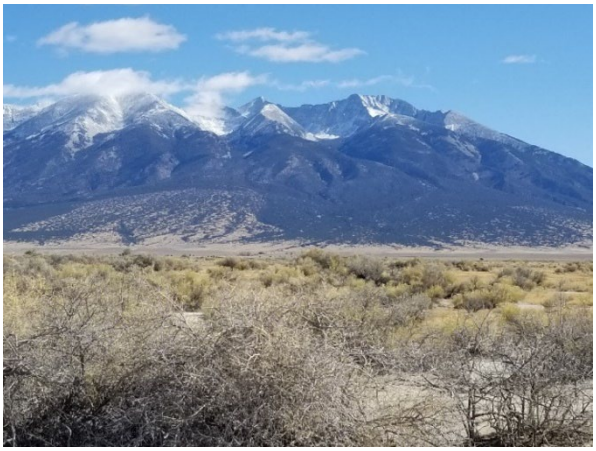
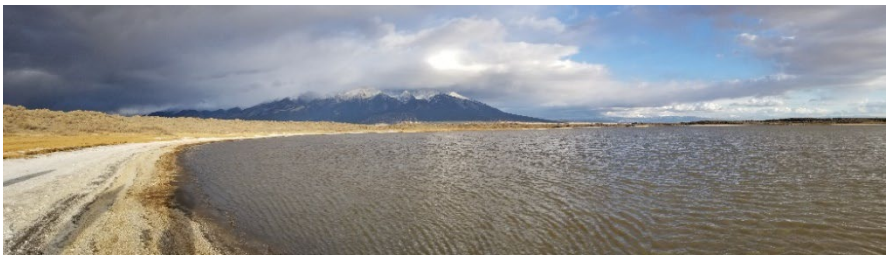
# Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association



## Program and Abstracts
## 17th Biennial Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference

## October 9-12, 2025
## Alamosa, Colorado



***From the Peaks to the Playas and Everywhere In-Between***

# Program Contents

# General Information

**Meeting Location**

All presentations, posters and meetings will be held at Adams State University, 208 Edgemont Blvd, Alamosa, CO 81101; 719-587-7011; https://www.adams.edu/

**Wi-Fi Information**
ASU Wifi
Username: rma.conf
Password: RMAC1025guest

**Registration**

On-site registration is available for those who have not registered with the conference early. Prices for on-site registration are $60 for students and $90 for professionals/non-students.

**Paper and Poster Presentations**

All paper presentations will be held on Friday and Saturday in McDaniel Hall. Please refer to the conference schedule for more information. Posters will be set up on Friday afternoon (1 pm) in McDaniel Hall Room 117 and will be left up for the duration of the conference (late Saturday afternoon). We will host a single general poster session on Saturday afternoon (1-2 pm) for conference attendees to meet with the poster authors. We will provide easels and boards to mount posters.

# Conference Schedule

**Thursday, October 9, 2025**
**5:00 pm - 7:00 pm Conference Registration, Vistas at Rex Stadium**
**5:00 pm - 9:00 pm Early Bird Social, Vistas at Rex Stadium**

**Friday, October 10, 2025**
**8:00 am - 4:00 pm Conference Registration, McDaniel Hall (MCD), First Floor Solarium**
**8:00 am - 3:00 pm RMAA Presentations, MCD 101**
**1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Posters, MCD 117**
**3:00 pm - 4:00 pm Panel 1: The Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference – Surveying the Future of Our Conference, MCD 101)**
**4:00 pm - 5:00 pm RMAA Business Meeting, MCD 117**

**Saturday October 11, 2025**
**8:00 am - Noon Conference Registration, McDaniel Hall (MCD), First Floor Solarium**
**8:00 am - 4:30 pm RMAA Presentations, MCD 101**
**8:00 am - 4:30 pm Posters, MCD 117**
**1:00 pm - 2:00 pm Meet and Greet with Poster Authors, MCD 117**
**3:30 pm - 4:30 pm Panel 2: Collaborative Research in the Rocky Mountain Region, MCD 101**
**5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Evening Social, Student Union Banquet Hall**
**6:00 pm - 9:00 pm Banquet & Keynote Speaker, Student Union Banquet Hall**

**Sunday October 12, 2025**
**9:00 am - 1:00 pm Field Trip to the Blanca Wetlands & McIntire Mansion, meet in the McDaniel Hall parking lot at 8:45 am (transportation provided).**

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Adams State University for hosting the 17th biennial meeting of the Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference. Please share thanks to the following individuals for their efforts in planning the 2025 meeting.

### Conference Organizer
Chris Merriman

### Registration and Sponsorship Coordinator
Spencer Pelton

### Program Coordinator
Jason LaBelle

### Field Trip Leaders
Kevin Black—McIntire Mansion
Rob Koenig—Blanca Wetlands

### Our Volunteers
Caroline Gabe

### Special Thanks
The Adams State University Events Management and Aramark for their help arranging our conference at Adams State University.

And to our many sponsors, we thank you!

## Conference Sponsors

ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY
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Great Stories Begin Here

Western Archaeological Services, Inc.

CHC

CMPA
CENTER FOR MOUNTAIN & PLAINS ARCHAEOLOGY

ERO
ERO Resources Corporation
Consultants in Natural Resources and the Environment

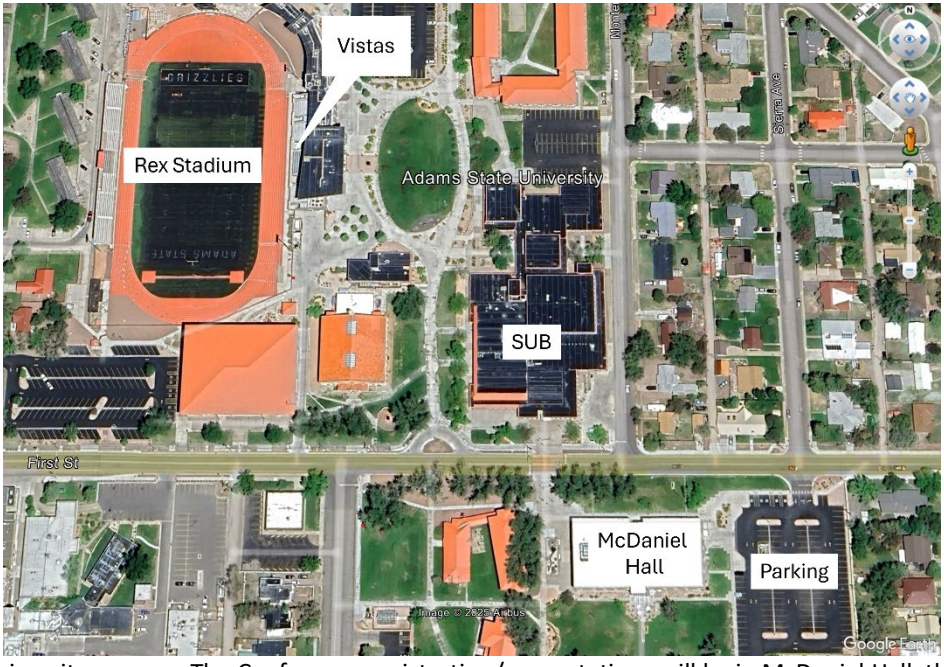
Adams State University, Department of History, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Political Science

