



# THE MOKI MESSENGER

May-June 2025

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

[sjbas.org](http://sjbas.org)

## SJBAS Monthly Meeting: May 14

**SJBAS meeting** – “Turquoise Trade in the Chacoan World and Beyond” by Sharon Hull, PhD, ranger at Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The procurement and exchange of turquoise



was an important part of pre-Columbian American Southwest and Mesoamerican cultures. The ability to identify the geological source of the turquoise artifacts recovered from archaeological sites enhances our understanding of procurement strategies among sites and cultures. A technique to identify the source regions of turquoise artifacts was developed using isotopes. Dr Hull’s research improves our understanding of long-distance trade among Chacoan sites.

Dr Hull’s presentation starts at 7 PM preceded by a special screening of a new film on Chaco by Cloudy Ridge productions (see below). Details are on [sjbas.org](http://sjbas.org).

**Meeting Bonus** Larry Ruiz, founder of Cloudy Ridge Productions, will present an exclusive preview of his latest film—“**Room 33: A**

**Room With A View Into the Past.**” In the fall of 2024, Cloudy Ridge Productions interviewed Hopi tribal member Phillip Tuwaletstiwa. Mr.

Tuwaletstiwa was interested in “communicating vital, factual, and scientific information about



Chaco Canyon; particularly Room 33 in Pueblo Bonito, to the general public.” Room 33 is somewhat controversial in that contained the remains of what some believe to be Chaco royalty plus thousands of turquoise beads. Larry will preview the film at 6:00 PM, before the main meeting, and take questions from the audience. This portion of the meeting will not be zoomed so you must be in-person at the Center of Southwest Studies to view the film.

## President’s Message

Dear Colleagues:

**Now Is the end of an era!** After decades of respectful and responsible visitation, San Juan Basin Archaeological Society has been effectively banned from all BLM managed lands in south eastern Utah. For the past two and a half years, we have negotiated access to Bears Ears and Cedar Mesa under then current guidelines in the BLM manual which provided for a "letter of agreement" (LOA) option for small nonprofit organizations.

This all changed in 2024-25 when the BLM refused the LOA request and required a Special Recreational Permit (SRP) for all future trips. They argued that since we charge a membership fee (\$15 plus a \$10 Sanders scholarship contribution) and publish trips on our web site that we are engaged in "archaeological tourism" and therefore would have to comply with the extensive requirements of the SRP typically associated with commercial operations. The assertion that our web site constitutes "paid advertising" is clearly contradictory to the descriptions in the BLM SRP manual.

The previous LOA agreements detailed sites to be visited, allowed activities, group size limitations, and visitation dates. We adhered to these guidelines. The availability of the LOA option described in the BLM manuals was an implicit recognition that the SRP required of commercial outfitters was excessively burdensome for small groups engaging in single visitation events. This simplified option provided access for small nonprofit/non-competitive organizations conducting short infrequent field trips (e.g. Audubon, scouts, schools, etc).

In comparison, the SRP requires recreational providers to obtain liability insurance to indemnify the BLM in amounts varying from \$300,000 to one million dollars. Additionally, we would be required to have certified medical support staff present on trips (CPR and First Aid) and submit operational plans that include human waste management and environmental impact plans along with post trip reports. In addition to annual permit fees, SJBAS would be required to submit annual financial statements and submit 3% of all revenues derived from activities occurring on BLM land. In our case that would be 3% of \$0.

We maintain that as a 501(c3) nonprofit educational organization, with an all-volunteer board, and minimal dues similar to the example groups listed in the BLM manuals, we were eligible for an LOA. They disagreed and suggested we contract with existing guide services for trips, which would cost hundreds of dollars per person, per day. Given the significant expense and often limited knowledge of the guides, this option is unacceptable.

We pointed out SJBAS's only role in field trips is to provide a forum for people to coordinate their activities and ensure minimal impact to fragile areas. We also documented the uses of membership funds; speakers, events and scholarships; no funds are ever collected or expended on trips. The only connection between membership and trip participation is membership assures participants are aware of site visitation etiquette, associated risks and assume liability limitations. No remuneration, financial or otherwise, is collected by SJBAS or the trip originator. All expenses such as camp ground fees, permits or admissions are the responsibility of individual participants or shared equally as described in the BLM manual.

BLM management ignored these facts, cited the recently passed EXPOLORE act (intended to "expand access to America's public lands and waters") as eliminating the LOA option, (it didn't) and invited us to apply for an SRP. However, in a "catch 22", Monticello BLM management noted that they only review SRP applications twice a year and are currently unlikely to issue any additional permits due to undefined "resource constraints".

While SJBAS can no longer organize trips to BLM managed public lands, individuals may continue to access them through the current individual permit system, where required. If you disagree with the determination of the BLM, we have a list of administrators and congressional committee members you can contact to express your opinions.

