronomical knowledge, applied in acts of spiritual devotion. Puebloan participants in the film affirm their historical connections with Chaco Canyon and the larger region, giving insights into the spiritual significance of the Chacoan people’s remarkable achievements.

*"This film is a journey not only through history but through the very soul of a land and its people."* — Robert Redford

**Websites:**

<https://solsticeproject.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/solsticeproject>

**Trailer:**

<https://vimeo.com/880297649>

**Film Credits:**

* Anna Sofaer, Producer & Director, Founder, The Solstice Project, Researcher and Educator on the astronomy of the Chaco Culture
* Christopher Beaver, Editor & Co-Writer
* David Valentine, Cinematographer
* Helen Colton, Associate Producer

**Film Participants & Advisors:**

* Richard Friedman, Archaeologist
* Petuuche Gilbert, Acoma Pueblo, Educator and Activist
* Adriel Heisey, Pilot, Aerial Cinematographer
* Alonso Mendez, Archaeo-Astronomer, Artist of Maya heritage
* Elena Ortiz, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, Educator
* Paul Pino, Laguna Pueblo, Educator and Historian
* Patricia Sandoval, Laguna Pueblo, retired Superintendent of Laguna Middle School, former Director of Planning and Evaluation at the Santa Fe Indian School
* Phillip Tuwaletstiwa, Hopi, former Deputy Director of the National Geodetic Survey
* Robert Weiner, Archaeologist and PhD in Chaco Archaeology

**About the Solstice Project:**

The Solstice Project studies the rich astronomical heritage of the ancient Chaco culture in the American Southwest. Founded in 1978 by Anna Sofaer, the non-profit organization publishes research and produces award-winning films that document the Chaco culture’s scientific achievements.

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(Insert Station Boilerplate)

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