



THE MOKI MESSENGER

July-August 2025

San Juan Basin Archaeological Society

sjbas.org

SJBAS Monthly Meeting: July 9

SJBAS meeting – Dr. Mathew Martinez, Executive Director of the Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project, will present “Geographies of the Sacred – Landscapes and rock images that reflect movement and living histories.” A reception will start things off at 6:30 p.m. in the CSWS foyer. You may learn more about this talk at sjbas.org.

President’s Message

Dear Colleagues:

Hope you had a happy solstice and have plans for the summer. We had a good time at the annual picnic as described below.

There are several interesting monthly presentations scheduled for the remaining parts of the year and while summer is a busy time, we hope people will attend if possible. The next presentation is on July 9th concerning rock art and will be by Dr. Mathew Martinez, a member of the Ohkay Owingeh pueblo.

HELP WANTED

Membership Chairman Needed

After years of service Tish Varney retires at the end of the year. WE REALLY NEED someone to step up and become membership chairman. With only months to go in her term, now is the time to learn the ropes. You need only attend a few 2-hour board meetings per year; have basic spreadsheet knowledge and a commitment to our mission. Contact Tish at tishvarney@att.net or Paul Landrum at p_landrum@hotmail.com for more info.

Additionally, there are a number of field trips (see the schedule on the SJBAS webpage) including a camping & work trip to be conducted on the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park. This has been a long-term service project conducted by SJBAS which Thom Polich is coordinating. We await more information once it is finalized.

Threat to public lands. As most of you know by now there is currently a movement to sell off public lands. The given reason is to alleviate homelessness and the housing shortage. A shortage of affordable housing is not the only cause of homelessness and how the funds derived from the sale of public lands would address this very real problem is unclear, at best. What is clear is this would place many parcels of irreplaceable public land in the hands of commercial developers. If you would like to express your opinion on “The Big Beautiful Bill”, the contact information of your elected representatives is listed below:

Sen. John Hickenlooper
316 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-5941
<https://www.hickenlooper.senate.gov/email-john/>

Sen. Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-5852
<https://www.bennet.senate.gov/contact/write-to-michael/>

Congressman Jeff Hurd Colorado 3rd district:
1641 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4676
https://hurd.house.gov/address_authentication?form=/contact/email-me

Now for some good news. We have received a most generous donation of \$5,000 from two of our members. These funds will help SJBAS support archaeology internships at FLC through the John Saunders Fund and our educational outreach to the community through speakers and grade school education.

Have a safe summer.

--Paul

SJBAS Annual Picnic and Mastodon Hunt

Nearly 40 SJBAS members trekked up to the Junction Creek group campground shelter for our annual picnic. The gathering was superbly managed by Social Coordinators Tammie and Joel Barger with advice provided by social coordinators *emeritus*, Michelle and Mark McKibben.

Among the highlights: President Paul Landrum was recognized for his contribution to the education of Four Corners school kids in the various arts of flint knapping, fire starting, and atlatl throwing.

Paul then led some members in a mastodon *hunt* using a traditional atlatl. We are glad to report that SJBAS members would not have gone hungry due to fairly adept atlatl tossing.



Thanks again to the Bargers for coordinating such a successful outing.

Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park Service Weekend and Fieldtrip Set for September 26-28

SJBAS members have the opportunity to do some light field maintenance work for one day followed by tours of rarely visited sites on the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation. The preliminary description of the work is to clear brush and debris from a water diversion ditch. The second day will be a tour of Pool Canyon Trail which has been closed for many years. This trail offers many amazing cultural sites, Nordenskiöld Cliff Dwellings, which are basically on the backside of Mesa Verde National Park. For more information contact Thomas Polich at thomas.polich@gmail.com

SJBAS's President Holds Classes on the Tools and Technology of Past Southwest Cultures

Paul Landrum, working with the Chimney Rock Interpretive Association (CRIA), held (interactive, experiential, applied, skill-based, or field-based)



and throw an atlatl at a simulated mastodon. He also talked with the kids about how farming evolved and the importance of calendars in agriculture and rituals. They even planted corn.

classes for dozens of students in the Pagosa Springs area. "School Days at Chimney Rock" let kids knapp arrow points, try to start campfires, set a snare to catch small game

Trip Report: SJBAS Archaeological Field Trip and Dig – South of Cortez, May 2025

In early May 2025, members of the San Juan Basin Archaeological Society (SJBAS) participated in a hands-on dig at an ancestral Puebloan site south of Cortez, Colorado. Partnering with Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, the Mitchell Springs Ruin Group, and both professional and amateur archaeologists, the group spent three days excavating ancient rooms and features, contributing to the ongoing understanding of Puebloan lifeways.



