

Navajo rug, circa 1925-1935, from the Teec Nos Pos area, New Mexico.

Navajo Weaving, the Final Selection

Since last May, the Museum has been celebrating the Joe Ben Wheat Collection with the exhibition, *Navajo Weaving: Dreams, Schemes, Stories*. Well-received by the public and press, the exhibition features many never-before-seen textiles. This February, the Museum hosts the third and final iteration of this year-long project, with the installation of *Navajo Weaving: Landscapes*. Once again, the Exhibition Department will transform the gallery overnight: the current exhibition closes on February 4, 2010 and the next morning, February 5th, *Landscapes* opens.

Landscapes focuses on the expansive Southwestern landscape that has influenced Navajo cultural and artistic traditions. A sense of place is woven into the textiles and earthy colors imitate the first blush of dawn expanding over vast stretches of land. Special emphasis is given to the art of natural dyeing and the aesthetic impact of color as many of the textiles in the third rotation are dyed with plants gathered on the Navajo reservation.

A series of programs highlight the artistic tradition of weaving, the relation of Navajo people to the land, and contemporary issues in Navajo culture. These programs are generously funded in part by the University of Colorado President's Fund for the Humanities.

February 5th Exhibition Opening Events: 5:00PM Reception • 6:30PM Artist Talk: Morris Muskett, Diné (Navajo) weaver and silversmith.

February 24th Suzanne Benally's (Navajo & Santa Clara Tewa) illustrated talk will speak to the complicated relationship between Navajo people and the land.

March 10th Lights Out! Watch Billy Luther's film, *Miss Navajo*, and then stay for a discussion led by a Navajo artist, a local filmmaker, and CU faculty.

Events Calendar

Hang it up as a reminder to attend these great upcoming programs!

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SPRING 2010

Newsletter of the University of Colorado
Museum of Natural History

See the Events Calendar or the Museum's website:
<http://cumuseum.colorado.edu> for more information.



In my past several messages, I have mentioned that the Museum is in the midst of a strategic planning process. The process has allowed us to assess where we've been and are, and where we are headed. It is a plan that has looked at the museum through a variety of prisms, including programmatic, staffing, and budget all in the context of the scientific, educational, cultural and social milieu of the campus, Boulder, the State of Colorado and the nation. We are finalizing the strategic plan, which will look at two phases of growth and development for the Museum, a short-term phase (the next 3-5 years) and a long-term phase (the next 5-10 years).

In the short term, we can, I believe, look forward to having a greater impact locally to internationally, with programmatic expansion across the Museum. While funding is a concern currently, there is room for growth in this area for the Museum, even though we are quite successful in obtaining extramural funding for research and collections (comparable to or better than our cognate departments). This growth and impact will be most markedly demonstrated in the Education and Outreach areas of the Museum, and plans are in the works to realize the potential in these areas.

In the longer term, what we are learning from the strategic plan is that after 3 or 4 years, the Museum will significantly be constrained by space, both in terms of the quality and quantity of space. This relates not only to the total amount of space, but the adjacencies, flow, and ability to conserve the important natural history collections for which we are stewards over the long term. Amazingly, the Henderson Museum has some of the poorest spaces in terms of conservation of the entire campus, yet housed in the building are some of the most valuable artifacts in our vast collections. In addition, the science of natural history museums has changed, and continues to change, and we need to prepare for the collections of the future: tissues and extracted DNA. With these new collections come other opportunities and responsibilities, including managing new (and vast) stores of information, that make our collections all the more valuable, and relevant, in today's world. And in terms of the exhibitions, education and outreach elements of the Museum, we will need additional space to help address critical issues related to science education: here on campus, but also for the general public and in support of the formal K-12 education community. Our one dedicated classroom is both too small, and ill-equipped to help train the next generation of museum leaders. In research, collections, and education (in the broadest sense), we have 20th century facilities to tackle 21st century issues.

So, we will begin the process of developing plans for a new Museum of Natural History. The plan will be one that celebrates the history and heritage of the current museum, but also looks forward in terms of the types of collections we house and the way we maintain our collections, supports research in all of the disciplines we address, creates environments for a wide range of learning opportunities and most efficiently and effectively forwards the Museum's mission at CU, in Boulder and for the state of Colorado. I look forward to developing these plans with you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kociolek

An Ocean of Data Miles From the Coast - The CU Museum Takes a Leadership Role in Ocean Biogeographic Data Sharing

By Robert Guralnick, Invertebrate Curator

The world's oceans are critically important to all of us, providing food and recreation opportunities, contributing to economic growth and national security, and influencing our climate. Yet at the same time, oceans are threatened by a variety of changes. A fundamental challenge for scientists and managers is first documenting ocean biodiversity and then determining how that biodiversity is being affected by all the other changes happening to the overall ocean system.

