



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# Cultural Resources Program Highlights

## BLM Colorado Fiscal Year 2024

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## **Mission statement**

The Bureau of Land Management sustains the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

## **Cover Photo**

Dominguez Escalante National Conservation Area, Colorado  
Photo by Bob Wick

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## Burro Mine National Register Nomination (under Multiple Property Listing) *Tres Rios Field Office*

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In Fiscal Year 2024, the Tres Rios Field Office prepared a National Register nomination for the historic Burro Mines Complex. The Burro Mines Complex retains features and a high degree of integrity not normally found on uranium mining operations in the region and as such, is a rare surviving example of its resource type. Architectural and archaeological assemblages on site include the Burro Tunnel mine (mine features include an ore bin, ore bin trestle, waste rock, and road and loadout area), Burro No. 5 mine (support buildings, shaft, steam engine air compressor, engine cooler, and waste rock) and the Burro No. 7 mine (headframe, hoist house with hoist, waste rock, access road, air and water line, and original vehicles). This mining complex was listed under a multiple property listing which was completed in Fiscal Year 2023. The nomination is currently being reviewed by the BLM Headquarters Office and is expected to be listed in 2025.



Figure 1. Overview of the Burro (7) Mine.



Figure 2. Overview of the original air compression system used to supply air to the underground mine.

## **Wickiup Photogrammetry Phase II**

### ***White River Field Office***

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At the request of the three Ute Tribes, the White River Field Office has built off its pilot study and continued to complete photogrammetry of all known standing wickiup sites remaining within the field office. Wickiups are fragile features susceptible to the elements, especially wildfire, and their presence on the landscape after Ute removal from the area indicates continued use of ancestral lands. The resulting effort provides 3D scans of these 100-plus-year-old features, allowing for tracking condition, future research, public education opportunities including interactive virtual reality, and benefiting the Ute Tribes by providing each Tribe a copy of the resulting 3D models. These 3D models also serve as an important tool in monitoring the sites.



*Figure 3. Representative photo of photogrammetry capture of a 100-plus-year-old standing wickiup with the National Operations Center and BLM White River Field Office.*

## **Rock Shelter with Baskets and Pictograph with Southern Ute Indian Tribe**

### ***Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area***

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In May 2024, tribal representatives of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, as well as Colorado Tribal Liaison, traveled to the Uncompahgre Field Office to visit baskets that were recently discovered in a rock shelter, and a newly discovered pictograph. Last year, tribal representatives from Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation visited the baskets and pictograph.

## Section 110 Inventory of Long Gulch Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area

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While conducting a literature review, the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area archaeologist became interested in the type of sites (open camps) that are previously documented in the Chukar Road and Bostwick Park areas. There has not been any previously conducted survey in between the two areas, and the archaeologist theorized that there could be a potential travel route between the two areas, possibly a winter travel route (due to lower elevation and a southwest facing landscape) for indigenous peoples.



Figure 4. Petroglyphs found in the Chukar Road/Bostwick Park area.

The survey is ongoing, but so far, the archaeologist has found numerous cairns, projectile points (one obsidian), a wooden feature (possible a pen), petroglyphs, and pottery (which is unusual for this area). Consultation with the Ute Tribes has indicated that this area could indeed be a winter travel route, and the area may be incorporated into the larger, statewide Ute Trails Project.



Figure 5. Obsidian projectile point found in the Chukar Road/Bostwick Park area.

## Calamity Camp Structure Stabilization Grand Junction Field Office

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In 2024, HistoriCorps completed historic preservation work on two structures at Calamity Camp, a National Register listed historic mining site. The preservation work was completed through an assistance agreement with Colorado BLM. Work was conducted in four sessions between May and June 2024. HistoriCorps completed vegetation clearing and removal of built-up soil along the exterior of Building 7, as well as grading along the exterior to create positive drainage away from the walls and foundation. Roof repair and wall stabilization, window reframing, and stabilization/resetting of the fireplace stones was also completed. Preservation work on Building 105 included deconstructing and salvaging of the roof framing, framing a rough sawn truss system for interpretation of the rafters, ridge beam, and collar ties, and replication of at the gable ends, repair of the exterior stone walls, repair and replacement of the top logs and tie beam logs, regrading along the rear of the building and resetting the entryway stones. This work was completed by 17 volunteers (for a total of 874 volunteer hours) and HistoriCorps staff who bravely battled juniper gnats the entire time.



Figure 6. Before (2016) and after (2024) photos of Building 7.



Figure 7. Before (2016) and after (2024) photos of the south side of Building 105..



Figure 8. Before (2015) and after (2024) photos of west side of Building 105.

