

Mesa Verde Foundation

Stewards of an Ancient Treasure

SPRING NEWSLETTER

2020



LETTER FROM THE MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK SUPERINTENDENT

March began with snow that we sorely needed. February was quite dry and sunny. The dry ground seemed to welcome the moisture from one light snowstorm after another. Little by little the snow helped push fire season further away, if just by a week or two. Then we closed and, like millions around the country, had to adjust to a new reality.



Several national parks are closed right now. That move was necessary to reduce the spread of this deadly virus. Until we reopen, please visit www.nps.gov to virtually enjoy your favorite national park. Many parks have live webcams, photos and videos, and a few parks feature podcasts to provide an in-depth look at important resources or stories of our nation's history.

On a positive note, since we closed on March 26th the staff who reside in the park have seen more than the usual amount of wildlife. Deer, turkey vultures, turkeys, and one bear that seems to enjoy hanging out near the main road are frequently mentioned. There is also a video making the rounds on social media of two deer running on Main Avenue in a nearly deserted downtown Durango. We believe many more will emerge as the days get longer and the temperatures increase.

On behalf of the employees of Mesa Verde, I send my sincere wishes for your good health and that of your family and community. Yes, we're closed, but that's temporary. We will open again when conditions allow. Thank you.

Cliff Spencer
Mesa Verde Superintendent

UPDATED

Mesa Verde
National Park began
a phased reopening
on May 24th



Remembering Pueblo Leader Peter Pino

By Andrew Gulliford



When I learned that my friend Peter Pino had passed on from complications of Coronavirus I was devastated. I took a long walk at twilight with my two dogs trying to remember Peter's quiet way of speaking and his connection to the natural world. At the last Mesa Verde Foundation board meeting, we had lunch at La Fonda in Santa Fe swapping hunting stories. We discussed the quiet pleasure of tracking game at dawn in the silence of fresh snow.

We both made hiking sticks and I was honored to receive one from him smoothed and hand-rubbed from an ocotillo cactus spine. For three fall sessions Peter and I worked together on an exclusive Mesa Verde tour that brought visitors to the park from across the United States. We teamed up for this successful fundraiser for the Mesa Verde Foundation where Peter had been a board member since 1996. Our guests came to tour the park during the off season to listen to Peter's stories, to glean from his knowledge, and to share his smiles and laughter. Peter Pino gave to all of us from his heart and from his deep knowledge of the Pueblo past.

With a B.A. in Industrial Education from New Mexico Highlands University and an MBA in Business

Administration from the University of New Mexico, for decades Peter was a vital part of the Zia Pueblo government having been elected governor and serving on the tribal council since 1967. He also worked as tribal administrator and treasurer.

In addition to his business skills, which helped Zia Pueblo purchase additional acreage, Peter also possessed knowledge of Ancient Pueblo crafts including how to create specially shaped sticks for hunting rabbits, bone tools, digging sticks for planting crops, and bows and arrows. He tanned hides, made moccasins, and successfully represented the Ancestral Puebloan world to Mesa Verde visitors brimming with questions.

Peter Pino helped Mesa Verde visitors by spending long hours in consultation with Mesa Verde staff and working on projects including implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990), interpretation of archaeological sites along Ruins Road, and assisting with planning the Visitor and Research Center to incorporate Native art and the kiva-like rotunda with a direct line of sight to Point Lookout. Peter possessed centuries of Pueblo knowledge along with personal leadership skills.

“His carefully chosen words had impact,” relates Mesa Verde Superintendent Cliff Spencer. “That impact extended to improving the relationship between Mesa Verde and its affiliated tribes, and in the design of the visitor center. We will miss him dearly.”



“It sounds cliché to say Peter was a man of few words, but that was true. Whenever he spoke in his quiet voice, the room fell silent. His carefully chosen words had impact,” relates Mesa Verde Superintendent Cliff Spencer. “That impact extended to improving the relationship between Mesa

Verde and its affiliated tribes, and in the design of the visitor center. We will miss him dearly.”

“He had that way about him. With his mere presence he could get people back on track. He could change a meeting in just a few words to bring people back to the issues at hand,” explains Assistant Superintendent Bill Nelligan, who worked extensively with Peter on the new Visitor & Research Center. He and Cliff Spencer visited Zia Pueblo’s Feast Day as Peter’s guests. Bill remembers that Peter was “generous with his time and welcoming people to his house. He loved sharing and telling stories. He was ageless. Being in his presence was like a gift. He was calming like a grandfather.”

