

The Uncompahgre Journal

January 2020 CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY Volume 37, Issue 1

Our January Presentation

Mark Your Calendar

Jan 7: [Hisatsinom Chapter](#) monthly meeting with Kari Schleher and Kelly Throgmorton on Crow Canyon's Northern Chaco Outliers Project. First United Methodist Church, 515 N. Park Street, Cortez, 7:00 pm.

Jan 8: [SJBAS](#) monthly meeting with Connie Massingale on the use of pigment in SW pictographs and artifacts. Center of Southwest Studies Lyceum, Fort Lewis College, 7:00 pm.

Jan 9: Montrose Historic Resources Survey Plan. Help the city identify its vision, goals, and objectives for historic preservation. Centennial Room, 433 S 1st St, 5:00 pm.

Jan 13: [CAS-GJ](#) monthly meeting with John Seebach on the latest in Paleo-Indian research. Redlands United Methodist Church, 527 Village Way, GJ, 6:30 pm.

Jan 15: Chipeta monthly meeting with Rand Greubel on prehistoric stone structures on the Plateau (*right*). United Methodist Church, S 1st and Park Avenue, Montrose, 7:00 pm.

Feb (date TBD): Red Mountain Mining District Snowshoe Tour. Uncompahgre Water Partnership and Ouray County Historical Society.

Feb 4: Hisatsinom chapter monthly meeting with Tim Kearns on Basket-makers in the Chuska mtns. First United Methodist Church, 515 N. Park Street, Cortez, 7:00 pm.

Feb 5: Montrose Historical Society monthly meeting, program to be announced. Pioneer Room, Friendship Hall, Fairgrounds, 7:00 pm.

Recent Research on Prehistoric Stone Dwellings on the Uncompahgre Plateau

by *Rand A. Greubel*

Archaeologists have known about circular stone structures on the Uncompahgre Plateau and neighboring regions since at least the 1920s. Most have Ancestral Puebloan pottery indicating they are at least 1,000 years old. Excavations were undertaken between the 1920s and the 1970s, but this work was sometimes substandard even for the time and poorly reported. Some unexcavated sites have been looted, but against all odds, a few of the remaining stone structure sites retain intact archaeological deposits. Although no new excavations have been undertaken, recent field examinations and other research have resulted in new ideas and hypotheses concerning the inhabitants of these ancient dwellings.



Rand Greubel is a co-owner of Alpine Archaeological Consultants in Montrose and has worked as an archaeologist in western Colorado for over 35 years





The Squint and Juanita Moore Scholarship

Created in honor of Chipeta Chapter founding member Carlyle "Squint" Moore and his wife, the scholarship is awarded each year to a deserving high school senior or college student intending to enroll or already enrolled in an Anthropology or Archaeology program.

Students can apply online [here](#) at collegeXpress. Note that the deadline is April 1.

The scholarship is managed by the Montrose Community Foundation. If you wish to donate, please send your tax deductible donations to the Montrose Community Foundation, PO Box 3020, Montrose, CO 81402.

The Uncompahgre Journal
Published 9 times annually
by the
Chipeta Chapter
of the
Colorado Archaeological Society.
P.O. Box 593
Montrose, CO 81402
Submissions for publication
may be emailed to:
Dave Batten, david.batten@enmu.edu

President's Corner

by Sally Johnson

Photo by Sally Johnson

Welcome, 2020! I want to thank everyone for their support during my first year as president. It has been great getting to know everyone in the chapter, especially on the field trips and at the monthly meetings. As you found out, sometimes I am challenged with PDFs, mass emails when the summer has ended, but I appreciate all the help keeping me on track.

Thank you, site stewards, for showing us your sites, and if there are any stewards that would like to showcase their sites, just let Bill Harris know. This year again we will be having a planning session for field trips for the upcoming spring and summer. If you have a certain place that you would like to visit, please let us know.