How do we document changes to ocean biodiversity? The first step is to collate all available previous data and information about oceanic diversity; this data represents a baseline, which can be used to document the rate and magnitude of biodiversity change. Help in creating this baseline has come from the Census of Marine Life, a global scientific initiative to assess and explain the diversity, distribution, and abundance of life in the oceans. One goal of the Census is to make all data and knowledge that it generates available into perpetuity. Researchers at the CU Museum are involved in this critical task.

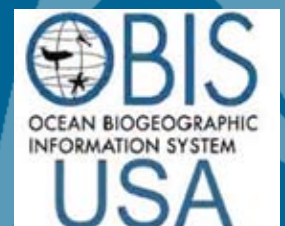
Although it may sound simple, creating a one-stop source for ocean biodiversity data on the Web is a sociological and technological challenge. The CU Museum of Natural History has been on the forefront of developing the resources to share biodiversity data. The National Biological Information Infrastructure, a program within the United States Geological Survey, has funded PI and Invertebrate Curator Robert Guralnick, and his team of talented technology developers, to create an Ocean Biogeographic Information System for the United States (OBIS-USA). Their work on OBIS-USA directly ties into the Census of Marine Life and will be the ultimate repository of US data from the Census.



The development process for OBIS-USA is relatively unique. Many other successful data sharing initiatives have taken hold in the natural history collections community. OBIS-USA, however, has worked less with natural history collections and much more with different agencies that maintain ocean biodiversity data.

The lead technology developer, Philip Goldstein, has developed a centralized data sharing "portal" that is available for all citizens to access and use (<http://obisusa.nbii.gov>). The site provides access to nearly three million records that document where, when, and what has been found in our national waters. These biodiversity records represent data from 67,201 ocean species collated from 42 data providers. All records shared through OBIS-USA conform to a simple data standard.

In the coming year OBIS-USA plans to greatly expand the volume of data it shares and to create new functions so that users can more easily understand how datapoints represent biodiversity and its change over space and time. In the farther future, we plan to provide high-resolution geographic distribution data for a large number of marine species. Such geographic distributions can be summarized to show hotspots of biodiversity in our oceans and provide the means for better management of our precious ocean resources.





Month of the Wolf at the CU Museum

Once one of the most abundant predators in North America, with over two million animals, it took humans only a few hundred years to reduce the wolf (*Canis lupis*) population by ninety-five percent. The reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park in the mid 1990s has become a classic story of what happens when an apex predator is allowed to play its native role in an ecosystem. As an example of “top-down regulation”, the repatriation of wolves to Yellowstone tells a story of food webs, plant succession, landscape ecology, the importance of biodiversity in maintaining healthy ecosystems, the need to preserve both endangered species and domestic livestock, and congressional policies related to extermination and species reintroduction.

A new BioLounge exhibit, *Yellowstone Wolves, Willows, and Warblers: A Case Study* will explore this complex and controversial topic. The small exhibit will include a dramatic wolf mount and specimens of some of the key species whose populations have rebounded with the repatriation of wolves to Yellowstone.

Some view the wolf as a symbol of the wilderness ideal; others see the wolf as a representation of misguided government land and environmental policies. In order to better understand some of these very important, timely, and complicated issues, the CU Museum is hosting a suite of programs designed to foment discussion and debate.

Topic / Date

The Wolf and the Tangled Food Web / March 31

Join the Conversation: Yellowstone Wolves / April 13

Mission Wolf / April 16

The Politics of the Wolf / April 17

The Big Bad Wolf: The Wolf in Folklore and Pop Culture / April 21

CSI LaBrea: The Wolf Through Time / April 28

To achieve these goals, the Museum has collaborated with CU Science Discovery, CU faculty members, Mission Wolf, and the National Park Service to bring in expert and engaging speakers and programs. Be sure to check the Museum’s website: <http://cumuseum.colorado.edu> and the Events Calendar for more information on these fascinating programs.



A newly released and collared wolf in Yellowstone National Park crashes through the snow, Barry O’Neill, 1996.



The Gibbon wolf pack pauses in the snowy landscape, Doug Smith, 2009.

BE A VOLUNTEER EDUCATOR! Contact the Education Coordinator at (303) 492-4843.