As well, our generous colleagues:

Kevin Black
Ken Cannon
Brian Fredericks
Beth Horton
Ken Kvamme
Larry Todd
Clifford White
Aaron Whittenburg

# Conference Maps


Map of the Alamosa area and location of the conference venue. Red star marks the location of McDaniel Hall, Adams State University. North is to top of page.




Map of Adams State University campus. The Conference registration/presentations will be in McDaniel Hall, the Early Bird Reception in Vistas, and the Banquet in the Student Union (SUB). There is free parking in the lot adjacent to McDaniel Hall. North is to the top of the page.

# Local Attractions and Businesses

Alamosa Chamber of Commerce (local businesses, maps)
https://alamosachamber.com/

Great Sand Dunes National Park
https://www.nps.gov/grsa/index.htm

San Luis Valley Museum
https://www.museumtrail.org/san-luis-valley-museum

Fort Garland Museum and Cultural Center
https://www.historycolorado.org/fort-garland-museum-cultural-center?utm_source=GoogleBusinessListing

Pike's Stockade
https://www.historycolorado.org/pikes-stockade

Francisco Fort Museum
https://www.franciscofort.org/

Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad
https://cumbrestoltec.com/

Luther Bean Museum (Thurs.-Fri. 1-5 pm)
https://www.adams.edu/lutherbean/

# Special Events

## Early Bird Social -- Welcome Reception

**(Thursday, October 9, 5:00 PM–9:00 PM)**

Please join us Thursday evening, March 9, from 5-9 PM for the Early Bird Social -- Welcome Reception at Vistas on the top floor of Rex Stadium on Adams State University campus. Appetizers and drinks will be provided. Conference registration will be available on site. Please remember to bring cash to support the bartenders. On-site registration will also be available at Vistas from 5:00pm-7:00pm.

## Pre-Banquet Happy Hour

**(Saturday, October 11, 5:00–6:00 PM, SUB Banquet Hall)**

Please join us for an informal happy hour preceding the banquet dinner.

## Saturday Evening Banquet and Keynote Speaker

**(Dinner, Saturday, October 11, 6:00–7:30 PM, SUB Banquet Hall)**
**(Banquet Talk, 7:45–9:00 PM**

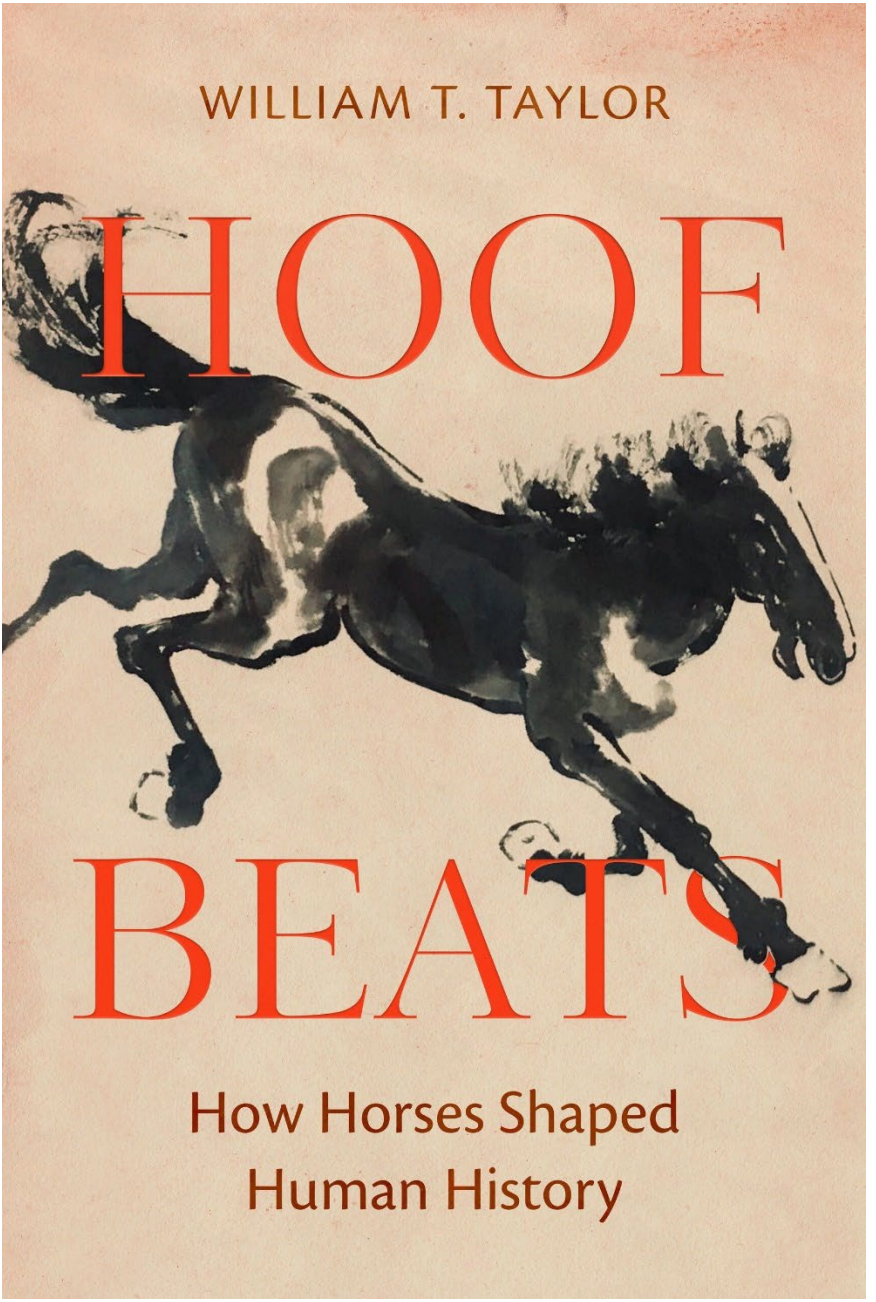
Attendees must have paid and registered for the banquet to attend the dinner. A buffet dinner will be served.