## **Section 110 Inventory Along the High North Segment of the Salt Lake Wagon Road McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area**

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The McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) archaeologist used historic maps and lidar-based digital elevation models to identify segments of the historic Salt Lake Wagon Road (SLWR), then verified these and identified any associated archaeological sites through field inventory. The project identified one new circa 1.8-mile segment of the SLWR, refined data on, and reevaluated one associated site as potentially eligible for NRHP listing, identified one new potentially eligible site, and identified limited artifacts along the road corridor that help define the segment's period of use. The two associated historic properties pertain to both historic and prehistoric/ethnohistoric uses of the landscape. Further, two major mapping errors concerning previously recorded sites in the vicinity were remedied. The project demonstrates the potential to securely map long segments of historic linear features with field verification of only select, representative locations, thus reducing the fieldwork investment for recording such properties. It also records a segment of the SLWR, generally considered the successor to the Old Spanish Trail North Branch in the vicinity of the project, that is unusually visible and well-preserved, and may therefore provide a suitable basis for future interpretation and low-impact user experiences.



*Figure 9. View of the MCNCA High North segment of the SLWR, view to southwest.*

## **Gateway South Ethnography Study**

### ***Little Snake and White River Field Offices***

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The Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and Southern Ute Indian Tribe expressed in consultation with the BLM a preference to mitigate adverse visual effects of the Gateway South Transmission Line through Colorado by development of ethnographic materials regarding historic properties and landscapes of Tribal concern. During various meetings between the BLM and the Ute Tribes from spring 2021 through spring 2022, the entities decided to mitigate impacts by developing a one-hour video conveying the cultural significance of the area and affected historic properties. This video is the central piece of ethnographic mitigation requested by the Ute Tribes, along with an ethnographic report developed in collaboration with Gateway South proponent company Rocky Mountain Power and their ethnographic consultants with SWCA. The ethnography report included a summary of interviews shared by Ute Tribal representatives during multiple field visits to sites and places of importance. Concepts of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (i.e., traditional uses of the plant, animal, mineral, and other cultural significance places across this interrelated landscape) were documented for the benefit of BLM's long-term management of this area of importance.

## **Alpine Loop Ethnographic Study**

### ***Gunnison Field Office***

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The Alpine Loop Ethnographic Study was developed by the Gunnison Field Office (GFO) in consultation with the three Ute Tribes, given the known tribal importance of the area and the intense multiple uses of the area today. The Alpine Scenic Loop Byway (Alpine Loop) is a network of high-elevation trails located in the San Juan Mountains. This area is culturally significant to the three federally recognized Tribes that comprise the Ute Nation. Ute perspectives and connections to the land are underrepresented in scholarly research and in the historical signage along the Alpine Loop. Furthermore, Ute ancestral sites and resources may be impacted by further development of the Alpine Loop's vehicle and foot trail network. Consequently, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe requested that the GFO support an ethnographic study to address these issues. The GFO contracted with Anthropological Research, LLC to conduct a Ute cultural landscape study of the Alpine Loop beginning in 2020. Anthropological Research worked directly with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Cultural Preservation Department, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation's Historic Preservation Office on this research. In addition to a community atlas titled, "This is Ute Land: A Ute Atlas of the Alpine Loop Scenic Byway," this study resulted in the design and installation of four new interpretative panels on the Alpine Loop that tell visitors about Ute connections to the land.

## **San Luis Valley NAGPRA MOU Meeting**

### ***San Luis Valley Field Office***

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In collaboration with the Rio Grande National Forest, Great Sand Dunes National Park, and the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the San Luis Valley Field Office and BLM Colorado State Office hosted the San Luis Valley (SLV) NAGPRA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) meeting in Alamosa, Colorado in person for the first time since 2017. The meeting's intent was to strengthen and build relationships with tribal partners while reviewing and recommitting to the SLV NAGPRA MOU that was originally signed in 2008. The meeting included one and a half days of meetings at Adams State University and one and a half days of field visits throughout the San Luis Valley. Participants



included elected government officials, staff, and members from 11 Tribes and Pueblos and staff from the Federal agencies.

During the meeting, all participants discussed the new NAGPRA regulations, integrating those into the existing MOU, and what Tribal Nations who have ancestral ties to the San Luis Valley want to be added to the MOU. During the field visits, the group visited a variety of sites and landscapes that are significant to the Tribes, and some of the representatives in attendance had never been to them before. The meeting highlights the close collaboration and commitment to government-to-government consultation between Tribal Nations and the four land managing federal agencies in the San Luis Valley.

The Tribes and Pueblos who attended the meeting (alphabetically in English) include the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Kiowa Tribe, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo de San Ildefonso, Pueblo of Santa Clara, Pueblo of Tesuque, Pueblo of Zia, Pueblo of Zuni, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.



*Figure 10. Participants of the 2024 SLV NAGPRA MOU Meeting outside of Adams State University in Alamosa, Colorado.*