

*Welcome to Earth Matters – field notes on the geology of New Mexico's
Enchanting Landscapes.*

Celebrating Earth Science Week, I'm Bruce Harrison

I had absolutely no idea when I graduated from High School that I would eventually be teaching Geology in a University in New Mexico. I grew up in New Zealand, a country where agriculture is very important so I went to university and graduated with a degree in Agricultural Science. My first job was working as a soil conservator for the New Zealand equivalent of the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The main focus of the work was to determine the agricultural potential of all the land in New Zealand taking into consideration the susceptibility for soil erosion. After a few years I decided that I did not know enough about soils to do the job adequately so I returned to university to do a Masters in Soil Science. A few more years working and I came to the realization that I needed to understand more about Geology. So I made a major shift and came to New Mexico to study geology at UNM for what I thought would be 4-5 years. On finishing my PhD, I spent 2.5 years in Jerusalem on a post doc then got a position at NM Tech and have been here ever since. Although I have three degrees from what sound to be very different fields, I have been working with soils for my entire career. Over this time I have worked in neotectonics, identifying the record of past earthquakes, helped with archeological studies in Mongolia and the US, and more recently I have focused on the role calcium carbonate or caliche has on water movement in soils. I love the wide variety of applications soil have and the opportunities it has given me to work in many places around the world.