"The Origins of Anthropogenic Fire in Arid Australia"

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295 FASB (Sutton Bldg.)
Abstract
Understanding when people began applying fire to the landscape is a central question in the prehistory of Australia. Some suggest that human lit fires began with the initial colonization of the continent, immediately transforming Australia's ecosystems. Others suggest that people did not begin burning until quite late in the Holocene, and that these fires had very little environmental impact. In this talk I outline the results of long-term ethnographic and ecological work examining the effects of anthropogenic fire regimes on Australia's arid zone environments. These findings generate novel proxies that can be used to identify Aboriginal fire regimes in the archaeological record, suggesting a Holocene date for the origin of anthropogenic fire. These results have implications for the management of Australia's deserts including the conservation of vulnerable fauna.

Bio
Dr. Brian Codding's research focuses on the ecology of foraging economies in the past and present. He maintains archaeological and ethnographic research projects in Australia and Western North America focused on understanding the nature of human-environment interactions among hunting and gathering populations. He received his bachelors from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, masters and PhD from Stanford University. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Utah.