San Luis Valley Archaeology Tour July 9 - 11, 2015

Eleven site stewards joined in a fascinating 3 day archaeology tour of the San Luis Valley, Colorado. The first day we spent with Ken Frye who retired as the Heritage Program Lead on Rio Grande National Forest. Ken took us to 4 rock art sites dating from 6,000 years ago to the De Vargas crossing of the Rio Grande River in 1694. At the end of the day we had a group dinner in Alamosa and Ken gave us a Power Point presentation on the rock art of the valley.

On the second day Fred Bunch, archaeologist from the Great Sand Dunes National Park took us to 4 sites at the Great Sand Dunes National Park. We visited a “scarred tree” site, the Cattle Guard Folsom Site where at least 49 bison were procured in one or possibly more hunting events, the historic Trujillo Homestead site and a “sand blow-out site” where the sand has been wind blown down to an archaic archaeological site. Members of our group found a partial point, ground stones, and lithics. We also had a chance to practice our atlatl skills.

On day three we went out again with Ken Frye and visited English Valley, where Mark Mitchell of the Paleo Cultural Research Group was testing a Folsom / Early Archaic site with a university field school group. We then went on to visit pictograph and petroglyph sites on the west side of the valley and an archaic habitation site on a private ranch.

We were all fascinated with the wide variety and density of sites in the southern portion of the San Luis Valley and hope to return to the northern portion of the valley in an upcoming tour.