

# The Colorado Desert Archaeology

November/December/January 2025/26

Society Bulletin

## LAND

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Kumeyaay, Cahuilla, Cupeño, and Payómkawichum/Luiseño are the Original peoples of the Anza-Borrego Desert, Palomar Mountain, and Cuyamaca Rancho state parks. These traditional homelands in the Colorado Desert District are rich with their heritage and cultural tradition. The Colorado Desert Archaeology Society acknowledges these places as the Peoples' homelands and offers gratitude for their stewardship of these lands from time immemorial through the present and into the future.

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## NOTES FROM THE PARK

Hayley Elskén

Associate State Archaeologist and CDD Tribal Liaison

This season has had a wonderful start with public education! Thank you to everyone who participated in *Arch in the Park*, *Borrego Days*, and *Archaeology Day*. I'm so proud of all that CDAS does to educate the public about archaeology.



This year, LEGO's Annual Robotics Competition is inspired by archaeology — students are working together to design tools and machines that could help archaeologists in their work. At *Arch in the Park*, many students visited our booth to ask questions about challenges we face and get feedback on their inventions.

I've had the chance to speak with two student groups and have connected several others with archaeologists at Ocotillo Wells, the San Diego Coast District, and the Southern Service Center. The students have come up with some impressive ideas, including 3D modeling tools, drones, and rovers to assist with archaeological fieldwork.

In early November, the Scissors Fire burned approximately 68 acres within the We-Nelsch Cultural Preserve. Andie and I responded as Resource Advisors. I surveyed the dozer line in the preserve for artifacts and cultural features, while Andie assisted with repairing the dozer line and carefully examined the piles for any artifacts that may have been buried during suppression efforts.

*Continued on page 2*

# CALENDAR

## COVID UPDATE

The mask mandate has been lifted.

**LAB DAY**  
Every Tuesday,  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Members only

**LIBRARY**  
Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Members only

Contact Hayley by email if you wish to work in the lab or library  
[hayley.elsken@parks.ca.gov](mailto:hayley.elsken@parks.ca.gov)

## CDAS ADVISORY GROUP MEETINGS

Third Thursday of the Month:  
3 p.m., Virtual, via Zoom  
Upcoming meetings:  
December 18, 2025  
January 15, 2026

## Save the Date!

## SEASON KICKOFF EVENT

Saturday, November 22  
UCI Steele/Bernand  
Desert Research Center  
11 a.m. to 3 p. m.

# NOTES FROM THE PARK--CONTINUED



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ALLEN

*Susan Gilliland, Hayley Elsken, and Mary Duffy  
Arch Day 2025*

Andie will also be leading a survey of the burn area to identify new sites and update previously recorded ones in preparation for an upcoming fuels reduction project with Natural Resources.

Thank you all for your continued hard work and dedication! I look forward to seeing everyone at the Kickoff Meeting on November 22nd.

—Hayley



PHOTO BY BARBARA BARNES

*Verbena in bloom, Arch Day 2025*

### FROM THE EDITORS:

**WE'RE LOOKING FOR Volunteers TO HELP WITH THE BULLETIN'S "MEMBER PROFILE" FEATURE!**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT SALLY BICKERTON FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

[SALLYBIC@COX.NET](mailto:SALLYBIC@COX.NET)

### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION



The Colorado Desert District includes Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Cuyamaca Rancho State Park and Palomar Mountain State Park.

### COLORADO DESERT ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY



The mission of CDAS is to assist Park staff with the documentation, preservation and protection of the district's prehistoric and historic cultural resources.

#### ★ HAYLEY ELSKEN

ASSOCIATE STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST/  
TRIBAL LIAISON  
COLORADO DESERT DISTRICT  
760-767-4403 [hayley.elsken@parks.ca.gov](mailto:hayley.elsken@parks.ca.gov)

ANDREA ROBINSON  
Archaeological Specialist  
[Andrea.Robinson@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Andrea.Robinson@parks.ca.gov)

### CDAS Advisory Group

The CDAS Advisory Group meets once a month during the season. Meetings are on the third Thursday of the month from 3 to 4 p. m. They are held via Zoom and are open to all members. If you have any comments or suggestions and cannot attend a meeting, please contact:

Advisory Group Coordinator and Arch Tech  
Coordinator: Pam Wiedenkeller  
[pwiedenkeller@gmail.com](mailto:pwiedenkeller@gmail.com)

Secretary/Treasurer: Brenda Wills  
[Brenda.s.wills@gmail.com](mailto:Brenda.s.wills@gmail.com)

Facilitator: Eugenie Newton  
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### CDAS BULLETIN

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COVER BANNER: HARPER CANYON AREA,  
NOVEMBER 2018  
PHOTO BY BARBARA BARNES

## FROM THE ADVISORY GROUP COORDINATOR

*Pam Wiedenkeller*  
*Advisory Group Coordinator*



I'm delighted to invite all Colorado Desert Archaeology Society volunteers—new and returning—to our CDAS Season Kickoff Meeting on Saturday, November 22, from 11a.m. to 3 p.m. at the UCI Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center in Borrego Springs.

