Presenting: Tim Riley, Ph.D. Curator of Archaeology at the USU Eastern Prehistoric Museum in Price, Utah

Eating along the edges of agriculture: A comparison of Fremont and Ancestral Puebloan coprolites from the northern Colorado Plateau

May 20th, 7pm, First Methodist Church, Montrose, CO. free to the public

This talk presents an evaluation of coprolite specimens from Fremont and Ancestral Puebloan sites as records of individual dietary decisions. Most archaeologists recognize that the Ancestral Puebloans were farmers heavily dependent on their staple crop of maize. Fremont diet has been seen as much more variable, with maize farming being only a part of their broader subsistence strategy. Coprolite specimens present a direct opportunity to compare and contrast the dietary patterns among these contemporary archaeological cultures. Prior studies of coprolites from this region have greatly expanded our knowledge of past subsistence patterns, but have not taken full advantage of the record of individual dietary decisions recorded in each coprolite specimen. Patterns of dietary consumption related to seasonality, habitat exploitation and diet breadth are all present in the data available from coprolite specimens. The menus, or dietary combinations, reflected in individual coprolite specimens are assessed through the identification of congruent dietary components from each specimen. The resultant menus reflected in these clusters are evaluated with reference to a diet-breadth model developed for the region.

Dr. Tim Riley is the Curator of Archaeology at the USU Eastern Prehistoric Museum in Price, UT. He received his undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago and his doctorate at Texas A&M University. He has participated in fieldwork across the Midwest and Southwestern United States. Within the field of archaeology, his specialty is paleoethnobotany, or the study of past human use of plants for subsistence and other aspects of material culture. His research has ranged from assessing diet with coprolites in Texas to examining changes in vegetation associated with agricultural intensification along the Mississippi river. There is a strong ecological approach to his research, focusing on past cultures as an integral part of their environment.
I’m thinking about when I first started graduate school and was required to take two semesters of method and theory in archaeology. I thought, “Let’s see...method: that would be about digging square holes using the metric system, 10-cm levels, keeping track of artifacts that come out of the ground. But how much theory could be involved in that? Perhaps a lively debate about why square holes are better than round ones?” I didn’t really see what there was about archaeology that could involve much in the way of theory. Turns out the University of New Mexico was the right place for me to be.

For most of the time I was there, Lewis Binford was also there. In 1984, when I started, he was arguably the preeminent theoretician in the field of archaeology at the time. His ideas weren’t universally accepted, but whether you were for him or agin’ him, you had to take his ideas into account. He made several key points. 1) Archaeological remains don’t talk—you can’t commune with them, whisper to them, or absorb knowledge in any way directly from them. 2) We can’t assume that human actions were the sole causes of the location of artifacts or artifact clusters on the ground. 3) Since artifacts and other material remains were the expression of the technical and social aspects of human existence, those are the kinds of questions we can hope to answer about the past—the organization of the sociotechnic aspects of society. 4) Since human societies are dynamic and archaeological remains are fixed, or static, we must create bridging arguments, or bridging theories, to connect the fixed positions of artifacts in the present to the dynamic social behavior of the past.

That meant we had to study modern, living societies (or well-documented historical societies) that were organized in about the same way as the social systems of concern in the past, in order to see how people’s activities worked in patterned ways to create an interpretable distribution of artifacts and features on the ground. We can’t see the past; we can only see the result of patterned human action. And there are lots of possible actions that we have to take into account. The point is, we must keep ourselves informed about the behavior of disposal in different kinds of societies and activities within those societies in order to be able to say anything about the distribution of artifacts on the ground. And we have to understand the natural processes of decay of structures and deposition of sediment as we attempt to interpret the information embedded in buried sites.

I just attended the April quarterly meeting of the CAS in Salida, and brought back with me a bunch of raffle tickets to support the Alice Hamilton Scholarships, presented each year to promising archaeological scholars in Colorado. The three raffle prizes are a beautiful Acoma polychrome seed pot and two spectacularly carved Native American flutes. We’ll get information out to you soon about how to purchase those raffle tickets. The other important news from Salida is that there is now an officially revived Grand Junction chapter of CAS. That means we’ll be able to share resources, such as speakers and field trips.

Speaking of speakers, this month is Tim Riley, Curator of Archaeology at the USU Eastern Prehistoric Museum in Price, Utah, will be comparing the diets of the Fremont culture with those of their neighbors, the Ancestral Puebloans. I hope to see you all there. Dave Batten
Debeque area field trip.
There were 15 Chapter attendees, with a new site shared by member, Jim Liewer in addition to the scheduled panels at Horseshoe Canyon.

At Horseshoe, we scrambled around and viewed the amazing array of strange glyps, thought to be historic Ute because of very abstract horse and rider, signlanguage symbols and very little patination.

The site's associated pithouses have been reduced to rubble after being entirely dug by pot hunters in the 70s and a more recent roof fall. Ed Horton

Photos by Ed Horton and Carol Patterson
Spring Creek Survey on a Spring Day

Under the direction of BLM archaeologist, Glade Hadden, and with support from Brian Haas, USFS archaeologist, 5 members of the Chipeta Chapter participated in the archaeological clearance of 2.8 miles of a corridor for two proposed non-motorized trails in Spring Creek Canyon. It was a fine, spring, bluebird day in April that lured Mike and Mary Ward, Bill Harris, Barb Brown and Russ Barr to hike some rugged country southwest of Montrose.

The proposed trail corridor had been flagged prior to the survey, so it was just a matter of forming a survey line, walking and searching for sites and the artifacts – an easy task you might suppose. The rugged terrain, spring runoff and thickets of undergrowth proved otherwise. The parameters that dictate the construction of a sustainable trail aren’t influenced for the most part by presence of vegetation and undergrowth along its course. All those obstacles can be cleared during the construction phase of the trail project, but are present during the archaeological survey work.

