

The Uncompahgre Journal

March 2022 CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 39 Issue 3

Our March Presentation

Communal Hunting in the Colorado High Country

By Aaron Whittenburg

Communal hunting is an effective method of procuring large amounts of meat in a relatively short span of time, but it also represents a significant investment in time and resources to successfully coordinate and conduct a hunt. This is even more true above tree line. Alpine communal hunting sites are found along nearly every major pass and travel corridor in Colorado from Rocky Mountain National Park to the I-70 corridor (with a major exception for the sites at Monarch Pass) and most of these rest at elevations above modern tree line. These sites indicate prehistoric hunter-gatherers actively modified the alpine landscape by building complex arrangements of stone features to optimize the procurement of medium and large-bodied ungulates during seasonal migrations.

This talk focuses on two projects I have participated in that relate to alpine communal hunting: the Rollins Pass project and the James Peak Wilderness Project. The talk discusses broad generalities and trends in these sites and uses examples from the two aforementioned projects to provide more fine-tuned detail before wrapping up with discussions for possible avenues of future research.



Mark Your Calendar

Mar 2: Montrose County Historical Society monthly meeting, with Marshall Pendergrass on "The Red Canyon Area." Pioneer Room, Friendship Hall, county fairgrounds, 7:00 pm.

Mar 9: San Juan Basin Archaeological Society monthly meeting, via Zoom, with Ryan Harrod on the Chacoan use of social control. Go [here](#) for specifics. 7:00 pm.

Mar 16: Chipeta Chapter monthly meeting, with Aaron Whittenburg on communal hunting in Colorado high country (**right**). United Methodist Church, 1st Street and Park Avenue, 7:00 pm.

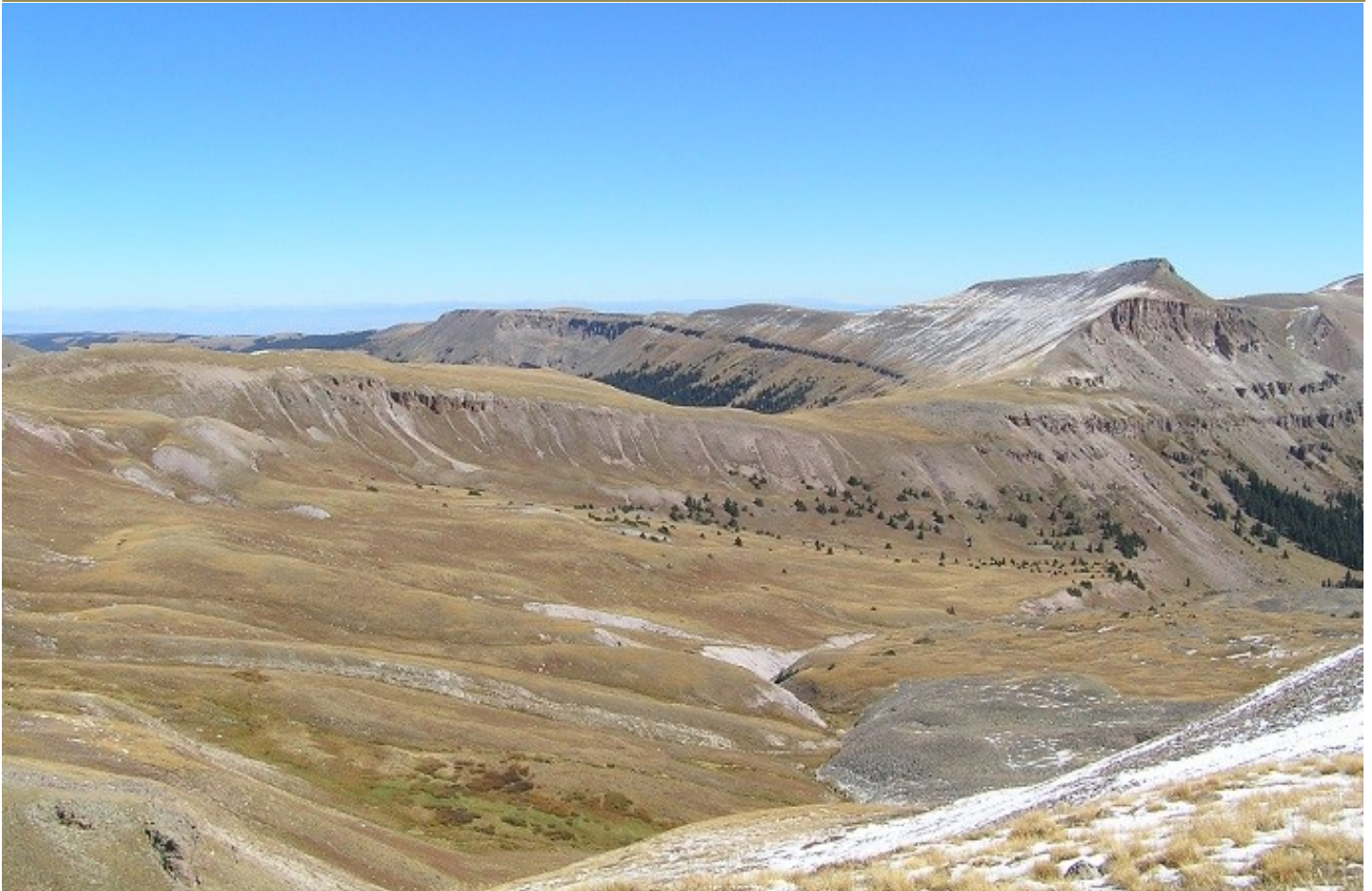
Mar 13-14: Chipeta Chapter Field Trip to the Verde Valley and Agua Fria National Monument. See announcement below (**page 4**).