For those not attending the dinner, be sure to join us after the meal for our keynote speaker. We are thrilled to welcome Dr. William Taylor (Assistant Professor and Curator of Archaeology, the University of Colorado-Boulder). Dr. Taylor's address is titled "Rethinking the Origins of Horse Domestication and Its Impact on the Ancient World."

## *Please Welcome Dr. William Taylor*

## *Rethinking the Origins of Horse Domestication and Its Impact on the Ancient World*

The domestication of the horse is widely understood as one of the most significant events in human history – with horse transport linked to drastic changes in ecology, communication, culture, ceremony, and even the very structure of societies across the ancient world. But how did this transformative relationship between people and horses first emerge? New discoveries from archaeological sciences are overturning long-held assumptions about the timing and process of the first domestication, revealing a process that was far more rapid - and far more disruptive - than previously understood.


WILLIAM T. TAYLOR
HOOF
BEATS
How Horses Shaped
Human History

# Sunday Field Trips and Tours

We are excited to offer a tour during the 17th biennial conference. The tour is scheduled for Sunday morning, October 12th. Please meet us in the parking lot of McDaniel Hall at 8:45-8:50 am for a 9:00 departure.

A 12-person van is available for those attending the tour or participants can caravan along in their own vehicles. Be sure to bring food/water along, as desired, for the tour.

## *Blanca Wetlands*

Robert Koenig (Espinoza Consulting Services)

Join us for a field excursion into the Blanca Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern, a 10,000-acre preserve of remnant wetlands, playas, and lunette dunes that once formed a vibrant ecological and cultural hub in the San Luis Valley. This landscape, now a refuge for migratory birds and other wildlife, has also been shaped by human activity. Throughout the Holocene and into the 19th century, water-filled playas defined the region, supporting a rich array of resources that attracted foraging groups and sustained repeated occupations. Although mid-20th-century water diversions and irrigation efforts disrupted the hydrology, the archaeological record remains remarkably intact. The area's playa-lunette landscape serves as a backdrop for thousands of years of land use, reflected in widespread low-density flaked stone and groundstone artifacts, punctuated by dense open campsites. On this trip, we'll visit two of the larger camp sites and delve into the latest survey data and interpretations.

## *McIntire Ranch and Mansion*

Kevin Black (Colorado Assistant State Archaeologist [retired])

The McIntire Ranch and Mansion is designated as one of Colorado's Most Endangered Places and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. It was established by Albert and Florence McIntire near the Conejos River ca. 1880 and remained an operating ranch into the 1920s. Albert McIntire served as a local county and district judge before being elected Governor of Colorado in 1895. The site is also important for its connection to Florence, who was one of the pioneers in the women's movement through the Homesteading Act.

The most prominent feature to see during this field trip is the "mansion," the ruins of a Territorial Adobe style ranch house with some walls still standing. There are also a number of foundations of outbuildings and artifact concentrations. The McIntires' daughter, Dorothy [born ca. 1887], married Edward Cortez and they established a ranch on the opposite side of the Conejos River--not far northeast of the McIntire Ranch and adjacent to the location where Pike's Stockade once stood. Both ranches benefitted from the presence of local springs, including sources warm enough to keep a part of the river unfrozen in winter. [Optional: If time and interest permits, we may add a stop at the reconstructed Pike's Stockade on the return trip to Alamosa, for those headed north to home].

Here's a link to a video about the site from CPI:
McIntire Ranch & Mansion - Colorado Preservation, Inc.

Scan this QR code for a short synopsis of the site.

# Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association
# Business Meeting Agenda

***Meeting Time: 4-5 pm MDT, Friday, October 10, 2025***
***Meeting Place: MCD 117, Adams State University, Alamosa, CO***

**1. Call to Order**
   a. Directors Present

**2. In Memorium**
   a. Over the past several years, we have lost a number of friends and colleagues. Please take a moment to remember those who have gone before us.

**3. Votes on meeting minutes**
   a. Minutes of the 3 May 2024 annual business meeting
   b. Minutes of the 26 September 2025 BOD meeting

**4. Treasurer's Report** (Spencer Pelton)

**5. Old Business**
   a. Election results, 2025 BOD (Rebecca Sgouros)
   b. RMAA Annual Report 2024-2025 (Kevin Black)
   c. Future of RMAA and RMAC [follow-up from roundtable discussion]

**6. New Business**
   a. Venue for RMAC 2027
   b. Recognition of outgoing 2021-2025 RMAA Directors
   c. Other new business

**7. Recognition of RMAC 2025 Organizers**

**8. Adjourn**

# Paper Presentation Schedule

## Friday Morning Session

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:00-9:20 | **Before the Railroad: 1860s Archaeology in the Laramie Valley** |
| | Spencer Pelton (Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist) |
| 9:25-9:45 | **Land, Water, and Faith: Settlement Patterns in Northern New Mexico and the San Luis Valley** |
| | Caroline Gabe (Adams State University) |
| 9:50-10:10 | **1885 Artifact Assemblage** |
| | Dudley Gardner (WAARI) and Laura Ng |
| **Break** | |
| 10:35-10:55 | **Community Ethnoarchaeology and Collaboration in Folsom, New Mexico** |
| | Robert K. Hitchcock (University of New Mexico) and Melinda C. Kelly (Kalahari Peoples Fund) |
| 11:00-11:20 | **Railroad to the Mountains: Fieldwork and Taphonomic Complexities at a Hell on Wheels Camp** |
| | Riley Limbaugh (Colorado State University) |
| **11:30-1:00** | **Lunch** |