--Paul Landrum

## Spring 2025 John W Sanders Intern Lauren Walicki Catalogs Archaeological Artifacts and then Hits the Road for Two Digs

*Editor's Note: In her own words Lauren describes her work funded by SJBAS dues and her enviable plans for the future.*

I am from Anchorage, Alaska and am about to graduate (Spring 2025) from Fort Lewis College with my Anthropology degree. After graduation, I will be attending two field schools—one in Asheville, North Carolina, and the other in a village near Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. After Tanzania, I will attend Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic.



For my SJBAS Internship at the Center of Southwest Studies, I have been working on the 2014 FLC Archaeology Summer Field School. This project was led by Dr. Kelly Jenks and focused on a historical site in New Mexico. So far, I have finished processing and rehousing the field school's archives including hand-drawn maps, photograph logs, reports, field notebooks from students, and the final report. I am still working



on cataloging all the ceramics collected from the field school and inputting them into the Center of Southwest Studies' new database.

The ceramic sherds I've cataloged have been both domestic tableware and utilitarian pieces including redwares, porcelain, whitewares, some plain, some highly decorated, some with maker's marks, and many other types. Much of my work has consisted of accurately entering information on the ceramics into the database – checking item counts and material types as well as making sure all provenience information stays associated with the item records. Because Dr. Jenks has written articles and reports referencing these ceramics, it is important that future researchers are able to match items in the collections to what is written about them. It

has been a great opportunity to learn more about archaeology curation and data entry by using such interesting materials from this field school site. -- *Lauren Walicki*

## SJBAS Members Take Guided Hike of Diné Defensive Sites, April 11

Nine SJBAS members spent a day on a guided hiking tour of four Diné Defensive sites in the Dinétah area of New Mexico south of Navajo Reservoir. While Ancestral Puebloan sites throughout the Southwest receive most of the attention the Diné built their own stone and adobe structures. Their sites were built between about 1694 and 1750 and then suddenly abandoned. As the name denotes, these were defensive refuges—rarely lived in. The Spanish encouraged Southwest tribes to raid their neighbors to procure women and children as slaves—or else. Often it was the Utes who raided the Diné.



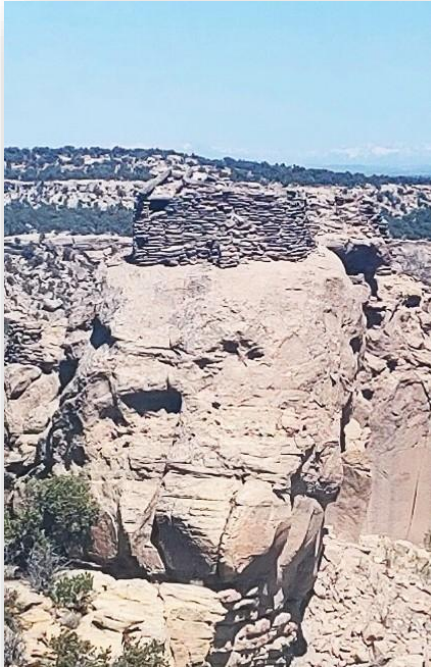


While the Diné may not have matched the Ancestral Puebloans in their mastery of masonry,

they were just as daring in the placement of their structures. Salmon Ruins guide Larry Baker described the stabilization project at *Three Corn Ruin* (seen to the left). Special scaffolding had to be brought in from

Albuquerque to work on the structure. Imagine

building this from scratch with no scaffolding?



One of the earliest excavations by noted Southwest archaeologist Earl Morris was at *Frances Canyon Ruin*, our first stop. This remarkably preserved site had many

wooden beams and platforms topped by earth. It was built about 1713, later enlarged, abandoned and then excavated by Morris 200 years later. The ancient tin can shown above is now an archaeological artifact on the site.

SJBAS members participating in this day trip were: Tish Varney, Elena Piazzisi, Nancy and Jim Ottman, Chris Anderson, Dianne Pauls, Mary Moorehead, Lorie Hansen and Hunter McCleary. Our guides were Larry Baker and Tori Myers from Salmon Ruins.



—Hunter McCleary

## Upcoming SJBAS Events for 2025

[Contact trip organizers for details.  
See [sjbas.org](http://sjbas.org) for the latest version of the full-year calendar.  
Dates and event descriptions may change]

