

The Uncompahgre Journal



January 2016

CHIPETA CHAPTER OF THE COLORADO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 33, Issue 1

Mark Your Calendar

January 20: Chipeta Chapter speaker, Sonny Shelton. 7 pm, United Methodist Church, Park Avenue and South 1st Street, Montrose. See "A Bison Tale," right.

Also on the meeting agenda: we will vote on the nomination of Dan Elsner for Vice-President. Thanks, Dan for stepping forward.

We're still accepting nominations for President!

January 23: State CAS Quarterly Meeting hosted by Indian Peaks Chapter (Boulder). Niwot Grange, 195 Second Ave., Niwot, CO

February 17: Chipeta Chapter speaker, David Sucec, entitled "In Plain View: Considerations Of Style In Prehistoric Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art." 7 pm, United Methodist Church, Montrose.

February 18: David Sucec will also speak at a Feb. 18 meeting of the Grand Junction chapter. 6:45 pm, Grand Junction City Hall / City Council Chambers, 250 N. 5th St.

March 17-20: CCPA Annual Meeting 2016. The Historic Steam Plant Event Center, Salida, CO.

A Bison Tale: Prehistoric Bison Hunting in Western Colorado

Recent archaeological investigations by Grand River Institute have resulted in a more complete picture of the occurrence of bison and of bison processing locations in western Colorado. Data compiled on the presence of bison in western Colorado was previously limited to approximately 170 locations and was often represented by a single bone or bone fragment. Recent excavations and research by Grand River Institute (GRI) and Dominguez Archaeological Research Group (DARG) have resulted in the recovery of a significant number of culturally modified bison bones, fleshers and other prehistoric tools dating back 900 years. The presentation will include an overview of known and recent discoveries and will explore how GRI and DARG research results have aided in the development of theories related to regionally specific hunting techniques.



January Speaker, Sonny Shelton

Holly "Sonny" Shelton is an archaeologist, geoarchaeologist, and field crew member for Grand River Institute and is a Dominguez Archaeological Research Group (DARG) associate. She is a technical illustrator for Grand River Institute and DARG and her work is soon to be featured in the 2016 University of Utah Press publication of Curtis Martin's "Ephemeral Bounty: Wickups, Trade Goods, and the Final Years of the Autonomous Ute". She is actively involved in the Colorado Wickup Project for which DARG was awarded the History Colorado Stephen H. Hart Governor's Award for Historic Preservation in 2014. Presently she is engaged in the Western Colorado Bison Project, a DARG project focused on prehistoric occurrence and procurement of bison in western Colorado. Shelton is involved with the Old Spanish Trail Association, North Branch Chapter and volunteers for the Museum of Western Colorado and Boy Scouts of America.



From the Editor

This is my inaugural issue of The Uncompahgre Journal, taking over from Carol Patterson, who had graciously taken on most of the load of putting out the journal after we lost Bob Dundas in the spring. I owe a great deal to the work Carol did in those months, using her basic template and formatting. I welcome constructive criticism from the membership as I work to create a newsletter that conveys the information that you want to know. My email address is david.batten@enmu.edu.

I wanted to note that Chipeta member Jerry Searcy was one of the lucky winners of a prize from the Alice Hamilton Scholarship Fund raffle held in October (*right*).

Congratulations to Jerry! I saw the two flutes and the Acoma pot at the CAS Quarterly Meeting in April of last year. They were uniformly gorgeous.

The 2015 Christmas Party at Two Rascals was a lot of fun, and the silent auction was a resounding success. Two Rascals was warm and congenial venue for the party and everyone seemed to enjoy it. There was lots of food—I'm pretty sure nobody left hungry. The beer was of course excellent! I'm happy to be able to report that the silent auction brought in \$496, which all went into our coffers, since the space was free. Thanks to all who donated items for the silent auction, including Two Rascals for their generous contribution of a growler. Thanks also to all who came and who made one of the many delicious dishes for the potluck!

Chipeta Member Wins Raffle!

Jerry Searcy
(Palisade)



Jerry Searcy with the Native American flute he won in last October's Alice Hamilton Scholarship Fund raffle. It was one of three prizes given away in the 2015 raffle.



Negro Gulch Recording Session a Big Success

By Bill Harris

On a clear, cold day in November members of the Chipeta Chapter ventured out into the canyons west of Delta. The objective was to record a series of rock shelters along a rugged canyon called Negro Gulch. Our caravan led by BLM archaeologist, Glade Hadden crept along a rocky two-track that took us to the merging of Club Gulch and Negro Gulch. From there we hiked a short distance to the first of several rock shelters that had been used by prehistoric peoples.

