



THE MOKI MESSENGER

September 2021

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

sjbas.org

September 8 Monthly Meeting

Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, September 8**, and held via Zoom. The speaker will be Wirt Wills, UNM Professor who will present: “Reconstructing the Pueblo Bonito Mounds: New Data and Models.” For information on the speaker and joining the meeting go to sjbas.org.

President’s Message

Dear SJBAS Members,

The Junction Creek Campground Group Picnic Area turned out to be a wonderful



place to hold our picnic and semi-annual meeting. Thank you to our Social Co-

Chairs, Michelle and Mark McKibben, for their hard work in making the picnic a

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successful and fun event. And, thank you, to the volunteers who helped set-up, grill, and clean-up.

I also want to thank all of our Board Members and volunteers - SJBAS could not function without them! Please consider volunteering and lending a hand - most likely you will find yourself having fun getting to know other members and working with them. Please see the Volunteer Opportunities list in this newsletter.

It's hard to believe that Fall is approaching. We hope you all keep safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Susan Hicks

SJBAS President

Upcoming Field Trip Focus: Ute Mountain Tribe Service Day and Backcountry Tour of Ancestral Puebloan Sites, Sept 25-26

The Ute Mountain Tribe arranges for us to do various projects that our members can do to their own physical limits. The tasks range from cutting tree limbs to making ladders, painting and doing some light trail work. On the second day a Ute guide will take us to back country Puebloan sites. There's an option to camp locally on the Mancos River. Carpooling in a 4W drive from the campsite may be needed. Contact Jim Shadell at shadelljim@gmail.com for more information and to sign up.

Field Trips, Speakers and Other Events for 2021

See SJBAS.org for details on each of these field trips or events.

You must be a SJBAS member to participate in field trips. All are welcome to attend speaking events.

Dates	SJBAS plans the field trips. Meetings will be in-person meetings and offered through Zoom.
September 3	Durango Walking Tour with Historian Andy Gulliford. For more information or to sign up contact andy@agulliford.com .
September 8	SJBAS meeting - Wirt Wills, UNM Professor will present: "Reconstructing the Pueblo Bonito Mounds: New Data and Models." See sjbas.org for Zoom connection details.

September 25-26	Ute Mountain Tribal Service Day & Tour of Ancestral Puebloan Sites. The Tribe arranges for us to do various projects that our members can do to their own physical limits. The second day a Ute guide will take us to back country Puebloan sites. There's an option to camp locally on the Mancos River. Carpooling in a 4W drive from the campsite may be needed. Contact Jim Shadell at shadelljim@gmail.com for more information and to sign up.
October 13	SJBAS meeting - Douglas MacDonald will present: "Before Yellowstone: 11,000 Years of Native Americans in the National Park."
October 17	Bluff Rock Art Day. This Trip is Full. After a day of rock art viewing there will be a wine and cheese reception at Andy Gulliford's house near Bluff. For more information or to sign up contact Andy at andy@agulliford.com . Limit of 10.
November 10	SJBAS meeting – Dr. Stephen Lekson will talk about Paquime
December 4	SJBAS Annual Holiday Brunch

Modified Field Trip Covid Policy

The SJBAS field trip policy remains the same as published in the [June Moki](#)

SJBAS Board meeting and Semi-Annual Membership Meeting Highlights

From the June 9, 2021 Board meeting minutes:

- John W. Sanders Internship Fund donations to the Center of Southwest Studies, \$1,000 per semester for the academic year 2021-2022, were approved.
- Hunter will create a SJBAS Facebook page in order to help attract new members.
- A Covid policy was created, the picnic was planned for, advertising and increasing participation in field trips was discussed, Board members will call members to let them know we are starting to open up.
- The budget was reviewed, discussed, and approved.

From the August 11, 2021 Semi-Annual Membership meeting minutes (held during the picnic)

- SJBAS is looking for a secretary (see item below)
- The group voted to hold the 2022 Summer Picnic at the same location.
- There will be a New Member Orientation as soon as Covid conditions allow. This will be advertised in the Moki.
- A suggestion was made for SJBAS to be involved in the excavation of the Ft. Lewis Indian Boarding School. This will be looked into.