The Diverse Nature of the Museum and Field Studies Program

By Samantha Pettigrew

The Museum and Field Studies (MFS) Program draws upon knowledge from several academic departments on campus from Biology to Anthropology to History to Geology, making it a truly multidisciplinary program at heart. Not only does the program draw upon a variety of disciplines, but it also reigns in students from a range of intellectual and geographical backgrounds. Meet some of our current first year students.

Crystal Boyd of Golden Valley, Minnesota received a Bachelor's degree in English and Spanish and a minor in Entomology. Crystal brings a wealth of experience in marketing, community outreach, program development, and writing. Crystal is particularly interested in bilingual exhibits and programming options. She loves the multidisciplinary nature of museum work, which is one reason she chose this program. Becoming an entomology collection manager will allow Crystal to combine her interests in science, communication, and insects.



Jessica Holm hails from St. Paul, Minnesota and attended the University of Minnesota. Having a background in Biology and English, Jessica says that she feels prepared for communication and interpretation within the museum. She currently works as the Graduate Assistant in the Museum's Education Department, gaining invaluable experience she will use in her future career. Jessica says that she loves the variety of classes in the program that address all different areas of museum work. She hopes to come out of the program ready for anything.

Austin native, **Rebecca Wahlberg** began her higher education in Biology but soon realized her artistic side needed more attention. She pursued Studio Art in the Master in Fine Arts program at the University of Colorado at Boulder, but missed the objectivity of science and its clear relation to the world. An 'aha-moment' occurred while looking at a praying mantis sculpture—she decided she wanted to design exhibits in science museums, the perfect use of her science and art background. For Rebecca, the MFS program provides multidisciplinary opportunities and helps her look outside the box.



Irina Fartushnikova was born and raised in Southern Russia and has lived in the United States for eight years. She studied a variety of subjects during her educational career, including English, Linguistics, and Psychology and she has an Anthropology Degree. She wants to pursue a career in museum education and public programming. She sees the MFS program at CU Boulder as the perfect place to help her achieve those goals. Irina believes that the more museums understand visitors, the better museums can serve the public.



Jen Shannon: A New Voice at the University of Colorado

By Rebecca Wahlberg

Jen Shannon, Ph.D., Curator and Assistant Professor of Anthropology, is our newest faculty member. Full of energy, enthusiasm, and a rich background, she brings a fresh spirit and new vision to the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History. We are pleased to count her amongst our ranks!

Jen's original interests in Anthropology and human rights emerged in high school when participating in Model United Nations. At Bowdoin College, Jen began her undergraduate study in Marine Biology and then added Cultural Anthropology as a second major. During an undergraduate Study Abroad program, a situation in Townsville, Australia really captivated Jen's attention: The City wanted to kick out the Aboriginal people camping in a city park, but had never spoken to the them. For a month, Jen worked with these Aboriginals to communicate their multiple viewpoints to the city at Mayor's Meetings. This project, laden with land rights issues, legal issues, and activist overtones developed into her Honor's Thesis.

Upon graduating Bowdoin, Jen pursued Marine Biology, but missed working with people. This inspired her to obtain her Master of Arts in Social Science and Anthropology at the University of Chicago. Still interested in land rights and legal issues, her Master's Thesis focused on Federal Indian Law in Alaska.



In 1999, Jen became Lead Researcher for the Our Lives gallery at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Her work with the three communities: Carib Territory in the Caribbean, Chicago Indian in Chicago, and Inuit in Igloodik, Nunavut, informed the content and design development of the NMAI inaugural exhibitions.

Jen went on to receive her Ph.D in Sociocultural Anthropology from Cornell University and she taught for a year at the University of British Columbia.

In August 2009, Jen took on the dual role of Curator and Assistant Professor of Anthropology, a position she says is "the best of both worlds." In this position, Jen hopes to work with native communities to document collections, involve source communities in the exhibit process, and empower students to get involved in museum and community work. She believes that university museums can inherently be more experimental and collaborative than other institutions. This spring, Jen will teach Introduction to Museum Anthropology, a course that focuses on the history, politics, and practice of relationships between museums, anthropology, and indigenous communities.



Above: Jen and heritage center interpreter Janet Williams at the Kalinago Barana Autê: Carib Village By The Sea cultural center in the Carib Territory on Dominica Island, November 2007.
Right: Jen in Igloodik, June 2003.

