



THE MOKI MESSENGER

September-October 2025
San Juan Basin Archaeological Society
sjbas.org

SJBAS Monthly Meeting: September 10

SJBAS meeting – “Did Ancestral Puebloan People Raise White Woolly Dogs for Their Hair?” by Dr. Laurie Webster, anthropologist, specializing in the perishable material culture of the American SW, visiting scholar, Dept. of Anthropology, U of Ariz and Research Assoc, Am. Museum of Natural History, and Crow Canyon Arch. Center. 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.



SJBAS Special Presentation - Our Program Chair, Janice Sheftel, has arranged for an additional speaker for September. Alfred Berry, a third-generation land surveyor whose family has been mapping Mesa Verde for generations, will talk about "Old School Archaeological Mapping of Mesa Verde," September 24 at the FLC Lyceum, 7 PM.

President's Message

Greetings members:

Hopefully you all had a good summer and got out to some interesting activities.

Once again, I issue a plea for volunteers to replace long serving board members; Membership (Tish) and Publicity (Rusty). The current members will mentor new volunteers to assure a smooth transition. We are fortunate to have a few volunteers for board positions. In addition to Joel and Tammy who arranged a great summer picnic, Andy Dennison has stepped forward to serve as vice president when Thom Polich becomes president in December. I will be traveling

extensively this winter and can not do the position justice. Thom, a second-generation president of SJBAS, is very enthusiastic and has many ideas. On a personal note, I have learned a lot in my association with SJBAS and look forward to more opportunities to do so in the future.

On another topic, SJBAS is a member of the Council of Allied Societies, a sub group of the prestigious Society for American Archaeology. One significant benefit of membership is access to educational resources. You may access these amazing resources using our Society login credentials at the [Council web site](#).

The Log-in credentials are:

Username: SJBAS1979

Password: den2025

For information about these and other educational opportunities, contact Betsy Moore at (bmoore5552@gmail.com). As our Educational Programs Chair she reports there are some interesting opportunities coming up through the office of the state archaeologist.

In terms of promotion and outreach, Hunter and I are scheduled to make a presentation at the Durango public library Tuesday, September 30th. This will be a 90-minute event and will include a general orientation to the science of archaeology, basic concepts, and a summary of the time periods in the Southwest. Hunter will then describe some sites in LaPlata county. The last 30 minutes will be devoted to hands on activities that allow participants to experience the sophisticated technology and skills used by the people of this region for centuries before European contact. We will have SJBAS promotional materials and membership forms available for those interested. If you attend, bring a friend.

Finally, an interesting article is in the current issue of "Archaeology" found on the second floor, periodicals section, of the Durango Public Library. It is titled "Birds of a Feather, Birds of Power" and explores the symbolism of ducks in basket maker rock art. Possible interpretations are supported by oral histories found in current pueblo societies and are included in the analysis. Petroglyphs from various sites in the region, including those found in Bears Ears, are discussed.

Paul Landrum
President

HELP STILL 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.

2026 Trip Planning Meeting Set for October 11th

Where do you want to go next year? Our Trip Coordinator Rusty Chamberlain hosts the annual trip planning meeting at his home on October 11th. It is vitally important that members be engaged in planning trips. We need your ideas and engagement. Planning trips to Bears Ears Nat'l Monument, a key venue for us for years, has become so onerous that we need to be extra creative in where we go. Salmon Ruins, also a non-profit as are we, led us on a wonderful tour

of Diné defensive sites. We filled two day-trip vans and all reviews were positive. Don't be intimidated by the prospect of leading a trip; it is easier than you think. Contact Rusty at chambrke@aol.com and tell him you will be attending. So, we ask: **Where do you want to go next year?**

SJBAS Contingent Attends 2025 Pecos Conference in Bears Ears

The Pecos Conference, which rotates its annual venue throughout the Southwest, was hosted by the Bears Ears Partnership just outside Blanding, Utah. The theme this year was Bears Ears and adjacent "Lands Between." The Between being lands between Bears Ears and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The conference was 7-11 August.