Archaeologist Leigh Ann Hunt and others had visited the rock shelters, so the extent of cultural remains was pretty well known. Chapter member Ed Horton had visited the area many times in the past, and had scoped out the area for other sites.

Our recording crew included Barbara Brown, Alex and Laurie Labak, Ed, Leigh Ann and me. After a brief orientation session by Leigh Ann, we divided into teams of two. With

clipboard and tape in hand two teams recorded the dimensions of the rock shelters. Ed and Laurie concentrated on recording the small rock art panel at the largest of the rock shelters.

Several small work areas were noted within a few of the rock shelters that had ashy-stained soil, charcoal, fire-cracked rock and ground stone, but the bulk of the cultural debitage was large chunks of lithic material. Each of 8 associated rock



The largest rock shelter at the site.

shelters was recorded. All had a southeast to southwest orientation – a common finding for prehistoric sites indicating a late fall to early spring habitation timeframe.

What became abundantly apparent was the great amount of lithic material consisting of an off-white quartzite—a common tool-making material found in western Colorado. Indeed, there is a source of this lithic material within the site boundaries. Dozens of large to medium-sized bifaces were

located and photographed. The bifaces are chunks of the quartzite that had been reduced in size so they were more portable. They would have been used to fashion expedient and formal tools.

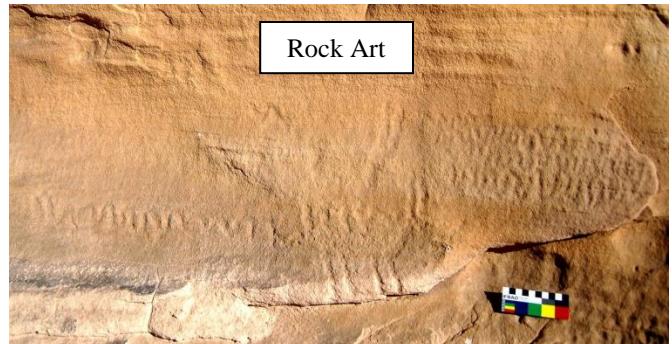
The site covers over ten acres and has been named 5DT2015. A few more rock shelters have been located above the recorded rock shelters and will be recorded in the future and added to the site report. No datable tools or materials were located, so a timeframe for site use isn't

known. A late to middle Archaic time period is suspected, but it may have been used as recently as the 1800's by the Utes.

The CAS team completed their work by mid-afternoon. A formal site report will be produced by Leigh Ann Hunt. Projects like this one give chapter members an opportunity to



Barb Brown and Laurie Labak record one of the rock shelters



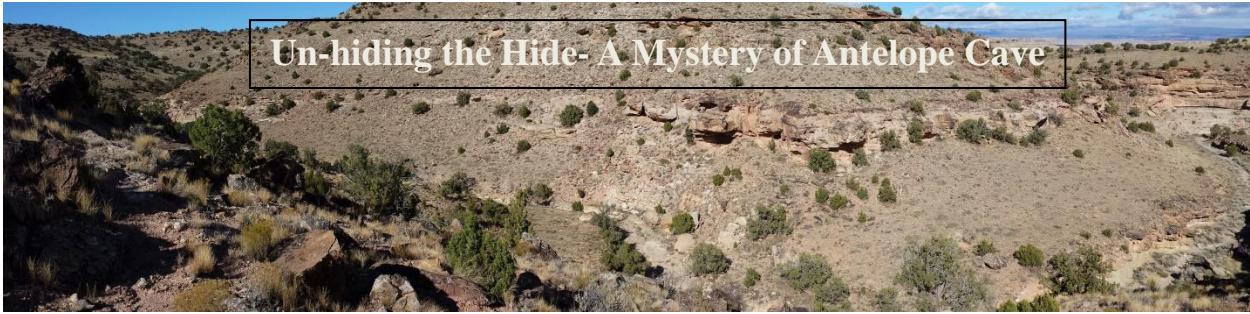
Rock Art

do bona fide archaeological work, and contribute to our understanding of western Colorado's past cultures. As an auxiliary benefit, pothunting damage was also recorded, which greatly benefits the cultural resource as a whole.

Thanks to Leigh Ann hunt for her professional expertise and interest in the project, to all the crew members who volunteered their time and to Glade Hadden for his support of the project.