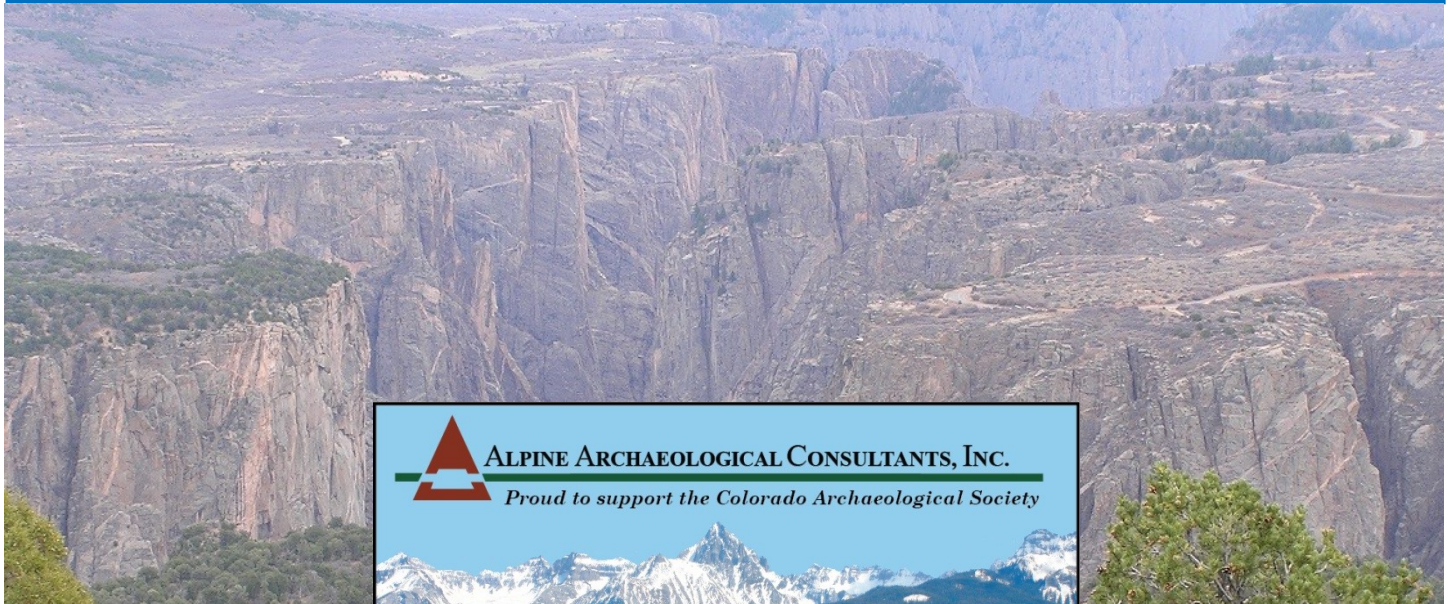
The current Board members will be staying on for another year, which is great now that they have me kinda trained. There is an opening for the membership chair, which I am currently doing. Also, we still need someone who would like to volunteer to be the State CAS representative, or maybe a couple of people to share this important committee spot!

It is also that time of year where renewals are due, so be sure to keep an eye out for the email. As the monthly meetings continue, if you happened to know a speaker or topic that might interest the Chapter or public please let Leigh Ann know.

On another topic, I want to thank the members for their cash midden and yearly donations. I want to thank everyone who attended the Holiday party and of course the summer gathering! At the Holiday party, the silent auction raised approximately \$275.00 for the Moore scholarship fund. Thank you all for the items that you donated and/or purchased.

By the way, I have a green LL Bean jacket with a logo of Grand Valley Power on the front, size Large, that was left at the Holiday Party on a chair by the fireplace. Just let me know when I can return it to you, and hopefully, you have another warm jacket on these cold days.

See you at the next meeting!



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From the Editor

I saw a blog by Holly Norton a month or two ago. Holly is our State Archaeologist, and in this case she was blogging about a case of pseudoarchaeology that seems to be specific to Colorado. Pseudoarchaeology fits under the broader term of pseudoscience. It encompasses lots of things, most notably the constantly recurring ideas of early great civilizations founded by space aliens or perhaps gods and demigods, creatures that controlled knowledge far beyond what we know, and sometimes had seemingly supernatural powers, or powers of the mind untapped by our society. Think Erich von Däniken, or more recently Graham Hancock. Holly was writing about a phenomenon called Bent Trees, or Ute Trees.

Bent Trees are nothing more than bent trees familiar to most of us—trees that have grown through some hard times, seeking sunlight, trying to grow out from under some obstruction, or surviving damage from something like lightning or porcupines. However, some self-serving people around the Colorado Springs area have been pushing the idea that these deformed trees are culturally modified trees. They say they were bent into strange shapes by Utes, who were using them to show the way to some prominent mountain top, or to express some spiritual value.

Norton points out that there are indeed culturally modified trees. The Utes and other groups during periods of starvation, would strip the bark off living trees—often Ponderosa pines—to get at the cambium on the inner

surface of the bark, which has some nutrient value for humans. Bark can also be used for such things as cradle boards. Of course, there are also the bark artists, such as the sheepherders who were noted for their illustrations on aspen bark. One such artist, Pacomio, was the subject of a recent book by local archaeologist and author, Steven Baker.

However, there is no evidence that the trees fitting in the Bent Tree category have been modified intentionally by humans. According to Norton, Ute leaders deny any such use (or abuse) of trees. There are many less energy- and time-consuming ways to indicate the way to a place. Besides, the Ute were effectively removed from the Front Range by 1868, so any tree less than 150 years old could not have been modified by Utes.

It would be nice to believe that these are just well-meaning citizens who are unaware of the remarkable capabilities of trees to grow toward light even around obstacles, or to react to damage with furious growth in unexpected places. So what if a few misguided people indulge in the fantasy of culturally modified Bent Trees? It turns out that these folks are not so benign.

