

Protohistoric Period and
European Contact
A.D. 1450 - 1900's

The Protohistoric Period concluded the prehistoric era. The people of this period were hunter-gatherers and part-time horticulturalists who pursued a more nomadic lifestyle after the introduction of the horse.

Euro-American settlers began to move into the area in the 1800's and to trade with the American Indians (Apache, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Ute) who lived here. The metal arrow tip shown here is an example of one of the prevalent trade items. During the 1880's, Euro-American settlers homesteaded this land. In the early 1990's, the colorful clay was mined to make bricks for buildings in Colorado Springs and Pueblo. Grazing and agricultural use by long-time local residents played an important role in the history of the Paint Mines.



THE STORY OF
THE PAINT MINES

For well over 100 years, Coloradoans have enjoyed Paint Mines scenery as well as its geological, archaeological, historical , and ecological resources.



Geology

The Paint Mines are named for their colorful clays that were collected by American Indians to make paint. Brightly colored bands, caused by oxidized iron compounds, are found in varying amounts throughout the may different layers of clay. When the outcrops erode, a hard capstone allows columns of clay to be preserved beneath them, creating fantastic spires called hoodoos. Selenite (gypsum) contributes to the color, and white quartzitic crystals dazzle the eye.

Natural geologic outcrops occur in the Dawson Formation that formed 55 million years ago during the Tertiary age when the region was wetter, warmer, and tropical. The Dawson Formation also contains the petrified tropical hardwoods used as materials for stone tools by prehistoric people.

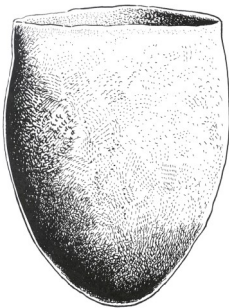
Archaic Stage 5500 B.C. - A.D. 100

The Archaic Stage followed the Paleoindian Stage and was characterized by distinctive stemmed, corner-notched, and side-notched stone points fastened on darts. Throwing sticks called *atlatls* were used on the end of the dart to increase the projectile force. Archaic people relied on a wide range of foodstuffs, hunted game animals such as deer and pronghorn antelope, and gathered locally available plant foods. Archaic sites have grinding stones, known as *manos* and *metates*, that were used for processing plant material for food.



Ceramic Stage A.D. 100 - 1450

The Ceramic Stage (called the Developmental Period by archaeologists) was the time of the Plains Woodland culture. This culture was heralded by the appearance of pottery, the adoption of the bow-and-arrow, and a greater dependence on domesticated plants such as corn, beans, and

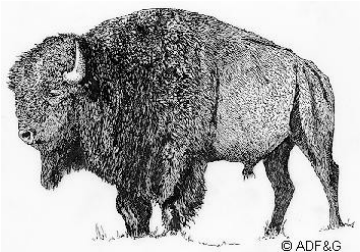


HISTORY

Archaeological studies indicate that humans have inhabited the Paint Mines for nearly 9,000 years. The plants, animals, and colorful clays encouraged prehistoric people to return to the area, year after year, for centuries. The Paint Mines are considered significant in the prehistory of the area, and this park is listed as an Archaeological District in the National Register of Historic Places. Throughout the history of the Paint Mines, people are known to have visited the area to gather the colorful clays, tinged with red, orange, yellow, purple, and gray hues, to produce ceramics.

Paleoindian Stage 7000 - 5500 B.C.

The earliest people to live in the Paint Mines area are commonly known as Paleoindians. These people were likely the descendants of the first Americans who migrated over the Bering Land Bridge from north-eastern Asia. The Paleoindian people hunted large game species such as mammoth, caribou, deer, and large bison, some of which are now extinct.



Paint Mines
Interpretive Park

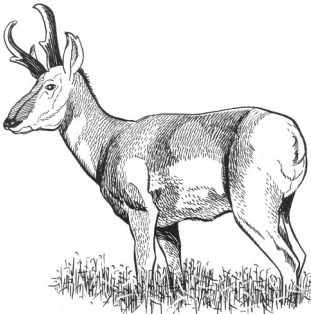
29950 Paint Mines Road
Calhan, CO 80808

Life has been a tapestry
Of rich and royal hue.
An everlasting vision
Of the ever-changing view.
-- Carole King

Ecology

Paint Mines ecology represents the connection among all elements of the park. The geologic formations create natural drainages abundant with wetland and riparian habitat.