This month's Featured Speaker: Aaron Whittenburg

Aaron hails from northwestern Montana, from a small town near the Idaho and Canadian borders. He moved to the big city of Bozeman, where he got his Bachelor's degree in Anthropology at Montana State University in 2012. He made the move Colorado in 2013 where he got his Master's degree in Anthropology at Colorado State University, focusing on mountain archaeology, in 2017. His Master's thesis is titled *Communal Hunting in the Colorado High Country: Archaeological Investigations of Three Game Drive Sites Near Rollins Pass, Grand County, Colorado*.

Aaron began working for Metcalf Archaeology in 2016 and now lives in Grand Junction, serving as Staff Archaeologist and Crew Chief for the office there, where his primary roles include fieldwork and report writing. His research interests remain the prehistoric Native American occupation of the Rocky Mountains, Western Slope, and High Plains of Colorado. In particular, he is interested in the interaction of groups inhabiting these regions and how that is manifested in the archaeological record. In his spare time, you'll usually find him hiking or backpacking with his pup Blaze, playing tennis, building wooden boat models, gardening, or reading.



President's Corner


by Sally Johnson

Photo by Sally Johnson


It was great to be back to a face-to-face meeting and see all those smiling faces. If you were not able to make it last month, please put the next meeting on your calendar for March 16th, (no there is no typo, February's meeting was also on the 16th). Last month was full of special dates 2-2-22, or 2-22-22, but with spring solstice coming up it brings up the question "How important was the solstice to rock art and the makers?" There is always the speculation that brings the many questions when you are viewing the images, too bad they did not leave a manual for interpretation for the future gawkers. If you have that special site and you would like to share it with a fellow group of enthusiasts, please let Leigh Ann know.

I want to thank Annette Butts for her many years of

upholding the position of Secretary for Chipeta. We did finally hold a board election at the last meeting. There was a nomination of Susan Henderson for the Secretary position, and all were in favor. We welcome Susan to the board. It should be noted that all other board members have chosen to stay for another year. Be on the watch for trip announcements soon, if you are having problems receiving any emails please let me know.



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Chipeta Chapter (two-day) Field Trip

Verde Valley and Agua Fria National Monument

Trip Date: Sunday and Monday, March 13-14 2022 (*two days*)

Both days will meet at the Verde Valley Archaeological Center (VVAC) at 460 Finnie Flat Road.

This trip will be guided by Leigh Ann Hunt and Rob Elliott, Arizona site steward. On the first day, we will visit significant Sinagua culture pueblos (Oak Creek, others) along with checking out the new, relocated Verde Valley Archaeological Center in Camp Verde, and its Heritage Garden.



For the second day we will visit Arrastra Creek in Agua Fria National Monument with the site steward coordinator for that area. This canyon contains many unusual petroglyphs, and grinding slicks in bedrock. The Monument, located near the interstate north of Phoenix, contains hundreds of late Puebloan sites and rock art along a flowing stream.

Time permitting, we will be able to add other sites in Camp Verde such as Red Tank Draw rock art and Sacred Mesa waffle gardens and ruins, Clear Creek or Wingfield mesa pueblos, and you may visit Montezuma Well and Castle and Palatki and Honanki ruins on your own.

RSVP Leigh Ann Hunt at lahunt970@gmail.com or 970-314-3124.



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 at collegeXpress—and 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. Please put "Moore Scholarship" in the memo line.