This annual gathering marks the start of our new season—a time to reconnect with friends, welcome new members, and celebrate another year of exploration and discovery in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. It's a potluck event, so please bring a favorite dish to share! Beverages will be provided.

Our guest speaker will be Will Madrigal, Jr., Tribal Capacities and Partnerships Program Manager with the Climate Science Alliance and an enrolled member of the Cahuilla Nation. Will is also a California Indian Professor of American Indian Studies, archaeologist, historian, and language teacher, with a lifelong commitment to preserving and sharing Cahuilla traditional knowledge. His work bridges Indigenous history, ecology, and community resilience, including programs such as Learning Landscapes, which connects Native youth and elders through Traditional Ecological Knowledge.



*Will Madrigal, Jr.*  
*Arch Day, 2025*

*Continued on page 4*

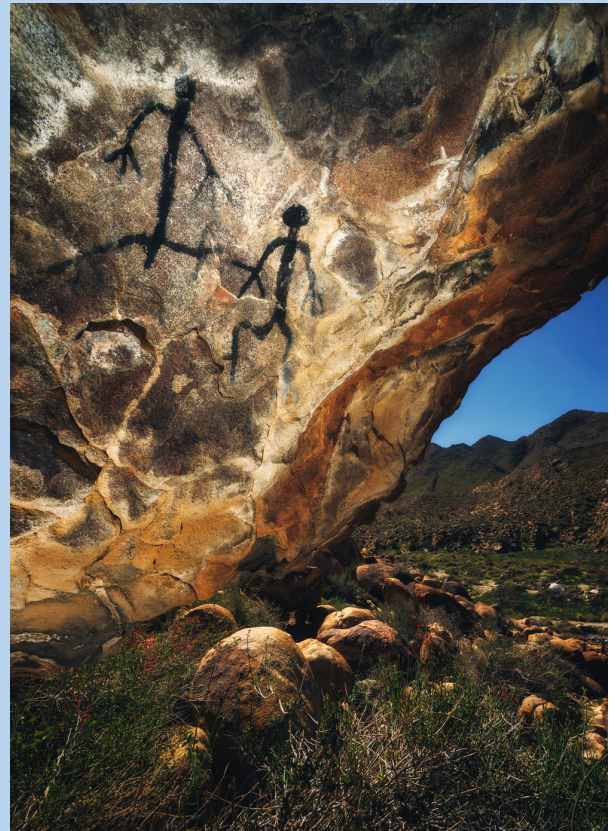
*Continued from page 3*

Will's presentation will give us a fascinating overview of the Cahuilla people—who they are, where they are today, and how their history and perspectives continue to shape our region. It's a unique opportunity to hear directly from Will and ask questions about his views on archaeology in the park and the work we do as volunteers.

We'll also enjoy a special presentation by Chris Maust, whose extraordinary desert photography has earned numerous awards in the Anza-Borrego Foundation's annual photo contest. Chris will share some of his favorite images—capturing the beauty, mystery, and spirit of the desert we all work to protect.

Please mark your calendars and join us for this inspiring kickoff event. Together, we'll begin another season of learning, service, and stewardship in the desert we love.

*Warmly,  
Pam*



*One of Chris Maust's extraordinary desert photographs*



**CDAS SHIRTS  
AVAILABLE!**

**MEN'S AND WOMEN'S  
SIZES**

**GET YOURS AT THE  
KICKOFF**

**\$25**

# IMAGES FROM ARCHAEOLOGY DAY 2025



## ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DESERT

November 8, 2025 • 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Colorado Desert Archaeology Society

