

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **August 19, 2012**

Destination: **Champagne Springs Excavation**

Leader: **Barbara Lawson**

Number of Participants: **6**

On August 19, six SJBAS adventurers were given an up-close-and-personal tour of the 300-room Champagne Springs excavation in progress by its director, archaeologist David Dove. From the test trenches begun with a backhoe to the meticulous work completed with dental picks, Dave and his field school volunteers are learning more about the Pueblo I to Pueblo II transition period in the northern San Juan—900 to 1075.

Discovering fantastic ceremonial burials of a variety of animals including dogs, turkeys, rabbits, and snakes makes each day of work an adventure. During the more than two-hour period of our visit, six tiny arrow heads were discovered with trowels, brushes and screening trays. One highlight of our visit was examining a beautiful turquoise pendant that had been discovered shortly before our arrival, the second one this week. Earlier recovery of a gorgeous, curved ceremonial point/blade and an obsidian bird effigy pendant encourage everyone to participate in future field work. Sound exciting? Have you ever had a desire to get your hands dirty looking for such ancient wonders? Dave's school might be just right for you.

But by far and away the best part of the tour was detailed explanations and insightful interpretations given by Dave. For over an hour and a half we systematically toured this fascinating site learning of the discoveries and improved understanding obtained from each of some half dozen active trenches. One pit structure exhibited three major remodels as it evolved from four central posts and wing wall pit house, through removal of the wing walls and addition of a clay bench with posts against the perimeter wall, to ultimately containing a masonry bench with socketed post pilaster predecessors. Champagne Springs is truly a unique archaeological site which is sure to gain widespread attention over the next few seasons.

- Prepared by Barbara Lawson

Participants: Barbara Lawson, Ray Turner, Diane Skinner, Tom and Lydine Hannula, Irene Wanner