## Friday Afternoon Session

| | |
|---|---|
| 1:00-1:20 | **Marsh Madness: Exploring the Archaeology of Dynamic Late-Holocene Lakes in the Carson Desert, Nevada** |
| | Annie Hershey (Adams State University) |
| 1:25-1:45 | **Before the Wagons, Before the Chairlifts: Revisiting the Precontact Use of Monarch Crest, Chaffee and Gunnison Counties, Colorado** |
| | Aaron Whittenburg (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants) |
| 1:50-2:10 | **Ri ubix ulew: Language and Identity in Humberto Ak'abal's Poetry** |
| | David Lee (Adams State University) |
| 2:15-2:35 | **Spatial Structure Inherent to Percussion Flaking Debris Scatters** |
| | Ken Kvamme (University of Arkansas) |
| **Break** | |
| 3:00-4:00 | **The Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference – Surveying the Future of Our Conference** |
| | Panel Discussion |
| 4:00-5:00 | **RMAA Business Meeting** |

## Saturday Morning Session

| **Morning Symposium (9:00-11:20)** | **Revisiting Forager Settlement Systems at the Pleistocene-Holocene Boundary in the Rocky Mountains, USA, organized and chaired by Kelton Meyer** |
|---|---|
| 9:00-9:20 | **Reddin Site (5SH77) Redux: New Perspectives on a Classic Folsom Surface Scatter, San Luis Valley, Colorado** |
| | Kelton A. Meyer (Department of Anthropology, University of Wyoming) |
| 9:25-9:45 | **Geochemically Sourcing the Black Mountain and Mountaineer Folsom Lithic Assemblages** |
| | C. Reagan Johnson (Southern Methodist University) |
| 9:50-10:10 | **The Allen Complex as Viewed from the Carey Lake (5LR230) and Other High-Altitude Sites in the Northern Colorado Mountains** |
| | Jason LaBelle (Colorado State University) and Kelton A. Meyer (University of Wyoming) |
| **Break** | |
| 10:35-10:55 | **Assessing Younger Dryas Cold Adaptation at the Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Boundary** |
| | Clifford White (Colorado State University) |
| 11:00-11:20 | **Models and Methods and Paleoindian Archaeology in NW Wyoming's Absaroka Mountains** |
| | Lawrence Todd (GRSLE), Daniel Dalmas (University of Utah), Paul Burnett (SWCA), and Charles Orngard (Iowa State University) |
| **11:30-1:00** | **Lunch** |

## Saturday Afternoon Session

| | |
|---|---|
| 1:00-2:00 | **Poster Session – Meet with the Poster Authors** |
| 2:00-2:20 | **Chinese Gold Mining in the Snake River Canyon** |
| | Kenneth Cannon (Cannon Heritage Consultants, Inc.), Ron James (Twin Falls Historic Preservation Commission), Sari Dersam (Cannon Heritage Consultants), and Scott Dersam (Cannon Heritage Consultants) |
| 2:25-2:45 | **Obsidian Studies from the Thirsty Creek Watershed, Madison Plateau, Yellowstone National Park** |
| | Marcia Peterson (Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist) and Elizabeth A. Horton, Ph.D. (Yellowstone National Park, National Park Service) |
| 2:50-3:10 | **The Application of Strontium Isotopes in Tracking Holocene Bison in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem** |
| | Kenneth Cannon (Cannon Heritage Consultants, Inc.), Ethan Ryan (Historical Research Associates), and Houston Martin (SUNY Westchester Community College) |
| **Break** | |
| 3:30-4:30 | **Collaborative Research in the Rocky Mountain Region** |
| | Panel Discussion |

## Closing Remarks and Banquet Reminder (Ken Cannon)

| | |
|---|---|
| 4:30-4:45 | **Ken Cannon (RMAA President, 2021–2025)** |

# Panel Discussions

We're excited to host two important and engaging panel discussions at this year's conference. We strongly encourage you to attend, lend your voice, and actively shape the future of our profession and the Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association (RMAA).

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**Panel 1: The Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference – Surveying the Future of Our Conference**
**When:** Friday Afternoon
**Led by:** RMAA Board Members

This is your chance to directly influence the future of the Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference. The RMAA Board wants to hear your honest feedback and ideas in this discussion.

Key Questions We'll Explore:

- What is the role of this conference (or others) in your professional life?
- How can we improve the student experience and better integrate students into the association?
- What is working well, and what can we do better to promote the RMAA and the conference?
- How can we better engage professionals across all archaeological settings—museums, cultural resource management (CRM), agencies, THPOs, and academia?
- What competing interests (like other conferences, rising costs, etc.) should we be aware of to ensure our continued success?

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**Panel 2: Collaborative Research in the Rocky Mountain Region**
**When:** Saturday Afternoon
**Moderated by:** Jason LaBelle

Join an open-ended conversation designed to spark creative thinking about research across the Rocky Mountains. We hope to identify compelling topics that would benefit from collaborative efforts.

**Key Questions We'll Discuss:**

- Can we identify comparative research topics where academics, agencies, and CRM practitioners could work together to create mountain-oriented contexts that shape future research?
- How can we better integrate students, descendent communities, and citizen scientists into these large-scale research efforts?

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Your insights are essential to the success of these discussions. We look forward to your engagement!

## General Poster Session

Posters will be on display from Friday 1:00 PM through Saturday 4:45 pm. There will be a poster session on Saturday afternoon from 1-2 pm, where poster authors will be in attendance to meet with conference attendees.

**Bottlenecks Shaped Us: Neanderthals and Modern Human Population Structures**
DJ Lueloff (University of Wyoming) and Dr. Allison Mann (M.A.G.E Lab and McNair)

**Exploring Regional Landscapes: Integrating Surface and Excavated Datasets, the GRSLE Example**
Lawrence Todd (GRSLE), David Rapson (University of Wyoming), and Daniel Dalmas (University of Utah)

**Full Re-Recording of Indian Canyon, Kanab UT**
Brooklyn Warner (Utah State University) and David Byers (Utah State University)

**No Name: Excavation of a Prehistoric Hunting Blind on the Continental Divide**
Garrett Williams (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc.) and Elena Haverluk (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc.)