### Schedule of Events

<p><b>ALL-DAY ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p><b>9-11 a.m.</b> EVA SALAZAR Kumeyay basket sales</p> <p><b>11 a.m.</b> TRADITIONAL GAMES &amp; PLANT MEDICINES by Jacobson-Pompeian</p> <p><b>12-2 p.m.</b> PADDLE-ANVIL POTTERY MAKING &amp; ROCK PAINTING</p> <p><b>2-3 p.m.</b> NATIVE PLANTS FOR FOOD, MEDICINE &amp; CONSTRUCTION</p> <p><b>EXHIBITS by:</b> Barona Museum and Cultural Center, San Diego Archaeological Center, Imperial Valley Desert Museum, Native American Land Conservancy, Pinson Tribal Museum, Kumeyay-Digueno Land Conservancy, and Archa-Borrego Foundation</p>	<p><b>SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p><b>9:15 a.m.</b> Opening Ceremony Led by Cahulla elder Michael Madrid</p> <p><b>11 a.m.</b> Eva Salazar Junco Basket Weaving Demonstration, Visitor Center Discovery Room</p> <p><b>12 p.m.</b> Cahulla Bird Singers and Dancers Visitor Center Amphitheater</p> <p><b>12:45 p.m.</b> Video Kuliveine Sadeel, Cahulla elder on tribal traditions &amp; history Presented by William Madrid</p> <p><b>2 p.m.</b> Ani Admire Payintawachum Storytelling, Visitor Center Discovery Room</p> <p><b>3:15 p.m.</b> Closing Ceremony</p>
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**HOURLY GUIDED TOURS**

**BEGOLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTER**  
Open for public viewing once a year.

Sign up at the Welcome Table.  
A.M. 9:45, 10:45, 11:45  
P.M. 12:45, 1:45, 2:45

**IN-PERSON FIELD TRIPS SAT. & SUN.**

- GUIDED WALK IN MINE WASH PREHISTORIC VILLAGE**  
Saturday, Nov. 8, 1-4 p.m.  
Tours limited to 20. Fee \$10 adult, \$0 child
- MORTEROS PREHISTORIC VILLAGE AND PICTOGRAPH TRAIL**  
Sunday, Nov. 9, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Tours limited to 20. Fee \$20 adult, \$10 child

*Pre-registration required. See Welcome Table.*



Thanks to photographers Barbara Barnes, Sally Bickerton, Pat and John Downing, and Don Endicott

## FEATURED IN THE BARC LIBRARY

### **A Natural History of the Anza-Borrego Region —Then and Now**

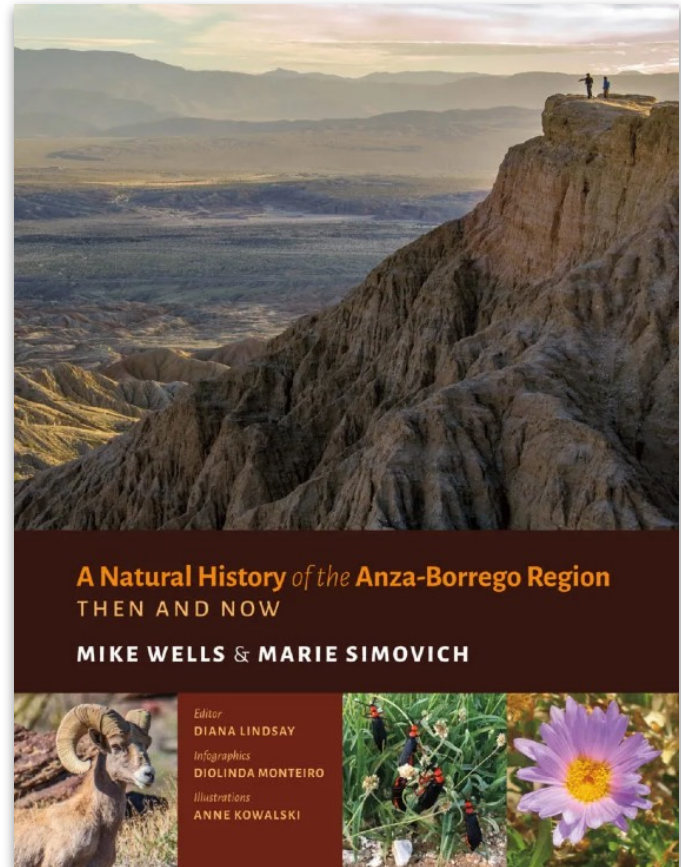
By Mike Wells & Marie Simovich, 2019

If the BARC library were a theme-focused theatre, man holds the stage, yet all productions are complex and involve more than a single floodlit central character on opening night.

*A Natural History of the Anza-Borrego Region —Then and Now* describes in great and welcome detail the regional history for our theatre production, “Our Desert.”

Authors Marie Simovich and Mike Wells begin with the location, the venue, and the architecture of the stage by discussing the geology and geography of the Anza-Borrego region. Comprehensive text, maps and illustrations describe the ancient construction and erosion of the landscape through the natural events that made and continue to remodel our familiar landscape. Stage sets may involve climate, weather, roaring flash floods and blistering solar heat in the canyons and valleys.

