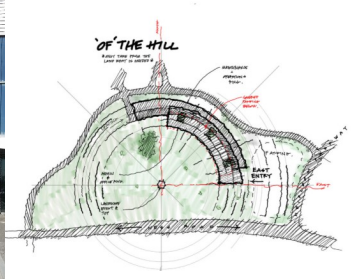
Interpretive Plan Final

6/6/2025

Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide Exhibit



For the

Parker Water and Sanitation Headquarters

And Douglas County History Repository

ParkerWater & SANITATION DISTRICT

by

INTERPRET-SITE L.L.C.
ARCHAEOLOGY COLLECTIONS & INTERPRETATION CONSULTANTS

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DOUGLAS COUNTY COLORADO
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

by Todd Christopher McMahon, CIP

Introduction

Developing an Interpretive Plan for any historic site, museum or visitor center requires lots of time and input from staff, administration, exhibit designers etc. Interpret Site LLC is contractually partnering with the Douglas County History Repository to provide a number of key services including collections/care practices and interpretive planning for the County's historic sites. The relationship and partnership with Parker Water and Sanitation District (PWSD) is unique. Through the course of planning and building the Rueter-Hess Reservoir, the Douglas County History Repository has supported the archaeological and historic documentation that occurred at the reservoir during its construction. When Parker Water decided to build its new headquarters building near the Reservoir it graciously offered exhibit space opportunities to the Douglas County History Repository to showcase the area and the County's history.

A Definition of Interpretation

Interpreters connect visitors to important natural, cultural, and historical resources at parks, nature centers, historical sites, aquariums, zoos, and anywhere that people come to learn about places. NAI (the National Association for Interpretation) defines interpretation as "a purposeful approach to communication that facilitates meaningful, relevant, and inclusive experiences that deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and inspire engagement with the world around us."

A Vision for the PWSD Interpretive Plan

Through a series of planning meetings and concept vision ideas, this Interpretive Plan was developed. The arc of the vision for the exhibit space at the Parker Water and Sanitation Department's Headquarters tied to a theme based on the unifying concept of thriving in the Palmer Divide through time.

Exhibit Spaces and Opportunities

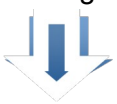
The new $53 million Parker Water and Sanitation District Headquarters (Operations, Maintenance, and Administrative building) was built to handle the immense growth needs of the towns of Parker, City of Lone Tree, City of Castle Pines, and several other rural Douglas County areas for the next twenty years. The two-story, 102,000 sf building design was "inspired by a drop of water's concentric rings of outward momentum and the ceremonial circles used by Native American tribes who once lived in the area."

The building was also built with the idea to provide public benefits such as a demonstration garden for low-water landscapes, new irrigation technology; tours and other educational opportunities. The first floor atrium area is then the focus for offering an interpretive visitor experience.

Interpretive Plan Goals and Objectives

The goal hierarchy contained in this section reflects the following structure:

Douglas County management purposes/goals



Interpretive goals

Objectives (Outcomes)

The hierarchy is developed in this manner to clearly show the link between the purposes for which the Parker Water and Sanitation Headquarters is managed, and the recommended actions associated with developing a network of orientation, interpretive opportunities, and extended actions.

GOALS

County Comprehensive Management Goals

An important component of Douglas County's sense of place is its historic legacy. This legacy is evident in our heritage of agriculture, mining, industry, and transportation and in our cultural resources. Cultural resources include historic roads, buildings, structures, sites, districts, landscapes, archaeological sites, as well as cultural practices.

Taken from: *Douglas County 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan*

Goal 5-A

Preserve Douglas County's cultural resources for future generations.

Objective 5-8A

Support the preservation and protection of cultural resources.

Policy 5-8A.1

Encourage partnerships and community-based efforts to plan for the preservation of cultural resources.

Policy 5-8A.2

Identify and support the preservation of sites and artifacts with historic, prehistoric, or cultural significance.

Policy 5-8A.3

Encourage the incorporation of historical and cultural resources into development plans.

Policy 5-8A.4

Cooperate with the Historic Preservation Board, historical societies, and archaeological organizations to promote the preservation of cultural resources.

Interpretive Goal:

We desire that visitors to the PWSD Headquarters will learn about the common human adaptation to the environment of the Palmer Divide throughout the centuries and the timeline of occupation in the Palmer Divide area. Additionally visitors will know how Douglas County's Historic Preservation Board and the Douglas County History Repository help to preserve the County's past. We also desire those that experience the exhibit will act to reduce vandalism in the area.

Objectives and Indicators

Objective 1
By the end of their visit, visitors will be able to identify at least two examples of how humans adapted to the environment of the Palmer Divide.

Indicator 1.1 (Knowledge): In an exit survey accessed by a QR code, 70% of respondents can name at least two examples (e.g., use of atlatls for hunting, transitioning from horse-drawn wagons to modern technologies, water management strategies, etc.).

Indicator 1.2 (Behavior): During guided or self-directed tours, PWSD staff observe 50% of visitors actively engaging with exhibits (e.g., reading labels, opening drawers, asking questions) that illustrate historical adaptations.

Objective 2
Visitors will gain an awareness of the timeline of occupation in Douglas County and the Palmer Divide, recognizing key periods and transitions (e.g., Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Ceramic, Settlement, Modern).

Indicator 2.1 (Knowledge): On a QR code exit poll timeline activity, 60% of participants place at least two historical eras or time markers correctly (e.g., Paleo-Indian era, gold rush period).

Indicator 2.2 (Behavior): Observational data by the PWSD front desk staff shows a majority of visitors referencing the chronological panels or timeline mural (e.g., pointing out dates, discussing them with companions).

Objective 3
Visitors will understand the role of the Douglas County Historic Preservation Board and the Douglas County History Repository in preserving the county's past.

Indicator 3.1 (Knowledge): In a brief exit poll or feedback form, 50% of respondents recall at least one service or function of these entities (e.g., artifact curation, land-marking of historic sites).

Indicator 3.2 (Action): 10% of visitors (as indicated by sign-up sheets or QR code scans) request additional information about volunteering, donating artifacts, or researching at the Repository.

Objective 4
Visitors of the exhibit will understand the call to protect the archaeological sites in the Rueter-Hess area.

Indicator 4.1(Knowledge): The north wall of the exhibit area will highlight vandalism that has occurred a site call "Point of Rocks"

Indicator 4.1 (Action): Vandalism at places like "Point of Rocks" will diminish after the instillation of the exhibit.

Heritage Tourism Goal

Through cultural and heritage tourism, it may be possible to preserve historic properties that tell the history of the County.

From: *Douglas County Recreation and Tourism Plan 2035*

Interpretive Goal:

Visitors will understand how actively engaging in cultural and heritage tourism supports the preservation of the County's historic properties, ensuring that future generations can learn from and enjoy these sites.

Objective: By the end of their visit, 50% of visitors will be able to identify at least one action (e.g., volunteering, donating, or visiting local heritage sites) that contributes to preserving historic properties in the County.