# Symposium Abstract

***Kelton A. Meyer (Department of Anthropology, University of Wyoming) Organizer and Chair of Symposium***

***Revisiting Forager Settlement Systems at the Pleistocene-Holocene Boundary in the Rocky Mountains, USA***

This symposium brings together papers covering new perspectives on Early and Late Paleoindian lifeways in the Rocky Mountains and adjacent uplands. Our contributors focus on high-altitude campsites as key contexts for exploring the interplay of mobility strategies, technological organization, subsistence practices, and cold weather adaptation. The papers critically examine the challenges of sampling these phenomena at the Pleistocene-Holocene transition, with attention to survey design, excavation strategies, and the limits of data resolution. Finally, we examine the applicability of standard models of settlement organization in high-altitude environments and propose new frameworks for understanding Paleoindian mobility.

# Paper and Poster Abstracts

***Kenneth Cannon (Cannon Heritage Consultants, Inc.), Ron James (Twin Falls Historic Preservation Commission), Sari Dersam (Cannon Heritage Consultants), and Scott Dersam (Cannon Heritage Consultants)***

***Chinese Gold Mining in the Snake River Canyon***

The discovery of gold near Shoshone Falls in 1869 provided newly discharged Chinese workers from the Central Pacific Railroad with a new economic opportunity. Records indicate that at least one of those claims was purchased by Ah Mon Mong and the Tung Toek Tong from Relf Bledsoe in November 1871. This transfer became possible following the repeal in the Autumn of 1870 of the ban on “Chinese emigration" enacted the previous May, possibly indicating the waning returns from placer deposits. In 2024, CHC initiated an intensive pedestrian inventory of the canyon, focusing on the area between the Hansen Bridge and the Perrine Bridge in

Jerome and Twin Falls Counties. While a continuation of earlier survey work in the 1990s, our efforts updated five previously recorded sites and recorded six new sites. The latest effort expanded the inventory of habitation features to those associated with the placer mining industry, such as adits, rocker platforms, and raceways for processing sediments. Additional work is planned for the fall of 2025, with the nomination of the Snake River Canyon Historic Mining District as the ultimate goal.

***Kenneth Cannon (Cannon Heritage Consultants, Inc.), Ethan Ryan (Historical Research Associates), and Houston Martin (SUNY Westchester Community College)***

***The Application of Strontium Isotopes in Tracking Holocene Bison in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem***

Light and heavy isotopic studies have become an integral tool in understanding the ecology of humans and vertebrates. In migration and mobility studies, strontium isotopes are used to determine if the individual is local to a particular area by comparing the isotopic values from bone and dental enamel of the specimen with local isotopic values that have been established for that specific geographic location. The local values of a specific place are determined by studying the underlying geology of a particular place. The GYE provides a unique research laboratory due to the number of distinct geologic substrates it contains. We should expect high-resolution 87Sr/86Sr variation in this mountainous area due to the complex juxtaposition of lithologies. In this paper, we discuss the role of strontium isotopes (87Sr/86Sr) in tracking bison from five locales ranging in age from the Early Holocene Horner site to Late Holocene bison from Jackson Hole and Idaho. A comparison of the archaeological specimens with modern Yellowstone National Park bison indicates significant shifts in range and range size. This has implications not only for understanding the predictability of this resource for precontact native groups but also in managing bison herds in the context of climate change.

***Caroline Gabe (Adams State University)***

***Land, Water, and Faith: Settlement Patterns in Northern New Mexico and the San Luis Valley***

This presentation offers a comparative analysis of cultural landscapes in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado's San Luis Valley (SLV), reframing the modern state boundary as an artificial divide within a historically connected region shaped by Spanish and later Hispano settlement. While both areas share traditions rooted in colonial land use, irrigation systems, and Catholic religious practice, their built environments reflect differing responses to local geography, historical timing, and sociopolitical conditions. Earlier settlements in New Mexico were often plaza-centered, compact villages that functioned as hubs of social, agricultural, and/or religious life. In contrast, 19th-century settlements in the SLV followed a more diffuse pattern, often organized around long-lot divisions aligned with acequia irrigation systems. These communities maintained strong ties to land and ritual, but expressed them through a more linear organization of the agrarian landscape. Despite differences in form, both regions demonstrate enduring cultural practices, including communal water management (acequias), religious observance centered around churches and moradas, and vernacular architectural traditions. These shared elements reflect a cultural continuity that transcends political boundaries and reveals how landscapes become repositories of memory, belief, and identity

***Dudley Gardner (WAARI) and Laura Ng***

***1885 Artifact Assemblage***

From 1991 to the present archaeologists have been excavating in the Rock Springs' Chinatown. This presentation will describe what the artifact and macro floral and faunal assemblages indicate about food ways at this time.

***Annie Hershey (Adams State University)***

***Marsh Madness: Exploring the Archaeology of Dynamic Late-Holocene Lakes in the Carson Desert, Nevada***

Archaeological research throughout the Great Basin has shown that people have always been drawn to lakes and wetlands, and the Carson Desert is no different. Compared to other more widely distributed resources, wetlands provide a concentrated variety of exploitable plant and animal resources. However, the location, extent, and productivity of these resource patches has varied greatly throughout prehistory, depending largely on climatic conditions. Additionally, there has been much debate about the intensity of marsh resource exploitation and the influence on mobility and land use patterns. This paper explores the relationship between late-Holocene water fluctuations in the Carson Desert and the human response to the dynamic distribution of wetland resources. Using the most recent environmental and geospatial data, a model was developed to estimate the locations of highly-ranked marsh patches during various low-elevation lake stands in the Carson Desert. The model was then tested against the archaeological record to see if land use and mobility patterns changed when lakes were present. Preliminary findings will be shared during this presentation.

***Robert K. Hitchcock (University of New Mexico) and Melinda C. Kelly (Kalahari Peoples Fund)***

***Community Ethnoarchaeology and Collaboration in Folsom, New Mexico***

For the past four years, a team of social scientists, archaeologists, and historians have been collaborating in work in Folsom, New Mexico. The team is examining the history of the life and work of an African American ranch manage, George McJunkin, who discovered what came to be known as the Folsom Paleoindian site in 1908. The multidisciplinary work has come up with numerous findings that shed light on the archaeology, ethnoarchaeology, and history of the High-Low region in northeastern New Mexico. This paper addresses some of the conclusions reached thus far as a result of the collaborative work.

