

# Mesa Verde Foundation

*Stewards of an Ancient Treasure*

FALL NEWSLETTER

2020



## LETTER FROM THE MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK SUPERINTENDENT

Autumn at Mesa Verde means a few things to the staff: the end of the US Government's fiscal year, planning what we do with our budget for the next fiscal year, and preparing for winter operations. This year has challenged us all to adjust to rapidly changing priorities and ways of living our lives. Park operations are no different. For example, because of COVID-19 and the related shutdowns and closures, attendance at the Park is down 64% through August.



Two things became apparent when planning for modified operations this year: we do a good job of bringing people from all over the country and world together, but we can't bring you together until it is safe to do so. That meant reimagining everything we do to keep the public and our staff safe. Postponing tours and keeping the visitor center and museum closed were two of the temporary ideas that came to mind. At least we hope they're temporary.

Some of the changes we plan to make permanent were conceived well before the pandemic.

All visitors can now prepay their entrance fees. To do so, point your browser to [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov), search for Mesa Verde and click on Mesa Verde Site Pass. From there you can purchase your entrance pass and save it to your smartphone for payment when you arrive. Earlier this year we began selling tour tickets on [recreation.gov](https://recreation.gov), and plan to again, once we resume tours. We made these changes so you can better plan your visit, whether you live on the Front Range, Frankfort, Kentucky or Frankfurt, Germany.

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't make you aware of a substantial road project scheduled for next Spring and Summer. The project will resurface the Mesa Top and Cliff Palace Loop Roads, install a new shade shelter at Balcony House, and make much needed accessibility improvements at overlooks along both roads. This project will also include road improvements near the park entrance. We'll provide more information on our website ([www.nps.gov/meve](https://www.nps.gov/meve)) as planning progresses.

We hope you remain happy and safe, and plan to visit us soon. Thank you.

*Cliff Spencer, Mesa Verde Superintendent*

**Get YOUR Mesa Verde  
National Park license plate  
and support the Park!**

Visit [www.mesaverdefoundation.org/about/](https://www.mesaverdefoundation.org/about/)  
for details.



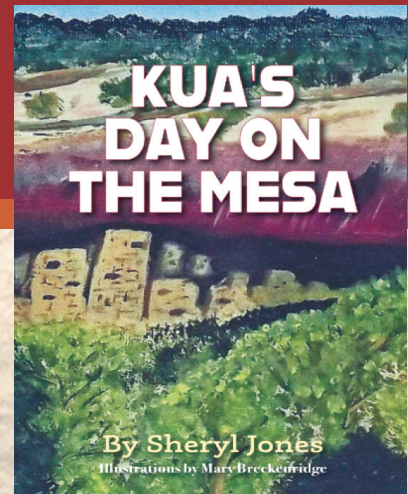


# New Book for Children Takes Place in Mesa Verde

In her recently published book, *Kua's Day on the Mesa*, children's book author Sheryl Jones imaginatively guides her readers on a day in the life of Kua, a 5-year-old boy, in June of 1250. Kua and his family live in Spruce Tree House in what is now Mesa Verde National Park. Kua is deemed to be old enough to guard his family's maize fields on the mesa top. Leaving the shelter of the cliff dwelling with his digging stick, mug, and a corncake from his mother, Kua climbs up to the fields and his adventures ensue. Sheryl writes in an easy-to-read style that is designed to turn on the "magic video in the brain" so that her readers can "see the story as it unfolds." She is very successful with her approach. While this 36-page chapter book is aimed at elementary-school age children, adults will enjoy the rich detail of what life may have been like for the Ancestral Puebloans in the 13th century Southwest.

Sheryl Jones, a resident of Arvada Colorado, is a retired language arts teacher who has been writing children's books since 1982. She has authored several series books, with perhaps her best-known one chronicling Texas sea turtles in need of rescue and rehabilitation. Other series take place in the West. Sheryl's paternal grandmother was a Cherokee who was given an allotment of land in Oklahoma under the Dawes Act of 1887. A member of the Cherokee Tribe herself, Sheryl grew up in Kansas. Because her father worked for the phone company, her family moved frequently. These experiences gave her a deep love of western history and ranch life, which culminated in the *Rowdy* series based on her father's stories about his childhood on the ranch

*Available now in  
paperback and  
Kindle versions  
on Amazon.*



in Indian Territory in 1900. Another series, the Jones Boys mysteries, unfolds on an imaginary dude ranch in western Colorado.