Indicator: An exit survey through a QR code will show that at least 50% of participants mention one specific way they plan to support or learn more about local historic properties (e.g., donating to a preservation fund, visiting a historic site, or joining a local historical society).

Management Goal

Conservation of Natural Resources – Preservation of agricultural, range, forest and aquifer recharge areas support productive and important uses on properties while preserving their natural character. As an example, preservation of agricultural land retains the historic heritage of the County, while supporting other open space criteria including preservation of wildlife habitat, archaeological and cultural sites, aquifer recharge areas, and scenic vistas.

Historical, Archaeological and Paleontological Sites – Protection of important historic sites preserves a sense of life in Douglas County in the early 1900s, the 1800s, and before. Archaeological and paleontological sites also provide excellent educational and scientific research opportunities.

From: *Douglas County 2030 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan*

Objective PT 5D

Preserve, protect, and improve historic, prehistoric, and paleontological resources on parks and trails lands, as feasible.

Objective OS 1B

Identify and preserve important landmarks and features that contribute to the natural and built environment of the County, including water bodies, agricultural lands, forest lands, cultural and historic resources, and scenic vistas as viewed from the major road network and key public places.

Objective OS 3F

Identify, monitor, and manage activities that impact wildlife, and natural and cultural resources on open space lands.

Objective OS 5C

Partner with historic conservation groups and others to identify, interpret, and preserve Douglas County's history.

Interpretive Goal:

Through “Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide,” visitors will recognize how preserving natural resources and historic sites—such as agricultural lands, wildlife habitats, cultural landmarks, and paleontological areas—supports both ecological health and Douglas County’s rich heritage.

Objective: By the end of their visit, at least 50% of exhibit attendees will be able to name one action or partnership (e.g., land conservation programs, historic conservation groups, or stewardship initiatives) that aligns with Douglas County’s management objectives for preserving open space and cultural resources.

> **Indicator:** An exit survey (through a QR code) reveals that 50% or more of respondents correctly identify a specific action or resource (e.g., volunteering with a historic conservation group, supporting wildlife-friendly practices, or advocating for local land preservation), demonstrating increased awareness of how to help protect the County’s natural and historical assets.

Themes

Themes (messages) are the main way to effectively communicate interpretive experiences. Themes are not topics. A topic is a subject, such as “The Archaic Period in Douglas County”. A theme is a statement or message about the subject. It is the “take-home” message that you want the audiences to know. The theme expresses an overriding conclusion you hope your audience will draw. Interpretation should also always have a purpose and help meet (relate back to) your organization’s goals and objectives (plan, or mission (see above)). For the purposes of this plan the themes outlined below help to establish part of the vision for the PWSD interpretive experience.

Why be thematic?

If you want to make a difference in what people think and feel with respect to a place.

- People will forget isolated facts, but they’ll remember aspects of a strong theme.
- The media content will then be more focused.
- It makes your audience’s job easier.

Themes are the core of the stories that are told; stories are selected to communicate themes. Consequently, themes are determined before selecting and developing the interpretive strategies.

The elements in this theme hierarchy include:

Themes

These are the key ideas or concepts that should be communicated.

Sub-themes

These are the concepts that support a theme.

Themes are derived from goals and objectives by determining the concept a visitor needs to understand for them to respond in a way that helps achieve the goals and objectives. The supporting stories then must support that concept.

Label Hierarchy:

LEVEL	TYPE (layer)	PURPOSE	LENGTH
Exhibit	Exhibit Title	Identify exhibit	8-10 words. “Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide”
	Exhibit Intro	Present main message / major themes of exhibit; serve as an advance organizer	250 words. Welcome to "Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide" Text Why does a place shape its people? Text Join the ongoing story. Text
Section / Cluster *	Section Header	Identify a section (Time Period) of the exhibit	2-8 words

Component / Exhibit Case	Theme label headline	Presents the big idea of this component;	7-10 word headline theme
	Sub-theme label	“Abstract” idea that relates or elaborates the main theme idea.	As much copy as needed to give more detailed concepts related to the main theme.
	Focus label(s)	Describes a specific object or activity, elaborates on the Sub-theme label.	50-75 word copy
Image	Caption	Describes image	25-50 words
	Credit	Identifies image source	Minimal attribution
Artifact	Catalog ID	Simple ID	Minimal word count
	Expanded ID (if needed)	Additional info on a specific object (if needed)	25-40 words
Indigenous Viewpoint	Side-bar or Pull out text panel	Provides Indigenous messages and/or themes based on the exhibited section	75 – 110 words. Include Native Language when appropriate.

Exhibit Intro

Welcome to "Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide"

Stretching across Colorado's landscape, the Palmer Divide is more than a geographical feature—it's a testament to the enduring spirit of adaptation and prosperity. This unique region, where the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains, has long challenged and inspired those who call it home. From Big Game “Paleo-Indians” navigating a changing environment to pioneers forging new communities, the Palmer Divide has been a backdrop for stories of resilience, innovation, and transformation.

Why does a place shape its people?

As you begin your journey through this exhibit, consider how the diverse landscapes and resources of the Palmer Divide have influenced human ingenuity over thousands of years. The towering ponderosa pines, rolling grasslands, and vital waterways created opportunities and obstacles that required constant adaptation. Early inhabitants crafted new tools for hunting, like the atlatl and later the bow and arrow, responding to shifting climates and wildlife. Settlers converted wagons for new purposes, such as

delivering fuel in a rapidly industrializing world.

Join the ongoing story

The legacy of adaptation on the Palmer Divide in Douglas County is still unfolding. Today's communities continue to innovate, finding sustainable ways to prosper while honoring the rich heritage of this remarkable region. We invite you to delve into the stories, connect with the experiences of those who came before, and consider how each of us contributes to the tapestry of adaptation and prosperity.

Image: Include a map showing the location of the Palmer Divide

> Caption: Named after Colorado Springs founder William Jackson Palmer, the Palmer Divide is a caprock escarpment-style ridge in central Colorado that separates the Arkansas River basin from the South Platte basin. It extends from the Front Range of the Rockies in central Colorado eastward approximately 80 miles toward the town of Limon.

Object Intro: Oil Wagon Adaptation

Theme:

From Farm Wagon to Fuel Carrier: Adaptive Ingenuity

Sub-theme:

Converting farm wagons into gas delivery vehicles showcases how early residents in this area adapted tools to meet changing needs.

Theme:

Mechanizing the Meadows: Evolution of Farming

Sub-theme:

This artifact reflects the shift toward mechanized agriculture, transforming how farming was conducted.

Time Period A: “Paleo-Indian” Bison and Mammoth Hunters Adaptations

Theme:

Big Game Hunters: Adapting to Hunt Giant Beasts

Sub-theme

Facing massive creatures like mammoths and giant bison, early inhabitants over 10,000 years ago developed advanced hunting tools—exemplifying human ingenuity and adaptation.

