Southwest Contemporary

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Two Years After the Flood: Recovery, Resilience, and the Road Ahead

1 message

Roswell Museum <museum@roswell-nm.gov> Fri, Oct 23, 2026 at 6:50 PM
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Two Years After the Flood: Recovery, Resilience, and the Road Ahead



Two years ago, on October 20, 2024, a devastating flood changed the course of the Roswell Museum’s history and our community's. In a matter of hours, the museum sustained extensive damage to its building and collections, beginning a recovery effort of extraordinary scale and complexity. As we mark this anniversary, we reflect on the challenges of the past two years, the progress made through remarkable collaboration and support, and the work that remains.

Before the flood, the Roswell Museum was looking toward an exciting future. We had recently completed reaccreditation by the American Alliance of Museums and were in the midst of significant facility improvements, including new flooring, an expanded lobby, a new Museum Store, and plans for a family interactive gallery. Just days before the flood, we had begun facility master planning to guide the museum’s development over the next 20 years, reflecting a commitment to strengthening the museum for future generations.

The flood abruptly changed those plans. Our priorities shifted to stabilizing the building, protecting the collections, and assessing the damage. Museum staff, conservators, contractors, volunteers, City staff and officials, and numerous partners came together under challenging circumstances. As the initial emergency gave way to recovery, it became clear that the museum faced not months, but years of complex and painstaking work.

Milestones in Recovery

Over the past year, we have reached several meaningful milestones. Artworks belonging to other individuals and institutions have been conserved and returned to their owners,

and conservation of the museum's courtyard sculptures has been completed. Preparations are underway to send flood-damaged artifacts from the Robert H. Goddard Collection and several large-scale sculptures to conservation specialists. Treatment is also being scheduled for objects housed above the flood line that were nevertheless affected by airborne silt and elevated humidity.

These projects represent just a portion of the museum's extensive recovery effort. Thousands of objects—including paintings, works on paper, sculptures, historical artifacts, and archival materials—require specialized assessment and care. Conservation will continue for several years, with work taking place both in Roswell and at laboratories across the country. Much of this effort remains unseen by the public, but it is essential to preserving the collections for future generations.

We have also been encouraged by the community's continued support. The success of the RMAC Foundation's recent "Preserve Our Past" fundraiser demonstrated the generosity of those who believe in the museum and its future, providing important support for conservation. Throughout our closure, off-site exhibitions, educational programs, special events, and partnerships will continue to help us maintain connections with the community while our primary focus remains on the recovery.

Looking Toward the Future

Even as conservation continues, we are looking more fully toward the museum's future. In the coming months, we will invite the community to help envision the Roswell Museum's next chapter through an initiative led by Public Design Agency (PDA), with support from the New Mexico Humanities Council and the McCune Charitable Foundation. At the same time, we are beginning a comprehensive museum planning process to guide decisions about a future facility, exhibitions, and visitor experiences. Together, these efforts will help shape a museum that reflects our community's aspirations and serves generations to come.

Anniversaries invite us to reflect on the passage of time, but recovery is not always easy to measure. Although the challenges have been considerable, they have been matched by the dedication and determination of our staff, recovery partners, the City of Roswell, and the many individuals and organizations who have supported us along the way.

Two years later, our recovery is far from complete, but our purpose remains unchanged. We are committed to preserving the museum's collections, sharing the stories they hold, and building a vibrant future for this institution. I am deeply grateful to our members and community for their patience, encouragement, and enduring belief in the Roswell Museum. We look forward to the day when we can welcome you through our doors once again.

Until then, thank you for being part of the Roswell Museum's story—and its next chapter.

Caroline Brooks

Museum Director













Museum After Hours:
Recovery, Rebuilding & What's Next

Wednesday, November 18 | 6–7:30 PM
Interstellar Beer & Wine Lounge at Stellar Coffee
315 N. Main St.

Join us at **Museum After Hours**, a new monthly series bringing the Roswell Museum into the community through engaging presentations and conversation about art, history, conservation, and the museum's future.

For our November program, Museum Director Caroline Brooks will share highlights of the museum's ongoing recovery, recent milestones, and the rebuilding process. The presentation will also introduce an upcoming community visioning initiative, inviting residents to help shape the Roswell Museum's next chapter.

The presentation will be followed by conversation and socializing.

This event is generously supported by Stellar Coffee and the RMAC Foundation.



Stay Connected with Friends of the Roswell Museum

As the Roswell Museum continues its recovery, we invite you to join Friends of the Roswell Museum, our free program for staying informed and involved while the museum is closed.

Friends receive museum news, conservation and recovery updates, event invitations, and opportunities to participate in shaping the museum's future.

There are no dues. Whether you've been a longtime supporter or are just discovering the museum, we invite you to stay connected!

Become a Friend

Roswell Museum

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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