The conference began Thursday evening with registration and a reception at Edge of the Cedars Museum in Blanding. As those who have attended in the past are aware, the Pecos Conference is known for its big-tent approach. Several of them, in fact. One tent is for talks, panel discussions, meetings, and for the Saturday dinner and dance. The other tent is for vendors, the silent auction, poster displays, and some times, for meals.



The presentations began on Friday, blessed by FLC professor Chuck Riggs playing bagpipes. The speaker format has presenters each given 15 minutes in their area of research. Posters describing research projects are displayed in the other tent. Vendors and the silent auction also occupy the other tent. The real information exchange, however, takes



place in casual group chats anyone is welcome to join. Following the first day of talks the SJBAS contingent returned to Blanding for dinner and a movie.

Saturday began with an encore pipe set by Prof Riggs and presentations much in the format of Friday. The big news was that the 2026 conference will be returning to Mancos the 2nd weekend of August. The afternoon sessions ended at 3:00pm so that the tents can be reconfigured, one for dinner and the other for the dance. The dinner and dance, beer and wine included, that evening was a blast. The

beer and wine were ok, the meal was fine and ample, the conversations were great. The band was good and loud and went on until midnight, or so we heard. We, however, returned to the B&B in Blanding.

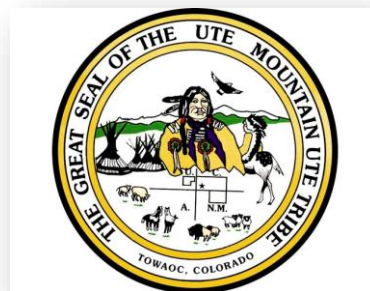
At Pecos Conferences the last day is devoted to field trips. SJBAS attendees signed up for a guided tour of House-on-Fire and then for a tour of Edge of the Cedars Museum. Noted archaeologist and author R.E. Burrillo led the tour of House-on-Fire and Jonathon Till, the Curator at Edge of the Cedars, turned the one-hour tour into 2 fascinating hours.

SJBAS members attending the conference were Rusty Chamberlain, Michael Moravan, Elaine Moravan and Judy Fisher.
—Rusty Chamberlain



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



Briefs

Zoomed Meetings to Continue. Following feedback from members the board has decided to continue live-zooming meetings. The issue had been raised that members might fore-go in-person attendance in favor of zoom-viewing from home. Although the vast majority of our meetings are recorded and available through our web site, we appreciate that some members prefer the convenience of the live-zooming experience.

PAAC Closer to Offering In-Person Classes in SW Colorado. SJBAS Education Coordinator, Betsy Moore, reports that Colorado History is expected to set a date for early next year when they will offer an in-person archaeology class locally.

Save the Date for our Holiday Brunch. Social Coordinators, Tammie and Joel Barger, have locked in December 6 as the date for our annual Holiday Brunch. It will be held again at the Student Union at Ft Lewis College. Stay tuned for details.

SJBAS President to Give Talk Four Corners Pre-Contact Cultures and Preservation at Durango Public Library, Sept 30

Paul Landrum will give a presentation at the Durango Public Library on September 30th at 5:00. There will also be some hands-on learning opportunities on indigenous technologies. The talk includes a presentation on how to respectfully visit area indigenous sites and a discussion about who lived in the Greater Durango area even before Mesa Verde was built. You may learn more at the [Durango Public Library](#) site.