Time Period B: Archaic and Ceramic Period Adaptations

Theme:

Adapting with Innovation: Atlatl, Bow, and Ceramics

Sub-theme 1:

As large game dwindled with a warming climate, inhabitants adapted by innovating—the atlatl, bow and arrow, and pottery transformed hunting and food storage.

Sub-theme 2:

Technological innovations—pottery and the bow—spurred trade, travel, and permanent settlements during the Ceramic period.

- Time Period C: Russellville Gulch (Gold Rush and Early Settlement) and Newland Gulch Mining District Adaptations

Theme:

Gold Rush Adaptations: Triumphs and Trials along the Palmer Divide

Sub-theme 1:

In the late 1850s, the shimmering promise of gold lured prospectors to Russellville Gulch—the first American settlement in the area in what would become Colorado.

Sub-theme 2:

Muldoon Mine's and the Newland Gulch placer miners adapted tirelessly but found little gold—symbolizing resilience in the unpredictable quest for prosperity.

- Timeline Ecological Zone Mural and PWSD history

Theme:

Timelines of Change: The Landscapes and Events that Shaped Douglas County

Sub-theme 1:

From mammoth hunters to modern residents, life in Douglas County thrives through continual adaptation to its diverse landscapes.

Sub-theme 2:

Quenching Growth: Water Innovation on the Palmer Divide

Call to protect historic and archaeological sites in the area*
*This is in substitution to “Landscape from Nature, Palmer Lake by Helen Power 1891” due to the financial constraints unavailable for needed conservation work prior to exhibition.

Theme:

Preserving the Past: Adaptive Protections

Sub-theme:

The historic and archaeological sites in the area are in danger of vandalism and destruction, the public should report all cases of vandalism to protect these sites for future generations.

Targeted Audiences and Prescriptions to Reach Them

For this exhibition it is difficult to target specific audiences. Audiences may change with marketing and word of mouth knowledge of the exhibit. The approach then is to take general audience behaviors as categorized by the noted cognitive psychologist and interpretive expert Sam Ham (2016) for nonsequential media. The groups envisioned as interacting with this visitor experience are broken down to **“studiers”**, **“browsers”** and **“streakers”** based on their time commitment.

The first group we are calling “**studiers”.** This exhibition audience wants to fully engage and read every text and feedback in the exhibition. They like to exhaust themselves with the entire presentation of ideas. All text and labels in this exhibition are designed first and foremost around this audience type.

Characteristic:	Obstacle or Opportunity:	Implication:
Committed to knowing more about Douglas County and the Palmer Divide’s	Provide a robust enough experience for this audience to appreciate the experience	Have the interpretive panels have accurate historical context and information

history		
Very likely will want to explore more sites and on-line sources. Will likely participate in audience feedback surveys	Provide information on the Douglas County Virtual Museum and survey feedback.	Add a QR code at the end of the exhibit, with a link to the Douglas County Virtual Museum and exhibit survey. Cross promote the site with other historic sites/places in the County

Interpretive Prescriptions for "Studiers"

Studiers	Provide detailed historical context within a thematic communication strategy, include information on the themes, object labels, and include information how to access more on-line via a website and/or QR code

The next group are those that are more selective at what they make take in with the exhibit. They are what we call "**browsers"**. While the exhibit tries to satisfy the behaviors of the first group, this segment of the audience is likely to be the largest users/viewers of the exhibition. Something may capture their attention more that another piece or area.

Characteristic:	Obstacle or Opportunity:	Implication:
Will spend a limited amount of time if something catches their attention	Knowing what will capture their attention can be hard to know	Make sure that themes labels are thought provoking enough to invite a few to take more time to more closely look at the exhibit details
This group will scan text quickly and glance at objects	Gain this groups attention through the objects and text	Make sure the exhibit label hierarchy is easily readable and convey complete thoughts

Interpretive Prescriptions for "browsers":

Browsers	Make sure the text panels and content are noticeable enough for this group to spend at least a limited amount of time learning and understanding a section or area of the exhibit.

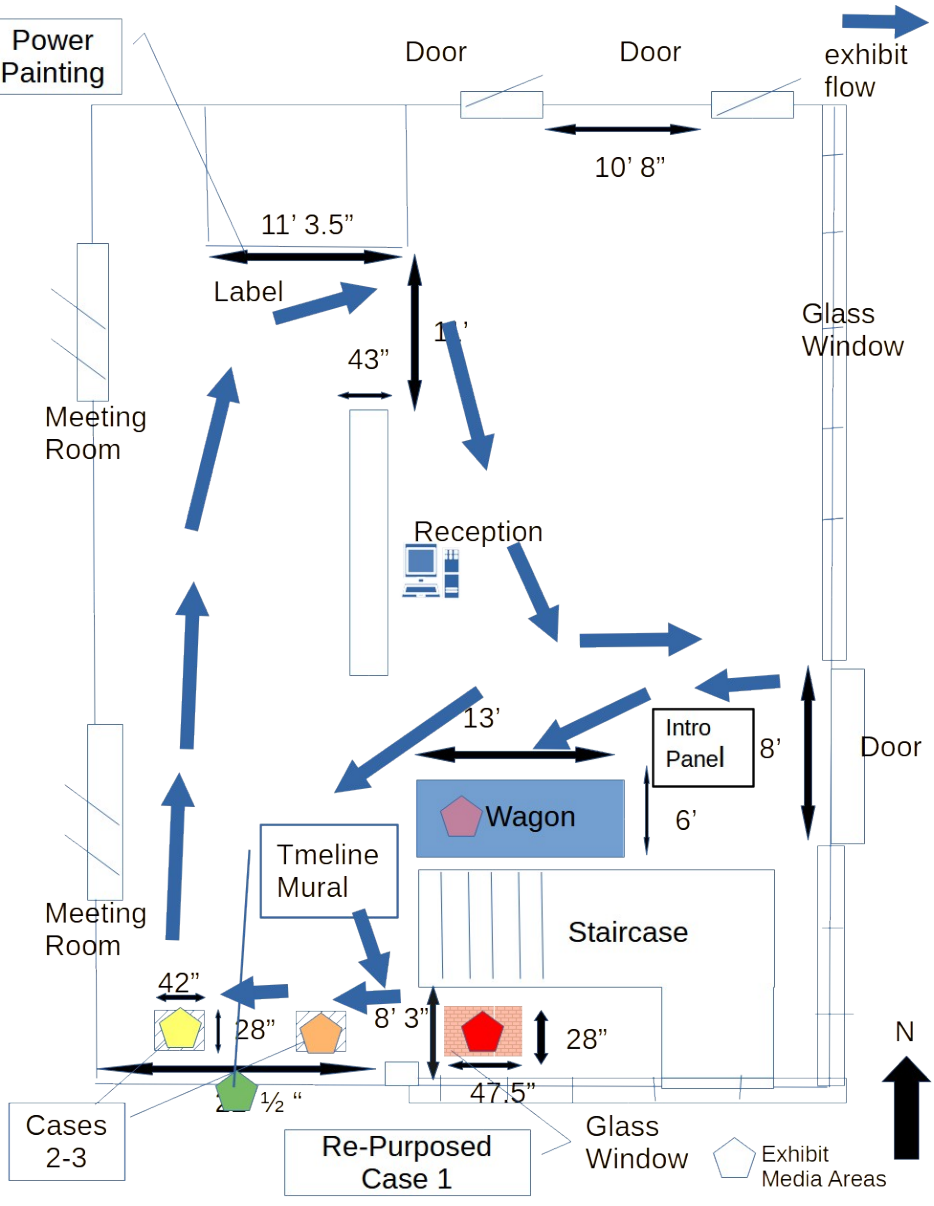
While this third group of **"streakers**" has the least amount of interaction with the exhibit, we are still aiming to provide small take-aways as they glace and view the exhibit on their way to pay a water bill or talk with a water scientist etc. Even if their time is limited and they only view headlines of the exhibit, we feel this is a small valuable takeaway, that will hopefully encourage a repeat visit that may change their interaction to that of **"browser"** or **"studiers".**

