



LAS November 2013 Headlines:

Note: With winter fast approaching you may be thinking of taking a side trip on a long weekend, weather permitting. This article from September 2012 may help you decide on a destination or two. We will cover the first five “must see archaeological sites” in this issue, and the next five in the December 2013 newsletter. Enjoy!

Top 10 Must See Archaeological Sites in Colorado

By **Jim O'Donnell** on September 12, 2012 in **Archaeology, Colorado, USA, North America**

<http://www.aroundtheworldineightyyears.com/top-10-archaeological-sites-colorado/>

Infatuated by archaeology since the age of seven, I was lucky enough to grow up in a state chock-full of amazing history and a plethora of archaeological sites.

So, I thought I'd share what I think are the top ten archaeological sites in Colorado.

My father took me out to the canyons east of our town to see the petroglyphs. I remember his carrying both my brother and I on his back in the pitch black when our shoes were too full of cactus spines to walk. Later, I demanded visits to places like Mesa Verde and my hounded parents obliged.

I volunteered on my first dig at the age of 15 at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in Cortez, Colorado. I went back the next year. And the year after that. At the age of 17 I dove head first into the search for the 150-year old Euro-American Fort Pueblo buried under the downtown of my hometown of Pueblo, Colorado.

In compiling this top ten list I stuck with places that I have personally visited. I avoided listing sites on private land, sites that I know of that are endangered or deliberately un-publicized.

Colorado hosts thousands of these. I also wanted to limit it to places that could be accessed relatively easily. As such, there is a hell of a lot out there I just could not put on this list for various reasons.

Any archaeological site needs to be treated with care. These places are fragile and we can never replace them.

So a few rules for the road:

1. Take as many pictures as you want but do not collect any of the artifacts you see.
2. Don't take any artifacts and, don't pile them up.
3. Don't ever touch rock art – nor should you make rubbings of rock art or make any marks of any kind on a rock art panel. That is what your camera is for.
4. If a site is barricaded that means something. Stay behind the barricade. A KEEP OUT sign probably means...keep out. Take only pictures. Leave only footprints. And enjoy.

Chimney Rock Archaeological Area (Note: site may not be accessible in winter)

A dramatic 1000-year old site in south-central Colorado between Durango and Pagosa Springs. An ancestral Puebloan site, Chimney Rock site is located hundreds of feet above the valley floor within the San Juan National Forest Archaeological Area. At its height, several thousand people lived at Chimney Rock.



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The Great House is of particular interest. Of Chacoan design, the difference between it and Mesa Verde style architecture is stark. As such, Chimney Rock marks the northeastern edge Chacoan cultural influence – that we know of.

The visitor center is open between May 15 and September 30th. Guided walking tours are conducted daily. Camping areas are located nearby.

How to get there: 43 miles east of Durango and 17 miles west of Pagosa Springs on U.S. highway 160. At highway 151 and turn south and go just three miles to the entrance on the west side of the road.

More information: <http://www.chimneyrockco.org/index.htm>



Mesa Verde National Park

One of the best known North American archaeological areas, Mesa Verde encompasses more than 5,000 known archaeological sites spanning nearly 2000 years. This was one of several important centers of the ancestral Puebloan people who inhabited the area for about 700 years (600-1300AD) constructing early 600 cliff dwellings – some of which are extraordinarily well-preserved.

This is the kind of place you can easily spend a week and still not see everything. Plan at least one full day but really, between the museums, the hikes, the tours you'll want some time in this fascinating place.

How to get there: Mesa Verde is located in Southwestern Colorado between Durango and Cortez. From Cortez drive 15 miles east on Highway 160 to the park turnoff to the south. Drive and 36 miles west from Durango, on Highway 160. From the entrance to the park it will take about an hour to get to the campgrounds and headquarters.

More Information: <http://www.nps.gov/meve/index.htm>



Canyon of the Ancients National Monument

It can be a little hard to imagine but 1000 years ago, there were far more people on this landscape than there are now. Canyon of the Ancients is the most archaeologically dense areas in the entire country. In some places there are around 100 sites per square mile and over 6000 known sites total in the area.