Volunteers worked in designated excavation units, carefully unearthing pottery sherds, lithic tools, faunal remains, and notable artifacts such as a finely worked obsidian arrow point and a painted ceramic rim sherd, possibly used in ceremonial contexts. These finds, along with intact wall segments and floor surfaces, offered valuable insight into the site's structure and history.

The dig also fostered community spirit, with shared meals under a massive cottonwood tree and a Saturday pizza party adding warmth to the dusty, windblown days. Newer members learned excavation techniques from experienced diggers, while informal lessons explored stratigraphy, artifact typology, and Puebloan cultural traditions.

The trip left participants with a deeper connection to the past and a shared sense of purpose. As one member put it, “Archaeology builds connections”—between people, across generations, and through time. — *Thomas Polich*

Trip Report: Sand Canyon and Lowry Pueblos, May 24

Three folks made the trip this year-- Joel and Tammie Barger, and Rusty Chamberlain. They met at Santa Rita and car-pooled to their first stop-- Goodman Point Pueblo. This pueblo is believed to be a good example of a society that was divided into social or ritual groups.



From Goodman Point they motored a few minutes to the head of Sand Canyon. The trail forks with one none path descending down the canyon to McElmo Creek and the other passing through Sand Canyon Pueblo. There are a few interpretive trail signs scattered around the remains of the pueblo. They describe excavations from decades ago and hints of the people that lived there 800 years ago. After touring the site, they returned to the trail head for lunch.

Following lunch they drove to Lowry Ruins National Historical Landmark. The pueblo was constructed around 1060 AD atop abandoned pithouses from previous periods of occupation. Whereas Goodman Point and Sand Canyon are located around the head of a canyon, an obvious water source, Lowry in located on high ground with a 360-degree view of the surrounding landscape. An interesting feature is the kiva built within the building. When excavated in the 30's, the archaeologists found a mural of a geometric design below the banquet. Part of the mural is on display at the Canyon of the Ancients Museum. —*Rusty Chamberlain*

Community Learns about SJBAS Education Mission at Durango Public Library Display Case

Paul Landrum assembled a collection of replica artifacts (most he created himself) and various other resources that showcase SJBAS's education mission. The items were on display for the month of May. This is our second rotation through the library display case; and we will undoubtedly be on display again next year. In fact, this September Paul will again be demonstrating and discussing Four Corners pre-contact cultures. Watch the *Moki* Calendar for the date.



Upcoming SJBAS Events for 2025

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

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| July 9 | SJBAS Meeting – “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. 7 PM at the Center of Southwest Studies, FLC. Details at sjbas.org . |
| August 13 | SJBAS meeting – “New Research on the Chaco South Road.” – Dr. Rob Weiner, Postdoctoral Fellow, Society of Fellows, Dartmouth College, affiliated with Dept. of Religion. 7 PM at the Lyceum, Center of Southwest Studies, FLC. More information is at sjbas.org . |
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Educational Opportunities on Southwest Archaeology As Compiled by Betsy Moore, SJBAS PAAC Coordinator [If not offered nearby they can be seen on Zoon]

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| July 7-10 | Conference on Archaeoastronomy and Celestial Geometry: Understanding Ancient Astronomies to be held in Ruidoso and Alamogordo, New Mexico. More info is here . |
| July 17 | Online presentation “ The Great Rock-art of Chaco Canyon ” by rock art researcher Jane Kolber Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. More information is available by emailing info@oldpueblo.org or calling 520-798-1201. |

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| August 7-10 | Pecos Conference 2025—at the Blue Mountain Boy Scout Camp north of Blanding, Utah. Easy. Contact Rusty at chambrke@aol.com . Sign-up begins June 1st. Or visit the Pecos Conference website here to view the program. |
| August 7 | Crow Canyon Archaeological Center: “Nuwu Astronomy Views.” This presentation will explore the connection to the night sky as a Southern Paiute, including the importance of preserving the night sky. Talk will be given by Autumn Gillard. Register for the zoom here . |
| August 21 | Online presentation “ Copper Networks in the U.S. Southwest, Mexican Northwest, and Mesoamerica ” by archaeologist José Luis Punzo Díaz, PhD. You may register for this zoom here . |
| Sept 3 – Dec 10 | A 14-week online course entitled: “ The Hohokam Culture of Southern Arizona ” taught by Allen Dart. You may register by calling 520-798-1201 or emailing info@oldpueblo.org . |
| Sept 9 | “ Reclaiming Reclamation: Public Power, Climate Change, and Glen Canyons Resurrection ” by Zak Podmore, author of Life After Dead Pool: Lake Powell’s Last Days and the Rebirth of the Colorado River. Center of Southwest Studies, FLC, 6 PM. |

SJBAS Elected Officers and Board Members

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| President | Paul Landrum |
| 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 |

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| <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 31st 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.