Characteristic:	Obstacle or Opportunity:	Implication:
Probably have no prior knowledge of the exhibit	"Advertise" the existence of the exhibit encouraging a repeat visit or word-of-mouth information that can be passed to those that have a strong interest in the subjects of the exhibit	Walking around the exhibit space may have this group take full notice of the content and encourage a repeat visit
Have limited time on their hands	Message to them with quick read texts etc.	Have the themes presented in such a way that they capture a full thought despite reading about all the details.

Interpretive Prescriptions for "streakers":

Streakers	Make sure the label texts are readable enough to still provide a "take-away" message despite a quick "windshield" survey of the exhibit experience.

Exhibit Flow



Parker Water and Sanitation Sketch 11/27/24

Until funds are available for conservation work for the Helen Power painting, a message of vandalism protection will take its place.

- The exhibit flow for the Parker Water and Sanitation exhibit for **"studiers"** follows a clockwise circular movement. The first stop would be an intro panel and the oil tank wagon. The intro panel explains the purpose and major theme that is presented including a map explaining the where the

Palmer Divide is located. The oil wagon would logically be the next stop. The Paleo-Indian case would follow, then the Archaic/Ceramic Pre-Contact case, followed by the Russellville, Mining exhibit, timeline and mural (vandalism substitution); then visitors would most likely interact with and view the Power painting and then exit back out in front of the reception desk area.

- While the flow of the exhibit has a general chronological/topic arrangement, the flow is not completely chronological and the design intent is to provide a fluid flow through the space, meaning the visitors should still be able to experience the themes and messages in any order and still come away with an overall understanding of the theme that is presented.

Network Support

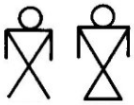
The exhibit will be best supported by promotion from Douglas County via social and other media means as well as Parker Water and Sanitation. Likewise, as on-site ambassadors, Parker Water can direct people to engage with the exhibit while they are doing business with the district or attending a meeting in the adjoining conference/meeting areas. Educational partner organizations like the Douglas County School District and the Douglas County Library can also help to promote the exhibit. A robust network support system is critical when implementing this exhibit interpretive plan for several reasons:

Unified Vision: A successful exhibit often involves multiple departments' marketing, visitor services, and digital engagement. Ensuring these teams are aligned creates a consistent narrative and promotes a unified vision.

Coordinated Campaigns: A robust network enables coordinated marketing efforts that span multiple channels—social media, email newsletters, local media, and in-house communications. This cohesive approach ensures that the exhibit's message is consistent and reaches a wider audience.

Leveraging External Networks: Partnerships with local organizations, cultural institutions, community leaders, and even businesses can expand the exhibit's reach. These partners can help promote the exhibit to broader audiences, attract diverse demographics, and lend additional credibility to the Douglas County History Repository's efforts

Co-Branding Opportunities: Collaborative promotions, such as joint events or co-branded content, benefit all parties involved. This increases visibility and enriches the interpretive narrative with multiple perspectives, fostering a deeper community connection.



Native American Consultation/Collaboration

Native American outreach was vital to the completion of this Interpretive Plan. A draft of this plan was handed out and feedback was asked to be received by twelve Tribal Historic Preservation Office representatives at the Indigenous Connections Summit held in Golden on March 18-20, 2025. Among those that attended were tribal representatives from the Kiowa, Northern Cheyenne, Northern Arapaho, Southern Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Rosebud Sioux Tribe and the Jicarilla Apache Tribes.

Jonathan Headlund of ERO Resources Inc, contracted by PWSD, also helped to facilitate this exhibit plan consultation.

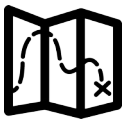
To summarize, a few interpretive suggestions made by the Tribal representatives are as follows:

- Don't use the word "ancient peoples" as this implies that Native communities are no longer around today. Manos and metates for instance are still used by Native peoples.

- Emphasize the connection of the pre-contact occupations of this area to present day Native Peoples – who are the direct descendants of these peoples.

- There needs to be more consultation and a consensus on the replication of the *Oeškeso* and if that should occur for this exhibit.

To capture the sentiment of the messages I have received, you will find a draft text panel that attempts to capture this take home message in the Native perspectives section below:



Mapping the Visitor Experiences

The visitor flow in the information network for each targeted audience type reflects the typical sequence of information desired by the visitors. Basic orientation are keys to guiding people to the right experience. The targeted audiences also require an information network necessary to support the success of each experience.

The interpretive experiences are layered, reflecting the need to serve different audiences. The layers are designed to stand alone, but also to pique interest in other interpretive opportunities that one may visit in-person on site or by conducting more research (with steps on how to make a research inquiry).

The prescriptions presented below reflect the sequence of the desired visitor experience with the "Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide" exhibit. That experience is broken down into the following segments:

- Awareness and Pre-Trip (trip planning) experience: How that audience is informed to come and experience the Parker Water Exhibit, including maps, brochures, social media etc.

- Navigation experience: Direction and travel to the exhibit.

- Arrival experience: Visitor options and optional paths.

- Primary experience: The primary story points (take home messages).

- Departure experience: Reflection and action (encouraging further inquiry, participation in other County's offerings) and/or feedback.

- Return visit: How this may occur or is encouraged.

- Post-trip experience: Link to historic landmarks, and other open space properties and the Douglas County Virtual Museum, etc..

- Potential extended experience: Information on other Historic Preservation events, educational programs for schools and educator's volunteer information, etc.