***C. Reagan Johnson (Southern Methodist University)***

***Geochemically Sourcing the Black Mountain and Mountaineer Folsom Lithic Assemblages***

The Black Mountain site (5HN55) is a high-elevation Folsom camp in the Rio Grande National Forest, Colorado, first investigated by the Smithsonian Institution and recently by the SMU Quest program. Located ~10,160 feet above sea level (asl) and just below a mountain pass over the Continental Divide, Black Mountain is ~80 km from the Mountaineer site (~8,630 feet asl) in the Gunnison Basin. These two sites represent the highest-elevation Folsom occupations currently known, and their proximity to one another, which is within typical estimates for Folsom ranges, raises the possibility that they were occupied by the same group. To investigate this possibility, cryptocrystalline lithic artifacts from both sites were geochemically sourced using portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF). Using multivariate statistical methods, these assemblages were compared to raw materials from potential chert sources, including Trout Creek, Mosca, Cumbres Pass, Elbert Wood, Cerro Pedernal, as well as local cobbles. According to this analysis, the Black Mountain and Mountaineer lithic assemblages contain relatively large amounts of Trout Creek and Mosca cherts, while other sources appear in more limited quantities. These results indicate that the Folsom group or groups that occupied these sites acquired at least some of their toolstone from the same chert sources. Because there is often high intra-variability within and low inter-variability between different cherts, future research should consider additional relevant lithic sources and sourcing techniques with lower detection limits (e.g., neutron activation) to further explore this potential connection between the Black Mountain and Mountaineer sites.

***Ken Kvamme (University of Arkansas)***

***Spatial Structure Inherent to Percussion Flaking Debris Scatters***

The structure of open-air lithic scatters has been compared to that of a "fried egg" with more material centrally located and density falling-off with distance. Yet, beyond this observation, the high degree of spatial organization inherent to flaking debris scatters has been surprisingly

neglected. Using experimental and archaeological debitage scatters, the exponential family of probability distributions is shown to closely model flake dispersal patterns, including flake size distributions, with correlations between observed and expected outcomes frequently exceeding r=.95. Smaller flakes tend to be located centrally, but as their size increases they tend to disperse more widely. Moreover, cortex-bearing flakes, which correlate with larger sizes, tend to spread farther. These patterns hold under different lithic material types, but the extent of dispersal varies with coarser-grained materials spreading more widely than vitreous stone types. Using experimental data these tendencies hold under various hammer types (hard, soft) and stances (standing, kneeling, squatting), but both affect dispersal ranges. It is potentially possible to infer knapper stance, facing, and left-or-right handedness from scatter mappings. Many of these patterns persist, even in palimpsests of multiple flaking episodes as shown through computer simulation and by actual surface mappings of archaeological distributions in a Rocky Mountain high desert landscape.

***Jason LaBelle (Colorado State University) and Kelton A. Meyer (University of Wyoming)***

***The Allen Complex as Viewed from the Carey Lake (5LR230) and Other High-Altitude Sites in the Northern Colorado Mountains***

The Allen Late Paleo complex is well represented in the mountains of northern Colorado, particularly compared to earlier Paleo traditions. This suggests the sub-alpine and alpine ecosystems were widely accessible and resource-abundant during the Early Holocene epoch. In this presentation, we review the Allen assemblage from the Carey Lake site (5LR230), a short-term camp located atop a lateral moraine in the headwaters of the Laramie River in the Medicine Bow mountain range. Repeated surface collection over the past 50 years revealed a robust assemblage of tools and debitage, allowing for comparison to other surface and excavated Allen sites in the central and northern mountains of Colorado, such as the Fourth of July Valley, Phillips-Williams Fork, and 5PA158 sites. Raw materials represented in these assemblages suggest intensive use of mountain ecosystems.

***David Lee (Adams State University)***

***Ri ubix ulew: Language and Identity in Humberto Ak'abal's Poetry***

My presentation will talk about Humberto Ak'abal's theory and practice of language as way of expressing Maya identity. Characterized by some scholars as backward looking "strategic primitivism", I argue instead that Ak'abal's understanding of the expressivity of K'iche' founds his project of reviving K'iche' and other indigenous languages through artistic creation and linguistic innovation. Comparing his K'iche' and Spanish poetry highlights his understanding that differences between Spanish and Maya epistemic worlds are fundamental to cultural difference, but those differences can be communicated and bridged through poetic practice.

***Riley Limbaugh (Colorado State University)***

***Railroad to the Mountains: Fieldwork and Taphonomic Complexities at a Hell on Wheels Camp***

Julesburg III, also known as Weir, was the only Hell on Wheels camp established in Colorado. Located in the northeastern corner of the state, near present-day Julesburg and Ovid, the site evolved from a small Transcontinental Railroad camp into a sizable town before being physically moved in 1881. Since that relocation, the land has been primarily used for agriculture and ranching with minimal development, especially in the area where the original town is believed to have stood. In June of 2025, the Colorado State University Archaeological Field School surveyed and shovel tested the suspected site to refine its location and potentially identify the town's footprint. Prior to this investigation, no professional archaeological work had been undertaken at the site. Available information stemmed primarily from privately collected artifacts and popular historical accounts of Hell on Wheels camps.
Over five days of fieldwork, the field school recovered a substantial number of surface and subsurface artifacts, indicating a complex site with multiple historic occupations. This paper presents the preliminary findings from the 2025 fieldwork at Julesburg III and aims to shed light on a previously overlooked part of Colorado's history and its role in Westward

Expansion. It also explores how overlapping occupations complicate interpretations of the site as a single historical moment.

***DJ Lueloff (University of Wyoming) and Dr. Allison Mann (M.A.G.E Lab and McNair)***

***Bottlenecks Shaped Us: Neanderthals and Modern Human Population Structures***

Neanderthal and Anatomically Modern Humans (AMH) have introgressed or mated since about 250 thousand years ago (kya) all the way up to the Neanderthal extinction around 40kya. In that time these populations were plagued by evolutionary forces such as genetic bottlenecks. Genetic bottlenecks, a sharp reduction in the size of a population typically resulting in lower genetic diversity, are a common evolutionary force that have affected AMH evolutionary history and their population structures. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of incorporating bottlenecks in population structure simulations and research. We ran genetic simulations using msprime, which stores hypothetical genetic sequences, with different parameters including bottlenecks to gage their impact on population structure. Using principal coordinate analysis, we evaluated genetic separation and diversity of the populations analyzed. Bottlenecks are crucial in creating accurate population structures amongst modern populations. In this study the bottlenecks we applied reduced genetic diversity amongst the Eurasian population to accurately represent what we expect to see from Eurasian populations today. Results from this research show that simulating bottlenecks and other evolutionary forces can greatly improve our understanding of ourselves, where we come from, and where we fit amongst the world.

