

FIRST DRAFT

Eagle Rock Shelter north of Delta on Gunnison predates civilization

Thirteen thousand years ago, agriculture had yet to be invented. Humans regularly stopped where wild grains were prevalent, but they weren't actually planting and cultivating grain.

Thirteen thousand years ago, the Great Pyramids of Egypt had yet to be built. The first



BOB SILBERNAGEL

of those pyramids wouldn't be constructed for another 8,400 years.

The beginnings of civilization in the Tigris, Euphrates and Nile river valleys were still more than 7,000 years in the future.

Descendants of wild wolves had been domesticated in Central Asia as early as 15,000 years ago; but horses, cattle, sheep and goats — or their ancestors — were still wild creatures 13,000 years ago.

Yet 13,000 years ago — or 12,800 years ago, to be more precise — humans made their home along the banks of the Gunnison River, north of present-day Delta, in what's now Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area.

The river has changed its channel many times during the thousands of years since, explained Glade Hadden, archaeologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Montrose. But it continues to flow in roughly the same area, between high rock walls, including one on the north side of the valley where the archaeological site called Eagle Rock Shelter is located.

Even today, he said, "It's the only place big game crosses the river for miles."

The easy access to year-round water, the shelter of overhanging rock and the southern exposure made the site attractive for many different people, Hadden added.

Hadden led Judy and me and a group of people from the Grand Junction Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society to the site last month.

In 2006, Hadden began exploring the site as part of his duties with the BLM. He eventually joined forces with a team of archaeologists from Western Wyoming Community College to carefully excavate and record items found in the shelter. They did so with the cooperation of the Ute Indians whose ancestors once lived in the area.

Across North America, there is limited evidence of human occupation as early as 15,500 years ago. Some discoveries suggest possible human activity on this continent as early as 22,000 years ago.

Eagle Rock Shelter, and a site in Douglas County known as Lamb Springs, offer the earliest evidence of human occupation in Colorado. At both of these sites, and a handful of others across the country, archaeologists have found stone points



Glade Hadden, an archaeologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Montrose, explains what was found in the oldest portions of Eagle Rock Shelter, which has been dated to 12,800 years ago.

that predate the Clovis style of points, which were once considered the oldest in North America.

The type of points found at Eagle Rock Shelter are known as Great Basin Stemmed Points, Hadden said. They have been found in a variety of locations in western North America.

Unlike some pre-Clovis sites, there is no evidence the people at Eagle Rock Shelter were hunting mammoths or other huge creatures.

"We mostly find rabbit bones and sage grouse," Hadden said. "We don't find big-game bones."

But the archaeologists did find the second-oldest basket in North America, made of yucca fibers. It's approximately 7,000 years old and was found near the second-oldest hearth discovered at Eagle Rock Shelter, which carbon dating showed to also be about 8,000 years old.

Additionally, there is rock art in the vicinity that is believed to be as much as 7,000 to 8,000 years old, although Hadden said dating rock art is more difficult because it cannot be carbon dated.

More recent rock art at the site is believed to be roughly 4,000 years old, he said. And there is some apparently done by the Utes much more recently, since it depicts a figure on horseback.

Eagle Rock Shelter also contained evidence of human occupation 5,000 years ago and 3,000 years ago. And there was corn from roughly 600 B.C., during the time of the people we now call the Fremont Culture.

"It's some of the oldest corn found around this region," Hadden said. "It's very exciting."

Interestingly, Hadden said that although farming helped the Fremont people live a more



Archaeologist Glade Hadden details the different levels of excavation and eras of human habitation at Eagle Rock Shelter, along the Gunnison River north of Delta.

settled life, it didn't make them live longer. In fact, it shortened their life spans.

"Studies show hunter-gatherers worked 15 to 20 hours a week and most lived 60 to 70 years" if they survived infancy and weren't killed in battle or an accident.

One 4,000-year-old skeleton found in western Colorado is believed to be that of a woman who lived about 80 years, Hadden said. The skeleton showed evidence of broken bones and arthritis.

In contrast, the Fremont Culture farmers lived an average of only 45 years, Hadden said. That's in part because their teeth wore down much earlier because of the way they ground their corn on rock metates.

Sadly, the Eagle Rock Shelter was heavily looted in 1998. But fortunately, an earlier rockfall at the site prevented the looters from digging deeply into the site. They came within a few inches of some very important artifacts before abandoning the site, Hadden said.

JUDY SILBERNAGEL/Special to the Sentinel

BOB SILBERNAGEL/Special to the Sentinel

City of Rifle bans outdoor watering

By ERIN MCINTYRE
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Problems with the city of Rifle's water treatment system have led officials to ban outdoor watering for at least the next few days.

The announcement came in the middle of the first heat wave of summer, with 90-degree highs forecast through Tuesday by the National Weather Service.