As an elder statesman, at ranger trainings he offered insight into the world of Pueblo thought. He helped to foster a much stronger bond between tribes and the park. He felt a deep responsibility to respect the Ancients, but he also wanted to work with living Native artists. He encouraged the park to sponsor more native arts and crafts festivals. For the park, Peter Pino built relationships. When First Lady Hillary Clinton visited Mesa Verde National Park, Peter was her guide. One of his favorite assignments involved the U.S. Navy.

Colorado Congressman Scott Tipton had arranged for one of a new class of Navy ships, sleek, fast, totally computerized and able to deliver U.S. Marines quickly around the world, to be named the U.S.S. Mesa Verde. U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and his wife Linda were to attend the dedication ceremony and Peter had been asked to represent the park and his ancestors. He gathered sacred water from a spring in the park and took it to

the naval shipyard in Alabama where he used eagle feathers, prayers, and the special spring water to bless and dedicate the ship. For Navy crewmen and women it was a profound and moving spiritual ceremony. Since then various crews from the vessel have visited Mesa Verde to continue to connect the ship’s mission with the ancient Pueblo past.

“He was always the first to volunteer to tell the story of Ancestral Puebloan peoples from the perspective of descendant community members,” notes Kristy Sholly, Chief of Interpretation at the park.



Peter’s voice is on an audio tape speaking in Zia to welcome visitors. He recruited his grandson to be a model for a life-size mannequin in one of the entrance displays. He also asked a neighbor to pose as a stone mason carefully choosing his next stone. The life-size dioramas intrigue visitors and place Ancestral Puebloans central in the park’s interpretation.

Visitors have clear memories of his tours. “We look at the land with new eyes and understanding and we will continue to cherish Peter’s stories, which he told with humility, compassion and good humor,” Ingrid Miller from Boulder, Colorado explains. “He was a gentle soul who radiated peace and harmony, blessing all those around him.”

For Eline Patience from Hayward, California, “Peter made such an impression on me by his quiet manner with a wealth of knowledge that astounded me.” Carolyn Baecker from Gold Canyon, Arizona concurs. “It is a tragedy for all of us to lose treasured people like Peter Pino. He enriched our Mesa Verde tour with his wisdom and humor and he broadened our definition of spirituality.”

On our last tour we sat together on a sunny October afternoon at a stone amphitheater as Peter patiently

demonstrated how to make Pueblo tools. We scraped, sanded, and polished using small stones and deer antlers that he had brought. We clustered in small groups, talking, laughing, using our hands in new ways to grasp and cling and shape. Mother and daughter Ginny and Ivey Bostrum from Holladay, Utah and Denver remember, “In a few short days, Peter had a transformative impact on our lives. His presence was calming and profound. When he spoke his words transported you back to the time of the Ancestral Puebloans.”

As we closed out the tour at the Visitor and Research Center and curator Tara Travis opened drawer after drawer of ancient artifacts, we saw on cushioned metal shelves the very tools that Peter had showed us to make. It was a profound teachable moment just like Peter’s interpretation at site locations.

Earlier in the weekend as we looked down far below us to the stabilized ruins of Square Tower House, a crow landed on a nearby rock. To the astonishment of everyone, Peter and the crow began a lengthy dialogue. Ginny Bostrum recalls, “I will never forget watching him speak to a crow and the crow responding to him in a conversation only the two of them understood. His spirit and the magnitude of his being will live on forever as we honor him and the many gifts he bestowed upon this world.”

On our last tour Peter specifically chose Mug House as a site he wished us to visit. We carefully picked our way down steep stone steps off Wetherill Mesa. As we entered the site he began to tell things to Ranger Jeff Brown about a mural that the interpretive staff did not know. On the far end of Mughouse, as we stood in front and listened, Peter described the roof beams for the kiva and where they would have been placed on the standing stone walls. This kiva was different from all others.

The cribbed roof pattern was unique. Then it dawned on us. Peter explained what we were seeing.

Sitting or standing in the kiva, looking up at the log ceiling, one would have seen the exact horizontal line pattern in the Zia sun symbol, the chosen motif for the New Mexico flag, and for years the design on yellow and also turquoise New Mexico license plates. Here before us was a direct connection between the ancient past and the present. Peter led us to that knowledge. There were a few moments of silence as the wind whistled around the carefully dressed masonry stones. Then we bowed our heads as Peter offered a departing prayer.

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Active and vigorous to the end, in his last months Peter Pino helped Mesa Verde Foundation Board members understand our responsibility to assist in returning human remains that had been excavated by Gustaf Nordenskiöld in 1891 and taken to Scandinavia before Congress and President Theodore Roosevelt created the park in June 1906. Peter gave prayers and welcomed donors to a special Denver repatriation event in March 2020.

