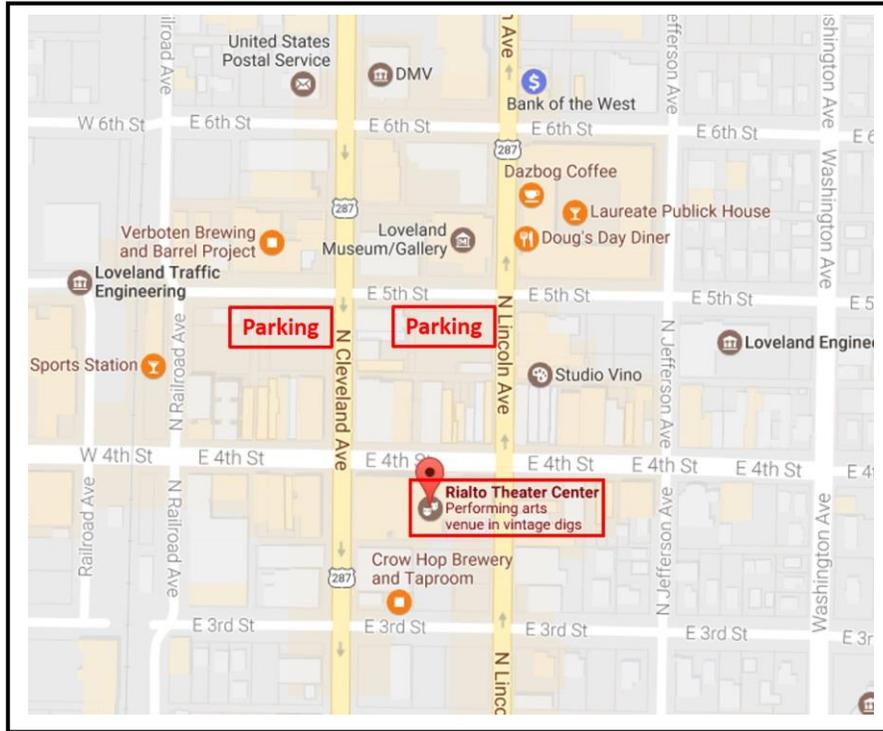




NOTICE

Our next few meetings will be held at the Rialto Theater Center at 222 E. 4th Street in Loveland, second floor. The Pulliam Building is closed for construction.



LAS May 2017 Headlines:

Native American artifacts and lessons learned in Colorado

Colorado has led the nation in efforts to repatriate sacred artifacts and human remains

By Chip Colwell, Denver Post, March 15, 2017

This week at History Colorado a seven-member panel made up of scientists and Native Americans will meet to consider the fate of sacred objects and human remains in museums across the country.

Established by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, the NAGPRA Review Committee monitors the progress of the law that established a process for tribes to claim cultural items from U.S. museums.

NAGPRA has had a profound effect on both museums and Native American communities. To date, more than 50,000 skeletons, 1.4 million funerary objects, and 14,000 sacred and communally-owned objects have been repatriated. Despite this steady flow of cultural items back to their sources over the last 26 years, in many ways the law's effects are just now taking hold. For example, less than 30 percent of the human remains in museums subject to NAGPRA have been claimed and returned.

It is fitting that Colorado be the site of a biannual Review Committee meeting because museums and tribes in the state have become national leaders in NAGPRA's implementation. As the legal scholar Cecily Harms wrote in a 2012 article, Colorado is unique because many museums here have "recognized and



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implemented the heart of NAGPRA's intention — correcting centuries-old human rights violations — while other states and government agencies have only grudgingly complied with NAGPRA's basic requirements.”

Repatriation demands came early to Colorado. In 1978, the Zuni Tribe in New Mexico set out to reclaim War Gods — living spirits in the form of wood sculptures — in museums, and first focused on the Denver Art Museum. After a year of heated controversy, the museum finally relinquished the War Gods in its collection. In Denver, the modern repatriation movement first began.

When Congress passed NAGPRA, Colorado museums, like many across the country, struggled to grapple with the law's implications. How much money would it cost to comply with the law's mandates to inventory collections and send notices to, and consult with, tribes? Would Native Americans claim everything as sacred? What criteria should be used to evaluate claims? Would museums become empty shells?

The 1990s was a learning period for both museum and tribal officials. But soon all parties were benefiting. As David Bailey, a curator at the Museum of Western Colorado, once explained after returning a vest and dress to the Northern Ute tribe, important pieces left the museum but the process built new relationships. He explained that instead of fighting the claim he “would rather have a dialogue and exchange with living Indians to gain their respect and insight into our collections.”

By 2012, of \$31 million allocated in federal NAGPRA grants, Colorado museums had secured more than 16 percent of it. Museums ranging from those on the campuses of Fort Lewis College to the University of Denver had engaged in dozens of deeply meaningful consultations. The University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, after years of unrelenting effort, likely became the first major museum in the United States to have returned all of the Native American human remains in its collection. My colleagues and I at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science have led innovative consultations with hundreds of tribes on human remains that lack enough documentation to culturally affiliate them with specific tribes yet deserve the respect of a burial.

Perhaps the state's brightest highlight is the collaboration among the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs, History Colorado, and Colorado's two Ute tribes, which started working together in 1999. One remarkable achievement was their exhaustive effort to create a protocol to deal with newly discovered remains that are culturally unidentifiable; the group held 130 consultations over four years with 47 tribes that are historically tied to Colorado.

Challenges remain for Colorado, and there is, of course, room for improvement. But what makes the state unique is how so many museums have embraced not just the letter of the law but the spirit of it, focusing on the law's prospect for justice and healing. As Roger Echo-Hawk noted some years ago after the Denver Art Museum repatriated a sacred sash to the Blood Nation, “DAM lost a valued object from its collections. The meaning to the Blood people, however, was that a living, long-lost sash returned into the care of the community. In dreams of goodwill, the outcome of justice offers a special blessing to us all. In human terms, this is the significance of NAGPRA.”

These are lessons learned in Colorado that can aid the Review Committee's work this week and offer hope for museums and tribes across the country.

Chip Colwell is senior curator of anthropology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.





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LAS Find of the Month, May 2017:

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 May 2017 was made by Eric and Helene Bindner.

Type: Material Cache
Material: Primarily Quartzite
Location: Private land,
Grand County, Utah



LAS News and Upcoming Events:

Speakers Needed!

Really!! We need speakers for our 2017 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!

- May 27 – 29, 2017 Loveland Archaeological Society Memorial Day field trip to the Harris Ranch at Bosler, Wyoming. See map and instructions on the next page. Respect the landowner and do not abuse the privilege. This includes the following: Do not litter; respect gates, fences and cattle; drive only on established dirt roads and don't bring motorcycles and ATVs; camp only where designated; and if you bring an animal don't let it run loose. LAS Code of Ethics: stoneagefair.com/LAS_code_of_ethics.htm.
- June 6, 2017 June meeting at the Rialto Theater. Program: Mike Pearce will give a presentation on High Country Artifacts, discussing artifacts found above timberline and their provenience. A map to the Rialto Theater will be included in the May newsletter.
- July 4, 2017 NO JULY MEETING due to Holiday.
- July 22, 2017 Hell Gap National Historic Landmark Dedication. The Hell Gap Paleoindian site will be dedicated as a National Historic Landmark Site. Ribbon cutting at 11:00 a.m. with lunch to follow. The public is invited to attend.

- Sponsor of the Annual Loveland Stone Age Fair -
www.stoneagefair.com