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Dave Batten, david.batten@enmu.edu

From the Editor

When I was a kid, I had soft teeth. Every time I saw the dentist, he found cavities. I had tons of silver in my mouth, and six gold crowns by the time I graduated from high school. I was periodically miserable in those days, but learned the importance of keeping on top of my dental health. I religiously observe those six-month check-ups, and tolerate—with no particular enthusiasm—the half-hour ritual teeth scraping and poking that temporarily rids me of my accumulation of plaque. I've already lived longer than the average Paleolithic or Mesolithic hunter-gatherer, and good dental care may have helped me achieve that.

But in the process of keeping myself healthy in this way, I've been letting scientists of the future down. Seems like there is a lot to be learned from teeth.

Teeth are the most durable parts of the human body, and often survive long after every other part of us has returned to dust. Teeth can be a valuable window into ancient populations and their relationships through time, and by studying tooth wear, we can also glean details of how people lived. Mineralized plaque, called calculus, can also be mined to help build a picture of past lifeways. The bane of my sub- and early teen existence, and of many individuals from farming societies both ancient and modern, can inform us about subsistence in the deep past.

The farther back in time you go, the harder it is to find evidence of plants as part of the diet of our early ancestors. Typically, the information we had on diet came from animal bones in association with human structures or features. As a result, we believed paleolithic people ate only large animals like mammoths, horses and reindeer. More than likely, the nutrition provided by small animals like mice and gophers and marmots and rabbits and turtles made up a much larger portion of the paleodiet than the so-called megafauna, but our information was biased by the vagaries of preservation and the recovery techniques of early archaeologists. We have in the interim learned to screen the sediment removed from archaeological units, and to use flotation techniques to recover plant remains from hearths and other activity areas.

But old teeth contain a resource that has only recently become possible to exploit—dental calculus. Science

has gotten incredibly good at identifying organisms from smaller and smaller chunks of evidence. Starch grains, which can often be identified to the genus level, are among these relatively newly accessible forms of microscopic evidence. Cristiani et al. (2021) have used this new approach to examine dental calculus at high magnification for clues to the kinds of plants eaten by early societies. Working with collections from the Danube Gorges in Serbia and Romania, they selected teeth from 60 individual burials, ranging from the Early Mesolithic (early middle stone age) at about 11,500 years ago, to the Early Neolithic (early farming period) at around 8000 years ago. After cutting the calculus off the teeth, they cleansed the samples of more modern sediments and dissolved the calculus in hydrochloric acid, which, amazingly, does not destroy the starch. The tiny starch granules reveal that the ancient hunter-gatherers were eating grains from local wild grasses from the botanical “tribe” that includes wheat, barley, and rye, among other genera—thousands of years before agriculture was introduced to the area by farmers from the east. Cristiani et al. don't reveal how the calculus was cut (or scraped) from the teeth; the only clue was that a new blade was used for each sample.

Of course, the presence of starch grains from grasses in the calculus doesn't help us to quantify the proportion of the diet provided by plants, but it does get us closer to a more balanced view of paleodiets.

Cristiani et al.

2001 Wild cereal grain consumption among Early Holocene foragers of the Balkans predates the arrival of agriculture. *eLife*, 10:e72976. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.72976>



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 Chapter 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

☐ 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, and a .pdf is posted to Member365 for download.

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 81402

CHIPETA CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

- **President:** Sally Johnson, president@chipetachaptercas.org
- **Vice Pres:** Leigh Ann Hunt, vp@chipetachaptercas.org
- **Secretary:** Susan Henderson, secretary@chipetachaptercas.org
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- **CAS Rep:** Nick Ard, casrep@chipetachaptercas.org

STANDING COMMITTEES

- **Newsletter:** Dave Batten, editor@chipetachaptercas.org
- **Membership:** Sally Johnson, membership@chipetachaptercas.org
- **Site Steward Coordinator (acting):** Leigh Ann Hunt, sitestewards@chipetachaptercas.org
- **Library:** Linda Manske, library@chipetachaptercas.org

OTHER COMMITTEES AND POSTS

- **Scholarship:** Jon Horn / Bill Harris / Fred Henderson, scholarships@chipetachaptercas.org

CHIPETA CHAPTER WEBSITE

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

TO JOIN OR RENEW:

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

Program for Avocational Archaeological Certification (PAAC)

For information on On-Demand PAAC courses, visit:

<https://www.historycolorado/paac-event-schedule>.

PAAC Contacts

Rebecca Simon

rebecca.simon@state.co.us
Assistant State Archaeologist/
303-866-4671

Dave Upchurch

PAAC Coordinator
paac@chipetachaptercas.org

Want More?

Archaeology Southwest is a great link to find out about current issues and events relating to Southwest Archaeology.

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.