***Kelton A. Meyer (Department of Anthropology, University of Wyoming)***

***Reddin Site (5SH77) Redux: New Perspectives on a Classic Folsom Surface Scatter, San Luis Valley, Colorado***

Folsom lithic scatters remain peripheral in discussions about Early Paleoindian lifeways in the Rocky Mountains. Unburied Folsom sites pose several problems for archaeologists: spatial context and temporal associations are difficult to establish, and sites typically lack datable material or faunal remains. This paper does not hope to solve these problems outright, but it reframes the utility of surface scatters by shifting analytical horizons outward. I use a multi-scalar spatial analysis to define several Folsom campsites within a contiguous 80-acre scatter of projectile point manufacturing debris. Camp-specific patterns of raw material procurement, ratios of discarded points, and evidence of hearth-centered activities suggest a dynamic scenario of site reoccupation and reconfiguration over time. The results demonstrate that large surface scatters and campsites retain significant evidence of broader Folsom mobility strategies.

***Spencer Pelton (Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist)***

***Before the Railroad: 1860s Archaeology in the Laramie Valley***

The earliest permanent Euro-American occupations in the Laramie Valley were associated with Ben Holladay's Overland Stage route, but little archaeological evidence associated with this era has been systematically documented in Albany County. A recent pilot project sponsored by the Albany County Historic Preservation Board focused on evaluating structures in Laramie's Hart Ranch provided the opportunity to investigate archaeological resources associated with these earliest historic occupations in the Valley. Here, I present a summary of these preliminary efforts, focusing especially on the excavation of a late 1860s or early 1870s privy deposit associated with Charles Hutton's Home Ranch, one of the oldest ranches in Wyoming. I conclude that Albany County should have ample opportunities to find these earliest historic archaeological sites, but that they may be hard to find.

***Marcia Peterson (Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist) and Elizabeth A. Horton, Ph.D. (Yellowstone National Park, National Park Service)***

***Obsidian Studies from the Thirsty Creek Watershed, Madison Plateau, Yellowstone National Park***

Between 2023 and 2025, the Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist surveyed approximately 4,000 acres of the Thirsty Creek Watershed and the areas around Little Summit Lake and Summit Lake on the Madison Plateau in western Yellowstone National Park. During that time, we located and recorded 11 sites and seven isolated resources, as defined by the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, including at least two new quarry locations for Lava Creek Tuff obsidian. In 2025, we used a Bruker S1 Titan portable x-ray fluorescence machine to source 53 geologic samples from the new Lava Creek Tuff obsidian quarries and several locations where obsidian outcropped throughout the project area to obtain a complete range of variation of elements for the Lava Creek Tuff obsidian on the Madison Plateau. We also source 146 obsidian artifacts located in the sites and isolated resources across the project area. This paper presents the results of these obsidian studies along with the results of the obsidian sourcing completed for artifacts collected in 2023 and 2024 (Hughes 2024).

***Lawrence Todd (GRSLE), David Rapson (University of Wyoming), and Daniel Dalmas (University of Utah)***

***Exploring Regional Landscapes: Integrating Surface and Excavated Datasets, the GRSLE Example***

Since 2002, the Greybull River Sustainable Landscape Ecology (GRSLE) Project has emphasized artifact-based inventory of northwestern Wyoming's Shoshone National Forest, primarily surface contexts with emphasis on the Washakie Wilderness. A central goal has been the creation of a single integrated database in which every mapped item -- whether from non-collection surface recording or limited test excavations -- is tabulated as a distinct attribute. This design allows each object to be included in regional analyses regardless of location relative to arbitrary

site boundaries. As of 2025, the GRSLE dataset contains over 270,000 coded items from more than 5,000 hectares of systematically surveyed blocks. Recorded objects range from ubiquitous chipped stone debitage to rare ornamental artifacts, offering a multifaceted picture of regional archaeology. While rich, these data alone cannot fully address many regional or landscape-scale questions without reference to excavated materials and legacy collections. Interpretations based primarily on surface inventories face methodological limits when addressing increasingly sophisticated behavioral inferences and models. To address this gap, GRSLE has begun incorporating materials from large-scale excavations and curated collections into its database. The objective is integration rather than partition: building a cumulative, comparative dataset linking surface and excavated assemblages. This poster illustrates how combining diverse datasets strengthens regional-scale interpretations, enhancing the comparability of archaeological evidence and supporting more robust models of long-term human land use in the Absaroka Mountains.

***Lawrence Todd (GRSLE), Daniel Dalmas (University of Utah), Paul Burnett (SWCA), and Charles Orngard (Iowa State University)***

***Models and Methods and Paleoindian Archaeology in NW Wyoming's Absaroka Mountains***

When evaluating data and interpretive models of high-elevation Paleoindian archaeology, it is necessary to consider both data type and regional context. The Greybull River Sustainable Landscape Ecology (GRSLE) Project now collects basic inventory data using intensive 5 m transect surveys at ~1 km/hr, with continuous GPS tracklogs for every crew member. These GPS data allow us to define actual inventory areas (15 m buffers), estimate percent coverage (1 m buffers), calculate transect spacing, and assess relationships between total minutes spent per cluster and total artifacts coded. By integrating tracklogs, coded artifact discoveries, and time-per-site metrics, we move beyond assertion toward quantifiable evaluation of survey results. Combined with regionally specific geomorphological contexts, a 24-year cumulative dataset of over 5,000 ha surveyed above 2,500 m, and an updated site probability model,

this approach provides a more precise foundation for evaluating Paleoindian land use in the Absaroka Mountains.

***Brooklyn Warner (Utah State University) and David Byers (Utah State University)***

***Full Re-Recording of Indian Canyon, Kanab UT***

Indian Canyon is a branch of the larger Cottonwood Canyon which lies just West of the town of Kanab, Utah. This region is associated with the Virgin Anasazi branch of the Southwestern Ancestral Puebloan phenomenon. We focus on the North Fork of Indian Canyon, which is managed by Utah Trust Lands Administration (formerly known as STLA). Most sites in Indian Canyon were originally recorded in the late 1960s - early 1970s, so our goal was to provide more detailed, updated recordings. A majority of the sites in Indian Canyon are rockshelters on the South-facing wall of the canyon, many of which contain granaries, rock art, and ceramics.