SJBAS Board Secretary Position Open

The position requires on average a few hours per month plus attendance at four quarterly board meetings. Please email Susan Hicks at sc53hicks@gmail.com to learn more.

Job Description: The Secretary is responsible for preparing and distributing minutes of Board meetings and the SJBAS Annual Membership meeting; maintaining a physical and electronic file of documents pertaining to SJBAS activities throughout the year; and maintaining a physical and electronic file of documents pertaining to SJBAS operations. You can see a detailed job description on sjbas.org.

Trip Report: Tavaputs Ranch and Range Creek Tour, Aug 16-20

Nine SJBAS members spent two-plus days in August at Tavaputs Ranch and Range Creek. Most of us would readily admit that the journey to and from the remote ranch was about as memorable as the *planned* archaeology tour. Tavaputs Ranch is accessed by driving up 4,000 feet of rocky switchbacks and then traversing miles of



single-track dirt roads and opening numerous locked and unlocked gates, some with ominous signs about trespassing. And always with the risk of a cow encounter around every bend.

At the Ranch we were warmly greeted by the owners, Butch and Jeanie Jensen. Jeanie is the niece of Waldo Wilcox who is renowned for saving Range Creek from pothunters. That afternoon we were treated to a bucking 4W

drive tour of the Tavaputs Plateau and the remarkable history of ranching in the area. For decades the Jensons practiced sustainable ranching and were rewarded a few years back with the prestigious Aldo Leopold Conservation Award.

The second day we all boarded two soccer-mom 4W drive beasts for the harrowing trip down 5,000 feet in three miles into Range Creek on a “road” created mostly with a little grading and lots of dynamite. The entire valley of 4,200 acres is now managed by the University of Utah archaeology staff as the Range Creek Field Station. Field studies are conducted each year but archaeologists say they are in no rush to document what is there. With the vast number of sites, it will take generations of archaeologists to investigate, they say.

The SJBAS group was treated to views of numerous granaries and rock art. We also walked through one burn scar that reportedly had 17 pit houses. After lunch at the old homestead where Jeanie spent her youth (and is now home to the caretaker) we returned back up the valley for more remarkable views.

Our last night at the ranch was a doozy. Howling winds and 1.5 inches of rain. Butch was so concerned about our getting across the plateau that he escorted us the entire way back to the rocky descent. Just in case we needed to be towed from the road muck.



The final leg of our trip was shortened when flooding closed access to the



Buckhorn Wash Panel and *Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry*. We were still able to see *Utah State University Eastern Prehistoric Museum* in Price; home to some Range Creek artifacts such as the Pilling Figurines. You

can read more about these amazing Fremont effigies [here](#). Later that day we were given a tour of the *Museum of the San Rafael Swell* in Castle Dale by the museum curator. One remarkable and unique Fremont culture item in their collection is shown above. Take a guess at what it is. Answer is at the end of this Moki (thanks, Paula).



We winged it on the final day by visiting the Rochester creation Panel and a fearsome snake panel.



Trip participants were: Rege and Nancy Leach, Mary Moorehead, Paula Lutz, Lorraine and Hunter McCleary, Barbara Am Ende, Harriet Stratton, Christine Quinlan.

2021 Pecos Conference Highlights



After a covid-induced hiatus the Pecos Conference was back on track with the delayed edition held in Mancos. Several archaeology aficionados gathered for several days of talks, posters, and socializing on a large field near Mancos State Park.

Robert Weiner from the University of Colorado talked about Chaco roads, noting that they are important symbols of *inequality* in the Chaco world. It was added that with all the talk about big budget infrastructure spending by the Federal government, the US needs a national LIDAR survey of historic infrastructure. The point was also made that Chaco also needs interpretation from the Navajo perspective as they occupied the area for many hundreds of years.

Davina Two Bears presented an affecting talk about returning to an area of Chacra Mesa where her immediate ancestors had lived for generations and were later forcibly moved for the creation Chaco Culture Nat'l Historic Park.