Although many Native American peoples left traces of their lives on this landscape over the course of 20,000 + years, artifacts from the more recent ancestral Puebloans dominate this amazing place. In sharp contrast to management of places like Chimney Rock and Mesa

Verde, Canyon of the Ancients is a rough and wild landscape prime for exploration on foot. Thankfully, roads are few and unpaved. Be sure to visit Sand Canyon Pueblo (the very first excavation I worked from 1986-1988) and Painted Hand Pueblo for some pretty stunning experiences.



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How to get there: Canyon of the Ancients is a massive area with multiple access points. The best thing to do is first stop at the Anasazi Heritage Center 10 miles north of Cortez for maps, orientation and advice on weather conditions.

More Information: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nm/canm.html>

Dominguez and Escalante Pueblos at the Anasazi Heritage Center

The Anasazi Heritage Center, operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a museum dedicated to the Ancestral Puebloan culture featuring some excellent exhibits and interpretive information, special events and tours, an impressive library and amazing resource collection. On top of all that, the center hosts two 12th-Century pueblos, Dominguez and Escalante, a Chacoan Outlier overlooking the Dolores River.

How to get there: 27501 Highway 184, Dolores, Colorado USA 81323 just 10 miles north of Cortez. Take Highway 145 north to Highway 184 and turn west.

More information: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ahc.html>

Falls Creek Archaeological Area

Falls Creek is a rather hidden is a 1500-acre valley in the San Juan National Forest on the northwest side of Durango. Flat grasslands surrounded by some rather impressive cliffs, this area protects several sites from the ancestral Pueblo Basketmaker period (500BC-500AD).

The area is divided in half by County Road 205. West of the road, ALL activity, including hiking, is off limits. There is a network of trails in the eastern half of the area that allow you to access some of the archaeology.

How to get there: Exit Highway 500 in Durango and take 25th St. west. The road changes to Junction Street. Then turn north on County Road 205 where you will see a sign pointing to the area.

More information: <http://4cornershikesdol.blogspot.com/2011/05/falls-creek-archeological-area.html>

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH....

LAS Find of the Year:

Voting took place at the November 2013 meeting, and the masses have spoken. The Loveland Archaeological Society's Find of the Year, October 2012 through September 2013, was made by Kevin Zeeck. This was the June 2013 Find of the Month.

Type: Harrell / Plains Tri-Notch Eccentric
(two additional notches)

Material: Alibates Dolomite

Location: Weld County, Colorado



- Sponsor of the Annual Loveland Stone Age Fair -

www.stoneagefair.com



LAS Find of the Month, November 2013:

Members can bring an artifact to be entered into the competition at the monthly meeting, which will be judged based on the following rules:

1. Must be a member of LAS in good standing.
2. The artifact must be a personal find.
3. It must have been found within the specified time frame, i.e., within the month prior to the meeting.
4. The artifact doesn't have to be a Colorado find—all that matters is that it was found in the last month.

The Find of the Month for November 2013 was made by Steve Campbell.

Type: Site Finds (all from single site)

Material: Various (bone, chert, agate, shell, and antler)

Location: Larimer County, Colorado

(Note metric scale)



LAS News and Upcoming Events:

- December 3, 2013 December meeting. This will be our annual Christmas party. Bring a dish to share for the annual feast. If you'd like to bring a Christmas beverage (non-alcoholic please) feel free to do so. Also, we will be taking donations in the form of gifts, gift cards, or money to provide a Christmas for Native American families in the area. If you can't attend and would like to make a donation please contact Sharon Lundt at (970) 669-2375. Annual LAS officer elections will be held at the beginning of the December meeting.
- January 7, 2014 January meeting. Program: to be announced.
- Speakers Needed! We need speakers for our monthly meetings starting in January 2014. If you would like to give a presentation or know of someone who would give a great program please contact Andy Coca, Jean Steinhoff or Kevin Zeeck. No experience is necessary. All that is needed is a passion for our hobby and a willingness to share that passion. Thanks!