



## LAS December 2013 Headlines:

**Note: The first half of this article ran in the November 2013 newsletter. Here we cover the last five “must see archaeological sites” in Jim O’Donnell’s article.**

### **Top 10 Must See Archaeological Sites in Colorado (cont.)**

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

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

#### **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.

#### **Roxborough State Park Archaeological District**

Humans have been on this land for 20,000 years or more to be sure but the earliest evidence for people at Roxborough State Park dates to about 9,000 years ago. Archaic (6,000-3000BC) and Woodland (500-1000AD) left behind a lot of evidence of their lives here in the form of lithic scatters, campsites and quarries. Later the Apaches, Utes, Comanches, Arapahoes and Cheyennes all utilized this area.

In the 19th Century, Euro-Americans homesteaded the area. Located near Denver, 3,300-acre Roxborough is very popular with weekend urban refugees. In addition to its archaeological resources the area is geologically unique with a remarkable landscape and a healthy and diverse plant and animal community.

**How to get there:** Roxborough is just 28 miles from the center of Denver. From Denver go south on US Highway 85 through Littleton. Then go west on highway 470 to Highway 121 (S. Wadsworth Blvd) and go south. The road curves east and meets with N. Rampart Range Rd. Go south to the park entrance.

#### **Curecanti National Recreation Area**

Curecanti National Recreation Area is a series of three reservoirs along the Gunnison River. A river that used to run wild. It’s an area well-known for its fishing, hunting and bird-watching opportunities. Less well-known, perhaps are is the archaeology.

There are about 160 prehistoric and historic archeological sites in the area and 5,000 acres of the park are protected as the Curecanti Archeological District and recognized on the National Register of Historic Places. Evidence for human occupation dates to Paleo times nearly 10,000 years ago. 4,500 year-old Archaic wickiups have been found in the area as well as extensive remains of the Ute peoples who called this area home for hundreds of years. More recently, the northern branch of the Spanish trail linking Santa Fe with Los Angeles ran through here.

**How to get there:** Curecanti National Recreation Area is located along US Highway 50 between Montrose and Gunnison approximately 200 miles southwest of Denver. You can also access the area via State Highway 149 and State Highway 92.

**More Information:** <http://www.nps.gov/cure/historyculture/archeology.htm>



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### Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

Some of my best memories of grade school were our frequent field trips to Bent's Old Fort east of my hometown of Pueblo, Colorado. The original fort on this site was built in 1833 by William and Charles Bent and their partner Ceran St. Vrain. The purpose was the trade with the Cheyenne and Arapaho and the mountain men who trapped along the mountain rivers to the west. A small trading "empire" quickly centered on the adobe structure supporting tendrils that extended to Taos, Santa Fe and even into Mexico. In 1846 it served as the staging grounds for Kearney's invasion of New Mexico. The fort was abandoned in 1849 after disease decimated the plains tribes. The structure fell into ruins and, as adobe does, it melted into the earth.



After archaeological excavations at the site in the early 1970s, the fort was reconstructed using original sketches, paintings and diary entries.

**How to get there:** Pueblo is located 75 miles to the west. Colorado Springs 110 miles to the northwest. From Pueblo, go east on US Highway 50 to La Junta. Take highway 109 north to Highway 194 then go east for 6 miles. You can't miss it.

**More information:** <http://www.nps.gov/beol/index.htm>

### Purgatoire River Track Site

Ok. This area will stand out from the list as it is not exactly an archaeology site. Yes, there are some impressive petroglyphs and some homestead remnants in the area but that is not the main reason to come. Still, given that this is one of the largest dinosaur track sites on the continent, you really can't go wrong. Located along the banks of the Purgatoire River in Picket Wire Canyon on Comanche National Grasslands this site boasts some 1400 dinosaur tracks!

This is another one of those areas that is, thankfully, hard to access. No, you can't just drive up in your car and no, you can't come on your ATV. Time for a walk folks. The tracks were found in 1935 by a local farm girl. The tracks are from various Jurassic animals but one of the most interesting sets were from five sauropods walking in parallel, not in single file. Theropod tracks are also rather prevalent. Lately, researchers have begun to find actual bones. While you can

explore the area on your own or with a Forest Service tour. Call the La Junta office at 719.384.2181

**How to get there:** The Purgatoire site in the Picket Wire Canyonlands lies within the Comanche National Grasslands approximately 23 miles south of La Junta in southeastern Colorado on state Highway 350

**More information:** [https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2004AM/finalprogram/abstract\\_78805.htm](https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2004AM/finalprogram/abstract_78805.htm), and [http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/psicc/about-forest/districts/?cid=fsm9\\_032707](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/psicc/about-forest/districts/?cid=fsm9_032707)

### Ludlow Tent Colony Site

Twenty people, including eleven children, died during the Ludlow massacre in an attack by the Colorado National Guard on a tent colony of 1,200 striking coal miners and their families in April 1914. The Tent Colony site is a designated National Historic Landmark. The massacre was a key event in the history of the American labor movement. The tent colony originated when coal miners and their families were evicted from company housing during a strike that began in September 1913. The colony was burned in the attack. The site is the first such strike camp in the country to be archeologically investigated.



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**How to get there:** located 73 miles south of Pueblo. Take Interstate 25 south, through Walsenburg to County Road 44. Go west to the memorial and then south to the site.

**More information:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludlow\\_Massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludlow_Massacre)

Enjoy but do not destroy. Colorado's history is fascinating. Follow some basic rules of respect and have a great time!

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### LAS Find of the Month, December 2013:

There was no meeting in December, 2013, and therefore no Find of the Month.

### LAS News and Upcoming Events:

January 7, 2014      January meeting. New Year's Holiday Party and Show & Tell. Bring a party tray or dish to share. We'll celebrate the Holidays and New Year since the Christmas Party was cancelled in December. Bring a few frames of artifacts for show and tell. Officer elections will also be held.

February 4, 2014      February meeting. Program: to be announced.