The problem is that this small circle of people have been using books and social media to argue that these trees must be identified and protected in any land use activities around the area, whether it be fire mitigation, timber harvesting, or recreation development. They have managed to convince at least some land-owning entities to pay them (the self-declared experts) to survey for and identify these trees before land use projects can be carried out. In the process, true archaeological survey is not carried out, and real cultural resources are potentially missed and destroyed. The situation has gotten completely out of hand, as these so-called Bent Tree experts have threatened lawsuits against legitimate archaeologists, ethnologists, and Ute representatives who have tried to educate the public about their erroneous claims.

In her blog, Dr. Norton stresses the importance of challenging pseudoarchaeology—and all pseudoscience—through education. The public must be able to see through these fanciful claims, maintain a healthy skepticism, and recognize the value of science in all its messiness. For some tips on recognizing pseudoarchaeology, check out the authors recommended in Dr. Norton's blog post (see below).

Holly Norton, "What's Up, Archaeology?" blog: "Bent Trees Part 1: Pseudo-archaeologies," https://whatsuparchaeology.com/2019/02/11/bent-trees-part-1-pseudo-archaeologies/amp/?fbclid=IwAR1n3KTfN62zt_zArxSrCBf7TrVLLP2SejtSQh3VABONUWr6FJ_IU3NjRA, accessed 1/2/2020.

Thanks to Susan Chandler-Reed for calling this blog to my attention.



Chipeta Chapter
Colorado Archaeological Society
P.O. Box 593
Montrose, Colorado 81402



Membership Application

Date: _____

Name: _____

Street or RR Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

(email required to receive Chipeta & CAS newsletters & field trip info)

Check One:

☐ New
☐ Renewal

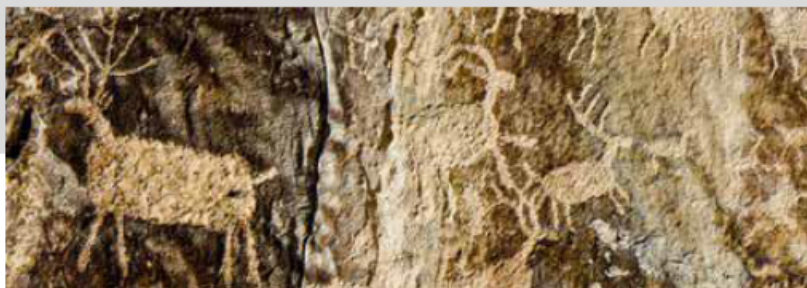
Annual Dues* (includes state CAS dues): Check one

☐ Family (2 or more members same household)\$40
☐ Individual\$35
☐ Student (Circle if Individual or Family).....\$25
☐ Senior/Disabled** (Circle if Individual or Family).....\$25
☐ Secondary (Circle one) Individual (\$10) or Family (\$15)
☐ Opt out of printed **Southwest Lore**

***Southwest Lore** is the journal of the Colorado Archaeological Society: print copies are mailed quarterly to all members except seniors, who receive electronic (PDF) copies.

****Senior** is any person who is at least 65 years of age; **Disabled** is any person who is permanently disabled.

Photos by Dennis DeVore



Code of Ethics

As a member of the Colorado Archaeological Society, I pledge to:

- Uphold local, state, and federal antiquities laws.
- Respect the property rights of landowners.
- Report vandalism to appropriate authorities.
- Support only scientifically and legally conducted archaeological activities.
- Conduct field and/or laboratory activities using professionally accepted standards.
- Not condone the sale, exchange, or purchase of artifacts obtained from illegal activities.
- Be sensitive to the cultural histories and spiritual practices of groups that are the subject of archaeological investigation.
- Accept the responsibility, if serving as principal investigator, to publish the results and make the collection available for further study.

Signature: _____ Other Family Signature: _____

Make checks payable to "Colorado Archaeological Society" and mail the signed application to:

Chipeta Chapter
P.O. Box 593, Montrose, CO 81401

CHIPETA CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

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- **CAS Rep:** open, Nick Ard filling in

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- **Membership:** Sally Johnson, sjcas1@gmail.com
- **BLM Liason:** Bill Harris, trlgpa48@gmail.com
- **Library:** Linda Manske, manske46@gmail.com

OTHER COMMITTEES AND POSTS

- **Scholarship:** Jon Horn / Bill Harris/ Fred Henderson, trlgpa48@gmail.com

CHIPETA CHAPTER WEBSITE

- <https://www.chipetachaptercas.org>

TO JOIN OR RENEW:

- Go to the Chipeta Chapter website and follow the membership links.

Want More?

[Archaeology Southwest](#) is a great link to find out about current issues and events relating to South-west Archaeology.

Chipeta February Speaker

To be announced

Field Trip Committee

Leigh Ann Hunt, Joe Oglesby, and George Decker

For more information on upcoming field trips and to sign up, please contact the Field Trip Leader

Masthead photo courtesy of Carol Patterson. All other unattributed photos are by the editor.