The open plains dominate the area and support a mix of native short-grass and mid-grass prairie communities typified by blue grama and buffalo grasses. Some stream bottoms retain enough water to support vegetation such as mountain mahogany, low sagebrush, chokecherry, wild rose, and a variety of grasses, sedges, and reedy plants. A few junipers and pines are also found here.



Before the Euro-American settlers arrived, the area supported large herbivores including bison. Pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and coyote are found in this area today. Small mammals, such

as raccoons, skunks, and rabbits, as well as burrowing rodents, are also present. These diverse habitats support a variety of birds including owls, Swainson's hawks, ducks, Canada geese, mourning doves, magpies, and western meadowlarks. Various species of frogs and reptiles, including the short-horned lizard are also present.



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Paint Mines Interpretive Park

Trail Map



Legend

TRAIL

FENCE

10' CONTOUR

POND

ROAD-UNPAVED

STREAM

- P

 PARKING
- 1

 ECOLOGY INTERPRETIVE SITE
- 2

 PREHISTORY INTERPRETIVE SITE
- 3

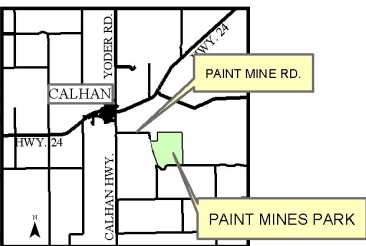
 HISTORY INTERPRETIVE SITE
- 4

 EAST OVERLOOK
- 5

 GEOLOGY INTERPRETIVE SITE
- 6

 FORMATIONS

To Calhan



Thank You for Visiting!

The Paint Mines are home to many beautiful animals, reptiles, flora and fauna. During your visit, keep an eye out for these...



Short-Horned Lizard
(Phrynosoma douglassii)

This type of horned lizard is a member of the iguana family. As an adaptation to the dry, cool climate, the short-horned lizard has as many as 30 young at a time that are ready to live on their own from birth.

Lark Bunting
(Calamospiza melanocorys)

Known for its spectacular dance and song, the lark bunting was designated the Colorado State Bird in 1931. This member of the sparrow family has distinctly different breeding plumages, as the male is lack with snowy white wing patches, while the female is gray/brown striped.



Buffalo Grass
(Buchloe dactyloids)

Historically, this native prairie grass was a primary food source for the immense herds of bison once found on the Great Plains. It also provided early Western settlers with sod used to build their houses.

Park Rules

This fragile environment requires many years for nature to restore it once the vegetation and soil have been damaged. These rules have been established for your safety and enjoyment and for the protection of this unique resource.

- Park Hours: Dawn to Dusk
- All plants, wildlife, rocks, minerals, and historic artifacts within park boundaries are protected by law. Do not remove, destroy, or disturb any of these features.
- Pets, horses, and bicycles of any kind are prohibited.
- Please stay on designated trails at all times.
- Entering the Paint Mine formations is prohibited. Avoid gulches and gullies during wet weather. Climbing is prohibited.
- Motorized vehicles must remain in parking area.
- Overnight parking is prohibited.
- Please remove your own trash and litter.
- Alcoholic beverages and glass containers are prohibited.
- Discharge of guns, BB guns, pellet guns, or paintball guns is prohibited.
- Fireworks and explosives are prohibited.

Suggestions for further reading:

Steve E. Cassells, 1997. *The Archaeology of Colorado* (2nd ed.), Johnson Books, Boulder.

George C. Frison, 1991. *Prehistoric Hunters of the High Plains* (2nd ed.), Academic Press, San Diego.

Larry L. King, 1987. *The History of Calhan and Vicinity 1888-1988*, Gaddy Printing Co., Simla, Colorado.

Audrey DeLella Benedict, 1991. *A Sierra Club Naturalist's Guide, The Southern Rocky Mountains*, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco.