

SAN JUAN BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chapter of Colorado Archaeological Society



FIELD TRIP REPORT

Date: **September 25 - 27, 2017** Destination: **Ancestral Puebloan Sites on Cedar Mesa**

Leaders: **Barb and Lyle Hancock** Number of Participants: **10**

On Monday morning, our group of ten SJBAS members rendezvoused at the BLM Comb Wash campsite. After setting up camp and having lunch, we formed carpools and drove toward Arch Canyon. We hiked up to the Walnut Knob petroglyph panel, then hiked to several sites in Arch Canyon and to the primary Pueblo III Arch Canyon site where the BLM had built protective fencing. This was a very large Ancestral Puebloan habitation site with many renovations over the centuries and a wide variety of petroglyphs. The more one looks, the more one sees. Then we visited the Pueblo I Chacoan Outlier great house situated near our campsite in Comb Wash. Happy hour and a roaring campfire completed the day.

Our first stop on Tuesday was the developed Mule Canyon Ruin Interpretive Site along Highway 95; this site is a good example of the typical Ancestral Puebloan habitation sites found on top of Cedar Mesa in the 12th and 13th centuries. Then we drove to a remote trailhead and hiked into the Seven Kivas and Citadel sites. These hikes were both challenging, as many of the routes were off trail and some scrambling was required. We made it back to camp just before dark and enjoyed another pleasurable evening relaxing around the campfire.

After an early thunderstorm Wednesday morning, the weather cleared up a bit so we broke camp and headed over to the Cave Towers site where several late 13th-century Pueblo III towers and a couple of above-ground kivas are situated near a permanent spring at the head of a canyon. We spent some "quality time" at the site, deciphering the towers versus kivas, and spotting ever more sites beneath the canyon rims the longer we looked. The weather continued to cooperate, so we hiked near Butler Wash to the White Alcove site where a well-preserved and inaccessible cliff dwelling perches high on a ledge above a bedrock wash. One can still see grooves in the sandstone where the top of the access ladder rested and depressions in the bedrock where the bottom ends of the ladder stood. Then we hiked to the Ballroom Cave site and everyone headed for home.

Participants: Barb and Lyle Hancock, Susan Whitfield, Linda and Pete Groth, Holly Hagan, Barry Spear, Sherry Suenram, Cathy Callahan, and Jim Mueller

- by Lyle Hancock