The city asked its 9,700 customers to curb their water use as much as possible, and prohibited any outdoor use of water, forcing businesses such as car washes to shut down until the problem is fixed.

Utilities Director Jim Miller said Rifle law enforcement officers were tasked with reminding residents not to water outdoors, temporarily policing water use.

Though residents with wells or irrigation water from ditches were not included in the ban, use of potable drinking water from the municipal system is prohibited until further notice. Residents were notified to stop watering outside with a reverse 911 phone call.

The problems started on June 1, when a supply line that provided water from the Colorado River to the main pump station broke. The 14-inch water line, which runs under railroad tracks and a state highway, had a major

leak that was resolved by the following morning, Miller said.

But what transpired was a bigger problem — the initial leak put stress on the pump station that brings the water from the supply line to the Graham Mesa treatment plant, and all of the check valves broke, causing the malfunction.

Though the city has a second, smaller treatment plant and pump station on Beaver Creek, located on Taughenbaugh Mesa, its capacity provides only roughly 10 percent of what the system demands, Miller said.

Right now officials are trying to resolve the situation by hooking up a temporary pumping system to feed the Graham Mesa treatment plant.

Miller encouraged residents to conserve water indoors as well as refraining from watering outside.

"Everyone should curb their water use," he said. "People need to take this seriously because it's what delivers water to most of the city of Rifle."

Residents will be notified when the watering restrictions have been lifted, on the city's website (www.rifle-co.org) and via reverse 911 phone calls, Miller said.

Missing dog found in woods

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ASPEN — A rescued former sled dog is back with her shelter buddy after going missing for 10 days in the woods.

The Aspen Animal Shelter took in 13-year-old Cleo from a Snowmass Village business where the former owner was convicted of animal cruelty. Cleo had been adopted days

before she went missing May 22.

Kayaker Denise Handrich contacted the shelter after spotting Cleo along the Roaring Fork River and sharing a power bar with the slightly-underweight dog. Shelter director Seth Sachson says Cleo likes spending time with another dog from the Snowmass Village business.

The Daily Sentinel (ISSN 1445-8962)
Published every morning at 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.
Periodical Postage paid at Grand Junction, CO.
Carrier home delivery prices: 13 weeks - \$65.00, 26 weeks - \$130.00, 52 weeks - \$260.00.
Weekend delivery packages: Wednesday thru Sunday - \$244.40, Friday thru Sunday - \$197.60, Saturday & Sunday - \$163.80, Sunday only - \$163.80.
Weekend delivery includes the following date in 2016: Nov 24.
Single Copy: \$1.00 daily and \$2.00 Sunday.
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Theft from Shoe Carnival

Police are looking for a man who stole a pair of Nike tennis shoes from Shoe Carnival on Feb. 23.

Security camera footage from the store shows the suspect, described as a white male about 5 feet 5 inches tall with a medium build. He was wearing a white baseball cap, black hoodie sweatshirt and blue jeans.

The suspect was driving a white Chevy Monte Carlo. Photos of the suspect are posted at www.241stop.com.

Crime Stoppers is asking anyone with information about this crime or the suspect in Grand Junction Police Department case No. 2016-10435 to call 241-7867.

Information can be given anonymously, and information leading to an arrest can result in a cash reward up to \$1,000.

According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

■ Mary Ruffin, 24, of 2853 North Ave., was

arrested on June 3 for alleged possession of controlled substances and drug paraphernalia as well as three warrants, including probation violation and warrants from other jurisdictions.

■ Rex Gibbs, 45, of 12402 Colorado Highway 65, was arrested on suspicion of felony menacing, third-degree assault and second-degree assault causing injury with a deadly weapon on June 4, after deputies responded to a report in the 13000 block of 45½ Road.

■ Deputies responded to the Western Colorado Dragway, 115 32 Road, on June 4 to investigate a reported fight. They arrested two men for disorderly conduct.

■ Michelle Hoaglund, 39, was arrested on suspicion of DUI on June 4, after deputies contacted her in the area of 30 Road and Interstate 70 Business Loop.

The Grand Junction Police Department did not release activity reports over the weekend.

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We're wearing jeans for charity at The Daily Sentinel. Ask me how you can help!

we've got heart!

The employees of *The Daily Sentinel* have joined together to adopt a local non-profit organization/charity of the month. We want to help raise awareness and badly needed funds for these organizations that are dedicated to helping people in our community.

JUNE JEANS FOR CHARITY ORGANIZATION: Roice-Hurst Humane Society

Roice-Hurst Humane Society provides safety, shelter and care for homeless dogs and cats in our area and strive to place them in loving and "forever" homes.

There is always a need for funds to help feed, house and care for these animals who are in need of adoption.

We also work to educate our community about the importance of responsible pet ownership.

Please join us and send your tax-deductible donation to:
Roice-Hurst Humane Society
P.O. Box 4040, Grand Junction, CO 81502-4040