*Kua's Day on the Mesa* is the first in what Jones envisions as a 5-book series. The second book, *The Family's Day on the Mesa*, is already in production with a target release date in early December. Book 3 will be right behind it, with a debut around Easter 2021. Before embarking on this series, Jones scoured the internet for children's books about Ancient Puebloan culture and could not find any of the type that she had in mind, so she began her research for the series in 2019 with a trip to Mesa Verde. She recalled that on her first trip to the Park in 1957, visitors were allowed to go anywhere. Spruce Tree House was her favorite and thus became the setting for the *Kua* series.

Sheryl and Don, her husband of 61 years, are Fellows of the Mesa Verde Foundation. In a gesture of great generosity, Sheryl will be donating a portion of the sales of the *Kua* books to the Foundation. The first book is available now in paperback and Kindle versions on Amazon. Buy copies for yourself and your family members, and support Sheryl's fine work and that of the Mesa Verde Foundation.





## Spruce Tree House Today

**S**pruce Tree House, occupied from 1206 to 1280, is the third largest dwelling in Mesa Verde, with 120 rooms, 8 kivas, and 2 towers. Each clan constructed its own kiva and suite of rooms. The structures are currently closed to visitors due to the threat of rockfall.

The site was originally stabilized and excavated (under the authority of the Department of Interior) by Jesse Walter Fewkes of the Smithsonian. His team blasted a trench in the rock above the dwelling to re-route surface water, keeping it from flowing over the rim and down on the structures. This blasting may have disrupted the arch in the cliff face, causing it to shift.

A 270-foot long crack formed above the site that measured a few inches to 5 feet wide at its widest point. This crack was cleaned out and waterproofed in the 1940's, but the waterproofing was ineffective.

Two decades later, 46 rock bolts were installed to anchor the arch to the cliff behind it; the crack was cleaned out again and filled with concrete and grout.

In addition to these human interventions, natural forces like sun, rain, wind, and snow affect the stability of the walls and alcoves. Rockfalls at Spruce Tree House have been common throughout time. The area was closed to visitors in 2015, following a geotechnical engineering study. Spruce Tree House remains closed today, as a 4-phase assessment and rehabilitation plan is being implemented.

*The average room in Mesa Verde measured 6' x 8' with enough space for two or three people.*



# Mesa Verde National Park Campground Food Storage Locker Project

**M**orefield Campground in Mesa Verde National Park, with its 329 campsites, is a favorite destination for campers in southwest Colorado. The campground is in the middle of prime black bear habitat due to the abundance of vegetation providing forage throughout the summer. Without food storage lockers, campers sometimes leave their coolers and other food containers unattended in the campsite while visiting the park. This makes human food available to bears in the area and often leads to a citation from park law enforcement for having unsecured food or trash. Once attracted, bears will come back time and time again.

Food storage using approved lockers is highly effective in reducing the habituation of bears to human food and has greatly reduced conflicts between bears and humans in NPS and other campgrounds throughout the country. In the past 25 years, there have been numerous occasions where bears' regular visits to the Morefield campground have put campers, staff, and the bears themselves at risk.

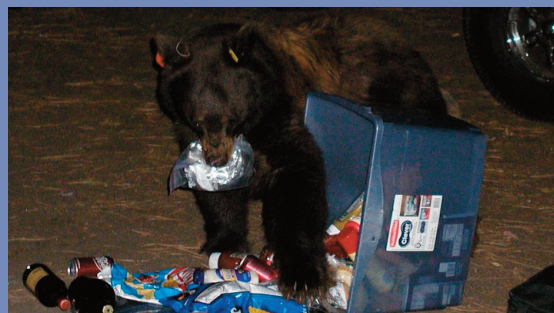
Additional food storage lockers will greatly decrease bear activity in the campground by reducing access to food for bears and other wildlife, resulting in safer camping conditions for visitors, less property damage to equipment and lowering the incidence of bear removal, relocation, or, worst case, euthanizing. The food storage locker project will also allow campers to be in compliance with food and waste storage regulations and reduce the number of violations. The result will be an improved park experience for campers.

