

LAS October 2015 Headlines:

**Tools of area's early visitors get public debut at CU-Boulder
Cache of implements discovered near Chautauqua by landscapers in 2008**

By Charlie Brennan, Daily Camera Staff Writer, 10/07/2015

So many people in this town these days. It's hardly recognizable anymore.

That would possibly be one of the reactions of some of the earliest known visitors to the Boulder Valley, who frequented the area 13,000 years ago — and left some of their tools behind.

Starting Friday, more recent arrivals to the Boulder area can stop by the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History and enjoy an interactive exhibit of 83 Clovis-era stone knives and blades discovered by landscapers digging a koi pond for homeowner Patrick Mahaffy in a neighborhood near Chautauqua Park in 2008.

Mahaffy, who recently moved just around the corner from the property where the tool cache was discovered, is thrilled that seven years after the find, the materials are getting their public debut.



Will Roberts, an exhibits technician at the museum, puts up the stone tools in a display on Wednesday. Back in 2008, a cache of stone tools dating back some 13,000 years was found while excavation was being done on a man's property on University Hill. They are now being donated to the University of Colorado Natural History Museum and will be on display. For more photos and a video, go to www.dailycamera.com. Cliff Grassmick Staff Photographer
October 7, 2015

"I think it's wonderful that they're going to be displayed, and displayed in their hometown," Mahaffy said Wednesday. "It took a while to get the exhibit up and organized, but I think it's such a unique find, right here in Boulder. ... I'm delighted to be able to help make this happen."

Mahaffy's first step when the tools were discovered was to call the CU anthropology department and leave a voicemail. He was called back shortly by Professor Douglas Bamforth, who recently was named the department chair.

Mahaffy recalls that Bamforth told him over the phone, "I want you to know that you didn't find anything. But you're near the university, so I'll come look at them, but don't have any expectations."

But when Bamforth arrived, Mahaffy said, "His tone changed completely."

Bamforth, at a preview of the exhibit for the media Wednesday, supported Mahaffy's account.

"Even if there had been someone there to speak to, I would have been

speechless," Bamforth recalled. Referring to tiger chert he readily spotted — a type of stone he knew to be associated with the Bridger Formation in southern Wyoming — Bamforth said, "I knew exactly what I was looking at, that it came from way, far away. I knew it was unique."

A 'map' of early human route

Analysis would show some of the implements had traveled farther. Uinta quartzite, Bamforth knew, is sourced to the Uinta Mountains of northeastern Utah, while Kremmling chert comes from the southern reaches of Middle Park in Colorado.

"The cache itself almost makes a map of people walking a known route across northwest Colorado," Bamforth said.



The Mahaffy cache, including skillfully crafted salad plate-sized bifacial knives, an implement likened to a double-bitted axe plus many smaller blades, was sent to the laboratory of professor Robert Yohe at California State University-Bakersfield. There, they were tested for the presence of protein residue.

"The lab looked at all of them, and we found traces of protein on four," Bamforth said. "And each of the four pieces had a different kind of protein on them. We had sheep on one and bear on another, which are interesting but not the dramatic ones. The dramatic ones are horse and camel."

Mahaffy's former property sat on Gregory Creek, which he imagines could have provided a logical campsite for some of Boulder's earliest tourists.

The Mahaffy cache site is thought to have been perched on the lip of an ancient drainage running northeast from Boulder's foothills, according to Bamforth. At the end of the late Pleistocene epoch, receding glaciers would still have been prominent along the Front Range.

Bamforth is not prepared to say that the person or people who stashed the tools — found clustered in an area as compact as a shoe box — were the earliest visitors to an area where they would have been brushing shoulders with saber-toothed cats, woolly mammoths and giant ground sloths.

"I would argue that we have never seen the (remnants of the) first human inhabitants of Boulder" or surrounding regions, Bamforth said. Speaking of the earliest human visitors to the area, whether it was 13,000 years or even 15,000 years ago, he mused, "What are the chances that you are going to find exactly the sites that they left behind? I would say the chances are nil."

Tools stashed as 'insurance policy?'

Bamforth theorized that the manner in which the tools were buried suggested a familiarity with the area and that their owner or owners had traveled this land before.

"Any time you needed a sharp edge, you had to make it out of stone. There is a fair amount of that stone in the mountains, but there's almost none of it out on this part of the Great Plains, in Boulder County," Bamforth explained.

"If you are coming out of the mountains and have got that with you, and you know you're going to be back in Boulder at some point, but you're not entirely sure what you're going to need or how



Loveland Archaeological Society, Inc.

