Archaeological Data Recovery in the Piceance and Wyoming Basins of Northwestern Colorado and Southwestern Wyoming

Edited by

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(Principal Investigator)

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Cover: A refit biface from site 5MF3687.
Map showing distribution of Formative-period components by site type.

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Abstract

In 2008 and 2009, a 14-in. natural gas liquids pipeline was constructed in Colorado and Wyoming. The 152-mi.-long pipeline is collocated with other pipelines, as it follows an existing utility corridor over most of its extent, from the Piceance Basin in Rio Blanco County northwards through Moffat County to a pipeline interconnect near Wamsutter, Wyoming. Because the pipeline crossed lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and required federal authorizations, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) was applicable. Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. was hired to survey the route and to aid in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Colorado Bureau of Land Management State Office was the lead federal agency on the project.

Because the project is largely collocated with other pipelines in northwestern Colorado and southwestern Wyoming, it largely affect the same type of archaeological sites. Fourteen sites ranging, from Paleoindian to historic Euroamerican, were subjected to data recovery, though the details of those excavations are described elsewhere. Like previous pipeline projects in the utility corridor, Archaic basin houses were encountered at several sites. Other sites are thought to represent campsites or resource procurement and processing locations. Moderate quantities of lithic artifacts were recovered, but most sites yielded relatively low quantities of animal bones or macrobotanical remains. Project results are synthesized with data from other pipeline projects, which produces a large set of archaeological data that are synthesized herein.

The major research themes presented in this volume synthesize chronometric and spatial information (Chapter 5), subsistence (Chapter 6), prehistoric technology (Chapter 7), small cultural features (Chapter 8), prehistoric architecture (Chapter 9). Chapter 10 describes the results of remote sensing at two prehistoric sites in the project corridor and Chapter 11 discusses changes to regional prehistoric archaeological units based on project data. Chapter 12 clarifies historic research themes addressed with the project data. When appropriate, these topics were examined across time and space. Given the results presented in this volume, it is clear that the mitigation approach for historic properties within the pipeline corridor was successful in providing important archaeological information that advances local and regional understandings of past lifeways.

Acknowledgements

because ‘a trustworthy historical synthesis
is certainly not to be entrusted to nor attempted
by any one single investigator.’
(Fewkes 1937:1954)

The successful completion of this archaeological data recovery program is due to many individuals and groups, to whom I am grateful. Alan D. Reed deserves enormous credit for his role as Principal Investigator during the bulk of the project and for setting its course before he retired. My deepest gratitude goes to all of the Alpine archaeologists who directed or assisted with excavations and made this project a success: Martha Bright, Rand A. Greubel, Abbie L. Harrison, Tracy L. Hoose, Sara A. Millward, Jenn Mueller, Jeremy Omvig, Jack E. Pfertsh, Michael J. Prouty, and Charles A. Reed. Jonathon C. Horn deserves special acknowledgement for being available as a consultant for a variety of different tasks. My many thanks go to Megan K. Carney Reed, Susan M. Chandler, and Jaclyn Mullen, whom were all technical editors during various stages of this project and who contributed greatly to the product you see here. I also wish to acknowledge the folks in Alpine’s GeoSpatial department, who prepared graphics for analyses and reporting; these include Stephanie L. Dudash, Seth Frame, Barb Lockwood, Iraida A. Rodriguez, and Connor C. Johnen. Charles A. Reed prepared most of the photographs and Jenn Mueller prepared artifact drawings. Brenda S. Collin, Debby Patterson, Kimberly L. Redman, and Terri Voglein all assisted in myriad ways to help ensure the project’s successful completion and have earned my thanks. Whether mentioned or not, a deep debt of gratitude goes to all of the individuals who worked on the data recovery program, including all of Alpine’s field directors, field assistants, and field technicians, because the breadth of this project required a large and diverse group of individuals who all care about the quality of their archaeological work.

Matthew J. Landt

Chapter 1:
Introduction

by Alan D. Reed and Matthew J. Landt

Project Background

In 2008 and 2009, a natural gas liquids pipeline was constructed in Colorado and Wyoming. The 152-mi.-long pipeline was collocated with other pipelines, as it followed an existing utility corridor over most of its extent, from the Piceance Basin in Rio Blanco County northwards through Moffat County to a pipeline interconnect at Echo Springs Pump Station, near Wamsutter, Wyoming.

The utility corridor crosses private lands, lands administrated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CDOW), and the State of Colorado Land Board. Because the pipeline represents interstate natural gas transportation across federal properties, certifications by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the BLM were necessary. Because federal lands and authorizations were necessary, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) applied to the projects. Section 106 is a process intended to ensure the consideration of important cultural resources prior to development projects. The Colorado BLM State Office was the lead federal agency on the project. Alpine Archaeological Consultants Inc. (Alpine) was hired to conduct cultural resource investigations.