Targeted Audiences (all Groups)

Trip Stage	Information	Delivery Strategy/Comments
Awareness and Pre-trip (trip planning)	- Basic exhibit details (hours, location) - Overview of main theme: "Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide" - Highlight of key artifacts or experiences	- **Website & Social Media**: Provide succinct highlights for *Streakers*; short videos or teasers for *Browsers*; more in-depth info, PDF brochures, or articles for *Studiers*. - **Travel Sites & Visitor Guides**: Quick overviews and top "must-see" features for all audiences.
Navigation	- Directions, parking, and accessibility options - Floor plan or site map of PWSD Headquarters & exhibit layout	- **Signage & Digital Maps**: Ensure clear, simple signage for *Streakers*; more detailed digital or print maps with exhibit sections labeled for *Browsers* and *Studiers*. - **QR Codes or AR Apps**: Offer optional deeper dive for *Studiers*.
Arrival Experience	Brief orientation to exhibit - Key safety or courtesy reminders (e.g., photography policies)	- **Welcome Sign or Kiosk**: Simple bullet points for *Streakers*; highlight exhibit sections for *Browsers*; background info or deeper context for *Studiers*. - **Staff/Volunteer Greeters**: Offer personal welcome, answer quick questions for all audiences, and share deeper resources for *Studiers*.
Primary Experience	- Main interpretive themes (adaptation, prosperity, water management, etc.) - Artifact highlights (wagon, paintings, archaeological finds)	- **Layered Labels & Interactive Displays**: Short labels for *Streakers*, optional flip panels with more details for *Browsers*; in-depth

	- Engaging storytelling elements	content, original documents, or extended text for *Studiers*. - **Hands-On / Pull-Out Drawers**: Invite all audiences to discover hidden artifacts; *Studiers* can delve into reference materials, while *Browsers* enjoy quick item highlights.
Departure Experience	- Exhibit recap / key takeaways - Ways to stay involved or learn more (volunteering, local preservation groups, etc.) - Exhibit survey through QR code	**Exit Panel / Survey Kiosk**: Brief bullet points for *Streakers*, a short survey or reflection prompt for *Browsers*, deeper feedback or references to further reading for *Studiers*. - **Staff Interaction**: Encourage PWSD staff to share next steps, local sites to explore, or upcoming events etc.
Return Visit	- Promotion of upcoming programs or rotating exhibits/events with the Douglas County History Repository collections - Highlights of seasonal or special events	- **Newsletters & Email Updates**: Concise teasers or “save the dates” for *Streakers*; short summaries for *Browsers*; longer stories or behind-the-scenes articles for *Studiers*. - **Social Media Campaigns**: Use visuals or short videos that show new discoveries, fresh content, or events.
Post-trip	- Encouragement to share experiences on social media - Acknowledgment of exhibit partners	- **Online Feedback**: Short poll or star rating for *Streakers*, optional comment box for *Browsers*, and a detailed review form or forum discussion for *Studiers*. - **Thank-you Emails**: Provide further reading links or details of partner organizations.
Potential Extended Experiences	- Ways to connect with other local sites, cultural resources, or continuing education	- **Collaborative Marketing**: Cross-promote nearby historical sites or open

	- Opportunities for deeper involvement (site stewardship. Academic research, volunteer programs)	spaces. - **Workshops & Lectures**: Short hands-on sessions for *Browsers*, multi-day classes or expert talks for *Studiers*. - **Travel Itineraries**: Quick one-day tours for *Streakers*, weekend exploration guides for *Browsers*, extended experiences for *Studiers*.

Accessibility Considerations

By order of State law HB21-1110 any digital interpretive panels and materials as a product of local government must comply with accessibility standards or risk lawsuits. All digital wayside exhibits, smart phone apps, web links, etc. should all be in compliance with these accessibility standards and requirements for both print and web-based resources. The signage should also consider the principals of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design Learning (UDL) to reach various age and ability audiences.

Media Descriptions

Each of the exhibit labels posted are to follow the design concepts discussed previously and in coordination with our exhibit designer, Condit. The actual arrangement on cases, for instance, may need some adjustments upon construction and completion.

Additional Enhancement Considerations

If desired, as funds are made available, the exhibit could be enhanced by adding an audio (talking post) or other media (replica artifacts for example for tactile experiences) or video/digital reconstruction media, etc. Educational lesson plans and products should also be considered.

Label and Panel Details

Introductory Panel

Welcome to "Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide"

This exhibition was created by the Douglas County History Repository through partnership with Parker Water & Sanitation District.

Stretching across Colorado's landscape, the Palmer Divide is more than a geographical feature—it's a testament to the enduring spirit of adaptation and prosperity. This unique region, where the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains, has long challenged and inspired those who call it home. From big game "Paleo-Indians" navigating a changing environment to pioneers forging new communities, the Palmer Divide has been a backdrop for stories of resilience, innovation, and transformation.

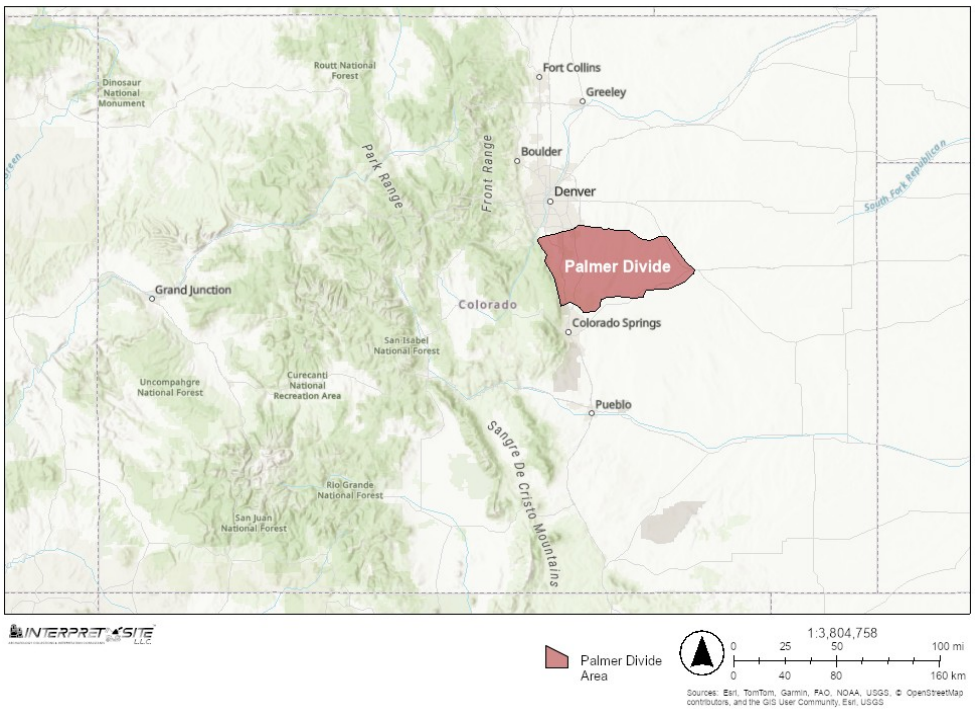
Why does a place shape its people?

As you begin your journey through this exhibit, consider how the diverse landscapes and resources of the Palmer Divide have influenced human ingenuity over thousands of years. The towering ponderosa pines, rolling grasslands, and vital waterways created opportunities and obstacles that required constant adaptation. Early inhabitants crafted new tools for hunting, like the atlatl and later the bow and arrow, responding to shifting climates and wildlife. Settlers converted wagons for new purposes, such as delivering fuel in a rapidly industrializing world.