A Colorado Non-Profit Corporation

much material you'll have with you, you leave it behind as kind of an insurance policy. That's the way that it seems to make sense to me."

Mahaffy, whose biopharmaceutical company Clovis Oncology is named for the find, said Wednesday the loan of the tools to the university is "open-ended." The exhibit is likely to be up at the CU Museum for at least the next year.

"I'm delighted to have them displayed and made available to the people of Boulder and other visitors to our community," Mahaffy said. "If they were just put in a box in a basement, then I'm taking them back."

If you go...

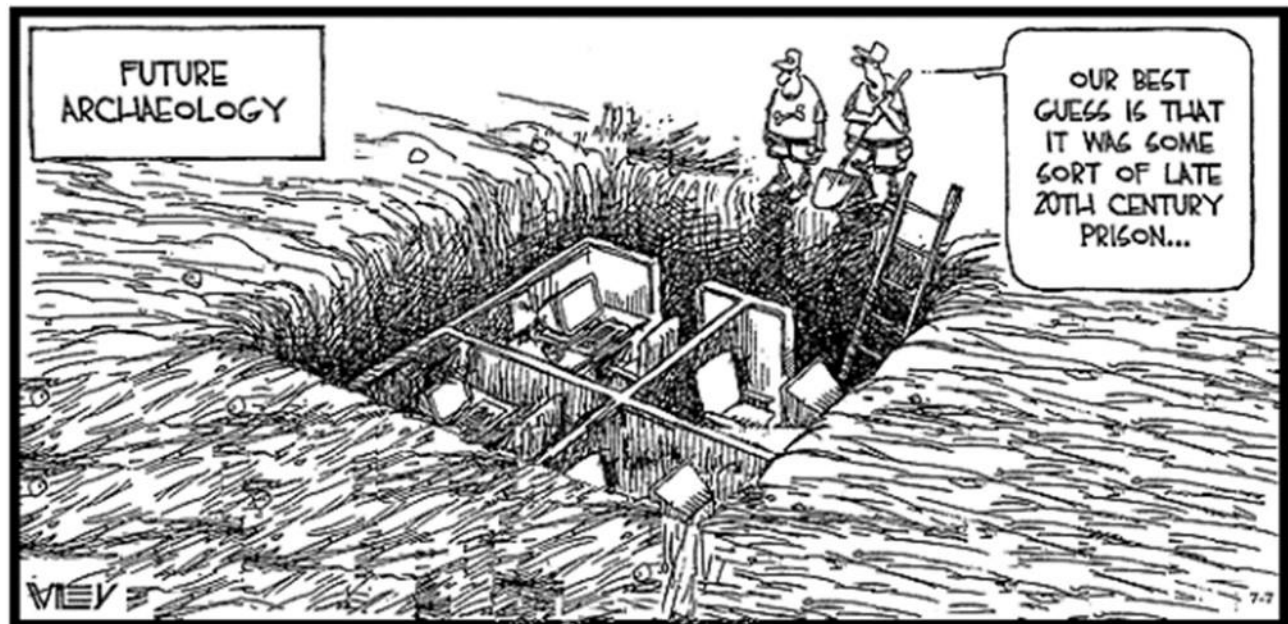
What: "Unearthed: Ancient Life in the Boulder Valley"
When: Starting October 9, 2015, and running at least one year
Where: University of Colorado Museum of Natural History
Cost: Free
More info: cumuseum.colorado.edu

We Appreciate You!

A special **"THANK YOU"** goes out to all those who assisted with the 2015 Loveland Stone Age Fair from September 25th through September 27th. We'd like to thank all of our members who put in time and effort, and also for those who displayed at the Fair. Your support did not go unnoticed!

And of course we can't overlook the contributions and dedication of our 2015 Stone Age Fair Committee: Andy Coca, Sharon Lundt, Jean Steinhoff, Gary and Sue Yeager, and Mark Boswell.

Thank you for helping us make this year's Stone Age Fair another great success!





Loveland Archaeological Society, Inc.

A Colorado Non-Profit Corporation

LAS Find of the Month, October 2015:

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 October 2015 was made by Robin Guthrie.

Type: Mallory

Material: Flattop Chalcedony

Location: Albany County, Wyoming



LAS News and Upcoming Events:

Speakers Needed!

Really!! We need speakers for our 2016 meetings! 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, just a passion for our hobby and a willingness to share that passion. Thanks!

- November 3, 2015 November meeting. This will be our annual Native American Foods program. 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.
- December 1, 2015 December meeting - annual Christmas party. Bring a dish to share for the annual feast. 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. (See notes for November 3, 2015 meeting above.)