It is the goal of the Mesa Verde Foundation to provide a food locker for each campsite at Morefield Campground.



## We need your help!

If you would like to sponsor the purchase and installation of a Bear Proof Food Locker, you can make a restricted project contribution in the amount of \$1,500 to the Mesa Verde Foundation. Sponsors will be recognized on a metal plate attached to each locker. Contact Shannon Clifford at 303-321-3120 or [shannon@mesaverdefoundation.org](mailto:shannon@mesaverdefoundation.org) for more information and/or to make your contribution.



National Park Service, Jeffrey Brooker

*"In the past 25 years, there have been numerous occasions where bears have frequented the Morefield campground."*



# Mesa Verde Foundation's New Lodging Partners Program

The Mesa Verde Foundation is pleased to announce its Lodging Partners Program! Our Lodging Partners Program, launched this July, already features four lodging establishments in Cortez and Durango—all within close proximity of Mesa Verde National Park. These partners support the work of the Foundation and are committed to our mission of promoting understanding and appreciation of Mesa Verde National Park. On your next visit to Colorado, please consider booking a reservation with our fabulous partners!

Lodging Partner guests have the opportunity to contribute a \$1.00 donation for each night stayed. Donations are added to guest bills. Every dollar donated directly supports the Park.

We provide our partners with Mesa Verde Foundation logo window decals for each lobby entrance to identify our partnership for arriving guests. Laminated compendium/fact sheets about the Foundation are displayed at the front desk and in each guest room. In return, these partners receive recognition on our social media sites and a feature in our newsletter that is sent to over 2,000 local and international supporters. Additionally, Lodging Partners are recognized on the Foundation's website with their logos that directly link to their website.

In response to the pandemic, our partners are dedicated to providing guests with the

safest experience. Each partner practices exceptional health and safety protocols to ensure every guest is protected.

We are grateful to our Lodging Partners and for their incredible support. Please consider booking your next stay with one, or all of the featured partners! A brief description of each of our Lodging Partners follows below.



## **Canyon of the Ancients Guest Ranch**

Canyon of the Ancients Guest Ranch is a spectacular ranch nestled along the McElmo Creek in Cortez, a quick drive to Mesa Verde National Park. The property features six luxuriously appointed vacation rental cabins and houses. The owners, Garry and Ming Adams, maintain a passionate stewardship of the land and are dedicated to the natural environment and ecology. The property, a working ranch, has an array of tremendous amenities. Enjoy its all natural beef and lamb raised right on the ranch, organic fruit orchards, an organic vegetable garden, free-range eggs, wines from the ranch's vineyard, a horse corral and a scenic creek walkway. The property affords a bucolic experience and the ultimate in privacy!

*continued*





### **Grizzly Roadhouse Bed and Breakfast and Vacation Rentals**

Grizzly Roadhouse Bed and Breakfast and Vacation Rentals is located in a majestic setting on 30 acres of hills and canyons in Cortez. It is minutes away from Mesa Verde National Park. Grizzly Roadhouse is a Native American owned business. The owner, Michelle Eagle (Santa Clara Pueblo), is renowned for her hospitality. She is also a licensed spiritual healer and certified Reiki practitioner. The property features two beautifully appointed cottages and one apartment. All accommodations have their own private outdoor space for guests to marvel at the property's stunning sunsets. A continental breakfast is provided to fuel up for exploration of the property's hiking trails, peace garden, medicine wheel, and Mesa Verde National Park!



### **The Adventure Inn Durango**

The Adventure Inn Durango is acclaimed on Tripadvisor for owners Nigel and Tammy's hospitality and attention to personalizing each

guest's stay. The newly renovated Inn is independently owned and operated and is conveniently located in downtown Durango. The property's location is ideal for those who want to be centrally located and close to restaurants and shops. The Adventure Inn features a free continental breakfast and is highly ranked on every travel booking website. It is no wonder, considering Nigel and Tammy's thoughtfulness to detail and providing first class treatment to guests from the moment their stay is booked! The owners are dedicated Durango community members and are known for their support of local businesses.