Two bifaces



by Leigh Ann Hunt

In November the Chipeta chapter helped to officially record the prehistoric rock shelters and rock art (which we have now named the Antelope Caves) in Negro Gulch, near the Gunnison River. Since we did not hike all the way up to the upper level of possible rock shelters to see if they were part of the site, several members followed up with a visit in December. They found several more shelters and lithic scatters high up in the next cliff band above the gulch, along with an unusual fragment of cut, cleaned animal hide partly buried in sand. This dried piece of hide, about ten inches diameter and six inches long, has yellowish long hair on one side, clean rawhide on the other side, and clearly human-cut edges. The crew members reported the new find to me, the archaeologist in charge of the site documentation for BLM.

A few days later, when other chapter members were visiting the same rock shelter, a rodent had commenced nibbling on the fragment. Fearing for its safety, the members removed and packed out the hide artifact, although collection is normally contrary to BLM practices. The item has now been carefully mapped and added to the site documentation as a collected artifact. Soon Glade Hadden at BLM will send it for detailed examination by a faunal remains specialist in Wyoming. But mysteries will remain. Here are the facts:

1. The rock shelter the artifact was found in is about 6 meters across, 4 meters deep, and the artifact was about a meter (three feet) from the back wall where the ceiling is only about a meter above the floor.
2. There isn't much perishable material in the Antelope Cave site. Although dry and sheltered, most of the alcoves contain only lithic artifacts. The hide fragment would be very unusual there.
3. The fur-covered hide fragment, about 20cm



diameter and 15cm long, was scraped clean on the inside and was cut from a leg or neck of a large animal, as it is like a short tube or cylinder. It has no sewing, holes, or signs of having been made into anything.

4. The shelter it was found in was almost devoid of rat midden or animal sign, but the hide was partly buried in clean sand. It is possible the shelter was the lair of a large predator, like a bobcat or coyote, thus keeping rodents at bay. If so, the visit of the Chapter members may have caused the cat to leave, thus exposing the thing to the rat nibbling.
5. The hide is from a large animal such as elk, deer, or cow. Could it be bison or horse?
6. The hide might date from prehistoric occupation, from Archaic to Ute, or from historic times, or even from the man the Gulch was named for around 1900. It could be modern. The only way to date it would be to send it for radiocarbon dating; at \$500 per sample the BLM is not likely to do this.
7. Even if it could be dated to ancient times, which would be fascinating, the hide fragment has almost no other information for archaeologists since it is not a completed object. It would be a little like dating a chunk of chert that had never been shaped into a tool.

Why is the hide chunk in such a remote shelter, far from the main part of the site, the water source, and the other signs of habitation? Why did rats start nibbling it the same week it was found by the Chapter members? Is it related to the site, or a coincidence? What species is it from? And *how old is it?*



Is it a chunk of bison hide harvested by a passing Ute 150 years ago? Or is it a piece of cow or a poached elk left by a hunter just recently? Should the Chipeta chapter members pay for a C14 date to help solve the mystery? What do you think?

January State CAS Meeting

by Nick Ard

The January 2016 Quarterly State CAS meeting will be held on the 23rd in Niwot (near Boulder) at the Left Hand Grange #9 Hall. The building is an historic structure which has housed Grange meetings since the early 20th century and remains as a modern day outpost for the 19th century rural Grange organization. Jack Warner, term limited president of CAS for the last two years, will be replaced by president elect Karen

Kinnear. Karen is a member of the Indian Peaks Chapter. The new vice president is Bob Rushforth, member of the Denver chapter and the Colorado Rock Art Association. Other officers that were elected at the October state meeting and will either begin or continue their duties include Treasurer Preston Nieson and Recording Secretary Kris Holien.



Chipeta February Speaker

David Sucec of Salt Lake City, Utah, will be the Chipeta Chapter's February speaker. His talk is entitled, "In Plain View: Considerations Of Style In Prehistoric Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art." He is active in research into the

Barrier Canyon rock art style (BCS), and is the director and co-founder of the BCS Project, whose mission is to document and photograph all BCS images.

The Uncompahgre Journal
Published 8 or 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:
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Want More?

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

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



Date: _____

Membership Application

Name: _____

Street or RR Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

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

Check One:

- New
 Renewal

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

- Family with Southwest Lore* \$40
 Individual with Southwest Lore* \$35
 Senior no Southwest Lore \$20

(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
353 Dakota Circle
Grand Junction, CO 81507

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- **Vice President:** Dan Elsner (to be confirmed)
- **Secretary:** Annette Butts,
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- **Treasurer:** Jim Douras, mtncpa@montrose.net
- **CAS Rep:** Nick Ard, nrard@bresnan.net

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- **BLM Liason:** Bill Harris, trlgpa@skybeam.com
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For more information on upcoming field trips and to sign up, please contact the announced Field Trip Leader