

Four Corners Archaeological Tour

September 13, 2021 through September 24th a group of seven to ten members of Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. explored the Four Corners area of the Southwest. Additional members were scheduled to attend but many cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. The tour involved camping, guest ranch and motel lodging as well as a taco dinner at the Canyon of the Ancients Guest Ranch and sometimes spontaneous group dinners. The initial group dinner was at the famous La Posada Harvey House in Winslow.

The tour started in Arizona at Homolovi State Park. We visited the Homolovi I and II ruins on our own and were honored to be guided by Chad Meunier, Park Manager to Homolovi IV, a set of ruins and petroglyphs on and around a small butte that is only open for special tours. In the afternoon Gwen Setalla, park ranger and Hopi potter delighted us with a talk on her native pottery making process. We were shown her sample clays, tempers, yucca brushes, paint and many finished products.



Homolovi IV



Hovolovi IV Rock Art



Gwen Setalla at Hovolovi

The visit to Chevelon Canyon was a multi-faceted experience. The ranch housing archaic to relatively modern artifacts was introduced by the owner, Brantley Baird. His granddaughter, Tori was the tour guide for visits to a Homolovi type Hopi archaeological site on their property, a ceremonial Navajo site with Hopi ruins and Chevelon Canyon with its ~3000 petroglyphs.



Chevelon Canyon



Chevelon Canyon

Petrified Forest National Park was the next destination. The group enjoyed a walk to Agate House and Long Logs. SAS member and geologist, Ric Frasse added perspective to this landscape, as well as Blue Mesa and the subsequent Colorado plateau formations seen on the rest of the tour. Puerco Pueblo ruins and petroglyphs were archaeological highlights.



Agate House at Petrified Forest



Puerco Pueblo at Petrified Forest

In route to Cortez, CO we were delighted to view Canyon De Chelly National Monument from the rims. The monument had recently just partially re-opened. At Cortez we were able to visit six sites with archaeologists leading the tour of three of them.



Canyon De Chelly

Kellam Throgmorton, Crow Canyon Supervisory Archaeologist lead us through Haynie Ruins. We visited two great houses, constructed between 1100 and 1150 AD, and observed earlier structures from 750 to 850 AD that were being excavated.



Great House 1 at Haynie



Group at Haynie Great House 2 Ruins

Dave Dove, property owner and archaeologist lead the tour of Mitchell Springs Ruins, an area continuously inhabited from ~650 to 1240 AD that included at least three great houses. One referred in David Dove's report as Pueblo A was probably a feasting location. He is in the process of excavating Great House B. The people of Mitchell Springs farmed using runoff water diverted from nearby Mesa Verde.



Mitchell Springs Ruins



Dave Dove showing Mitchell Springs Ruins (pre-tour in may)

Dr. Bruce Bradley and Dr. Cindy Bradley lead the tour of Wallace Ruins. This site which is also under excavation features a great house that is built on top of pit house(s). Several skeletons have been found in the great house suggesting its possible use as a mausoleum. A Navajo Taco dinner with the Bradleys as guests completed a wonderful day in the Cortez area. (Bruce autographed several copies of [Across Atlantic Ice](#)).



Wallace site with Cindy Bradley



Wallace site with Bruce Bradley

We also visited Lowry Pueblo, Sand Canyon and Yucca House ruins in the Cortez area. Lowry Pueblo was particularly interesting because it had been partially reconstructed; whereas, Yucca House is in heavy ruins. Sand Canyon was intriguing because Bruce and Cindy Bradley had been involved in the excavation and shed light on its colored history.



Lowry Pueblo Site



Yucca House



Yucca House Pueblo

After Cortez, pueblo ruins and rock art (both petroglyphs and pictographs) were highlighted in southeastern Utah. The first of the sites visited was Hovenweep National Monument. We all enjoyed strolling the Rim Trail Loop and Tower Point Loop. In addition after a bumpy ride the hikers walked to Holly Ruins, Horse Tower, Horseshoe House and Hackberry Pueblo. The edges of canyons seem to have been the preferred location for structures.



Hovenweep Castle



Hovenweep - Holly

The next three days were spent accessing more pueblo ruins and rock art by guided hikes. The first day in Comb Ridge/Butler Wash area hikers visited various sites including: Sand Island, Wolfman Panel, Procession Panel and Monarch Cave. On the second day the group took a driving tour to a variety of sites in Montezuma Canyon. On the third day we hiked to House on Fire in Mule Canyon but it really never looked on fire. We also found dinosaur tracks and explored cliff houses at Butler Wash. The short walk into Spirit Cave offered a delightful cliff house under a huge shelf.



Sand Island, archaic Glen Canyon linear figures



Sand Island, Basketmaker



Wolfman, notice the wolf paw print



Group at Wolfman site with our guide, Luke



Comb Ridge



Monarch Pueblo



Procession Panel



Montezuma Canyon kiva music



Denise and John (guide) at Montezuma Canyon pueblo



House on Fire



Lunch at Mule Canyon Kiva



Butler Wash Pueblo



Dinosaur Tracks

Two additional great houses were visited in Bluff and Blanding. It was interesting to view similarities in the cardinal point orientation of these great houses. We were fortunate to see the sun set on Bears Ears on the autumnal equinox from the Edge of the Cedars Great House (Five Kivas).



Bluff Great House



The Edges of the Cedars Museum

At Edge of the Cedars Museum we were honored to have Jonathon Till, archaeologist and curator of the museum show us prized artifacts in their collection including pottery, human hair leggings, and yucca sandals – some with designs on the sole.



Viewing artifacts with archaeologist, Jonathan Till

The last day of the tour was highlighted by a jeep trip, thanks to guides, Luke and his brother-in-law, John, over the very rough road/terrain to River House Ruin and the stunning Kachina rock art panels above the San Juan River. We returned to Sand Island and saw the archaic mammoth petroglyph. The day ended with a drive through Valley of the Gods. Monument Valley was not open.



River House



Kachina panel

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