Join the ongoing story

The legacy of adaptation on the Palmer Divide is still unfolding. Today's communities continue to innovate, finding sustainable ways to prosper while honoring the rich heritage of this remarkable region. We invite you to delve into the stories, connect with the experiences of those who came before, and consider how each of us contributes to the tapestry of adaptation and prosperity.

Graphic of Palmer Divide:



Caption:

Named after Colorado Springs founder William Jackson Palmer, the Palmer Divide is a caprock escarpment-style ridge in Central Colorado that separates the Arkansas River Basin from the South Platte Basin. It extends from the Front Range of the Rockies in Central Colorado eastward approximately 80 miles toward the town of Limon.

Take our survey

After you experience, “Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide" please participate in our short exhibit survey/quiz. You can also leave feedback and learn about other historic resources in Douglas County. See the text panel on the north wall across from the exhibit cases to find the link and QR code to participate.

Oil Wagon Adaptation

Headline Theme: (Streakers) *(7 – 10 words)*	*From Wagon to Fuel Carrier: Adaptive Ingenuity*
Sub theme Point 1: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**Converting wagons into oil and gas delivery vehicles showcases adaption to meet changing needs**
Focus label 1: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	This large four-wheel wagon began its life hauling goods across rugged terrain. As times changed, so did its purpose. Ingeniously converted—possibly from a Conestoga wagon—into a Standard Oil product delivery vehicle, it reflects the resourcefulness of early 20th-century residents. Horse-drawn or adapted for tractor pulling, it features a wooden two-door storage box at the rear for tools and a gauge to measure gallons of gas delivered. The smaller front wheels and larger rear wheels, all wooden with metal rims, allowed it to navigate uneven roads while carrying heavy loads. Imagine relying on such innovation to meet your community's evolving needs. How did adapting this wagon contribute to prosperity during a time of technological change? (*Object ID: 2006.002.01)*
Point Artifact(s):	*2006.002.01* 

Photo 1	
Caption	A similar converted wagon (public domain images)
Headline Theme: (Streakers) (7 – 10 words)	*Mechanizing the Meadows: Evolution of Farming*
Sub theme 2: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**This artifact reflects the shift toward mechanization, transforming how farming was conducted.**
Focus label 2: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 word);*	As agriculture moved from manual labor to mechanization, tools and equipment had to adapt. This wagon's conversion for fuel delivery represents a broader trend where farmers needed gasoline for tractors and other machinery. The shift reduced physical toil, increased efficiency, and changed the face of rural labor. This wagon was donated to Douglas County from a ranch located in Limon, Colorado. From 1861 - 1874 Douglas County extended all the way east to the Kansas State line. Think About: How do you think mechanization altered the social fabric of the farming communities as a result of these changes?
Photo or drawing 2	

Caption	Another similar oil wagon from Telluride, Colorado (public domain image)

Early "Paleo-Indian" Bison and Mammoth Hunters Adaptations

Headline Theme: (Streakers) *(7 – 10 words)*	*Big Game Hunters: Adapting to Hunt Giant Beasts*
Sub theme 1: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**Early inhabitants over 10,000 years ago developed advanced hunting tools—exemplifying human ingenuity and adaptation.**
Focus label: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	Researchers exploring the Scott Spring site uncovered soil layers dating back over 45,000 years, revealing a rich prehistoric ecosystem. Excavations in 2022 unearthed numerous mammoth bones, teeth, and tusks from at least three individual mammoths over 26,000 years old—slightly older than those at the nearby Lamb Spring site. Other ancient animals found include bison, camel, and both prehistoric and modern horses. While so far, no human artifacts were discovered, there is a potential that soil layers dating around 9,000 years could contain Late Paleoindian and Early Archaic cultural remains. Many of the bones exhibited markings resulting from trampling and sediment abrasion, offering insights into mega-fauna interactions and sediment movements. All the analysis suggests that this site was once an active spring attracting wildlife over thousands of years. *(Object ID's: 2023.002.001, 2023.002.002)*
Point Artifact(s): 	*Two mammoth mandibles from the Scott Spring site 2023.002.001, 2023.002.002 Mammoth teeth* 

 5DA.265.297	*Hell Gap Point Fragment (Bayou Gulch) 5DA.265.297* *Tom Westfall Mammoth Reproductions Replica*  2025.002.E0001
Point caption: *(50-75 words)*	This broken Hell Gap projectile point fragment was discovered in Douglas County. Dating back around 10,000 years *(Object ID: 5DA.265.297)* The replica below shows a complete Hell Gap point, illustrating the skilled craftsmanship of early inhabitants who adapted their tools for survival in changing environments. (*Object ID: 2025.002.E000)*
Photo or drawing 1	 and 

Photo Caption and Credit	Excavations at the Scott Spring site Douglas County, Credit: Brittany Cassell Before and after fossil preparation Credit: Heather C. Finlayson
Drawing	Artist drawing of a reconstructed mammoth: 
Photo Caption and Credit	Artist reconstruction of the an extinct mammoth like those found at the Scott Spring site (public domain)
Indigenous Viewpoint	Current Tribal Peoples Perspective: For many present-day Native peoples, including both Colorado Ute Tribes, Northern and Southern Arapaho, Cheyenne, Apache and Pawnee, the ancient big-game hunting sites in this region reflect deep ancestral ties—connecting the distant past to living traditions. These landscapes are part of an unbroken story, celebrating knowledge and practices passed from generation to generation. Such a viewpoint highlights that Native peoples are not relics of history but vital, contemporary communities preserving their cultural identity through language, ceremony, and land stewardship—continuing their presence on these plains and foothills into the modern era .

Archaic and Ceramic Period Adaptations

Headline Theme: (Streakers) *(7 – 10 words)*	*Adapting with Innovation: Atlatl, Bow, and Ceramics*
Sub theme 1: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	As large game dwindled inhabitants adapted by innovating—the atlatl transformed hunting .

Focus label 1: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	After the Ice Age ended around 11,700 years ago, the Palmer Divide became a welcoming home for people drawn by its diverse environments and abundant stone for tool-making. During the Archaic period (7,000 to 1,200 years ago), these early inhabitants traveled extensively across the foothills and plains, hunting game and gathering plants to sustain their communities. They ingeniously used grinding stones like "manos" and "metates" to process plants for food and medicine. For hunting, they crafted spears and enhanced their range and power with the "atlatl"—a special throwing stick that acted as an extension of their arm. Imagine relying solely on the resources nature provides. How would you adapt your tools and techniques to thrive? Imagine relying solely on the resources nature provides. How would you adapt your tools and techniques to thrive?
Point Artifact(s):	*1.) 5DA.1957.8304 Corner Tanged Knife (Texas style)*  *2.) 5DA.1951.8352 Hawken type, McKean complex. Middle Archaic period 5000-3000 years ago.* 

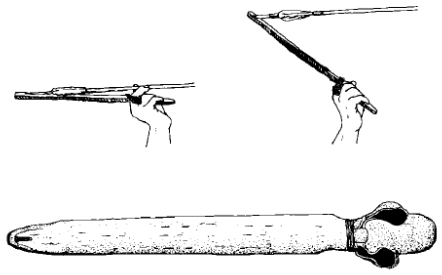
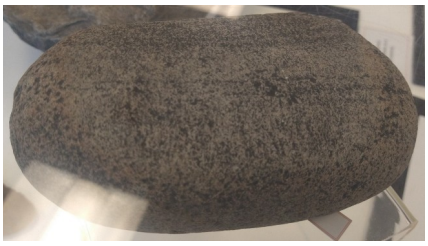
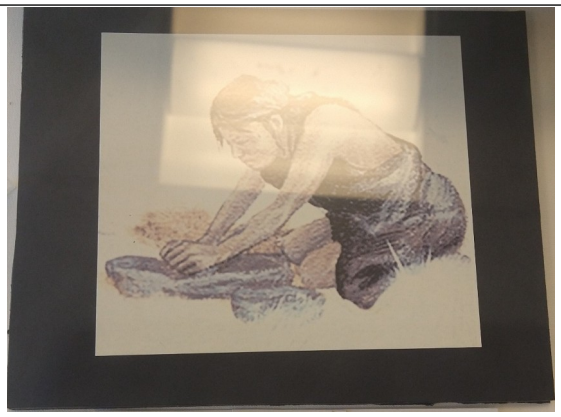
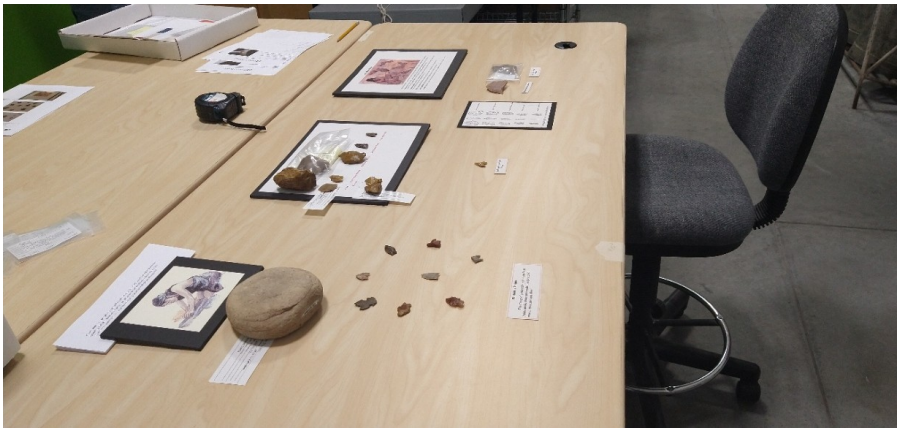
	3.) O.D. Hand Atlatl replica (credit O.D. Hand) 2024.008.E1 – 2024.008.E9 
Drawing:	
Drawing caption	How the "atlatl" was used (as an extension of the arm) (public domain image).
Artifact captions: *(25 words)*	1.) Texas-Style Point Found in Douglas County Colorado Suggests Early Cultural Exchange (Object ID: *5DA.1957.8304)* 2.) Atlatl-Thrown projectile point crafted by Rueter-Hess inhabitants (Object ID: *5DA.1951.8352)* 3). The Archaic period stone tools are associated with a unique spear (projectile point) throwing stick that acts like an extension of your forearm – an "atlatl". This is a modern replica by artist/archaeologist O.D. Hand *(Object Id's: 2024.008.E1 – 2024.008.E9)*

Photo:	Hess site excavation 
Photo Caption: ***(25 words)***	One excavated site known as the "Hess site" appeared to have served as a residential base camp, with three or more occupations over a span of 450 years.
Subtheme 2: ***(Strollers)*** *(10 – 30 words)*	**Technological innovations—pottery and the bow—spurred trade, travel, and permanent settlements during the Ceramic period.**
Focus label 2: ***(Studiers)*** *(80 – 140 word)*	During this period of occupation, ancestors of many modern Native nations across Colorado refined their ways of life in response to changing environments, shaping traditions that endure today. For both Colorado Ute Tribes, Northern and Southern Arapaho, Cheyenne, Apache and Pawnee, the lands near the Rueter–Hess Reservoir still hold living connections to these ancestral footsteps. Adaptation was not a finished chapter; it persists, ensuring that cultural knowledge and reverence for the environment remain woven into contemporary Native life. The message for all of us today is that this reverence should be continued by all who live and pass through this area. Consider: How do you think the technological innovations reshaped these people's daily lives and social structures?
Point Artifact(s):	 5DA.1957.221 Refit

	 5DA.1951.3060  5DA.1951.3008
Artifact labels	1.Refit cord-marked ceramic pot from Rueter-Hess Reservoir *(Object ID: 5DA.1957.52 Refit)* 2. Large "Metate" from Rueter-Hess Reservoir *(Object ID: 5DA.1951.3060)* 3. "Mano" (Spanish for "hand") from the Rueter-Hess Reservoir *(Object ID: 5DA.1951.3008)*
Drawing	
Drawing caption:	Native American peoples used (and continue to use) manos (hand stones) and metates (grinding slabs) to turn wild plants into edible

	food and medicine—like early kitchen appliances essential for survival. How would you adapt without modern tools?
Indigenous Viewpoint	Current Tribal Peoples Perspective: During this period of occupation, ancestors of many modern Native nations across Colorado refined their ways of life in response to changing environments, shaping traditions that endure today. For the Southern Ute, Northern and Southern Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Apache, the lands near the Rueter–Hess Reservoir still hold living connections to these ancestral footsteps. Adaptation was not a finished chapter; it persists, ensuring that cultural knowledge and reverence for the environment remain woven into contemporary Native life. The message for all of us today is that this reverence should be continued by all who live and pass through this area.
Pull-out drawer label:	Discover More: Pull Out the Drawer to Uncover More Artifacts
Pull-out drawer of artifacts:	Various Stone Tools from Rueter-Hess Reservoir 
Drawer label:	Bi-face and Archaic projectile points from the Rueter-Hess Reservoir area: 5DA.1951.8017, 5DA.1951.8020, 5DA.1951.8023, 5DA.1951.8039, 5DA.1951.8136, 5DA.1951.8139, 5DA.1951.8176, 5DA.1951.8178, 5DA.1951.8211, 5DA.1951.8268, 5DA.1951.8351, 5DA.1951.8360, 5DA.1951.8362, 5DA.1951.8383, 5DA.1951.8386, 2025.002.E0002, 2025.002.E0003, 2025.002.E0004, 2025.002.E0005, 2025.004.E12

Russellville Gulch (Gold Rush and Early Settlement) and Newland Gulch Mining District Adaptations

