

DRAFT – 12/18/2015
South Park Site Stewards (SPSS)
2016 Year-End Summary of Accomplishments

1. Overview

SPSS was comprised of 16 volunteer stewards. This staff includes 2 Field Coordinators, 1 Lab Coordinator, 1 New Mexico Site Steward Foundation Liaison/Advisor, and Dr. Susan Bender, Director. Stewards monitored 6 prehistoric and 2 historic sites in Park County on a regular basis. Site landowners included Buffalo Peaks Ranch, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and the South Park National Heritage Area. In addition, SPSS partnered with Beaver Ponds Environmental Education Center and the New Mexico Site Stewardship Foundation (NMSF) for training, administrative management and coordination.

Of special note, SPSS has been designated as a Partner to the South Park National Heritage Area.

2. Activities Summary

The following is a summary of activities and accomplishments during 2016.

Stewardship Training

A 2-day Stewardship Training was conducted at the Beaver Ponds Environmental Education Center.

Regularly-Monitored Site Visits

Due to favorable weather, the stewardship season started in May and ended in November. Following is a summary of the sites visited. Please note that one new site, Mosquito Pass, at 13,000' elevation was established with the BLM archaeology team and will be monitored on a regular basis.

Prehistoric Sites (existing):

Willow Creek: 1 site visit
Threemile: 3 site visits
Buffalo Peaks: 2 site visits
Salt Works Ranch: 3 site visits
Chick Site: 2 site visits

Prehistoric Site (new):

Mosquito Pass: 1 site visit (established)

Historic Sites:

Cline Ranch 3 site visits (new – established)
Magnolia Mill 4 site visits*

Significant Notes:

Magnolia Mill was vandalized several times throughout the summer. Because of the SPSS stewards' diligence in thoroughly documenting the damages and immediately notifying the landowners, repairs were made promptly.

At **Willow Creek** a new artifact was found by SPSS stewards.

At **Buffalo Peaks**, SPSS stewards discovered a new rock feature and artifacts. After the landowner unknowingly positioned a bench in the middle of a site, SPSS stewards worked together with him to relocate it to a new location.

At **Salt Works Ranch**, SPSS stewards discovered new artifacts and several rock features.

At **Cline Ranch**, SPSS stewards noted an open window and notified landowner about securing the building. Because of this, repairs were made to prevent possible vandalism and theft.

Significant Discoveries

As volunteers hike throughout Park County in the summers, they discover sites that may or may not have been located by landowners. Trout Creek Pass area and the Little Sacramento Creek basin are two (of many) areas where stewards have identified significant features and artifacts on their own. Some of these discoveries were reported to the landowner, and information filed in the SPSS Dropbox database for future reference.

Community Outreach - Private Request Site Visits

SPSS received the following special requests for reconnaissance on private land in Park County. The objective for working with private landowners is to educate the public about the rich Native American cultural heritage in Park County and help build motivation to protect and preserve sites that may be found on their own properties.

Ekarius Property (May)

Reconnaissance request by landowner to identify significant features and/or artifacts. Depending on findings landowner would either sell property or donate as open-space to preserve the cultural significance.

Klaroby Property / Bristlecone View Ranch (September):

Reconnaissance request by two landowners to identify significant features and/or artifacts. Landowners wish to preserve significant features and sites.

Mountain Area Land Trust (MALT) (September):

A hike was taken with a MALT steward to identify potential features and artifacts along the Pika Trail, newly developed on one of their properties. Some potential features were identified and plans made for 2017 to explore a large Bristlecone forest for culturally modified trees located on the property.

Mt. Pennsylvania – Appalachian State University Ecological Research Site (July):

A hike was taken with researchers in an area where ecological research has been conducted for 13 years. Native American artifacts have been found periodically and SPSS was asked to hike the area to identify any additional significant features/artifacts. Historic features were discovered and some potentially prehistoric features identified. Plans have been made to return in 2017 for additional reconnaissance.

Beaver Ponds Environmental Education Center

Verification of artifacts discovered by Beaver Ponds staff was requested. Additional reconnaissance revealed prehistoric stone features and culturally modified trees on the property.

Community Outreach - Presentation

A public presentation on Culturally Modified Trees by guest speaker, Celinda Kaelin was held at the Fairplay Fairbarn in June. This presentation resulted in over a dozen inquiries from the public regarding these trees, and the possibility some may be found on their properties. In some cases landowners wanted verification prior to excavating building sites.

Conferences

Conferences are a good source of continuing education and exposure to other stewardship organizations. The New Mexico Site Steward Foundation annual conference was attended by three SPSS stewards in Santa Fe. The Colorado Archaeological Society annual conference was also attended by two stewards in Grand Junction.

3. FAC Lab

Some artifact accession work continued in the Fall. Our facilities were reorganized somewhat to allow space-sharing with the Park County Archives. At this time the position of "Lab Coordinator" was established. This person will manage and coordinate lab activities throughout the year.

4. Carry-Over Activities from 2016 into 2017

New Sites:

The "Lake George Ute Fort" is a new USFS site planned for stewardship in 2017. This summer, SPSS stewards hiked with the USFS and preliminarily recorded the site in preparation for stewardship.

The "Arc Cairn Site" will be formally established in 2017 for regular monitoring. A third site south of Fairplay (as yet to be named) will also be formally established for regular monitoring. Both are BLM properties.

Administration:

There was a significant amount of work done to establish online file and reporting systems. Plans are to have an online reporting system completed at the start of Season 2017.