The crews got their fill of bushwacking and wet feet by the end of the day, but the results of the survey proved satisfying. Several isolated finds including two projectile points and a mano were recorded. Two sites were identified, a small prehistoric camp site and a large early 1900’s dumpsite. The campsite consisted of a thin scatter of flakes, a metate and a hammer stone. The dumpsite was filled with old datable cans and glass, most of them predating World War I. No cabin or structure was near the dump, and the location right next to the existing two track, suggests that the dump materials were just hauled in and discarded.

Thanks to Glade Hadden for including chapter members in this fun project, and to Brian Haas for lending his professional expertise to the project. Thanks to the chapter members listed above for volunteering their time. 35 hours of volunteer time were dedicated to the project, and saved Glade at least two days of work. The end result will be some nice hiking and biking trails in a beautiful setting. Bill Harris

The Moore Scholarship Recipient this year is:

Victoria Riggs of Fruita Highschool.

Huge Trash dump found up on top.
Seiks Canyon in Grand Gulch Primitive Area. Green Springs and site of the Green Mask

Women's Business: Some observations:

This site has 4 sets of two female figures. The first two are so faint that only the red triangles show up now. White pigment is fugitive and disappears after a few centuries. The headdress are very hard to see. They appear more clearly in the new book out now on Cedar Mesa. The white ghosts of the heads and shoulders can be seen in better enhanced photos. The two on the left may have just the center area of their torsos emphasized.

The two on the right have bare panels on their chests and a second bare panel with the breast nipples depicted in red. The reset of their bodies are dabbed with red finger prints. They are significant in referring to being “sacred”. The body gesture of hanging hands and feet with does down, means ‘dead” as a gesture, but it refers to being an “ancestors” or those who have died but are present now. So generally speaking, these are Grandmothers (old ladies with low hanging breasts).

“Prayers to the Sun begin like this: “Dawn Old Women; Dawn Matrons; Dawn Girls, have risen standing to their sacred place saying “let it be now” four times, drawing up our grandmothers making her arise.” Bunzel pg 640.

The next pair of ladies also have their nipples or areola in red paint. These women are painted in white also and it has remained more visible. The red painted hands in supplication to them may suggest prayers to these ancestral women. These are mature fertile women.

The fourth pair of women with their tiny nipples may be an even younger generation of women. They are immature females.

The final panel shows real women with the event of a breech birth. The little central figure with breasts may be a midwife. It is situated near the hand of the woman. This gesture infers that she is “giving a helping hand”.

Any comments and suggestions are certainly welcome. Carol Patterson, Urraca2fly@gmail.com
Site Stewardship Class Planned

The Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service will host an archaeological site stewardship class on May 23, 2015. The class is mandatory orientation for the site stewardship program.

Site stewards are volunteers who regularly visit prehistoric and historic archaeological sites to monitor their condition. Issues relating to vandalism and site deterioration are reported to the BLM staff archaeologist. The Site Stewardship Program is coordinated through the Chipeta Chapter, CAS. It is currently monitoring 50 sites with the help of 39 volunteers. This summer the program will expand to cover sites on Forest service lands. Volunteers need to be physically fit since many of the sites can only be accessed on foot, or are at high altitude, or both.

The class will take place from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm at the Public Lands Office, 2505 S. Townsend in Montrose. Bring a lunch, drinks – we may do a short field trip, so appropriate hiking gear is recommended. All supplies and paperwork will be provided. For more information or to sign up contact Emily Hoerner at the Public Land Office in Montrose – 240-5300 or by email ehoerner@blm.gov

Field Trip Committee
George Decker - gdeckercc@gmail.com, Ed Horton - hortoned@gmail.com, Carol Patterson – Urracapro@aol.com Bill Harris - trlgpa@skybeam.com

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

News worthy: “American Archaeology” Spring issue 2015 Vol 19, No. 1, there are two articles of interest on rock art:

Page 26-31 - “Searching for the Origins of Pueblo Culture” by Tamara Stewart. This article includes a full two-page color photo of the petroglyph Procession Panel from southeastern Utah.

Page 50-51 “Twenty-five Acres Added to Wells Petroglyph Preserve”.

In “Ancient American” March, 2015, Volume 18, Issue #106, there is an article on another Utah site:

Membership Application

Date: ____________________________
Name: ____________________________
Street or RR Address: ____________________________
City: __________________ State: ______ Zip: __________
Telephone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

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

Check One:  
____ New  
____ Renewal

Check One: **Annual Dues** (includes state CAS dues)
____ Individual with Southwest Lore* .................. $30
____ Individual no Southwest Lore ..................... $20
____ Family with Southwest Lore * .................... $35
____ Family no Southwest Lore ....................... $25
(Family = 2 or more members, same household)

*Southwest Lore is the journal of the Colorado Archaeological Society and is mailed quarterly. Most of our members elect to subscribe, and it helps support CAS.

**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 "Chipeta Chapter CAS" and mail the signed application to:

Dennis DeVore
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Grand Junction, CO 81507

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OTHER COMMITTEES AND POSTS

- Scholarship Jon Horn / Bill Harris/ Bill Manske
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- PAAC: Beverly Kolkman 970.835.4109
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- Upcoming Events
  May 2 / June 6 / July 11 / August 8 /
  September 5 / October 3
  Lamb Spring Archaeological Preserve
  Tours
  Littleton, Colorado
  http://lambspring.org/
  July 31-August 3 / August 14-17 / September
  11-14
  Mitchell Springs Excavation
  Cortez, Colorado
  http://www.fourcornersresearch.com/
  August 6–9
  Pecos Conference
  Mancos, Colorado
  https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pecosconfere
  nce/203021673045677
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