Chris Schwartz of Arizona State University discussed the logistics of transporting macaws 1,000 miles from the Yucatan to the Southwest. Among the points: were they caged or had they bonded to their owner and followed more or less untethered. Apparently, this all raised as many new questions as it answered.

Two presenters talked about the geology and stabilization of Wupatki National Monument which has been suffering from erosion. Perhaps most interesting was that in consulting with local Native Americans they learned that there are subtle cultural features that had not been picked up on during earlier surveys. For example, what was once ignored as just a “wedge-shaped boulder” has specific meaning to Native Americans. This boulder could be a symbolic entrance to the village. Also, interesting to note was these investigators’ adaptability to Wilderness limitations on drones. No drones are allowed so they stuck them on the end long poles to get area pictures.

Kenny Wintch talked about a new initiative he’s engaged in called “The Lands Between.” This effort seeks protection for one-half million acres of culturally significant lands between Bears Ears and Canyons of the Ancients. Three dozen organizations have signed on in support, including a dozen Native American tribes.



While there were many serious presentations, one two-legged attendee in particular stole the show. Kelley Taylor, with the non-profit Sacred Scarlets, brought her four-month-old macaw who walked on visitors’ feet and charmed everyone. Taylor’s organization educates the public about macaw conservation in the Southwest

SJBAS Board meetings - open to all members

SJBAS members are welcome to attend SJBAS Board meetings. The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, September 9th from 1:00-3:00, at the Durango Public Library.

PAAC Board Report

Tish Varney, our education coordinator, reports that the State Archaeology education program through History Colorado is alive and well but mostly online for now. She said that three classes will be held this Fall and Winter; on demand with no live instruction. The classes are on: Archaeological Practice in Colorado, Archaeological Laboratory Techniques and Research Design & Report Writing. You can get more information [here](#). If there is interest, History Colorado might make an instructor available for an in-person class.

Briefs

What’s holding up Biden’s decision on Bears Ears? *E&E News* reports that he might be making sure he has as many sympathetic DC Circuit court judges as possible to counter the likely court fight. At least one judge slot remains open on that bench.

Changes coming to NAGPRA? According to the *New York Times*, the Biden administration is working to streamline the process of repatriating the more than 116,000 Native American ancestor remains still in the possession of various institutions around the country. Institutions say that establishing “cultural affiliation” with nearby tribes is painstaking work. Tribes say the

institutions exaggerate the complexity of the task. The Biden administration hopes to reduce the red tape and clarify and simplify standards of proof.

Native Americans frustrated by lack of access to sacred places on public lands. *Arizona Republic* did a piece on how difficult it can be for Tribes to gain access to sacred places to conduct religious ceremonies. Federal agencies often control the land and there is a patchwork of access regulations. Even worse, the sacred sites themselves may be on land leased to mining or petroleum companies or be wide open to unsupervised recreation. They also face a double standard over Christian vs. Native religions. You can read the full story [here](#).

Get the skinny on Nine-Mile Canyon with the Fall Gathering and Stewardship Day, September 11. The event is put on by the Nine-Mile Canyon Coalition and includes tours, talks, food, and vendors. For more information go to 9mileranch.com.

A new Archaeology Southwest Report on how oil and gas leasing on public lands adversely effects a wide array of cultural resources. The report strongly recommends that future pending leases include indigenous people's input. You can read about the report [here](#).

From the Stacks

This month's recommended reading is another one from Center of SW Studies director, Dr. Shelby Tisdale. She likes *Fire on the Plateau: Conflict and Endurance in The American Southwest* by Charles Wilkinson. Wilkinson, emeritus professor at the University of Colorado, writes from a legal perspective about the centuries of conflicts between indigenous populations and more recent settlers in the SW. This book is available at the Durango Public Library

SJBAS Elected Officers and Other Board Members

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SJBAS Membership renewals are due by January 31st each year; however, if you paid dues in 2020, these would carry over through 2021. If you need to renew a lapsed membership or join SJBAS, please complete the [SJBAS Annual Membership Form](#), make your check for \$20 (\$30 family) payable to 'SJBAS' and mail with the Annual Membership Form to: SJBAS, Attn: Randy Graham, P.O. Box 3153, Durango, CO 81302.