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]

September 3-5	Acoma/El Morro – We will visit Acoma Pueblo, various sites in the area and possibly Laguna Pueblo. Contact Rusty at chambrke@aol.com .
September 10	SJBAS Meeting – “Did Ancestral Puebloan People Raise White Woolly Dogs for Their Hair?” Presenter Laurie D. Webster (Ph.D. University of Arizona, 1997) is an independent researcher with institutional affiliations at the University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, the American Museum of Natural History, and Crow Canyon. The presentation will be at 7 PM at the Center of Southwest Studies, FLC. Details at sjbas.org . It is preceded by a social at 6:30 PM

September 24	SJBAS Special Presentation - "Old School Archaeological Mapping of Mesa Verde" by Alfred Berry, a third-generation land surveyor whose family has been mapping Mesa Verde for generations. Lyceum at FLC, 7 PM.
September 26-28	Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park Service Trip – SJBAS members have the opportunity to do some light maintenance work for one day followed by a tour 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 tour will take place on the Pool Canyon Trail which has been closed for many years. This trail offers many amazing cultural sites, including the 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 .
October 8	SJBAS meeting – “Early Tewa occupations and colonial-era Tewa adaptations in the Northern Rio Grande (near Pojoaque, NM)” by Dr. Kaitlyn Elizabeth Davis, Assist. Prof, Dept of Anthropology, NAU. She is also associated with Indigenous Research & Teaching Circle, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The presentation will be at 7 PM at the Center of Southwest Studies, FLC. Details at sjbas.org . It is preceded by a social at 6:30 PM
October 15-16	Flagstaff – Sedona Trip – Three-day trip that includes Museum of Northern Arizona (guided) and Sinagua sites – Palatki (guided), Honanki, and Crane Petroglyph. Tuzigoot National Monument, time permitting. Difficulty: Easy Active. Contact: Hunter at hunter.mccleary@gmail.com . Trip is full.

Educational Opportunities on Southwest Archaeology and Culture
As Compiled by Betsy Moore, SJBAS PAAC Coordinator
[If not offered nearby they can be seen on Zoon]

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 .
September 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.
September 10	“ Great Garden Series: Indigenous Gardening ” at the Durango Public Library, 4:30 PM
September 13 – mid-December	Exhibit of “Ute Knowledge: Colorado’s Original Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math” at the Animas Museum. Check the Animas Museum Web site for hours.

September 15	“Decline of Hohokam Culture Based on Soil Degradation” by Gary Huckleberry. 7-8:30 PM. You may register for this online presentation at the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society Web site .
September 17	“Chasing Ghosts: A Ride with the American West’s Most Notorious Outlaw” by Brett Davis and Andy Gulliford in-person at the Center for Southwest Studies Lyceum, FLC. 6:30 – 8:00 PM.
September 18	“Geographical and Political Implications of Indigenous Visualities in National Parks” by Cassidy Renee Schoenfelder. 4:00 – 5:00 PM. You may register for this Crow Canyon Zoom presentation here .
September 18	“Restorative Justice: NAGPRA at 35” by Kathy Fine-Dare 130 Noble Hall, FLC, 7-8:30 PM. In-person only.
September 23	“History Live: Photographing the Dominguez-Escalante Trail of 1776” at the Durango Public Library, 6:00 PM
September 25	“The Radical Comparative Politics of Ancient Northwest Mexico” by Matthew Pailes, 4-5:00 PM. You may register for this Crow Canyon zoom here .
October 1	“Our Fight Has Just Begun” by Cheryl Redhorse Bennett, 6-8:00 PM at Maria’s Bookstore.
October 2	“Montezuma Castle National Monument: Recent Research and Insights from America’s Best Preserved Cliff Dwelling” by NPS archaeologists. 4-5:00 PM. Register for this Crow Canyon zoom here .
October 9-13	Utah Rock Art Research Association 2025 Symposium , Kanab Convention Center. More information is at the URARA web site .
October 16	“Reconstructing the Biographies of Culture and Power in Conquest Mexico: Malinche, Hernán Cortés, and the Origins of Indigenous-Spanish Relations,” by historian Michael M. Brescia, PhD, 8:00 PM MST. You may connect to this Old Pueblo Zoom using this link

SJBAS Elected Officers and Board Members

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
<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. New members need to just print and complete the Annual Membership Form; sign the membership form, Liability Waiver and Proper Etiquette forms; write a check to SJBAS for the appropriate amount; and mail the one-page Annual Membership Form and your check to our Chapter Treasurer. Please keep your signed Proper Etiquette forms for your records.