### **Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Durango Central**

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Durango Central is a full service hotel built in 2013. The hotel is situated in central Durango and is near Historic Downtown Durango. The property features 160 delightfully appointed guest rooms and guest suites. Room offerings include gas fireplaces and balconies. Fantastic amenities abound with a fitness center, indoor pool and whirlpool, a 24-hour business center, on-site restaurant and bar with an extensive menu and drink list, event and meeting spaces and services. With all these amenities guests may not want to leave the hotel! The hotel's staff truly goes above and beyond to accommodate any guest request.



*As the year-end giving season approaches, please be on the lookout for ways to support the Mesa Verde Foundation. The Covid-19 Pandemic has unfortunately resulted in the cancellation of many of our regular fundraising activities. We need your support now more than ever!*

## CARES Act Benefits

### Charitable Giving

The new CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act is designed to help individuals, businesses, and nonprofits facing economic hardship during the coronavirus pandemic.

Here are a few key provisions of the CARES Act that may affect you and your charitable goals:

### Required Minimum Distributions Suspended

The new law temporarily suspends the requirements for required minimum distributions (RMD) for the 2020 tax year. This may come as a relief to many who would have had to withdraw from their retirement accounts. Despite the RMD suspension, remember that if you are 70½ or older, you can still make a gift (“Qualifying Charitable Contribution” or “QCD”) from your IRA or name Mesa Verde Foundation as a beneficiary.

### Why a Gift from Your IRA May Still Be a Good Idea

- Your gift will be put to use today, allowing you to see the difference your donation is making.
- You pay no income taxes on the gift. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- Since the gift does not count as income, it can reduce your annual income level. This may help lower your Medicare premiums and decrease the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax.

## New Tax Incentives

**New Deduction Available:** A charitable deduction of up to \$300 is available to those who take the standard deduction (taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions). This new deduction is an “above the line” adjustment to income that will reduce a taxpayer’s adjusted gross income (AGI) and taxable income.

To qualify, donors must contribute directly to a qualified charity like Mesa Verde Foundation. All donations made since January 1, 2020 count toward the \$300 cap. Donations to donor-advised funds (DAF) do not qualify for this new deduction.

**New Charitable Deduction Limits:** For those who do itemize their deductions, the new law allows for cash contributions to qualified charities such as Mesa Verde Foundation to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2020 calendar year, up from 60% previously. The old deduction rules still apply for donations to a Donor Advised Fund or private foundation. The new limits also do not apply to gifts of appreciated stock.

## Your Charitable Goals

We are deeply grateful for your continued kindness and support during this difficult time. Please contact Shannon Clifford at [shannon@mesaverdefoundation.org](mailto:shannon@mesaverdefoundation.org) or 303-321-3120 to discuss how your gift can help further our mission.

*Information contained herein was accurate at the time of posting. The information is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor. Figures cited in any examples are for illustrative purposes only. References to tax rates include federal taxes only and are subject to change. State law may further impact your individual results.*



# Mesa Verde Foundation Welcomes New Directors

The Mesa Verde Foundation added two members to its Board of Directors over the summer. We are excited to have both Monica Buckle and Virgil Scott bring their areas of expertise to further the work of the Foundation. Welcome Monica and Virgil!



## Monica Buckle

Monica Buckle is a consultant, curator and scholar specializing in Native American arts and culture. She is an enrolled tribal member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Monica provides a Native dialogue for the representation of Indigenous subject matter with her cultural knowledge and inter-tribal sensitivity. She is an advocate for the cultural continuity and sustainability of Native communities. She holds a master's degree in Art Business from Sotheby's Institute of Art, New York and served as a docent at The Brant Foundation Art Study Center in Greenwich, Connecticut. Currently, she is the Visual Arts Coordinator with the American Indian Community House in New York City, a not-for-profit organization serving New York City's urban Native population. She is also a Development Committee Member with the Fine Art Museum of Sedona, a museum that serves as a cultural anchor for Northern Arizona and the Verde Valley. Monica loves horses; she oversees riding and horsemanship programs for youth, adults and veterans with disabilities and challenges at Pegasus Therapeutic Riding in Brewster, New York. She is committed to enhancing relationships with the 26 associated tribes of Mesa

Verde National Park and supporting the preservation of Ancestral Puebloan and Colorado Plateau culture.