The administrative and bureaucratic wheels between the United States and Finland have slowly begun to turn. Morally, there is no question that those sets of remains and grave goods, many from Step House, should come back to Mesa Verde. When it occurs, Peter Pino will not be there in person for the reburial, but his spirit undoubtedly will.



Andrew Gulliford, a Mesa Verde Foundation Director and an award-winning author and editor, is professor of history and Environmental Studies at Fort Lewis College. Reach him at andy@agulliford.com.

MESA VERDE FOUNDATION SHARES REPATRIATION INSIGHT

“It is about respect.”

In October of 2019, President Donald Trump and Finland’s president, Sauli Niinistö, signed an agreement that made it possible for the ancestral remains of 20 people and 28 funerary objects to be repatriated to Mesa Verde National Park.

This repatriation will occur more than 100 years after the remains were removed by Swedish scientist Gustaf Nordenskiöld. The announcement of the agreement’s signing created a flurry of interest surrounding the process and historical importance of repatriation at Mesa Verde National Park. The Mesa Verde Foundation was pleased to be able to offer an opportunity to hear from experts and gain insight into this historically significant action.

On March 10th, the Mesa Verde Foundation hosted a panel of experts who discussed the upcoming repatriation at Mesa Verde National Park. The sold-out event was hosted at the newly-opened Native American Bank headquarters in Denver and included a wine and cheese reception.

Together Troy Eid, Cliff Spencer and Peter Pino shared the history, the importance, and the process of the repatriation at the Park. Troy Eid, Vice Chairman, Mesa Verde Foundation Board of Directors, is the former United States Attorney

for Colorado appointed by President George W. Bush and is a principal shareholder in the Denver office of Greenberg Traurig LLP, the country’s largest law firm. He is also Chairman of the National Indian Law and Order Commission and currently serves as the elected President of the Navajo Nation Bar Association.



Peter Pino, Member, Mesa Verde Foundation Board of Directors and the former Governor of the Pueblo of Zia, was a Tribal Council member since 1967. Since 1977, he served as the tribal administrator and treasurer. Peter was a traditional spiritual leader, holding a lifetime appointment as one of the tribe’s Keeper of Songs.

Cliff Spencer is the Superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park and Yucca House National Monument in Colorado. Cliff also serves as general superintendent of Aztec Ruins National Monument and Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico.

With over 100 guests in attendance and over 500 views of our Facebook live feed, the Mesa Verde Foundation was pleased that our experts reached so many people. After all, as Cliff Spencer said during the question and answer session, “It is about respect.”

Mesa Verde Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

The Mesa Verde Foundation has been fortunate to welcome three new board members since the start of 2020. Read a little bit more about these new additions below – we are grateful to have them as a part of the Mesa Verde Foundation!



Todd Bacon

Todd Bacon retired in 2019 after a 38-year career running his own direct-mail services company in Denver. He has now turned his attention to his photography and writing. Active in a number of nonprofit organizations, Todd and his wife, Nancy, were the recipients of the 2017 “Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteerism” from Metro Volunteers. His interests have included The Rotary Club of Denver, the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, the Colorado Scholastic Art Awards, Trout Unlimited, and the Public Education and Business Coalition. Todd earned his BA from the University of Pennsylvania and MS in Natural Resource Policy and Political Science from Michigan State University before becoming the Project Director for the Public Lands Institute in Denver (now part of the Natural Resources Defense Council), where he spent six years.



Dan Bailey

Dan Bailey is a native Kansan who spent his summers in Wyoming during undergraduate and law school. After graduating from Washburn University School of Law, he was an attorney in private practice for many years in northeast Wyoming as a “country lawyer” and began representing hospitals and health systems in the early 1990’s. He transitioned to an in-house General Counsel role for Ivinson Memorial Hospital in Laramie, Wyoming in 2008 and has been a corporate attorney for healthcare providers and payers since then. Dan is presently EVP and General Counsel for AxisPoint Health in Westminster, CO, a healthcare management division of HGS. He and his wife Kim live in Arvada, CO with their two Labradoodles Gertrude and Winifred. Kim and Dan are proud parents of 4 children and 1 grandchild. Having ridden a half million miles on motorcycles, touring and falling in love with America (he’s traveled 48 of 50), Dan embraced the

opportunity to serve on the Mesa Verde Foundation Board and to be associated with one of the nation’s greatest national parks.