***Clifford White (Colorado State University)***

***Assessing Younger Dryas Cold Adaptation at the Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Boundary***

The Rocky Mountain and Great Plains regions have presented logistical challenges for human occupation since people first arrived in North America. During the Pleistocene/Holocene transition, winter conditions, and the variable climate of the Younger Dryas compelled people to implement cold adaptation strategies to combat climatic stress. Bone needles, a key component of these strategies, are found in archaeological contexts across North America, with the earliest examples dating to about 13,000 years ago in Wyoming's Rocky Mountain Front Range. Analysis of twenty-five bone needles from the Hell Gap site in eastern Wyoming provides insight into their role within cold adaptation. Morphometric measurements determine whether their dimensions fall within the size range attributed to fine stitching and assess whether Paleoindian groups standardized needle form intentionally. Microscopic use wear analysis evaluates whether wear patterns align with expectations for contact with animal hides and provides evidence for how bone needles may have been

used. Raw material analysis identifies the taxa used for manufacturing needles, reflecting technological decision-making. Spatial distributions and artifact associations allow us to visualize how needles and formal stone tools were clustered, offering evidence for the organization of sewing activities within a Folsom campsite. Together, this research illustrates how thermoregulatory tools were intentionally designed, used, and organized to meet the challenges of a variable Late Pleistocene climate.

***Aaron Whittenburg (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants)***

***Before the Wagons, Before the Chairlifts: Revisiting the Precontact Use of Monarch Crest, Chaffee and Gunnison Counties, Colorado***

Before Monarch Mountain opened in 1939, before the construction of a toll road over Old Old Monarch Pass in 1880, the Monarch Crest along the Continental Divide in central Colorado served as an important thoroughfare and destination for Precontact indigenous groups. The approximate five-mile stretch of Monarch Crest has no fewer than 13 Precontact sites, showing a range of use from short-term camping occupations to architectural hunting sites. This paper provides an overview of Metcalf Archaeology's recent 2022 and 2024 compliance survey for Monarch Mountain's planned No Name Basin Expansion project and ties it into previous work in the area. This included recording new sites, re-documenting a majority of the previously documented camping and hunting sites, test excavation at one site, and mitigative excavation at another site. Many of these sites were initially documented by Lewis Hutchinson in the late 1970s and 1980s and published in his 1990 Master's thesis, "Archaeological Investigations of High Altitude Sites Near Monarch Pass Colorado". Working with staff from the Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre-Gunnison National Forests, the Pike-San Isabel National Forests, and the Region 2 Regional Office, the original collection from much of Hutchinson's work was relocated after years of unknown whereabouts and includes all but a few items from Hutchinson's work. These collections, along with original notes and photos provided by the Gunnison Ranger District, help link past and present research in the area. Finally, a National Register District nomination for the Monarch Pass Archaeological District for the Precontact sites in the area is discussed.

***Garrett Williams (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc.) and Elena Haverluk (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc.)***

***No Name: Excavation of a Prehistoric Hunting Blind on the Continental Divide***

In 2024, Metcalf Archaeological Consultants excavated a precontact hunting blind (B1) on site 5CF427/5GN1932 as part of the No Name Basin projects. The site is part of a complex of adjacent sites associated with alpine communal hunting on Monarch Pass. Excavation of Feature B1 was productive, revealing a very well-defined, prehistorically-excavated pit with a small, charcoal-rich, interior hearth. In addition, excavation revealed evidence of the piling of spoil removed from the pit and the stacking of rocks around the blind for further concealment. Three diagnostic Late Prehistoric projectile points were recovered, the most common artifact type in the very modest artifact assemblage. Consistent with the projectile points, radiocarbon dating of charcoal from the pit returned dates from the very end of the Late Prehistoric era. The blind represents one small but important component of an elaborate complex of interrelated sites with rock features including drive lines, blinds, and cairns, all associated with the proposed Monarch Pass Archaeological District.

# Rocky Mountain Anthropological Association Executive Committee

| RMAA Title | Committee Member | Professional Affiliation |
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| President 2021–2025 | Kenneth Cannon | President, Cannon Heritage Consultants, Inc. |
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| Board Member 2023-2027 | Aaron Whittenburg | Project Director, Metcalf Archaeology |

# Past Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference (RMAC) Locations

| RMAC | Year | Location | Organizing Committee |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | 1993 | Jackson, WY | David Madsen, Mike Metcalf, Jamie Schoen |
| 2nd | 1995 | Steamboat Springs, CO | Calvin Jennings |
| 3rd | 1997 | Bozeman, MT | Jack Fisher, Ken Cannon |
| 4th | 1999 | Glenwood Springs, CO | Marcel Kornfeld, Brian Vivian |
| 5th | 2001 | Waterton Lakes National Park, AB | Marty Mange, Barney Reeves, Brian Vivian |
| 6th | 2003 | Estes Park, CO | Bill Butler, Danny Walker |
| 7th | 2005 | Park City, UT | Bonnie Pitblado, Carig Smith, Lynn Harrell, Ronald Rood |
| 8th | 2007 | Jackson, WY | Ken Cannon, Molly Boeka Cannon |
| 9th | 2009 | Gunnison, CO | Casey Dukeman |
| 10th | 2011 | Missoula, MT | Doug MacDonald |
| 11th | 2013 | Taos, NM | Marcel Kornfeld |
| 12th | 2015 | Steamboat Springs, CO | Linda Scott Cummings |
| 13th | 2017 | Canmore, AB | Janet Blakey, Dan Meyer, Brian Vivian |
| 14th | 2019 | Logan, UT | Ken Cannon, Molly Boeka Cannon, David Byers, Judson Finley |
| 15th | 2021 | Alamosa, CO (CANCELLED) | Jason LaBelle, Bonnie Pitblado, Caroline Gabe, Chris Merriman |
| 16th | 2024 | Laramie, WY | Spencer Pelton, Gwendolyn Kristi, Connor Johnen, Kimberly Troendle, Marcia Peterson, Judy Wolf, Marcel Kornfeld, McKenna Lytinski, Sara Allaun |
| 17th | 2025 | Alamosa, CO | Chris Merriman, Spencer Pelton, Jason LaBelle |


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