

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **March 19 - 25, 2012**

Destination: **Agua Fria National Monument**

Leader: **Richard Robinson**

Number of Participants: **4**

Four Brave members of SJBAS braved the high winds and threatening weather to travel to the Camp Verde AZ area and camp between March 19 and the 25th. Due to uncertain road conditions, we decided to stay at Beaver Creek CG. Our social committee arranged to have camp fires each evening with live Concertina music (singing was not allowed) on two evenings. Many of the other campers joined in to share stories and even invited us over on another evening for a dinner feast. However, late one evening a few days after we arrived, we had put out the campfires as we normally did. This night in the dark suddenly we all heard a horrific sound coming from the stream. It sounded like a reptillicus stomping thru the forest with branches snapping, and boulders rolling around. Those sounds preceded the sound of a great flood of water roaring down stream. The river rose rapidly, and we monitored it throughout the next several hours. Yes, a mini flash flood from the melting snow many miles north of us had arrived at a frightening time.

During our stay at this camp we visited many sites both nearby and up to 40 miles away. One afternoon we hiked in the Red Tank Draw area and viewed several petroglyph panels and realized that more would be found if the steam level were lower. This terrain was used as several pre-historic travel routes. We also hiked the Bell Trail and found both petroglyphs, and then hiked along a beautiful stream to the Casner Butte ruins. We also toured Scarred Mountain, a hill top site with maybe 50 to 60 rooms and enjoyed great views near the V-V heritage site. We toured the V-V petroglyph site and viewed the equinox sequence two days after the vernal equinox. A stone plate had been carved to produce a shadow replicating the San Francisco Peaks skyline. Here we attended an Archaeological fair, where the skills utilized for daily life were demonstrated. This included sandal making, fire starting, pottery skills, flint knapping and other events.

Clear Creek Ruins and Beasley Flats ruin were also visited. The jury is still out as to whether the many large caves below the site, which also overlook the Verde River, were ever either occupied or even used. In case these great sites and activities were not enough, we also went to the Aqua Fria National Monument and visited the Badger Springs ruin with its awesome views. We saw the magnificent Little Baby Canyon site, which was only accessible from one side, that also had great petroglyphs (many large quadrupeds and maybe even a one of astronomical significance).

Despite concerns of road conditions making Pueblo Pato inaccessible, we made it into this site without a hitch. This large village had over 150 rooms and seven room blocks. This site on the edge of several steep canyons has great views. The basalt rock faces below have many rock art panels, with representations of humans, quadrupeds and possibly the night sky. At this site we made one serious error which had potentially severe consequences. A member almost stepped on a mating pair of rattlesnakes who did not appreciate the interruption and viciously made their presence known.

During the beginning of our trip a request was made to walk every day, and I think we met that requirement. I thank the BLM for keeping the monument remote, and would like to remind our members to please respect all wildlife.

Prepared by: Rich Robinson Participants: Rich Robinson, Jim Shadell, Linda and Pete Groth