The evolving cast of actors — from Paleolithic to modern — is determined by adaptability or tenacious survival as they take stage for a single line or walk-on part. Some, like the creosote, successfully endure for long runs. Others, such as flowers and fairy shrimp, streak across after rain falls and when the temperature and light are right to sprout or hatch, reproduce and die. Exit stage left.



Man and his abilities to use environments, selecting for favorable habitat, abundant provisions and resources are chronicled. Well-illustrated scientific concepts and ideas are linked throughout the 200 readable pages. Mike and Marie close with thoughts of the future, what will man do with the precious space and what will be the next plot or scene on the stage that is “Our Desert.”

— *LLouise Jee*

# SITE STEWARD REPORT

## The Season Begins

It's great to see so many stewards visiting their sites as the season begins! Mild desert weather has made it easy to get out in the field, and conditions have been perfect in both Cuyamaca and Palomar.

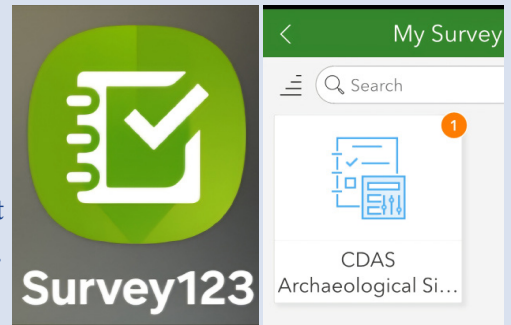
I previewed the new CDAS Archaeological Impact Report app at our last two Zoom meetings, but for those who missed it, here's a quick overview. The mobile app replaces the previous Impact Report form, photo submissions, and separate logs. It allows you to capture GPS locations, take photos, and complete your report directly in the field—then submit everything once you're back in cell service, with no need for emails or attachments. You can watch the video at CDAS Impact.

The app is now live and already being used by several stewards. My November 2 email to all stewards includes the download link and step-by-step instructions. We hope this new tool makes your work just a bit easier!

At our most recent Zoom meeting, Hayley presented an excellent talk, "Lithics in the Colorado Desert," which is now available in the Members section of the CDAS website under Training.

As always, life changes—relocations, retirements, and temporary injuries—create opportunities for new site assignments. Interested in taking on a new site? Or perhaps assisting temporarily at another location? We need volunteers! Please reach out if you'd like to help.

See you at the in-person Kickoff meeting on November 22!



*Icons from new CDAS Archaeological Impact Report app*

— Pat Downing  
pdsnewmail@gmail.com

## DID YOU KNOW...

... about the World Atlatl Association?? Yes, indeed. At [worldatlatl.org](http://worldatlatl.org) you can check out an organization built around atlatl spear-throwing competitions. I don't remember it at my school, but some colleges have atlatl teams that compete against other schools.

On their website, the WAA lists various events and competitions, some in Europe; most on the eastern side of the U.S., but also in Washington State and one in Gustine, CA (west of Merced).

The WAA has scoring rules, atlatl history (they pre-dated bow & arrow technology and were used on every continent except Africa), a newsletter, and a swag store so you can purchase that one-of-a-kind coffee cup or polo shirt. They also have an "Atlatl Finder" feature, somewhat like a dating app, that helps enthusiasts meet each other.

Quoting Celine Thoulin, winner of a 2000 competition: "I think it's just a low-pressure sport. Really, really fun. It's also experimental archaeology...we get to use the same weapons that were used 15,000 years ago, all over the world."

— Scott McClintock



PHOTO COURTESY CDAS GLOSSARY

## MEMBER PROFILE: LAURIE PUBLICOVER

How could I not be drawn to the archaeology of Anza Borrego? While in middle school, I was privileged to attend lectures by Margaret Mead and Louis Leakey. California public schools also taught multiple classes on the Indian tribes native to our state.

I majored in Cultural Anthropology while at Columbia University and was exposed to all the greats' theories, excavations, discoveries, and interpretations. One of the reasons I became an emergency physician was that it provided opportunities to go on medical missions to obscure areas of the world. While there, I was immersed in their culture: current, historic, and ancient. I offered the locals medical care and they provided me with insights into their ancestors' ways of life.



John and Pat Downing, Laurie Publicover, and Bill Phillips at "Arch in the Park" on October 18.



Laurie, near Mine Wash

When a colleague from the Disaster Medical Assistance Team, Bill Phillips, mentioned that he volunteered with CDAS, I jumped at the chance to join. With wonderful mentors like John and Pat Downing, Pam Wiedenkiller, Hayley Elsken, and many others, I've been brought into the fold of becoming a site steward for Mine Wash in Anza-Borrego Desert SP and Doane Pond in Palomar Mountain SP. Besides helping to maintain the sites, I've been able to help with public tours and community outreach like Arch in the Park and the annual Archaeology Day events. My participation has introduced me to fascinating people with amazing life stories.