Ed Nichols

Ed Nichols is the executive director of the Joshua School, a program that serves students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental disabilities. He is a fourth generation Coloradan with an extensive background in business and community service. He has experience with large corporations (IBM) and entrepreneurial initiatives, with positions on both cultural and education nonprofit boards. He is well versed in fundraising and implementing strategic planning for nonprofit organizations. Ed previously served as both the President and CEO of History Colorado, and head of the State Historical Fund (SHF). He also served as Colorado’s State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). As a Colorado state agency, History Colorado operates the flagship History Colorado Center in Denver and eight other museum sites across the State of Colorado. The new History Colorado Center, a \$142 million headquarters and museum, opened in April 2012 under Ed’s leadership. His philanthropic experience includes directing the \$32 million Make History Colorado! Capital Campaign of the new center and his service as CEO of the \$10 million annual grant funding program of the Colorado State Historical Fund (SHF). Ed has a BA in Science from Williams College and MBA in Marketing from Northwestern Kellogg School of Business.

Mesa Verde Foundation Board of Directors

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MESA VERDE FOUNDATION AND THE STATE HISTORICAL FUND PARTNER TO SUPPORT MVNP INTERPRETIVE FILM PROJECT

The Mesa Verde Foundation is pleased to announce that it has received a \$100,000 grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund for pre-production and production of a new interpretive film to be shown in the Chapin Mesa Museum at Mesa Verde National Park.

The State Historical Fund assists in a wide variety of preservation projects including restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings, architectural assessments, archaeological excavations, designation and interpretation of historic places, preservation planning studies, and education and training programs. The MVNP interpretive film project was granted funding through its education program.

More than 600,000 guests visit MVNP yearly and nearly all visit the Chapin Mesa Archaeological Museum and view the introductory interpretive film. The current film is old and a bit outdated. The new film will engage visitors in understanding and appreciating the history of Mesa Verde National Park and the culture of the ancestral Puebloans. It will illustrate the range of Mesa Verde National Park's programs and cultural resources, promote messages of stewardship and preservation, support visitor orientation, highlight the cultural richness of museum exhibits and support National Park Service goals. The film will be shot, produced, and projected in high definition with caption, audio description, and assistive listening capability tracks and supportive listening equipment to ensure it is accessible to all guests.

The Mesa Verde Foundation is honored to be partnering with the State Historical Fund to bring this incredible project to fruition. We are proud to be working together to fund a narrative that will tell the story of Mesa Verde National Park and its people, will include consultation with many associated tribes, will film important historic sites over multiple seasons, will include important artifacts and archeological discoveries, and will be accessible to all guests. This project is paid for in part by a History Colorado – State Historical Fund Grant.

Become a Friend of Mesa Verde Foundation Today!

Friends of Mesa Verde Foundation Levels

All levels receive invitations to MVF events and bi-annual MVF Newsletters.

Mesa Verde Contributor	\$100 - \$249
Mesa Verde Sustainer	\$250 - \$499
Mesa Verde Partner	\$500 - \$999

Fellow level memberships receive the basic member benefit plus discounts on MVF Tours, invitations to special MVF Fellows tours, exclusive events and receptions in Denver, the Four Corners Region, Phoenix, Santa Fe and the Park.

Spruce Tree Fellow	\$1,000 - \$2,499
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Balcony House Fellow	\$2,500 - \$4,999
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Spruce Tree and Balcony House Fellows receive Basic member benefits and Fellow level benefits plus a Mesa Verde National Park Annual Pass.

Cliff Palace Fellow	\$5,000 - \$9,999
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Cliff Palace Fellows receive basic member benefits and Fellow level benefits plus an Annual America the Beautiful pass to all National Parks.

Mesa Verde Society	\$10,000 and Up
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Mesa Verde Society members receive Basic member and Fellow level benefits plus an Annual America the Beautiful pass to all National Parks and complimentary behind-the-scenes tours/programs at Mesa Verde National Park and other venues (museums, archaeological sites, etc.), and special, one-on-one tours/receptions with the Park Superintendent and other Park personnel or archaeologists.

Join Today by using the enclosed envelope or <https://www.mesaverdefoundation.org/become-a-friend/>



Mesa Verde Foundation
8600 Ralston Road, Suite #100
Arvada, CO 80002

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Mesa Verde National Park License Plates

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Ordering your Mesa Verde National Park license plate is easy!

Simply visit mesaverdefoundation.org and make a one-time \$30 license plate donation. Once the donation is processed, you will be issued a PIN number that you will use when registering your vehicle with your county motor vehicle office. Please be aware that to issue the plate, the state will charge an additional (one time) \$50 fee to process your order.