This document serves as the record for the archaeological data recovery efforts associated with the project. The data recovery efforts exposed 168 small cultural features and 16 basin houses at 14 sites, which resulted in the collection of 41,250 artifacts, 7,245 animal bones, and hundreds of ancillary study specimens, as well as producing notes and maps pertaining to the contextual relationships of these materials. The data resulting from the analysis of these materials are summarized in the following and provide the basis for interpretations. An attempt has been made to include enough information that other researchers can evaluate the logic behind the report's interpretations and derive other interpretations.

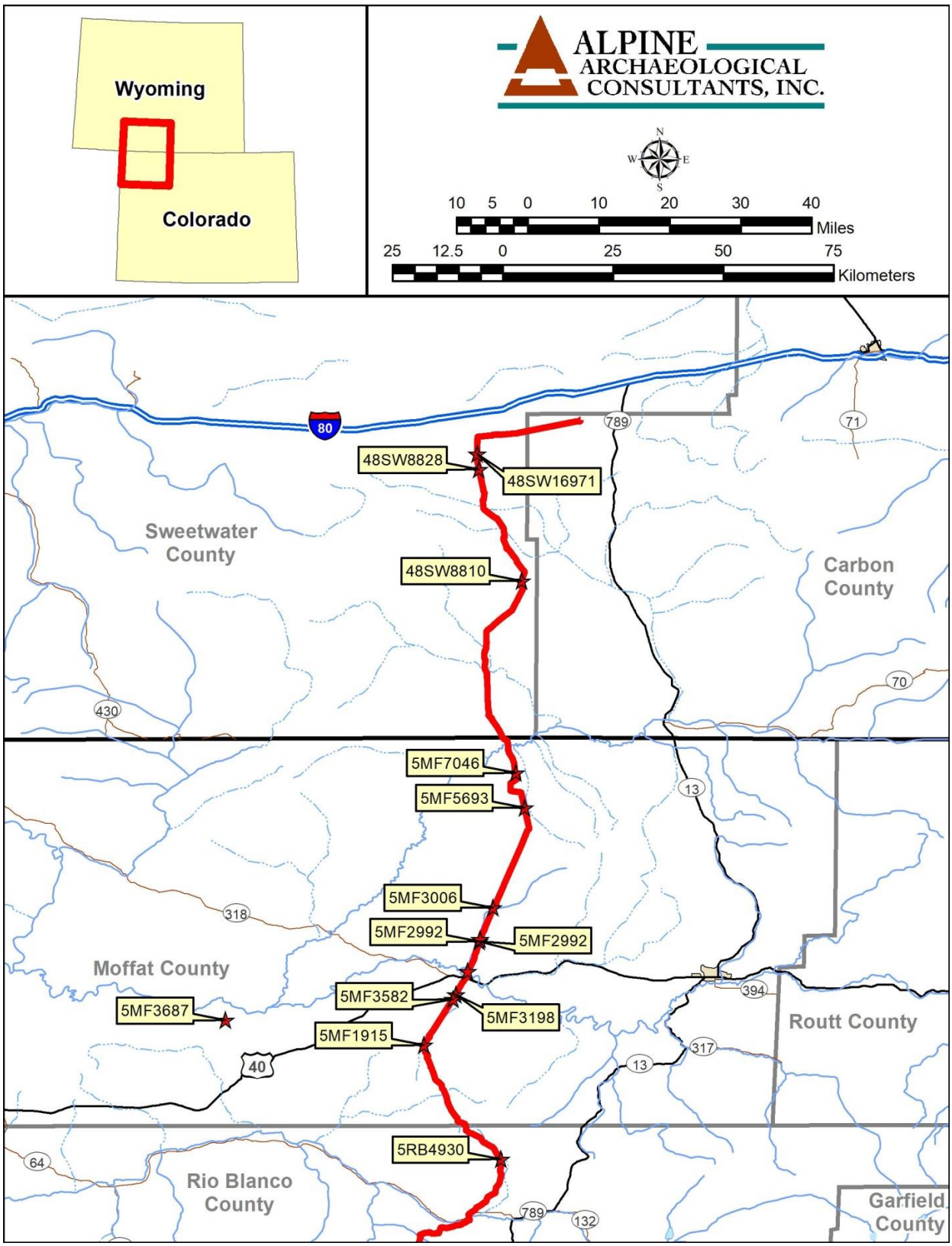

Figure 1. General location of the project corridor.