CDAS and ABDSP are truly fortunate to have the cooperation, knowledge, and assistance of Indigenous Peoples to help us understand and preserve their history which is so richly represented in these parks. Every chance I get, I try to encourage people to come out and see for themselves the wonderful areas of the park that are available to the public. With exposure to these archaeological sites, perhaps they will develop a better understanding and appreciation of the intersection of cultures and why it is necessary to protect our past in order to ensure a better future for us all.

—As told to Sally Bickerton by Laurie Publicover

## ARCH DAY FIELD TRIPS

The field trips were quite a success this year. The efforts of many to advertise these events resulted in both hikes filling to maximum a few days before Archaeology Day, with a total of 44 people registering.

We had a special guest join us for Saturday's trip to the Mine Wash village site. It was a pleasure to have one of the bird singers, Dr. Sean Milanovich of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, who contributed significantly to the tour. While this site is attributed to the Kumeyaay people Sean added a spiritual insight into the experience. Many thanks to Laurie Publicover, Jeff Haslett, Ron Bain, and Pat Downing for assisting with this large group.

Sunday's all-day field trip to the Morteros village site and the Pictograph Rock in Smuggler's Canyon also went very well. Although we did have 10 no-shows, the remaining dozen participants were an enthusiastic and inquisitive group. Site stewards Brenda Wills and Eli Vasquez provided informative insights.

In total the field trips generated approximately \$650 of income for CDAS. My thanks to all who contributed to this effort.

—John Downing



Myung and Ted Kautzman at the pictograph rock

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGY

Several organizations offer programs that may be of interest to CDAS members. Please check the websites below for upcoming events. If you know of other programs that CDAS members might enjoy, we would love to share the information in future bulletins—please send us the details!

**AGUA CALIENTE CULTURAL MUSEUM**  
<https://www.accmuseum.org>

**MALKI MUSEUM**  
<https://malkimuseum.org>

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY  
SOCIETY**  
<https://sdcas.org>

**CALIFORNIA ROCK ART FOUNDATION**  
<https://www.carockart.org>

**BARONA CULTURAL CENTER AND  
MUSEUM**  
<https://www.baronamuseum.com>

**IMPERIAL VALLEY DESERT MUSEUM**  
<https://www.ivdesertmuseum.org>

**SOCIETY FOR CALIFORNIA  
ARCHAEOLOGY**  
<https://scahome.org>

**SAN DIEGO ROCK ART  
ASSOCIATION**  
<https://www.sandiegorockart.org>



*Pictograph Trail, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park*

PHOTO FROM WEBSITE

COURTESY BARONA CULTURAL CENTER AND MUSEUM

## EDITORS' NOTE: WE WELCOME YOUR ACTIVITIES!

THE CDAS BULLETIN IS PUBLISHED ONLINE IN FIVE ISSUES,

SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY.

ALL CDAS MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SHARE NEWS, STORIES, AND PHOTOS. PLEASE SEND ITEMS TO

SALLY BICKERTON AT: [SALLYBIC@COX.NET](mailto:sallybic@cox.net)



# CDAS 2025 SEASON KICKOFF MEETING

Saturday, November 22, 2025

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

UCI Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center  
Borrego Springs, California



## 👉 JOIN US FOR FOOD, FRIENDSHIP & FRESH INSPIRATION!

The Colorado Desert Archaeology Society invites all volunteers—new and returning—to our Season Kickoff Gathering! Reconnect with friends, welcome new members, and celebrate another year of exploration in the Anza-Borrego Desert, Palomar Mountain, and Cuyamaca Rancho State Parks. **It's a potluck event—please bring a dish to share!** Beverages will be provided.

## 🗣️ GUEST SPEAKER: WILL MADRIGAL, JR.

Tribal Capacities & Partnerships Program Manager, Climate Science Alliance. Enrolled Member of the Cahuilla Nation. A California Indian Professor of American Indian Studies, historian, language teacher and archaeologist. His presentation will offer insight into the Cahuilla people—who they are and where they are today.

## 📷 SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY CHRIS MAUST

Award-winning desert photographer and CDAS volunteer, Chris will share favorite images – capturing the beauty and spirit of the Anza-Borrego Desert.

## 👤 DON'T MISS IT!

Enjoy good food, great company, and an inspiring start to our 2025 season as we continue our shared mission of learning, service, and stewardship in the region we love.