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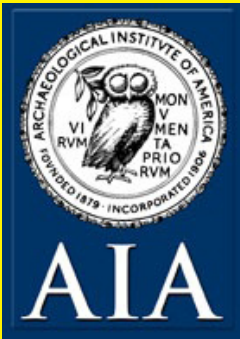
Membership Application

UCNMH and AIA Join Forces

By Dr. Steve Lekson

The Museum is very pleased to partner with the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), a venerable and highly regarded organization that encourages both first class scholarship and active public study and participation in archaeology. AIA is North America's oldest and largest organization devoted to the world of archaeology with over 200,000 members in the United States, Canada, and overseas, united by a shared passion for archaeology and its role in furthering human knowledge.

Anthropology Curator Steve Lekson is the current president of the Boulder society of AIA, rumored to be one the oldest local societies west of the Mississippi. Monthly meetings are hosted by the Museum, with nationally known speakers presenting research ranging from underwater archaeology in the eastern Mediterranean to rock art of Chaco Canyon. Check the Museum's calendar (<http://cumuseum.colorado.edu>) or the Boulder AIA website (aiabltr.colorado.edu/bltr) for future events.



Two Paleontology Curators Recognized

Congratulations to both Dr. Karen Chin and Dr. Dena Smith for receiving tenure from the University of Colorado this past fall. The award of tenure recognizes their achievement in research, museum work, teaching and mentoring students, and service to university and professional communities - well done!

Karen Chin

"I study the structure and dynamics of ancient ecosystems through the study of fossil feces. Specifically, I try to answer such questions as: 'Who ate whom (or what)?', 'Which organisms shared close relationships?', and 'How were resources recycled?' Such associations shed light on the composition and organization of ancient ecosystems and show how they differed from modern systems."

Dena Smith

"My research is broadly focused on insects in the fossil record. To study ecology and evolution, I conduct both in depth field-based research at targeted localities and large-scale literature based research across multiple geologic time intervals. I also conduct studies in modern ecosystems to learn more about the specifics of plant-insect interactions and processes of fossilization."

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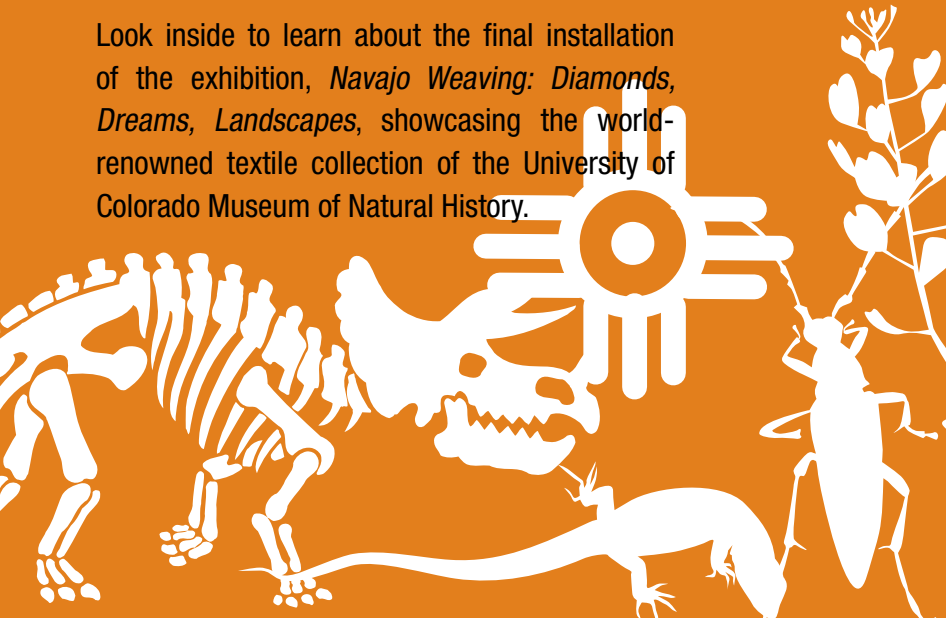
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MUSEUM INSIGHTS

COME SEE WHAT'S INSIDE

Look inside to learn about the final installation of the exhibition, *Navajo Weaving: Diamonds, Dreams, Landscapes*, showcasing the world-renowned textile collection of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History.



University of Colorado at Boulder
University of Colorado Museum of Natural History
Henderson Bldg., 218 UCB
Boulder, CO 80309

Located on the Boulder Campus in the Henderson Building at 15th and Broadway. Visitor parking is available at Euclid and 15th at the AutoPark. An RTD bus stop is located at 14th and Broadway.

Museum Hours:

Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am-4:00 pm
Sunday 10:00 am-4:00 pm

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