

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
Project Summary

Project Title: Revitalizing the Exhibitions of Chapin Mesa Archaeological Museum

Task Agreement #: P19AC00241 Modification(s): 2
Discipline: Cultural
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Cooperator: University Of Colorado - Boulder
Student Participation: Yes
Effective Dates: March 20, 2019 – 12/31/2022
Funding Amount: \$282,801

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract:

Built in 1922, the CMAM displays artifacts from the Ancestral Pueblo people that inhabited the mesas and cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde National Park over 1,500 years ago. Today, priceless objects are still stored and mounted in historic cases that lack environmental controls and do not meet current curatorial standards. Labels do not meet accessibility standards and do not present multiple voices for the interpretation of Ancestral Pueblo culture.

Revisions and artifact removals have been made as NAGPRA (Native American Graves Repatriation Act) laws, scientific understandings, and sensitivities demanded, but neither the exhibit plan nor the experience as a whole has been updated in a consistent way. Individual exhibits and exhibit rooms have no cohesive, thematic interpretive message and little opportunity for visitor engagement.

This project will address these issues through a collaborative scoping effort and the development of Schematic Design documents for new, interactive, accessible exhibits that present multiple perspectives, include current science, native voices, and engage visitors.