## Virgil Scott

Virgil is a fundraising consultant, specializing in charitable estate planning and major gift campaigns. After a 12-year career in advertising and marketing, Virgil moved to the nonprofit sector, serving as a foundation leader for 17 years, including tenures as President & CEO of the Fort Hays State University Foundation in Kansas and the University of Northern Colorado Foundation. He founded his fundraising consulting firm, Virgil Scott Consulting, Inc., with a passion to serve the nonprofit sector, to help organizations and leaders to excel. He enjoys helping individuals and nonprofits connect in order to have a transformational impact on their communities. Virgil has worked with nonprofits of all sizes throughout the Midwest and Rocky Mountain region in healthcare, long-term care, developmental disabilities, higher education, and agriculture. He has served on many nonprofit boards including: the Denver Rotary Club Foundation, Western Kansas Council on Estate Planning & Giving, Smoky Hills Public Television and the Topeka Advertising Federation. Virgil's first trip to Mesa Verde was in 1983 when he lived in the Four Corners region. Mesa Verde holds a special place in the hearts of his family. Virgil and his wife, Diane, are native Kansans and now live in Broomfield, Colorado with their daughter.

**Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA)** is a sister organization to the Mesa Verde Foundation. It is a nonprofit organization located in Mesa Verde National Park. The primary way that MVMA raises funds for the park is through book and gift store revenue. Normally, the MVMA operates 4 store locations within the park, plus a tour ticket outlet and a store at the Durango Welcome Center. This year is different: only the store located at the Visitor and Research Center at the base of the park is open, and that on a limited basis. In a normal year MVMA has provided over \$100,000 in direct support for the park, as well as a substantial amount of in-kind staff support. This year, park visitation is down significantly resulting in fewer visitors to the store and less revenue to provide park aid. Mesa Verde Foundation encourages our members to browse and support MVMA so that they can support our park. Please visit them at [mesaverde.org](http://mesaverde.org), to shop for Mesa Verde related books and items in support of Mesa Verde National Park.





## Become a Mesa Verde Foundation Fellow

We often get questions about how people can support Mesa Verde National Park on an ongoing basis. Well, one of the best options is to become a Mesa Verde Foundation Fellow!

Mesa Verde Foundation Fellows are a special group of supporters who provide the Foundation with significant annual donations. These gifts allow the Foundation to keep working on funding capital improvements, projects and other educational endeavors for Mesa Verde National Park.

We would not be able to do the work we do without the ongoing support of our Fellows. In addition to supporting the Foundation, Fellows also receive discounts on tours (typically our fall and horseback tours held each fall—we hope to have those back in 2021!), invitations to special tours, events and receptions, and other exclusive perks based on your giving level.

### The Fellow tiers are as follows:

Spruce Tree Fellow – \$1,000

Balcony House Fellow – \$2,500

Cliff Palace Fellow – \$5,000

Mesa Verde Society – \$10,000 and up

Have questions? Not sure which tier is right for you? Call 303-321-3120 or email [info@mesaverdefoundation.org](mailto:info@mesaverdefoundation.org) to learn more about making your donation.

## Mesa Verde Foundation Board of Directors

David Nagler, Chairman

Troy Eid, Vice Chairman

Jerry Burk, Treasurer

Todd Bacon, Secretary

Marilyn Alkire • Doug Bacon

Dan Bailey • Monica Buckle • Jim Dulin

Andrew Gulliford • Jana Leslie • Ed Nichols

Marion Swett Robinson • Virgil Scott

Barbara Sutteer • Jim Wilkins • Paul Yarka

Peter Pino, Advisor and Board Member, In Memoriam

### Executive Director

Shannon Clifford, MSNPA

## 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

**Balcony House Fellow** \$2,500 - \$4,999

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

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

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/>



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Instagram: @mesaverdefoundation