<b>May 14</b>	<p><b>SJBAS Meeting</b> – “Turquoise Trade in the Chacoan World and Beyond” by Sharon Hull, PhD, ranger at Chaco Culture National Historical Park. A reception kicks things off at 6:30 p.m. in the foyer of the Center of Southwest Studies with the zoom presentation starting at 7 PM.</p> <p>There will also be an exclusive preview of a film by Larry Ruiz, founder of Cloudy Ridge Productions. He will present his latest film on Chaco Canyon—“<b>Room 33: A Room With A View Into the Past.</b>”</p> <p>Details for both events are on <a href="http://sjbas.org">sjbas.org</a>.</p>
<b>May 15</b>	<p><b>SJBAS Board Meeting.</b> FLC, Lyceum, Upstairs conference room. 1:30 – 3:30. All members are welcome. Contact Susan Hicks for more information. <a href="mailto:Sc53hicks@gmail.com">Sc53hicks@gmail.com</a></p>
<b>May 22</b>	<p><b>Hovenweep Outlier Towers Day Trip.</b> Cutthroat Castle and Holly Tower. We will compare and contrast siting, masonry, function, and occupation periods as each is different. Difficulty: Moderate. Trip participation limit is 10. Contact: Andy Dennison at <a href="mailto:andrewdennison86@gmail.com">andrewdennison86@gmail.com</a>. Sign-ups began April 1st.</p>
<b>May 24</b>	<p><b>Sand Canyon and Goodman Point Pueblos</b> – Day trip to two Pueblo III villages in Canyons of the Ancients. Difficulty: Moderate. Contact Rusty at <a href="mailto:chambrke@aol.com">chambrke@aol.com</a>. Sign-up began April 1st.</p>
<b>June</b>	<b>No Monthly Meeting at Center of Southwest Studies</b>
<b>June 11</b>	<b>SJBAS annual picnic</b>
<b>June 23-25</b>	<p><b>Ohkay Owingeh Festival</b> – The festival is June 24 but before and after this date we will enjoy other sites in the Santa Fe/Espanola area. Easy. Contact Rusty at <a href="mailto:chambrke@aol.com">chambrke@aol.com</a>. Sign-up begins April 1st.</p>
<b>July 9</b>	<p><b>SJBAS meeting</b> – “Geographies of the Sacred – Landscapes and rock images that reflect movement and living histories” by Mathew J. Martinez, Executive Director of the Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project</p>

## Educational Opportunities on Southwest Archaeology

Compiled by Betsy Moore

[If not offered nearby they can be seen on Zoon]

May 7 - Aug 13	<p><b>Old Pueblo Archaeology Center:</b> Online Course - The Mogollon Culture of the US Southwest - Presented by Allen Dart. Information at Old Pueblo at 520-798-1201 or <a href="mailto:info@oldpueblo.org">info@oldpueblo.org</a></p>
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May 8	<b>Crow Canyon Archaeological Center:</b> “Archaeology, Indigenous Knowledge, and Restorative Justice in Canada” - Presented by Kisha Supernant. Register for the zoom <a href="#">here</a> .
May 22	<b>Crow Canyon Archaeological Center:</b> “Staking Futures Together: Mediating Conflict through Games in Ancient North America” – presented by Gabriel Yanicki. Register for the zoom <a href="#">here</a> .
May 29	<b>Crow Canyon Archaeological Center:</b> “Save History: How to Protect Archaeological Sites from Looting and Vandalism” – presented by Anastasia Walhovd and Shannon Cowell. Register for the zoom <a href="#">here</a> .
June 12	<b>Crow Canyon Archaeological Center:</b> “Rethinking the Origins of Horse Domestication and its Impact on the Ancient World” – presented by William Taylor. Register for the zoom <a href="#">here</a>
June 26	<b>Crow Canyon Archaeological Center:</b> “Lithophones in Colorado: Were these ground stone artifacts utilized to play some of the earliest music in the western U.S.?” – presented by Marilyn Martorano. Register for the zoom <a href="#">here</a>

## Additional SJBAS Volunteer Opportunities

**Program Co-Chair:** We are looking for a volunteer to work with our Program Chair, Janice Sheftel. The Program Chair secures speakers for regular membership meetings and works with other SJBAS members to organize other lectures, such as the John W. Sanders Lecture. This is a Board position. Please contact Janice at [janicesheftel@gmail.com](mailto:janicesheftel@gmail.com) for more information.

**Membership Co-Chair:** The co-chair will work with Tish Varney and, eventually, move into the chair position. The Membership Chair is responsible for organizing recruitment of new SJBAS members and supporting Board members in encouraging active participation by members. This is a Board position. Please contact Tish Varney ([tishvarney@att.net](mailto:tishvarney@att.net)) for more information.

**Webmaster Assistant:** If you know your way around a computer, please consider volunteering to assist our Webmaster, Lyle Hancock, when he is unable to access a computer. The Webmaster is responsible for maintaining and updating the SJBAS website- [www.sjbas.org](http://www.sjbas.org). Please contact Lyle for more information, [lylehancock54@gmail.com](mailto:lylehancock54@gmail.com). Training and support will be provided for all positions.

## SJBAS Elected Officers and Board Members

President	Paul Landrum
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Vice President	Thomas Polich
Secretary	Susan Hicks
Treasurer	Mary Moorehead
Communications chair	Byron Kellogg
Membership chair	Tish Varney
Field Trip Program coordinator	Rusty Chamberlain
Education/PAAC representative	Betsy Moore
<i>Moki Messenger</i> editor	Hunter McCleary
Programming chair	Janice Sheftel
Publicity chair	Rusty Chamberlain
Social chair	Tammie and Joel Barger
Webmaster	Lyle Hancock

SJBAS Membership renewals are due by January 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Individual dues drop to \$15 after June 30. If you need to renew a lapsed membership or join SJBAS, please complete the [SJBAS Annual Membership Form](#), make your check for \$25 (\$50 family, \$10 student) payable to 'SJBAS' and mail with the Annual Membership Form only to: SJBAS, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 3153, Durango, CO 81302.