Headline Theme: (Streakers) *(7 – 10 words)*	*Gold Rush Adaptations: Triumphs and Trials*
Subtheme Point 1: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**In the late 1850s, the shimmering promise of gold lured prospectors to Russellville Gulch—the first American settlement in what would become Colorado**
Focus label 1: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	Imagine the courage it took to forge a new life in unfamiliar territory. The gold seekers of Russellville Gulch did not just chase wealth; they became the backbone of a budding community and defenders of an early state. When their settlement turned into a garrison for the volunteer U.S. Cavalry, they took on the vital role of safeguarding the well-used Jimmy Camp Trail against Confederate raiders during the Civil War. Their resilience and adaptability not only transformed the landscape but also ensured the security and growth of the region. Consider how these settlers balanced their pursuit of prosperity with the responsibility of protection? Their legacy invites us to reflect on how individual dreams can collectively forge a state's destiny.
Point Artifact(s):	*5DA.998.1331* 

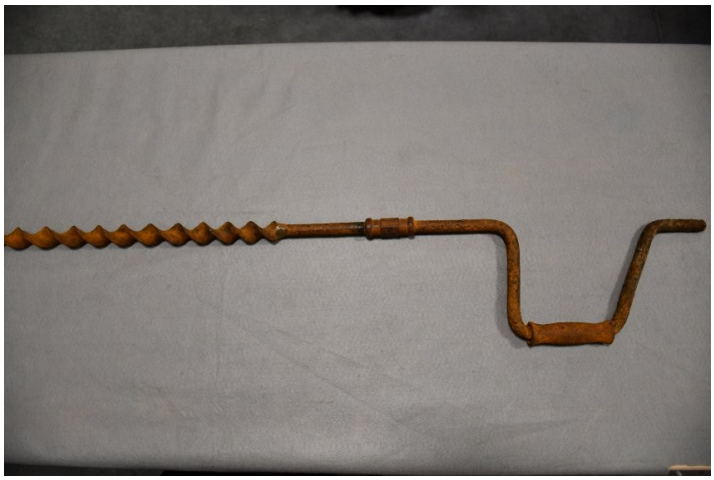
5DA.1069.036

5DA.998.1127

5DA.998.1518

	1993.004.1  *5DA.998.1314* 
Artifact labels:	1. Civil War era Union General Service military officer's cuff button *(Object ID: 5DA.998.1331)* 2. 1834 – 1860 J. Henry Leman & Son of Lancaster, percussion rifle *(Object ID: 5DA.1069.036)* 3. This is a 50-.54 caliber Spencer copper bullet. Flat base chewed up – 3 grease grooves *(Object ID: 5DA.998.1127)* 4. This Buckle was probably lost by a Colorado Cavalry Volunteer over 150 years ago *(Object ID: 5DA.998.1518)*

	5. The 1994-1995 archaeological investigation at the Russellville site found this crushed gold pan. It may date to Russellville's earliest occupation *(Object ID: 1993.004.1)* 6. Iron oxen shoe half (early Russellville settlement) *(Object ID: 5DA.998.1314)*
Photo or drawing:	 
Photo caption1	William Greeneberry "Green" Russell The Green Russell camp was the party of gold seekers that started the Gold Rush of Colorado (https://freepages.rootsweb.com)
Photo caption 2:	A member of the Reynolds Gang, former members of Company A of Wells' Battalion, Third Texas Cavalry, who conducted raids and robberies in the South Park area. Russellville and its Calvary station was the site where Colonel Chivington (who later murdered the peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians at Sand Creek) ordered their execution (public domain image)
Subtheme Point 2: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**Muldoon Mine's miners and earlier Newland Gulch placer miners adapted tirelessly but found little gold—symbolizing resilience in the unpredictable quest for**

	prosperity
Focus label 2: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 word);*	In the late 19th century, miners converged on Muldoon Mine in Newlin Gulch, now the site of Rueter Hess Reservoir, lured by the promise of gold and a better life. Despite their relentless efforts and innovative mining techniques, the mine yielded little profit. These miners faced immense challenges: difficult ore extraction, financial hardship, and the harsh realities of an unforgiving landscape. Their story reflects the unpredictable nature of the quest for prosperity and highlights the importance of resilience and adaptability—even when success isn't guaranteed. As you consider their journey, ask yourself: What drives people to persist in the face of repeated setbacks? The legacy of Muldoon Mine invites us to reflect on our own definitions of success and the enduring human spirit that compels us to keep striving.
Point Artifact(s):	*5DA.1705.015* 

	5DA.1705.006  *5DA.1705.014* 
Artifact caption:	1. Steel hand auger, C. E. Holt Breast Auger *(Object ID: 5DA.1705.015)* 2. Food/pickled jar from the Muldon Mine (circa 1930 – 1960) *Object ID: 5DA.1705.006)* 3. Mining bit (Muldon gold mine (Steel spike drill bit for hammering into rock) *Object ID: 5DA.1705.014)*
Photo or drawing:	See below

	 
Photo caption1:	1. Collapsed building at the Newlin Gulch Placer Mine (OAHP: 5DA.1705) 2. Mining adit entrance at the Newlin Gulch Placer Mine (OAHP: 5DA.1705)
Pull-out drawer label:	Discover More: Pull Out the Drawer to Uncover More Artifacts (Assorted artifacts from the Russellville site)
Pull-out drawer:	

	
Pull Out Drawer Label	Id and title key label example  5DA.998.1021 Large Harness Link 5DA.998.1025 Nail, Horseshoe 5DA.998.1254 Staple, Fence 5DA.998.1292 Wrench, Combination 5DA.998.1332 Can 5DA.998.1337 Ball, Musket 5DA.998.1362 Bullet 5DA.998.1380 Cartridge, Rim-fire 5DA.998.1389 Bullet, Minié 5DA.998.1454 Buckle 5DA.998.1536 Buckle 5DA.998.1823 Horseshoe 5DA.998.1825 Key 5DA.998.1843 Gauge

Timeline Ecological Zone Mural and PWSD history

Headline Theme: (Streakers) *(7 – 15 words)*	*Timelines of Change: The Landscapes and Events that Shaped Douglas County*
Sub heme Point 1: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**From mammoth hunters to modern residents, life in Douglas County thrives through continual adaptation to its diverse landscapes.**
Focus label: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	Douglas County's landscapes which includes even more than the Palmer Divide are more than just a backdrop—they are catalysts for adaptation and prosperity. The rolling plains, rugged foothills, and rich ecosystems have continuously challenged and inspired those who call this place home. Ice-Age hunters traversed these terrains, adapting their tools and strategies to hunt great beasts. Gold seekers altered both land and lifestyle in their quest for fortune. Ranchers learned to work in harmony with the environment to sustain their livelihoods. Today, modern developments reflect new adaptations to our ever-changing world. How does the environment influence the way we live? As you explore this mural, reflect on the enduring relationship between people and the land. Consider your own adaptations in the face of change and how this timeless connection continues to shape our community's story.
Photo or drawing:	Commissioned Mural Painting by Elena Haverluk
Credit:	*Elena Haverluk*

Timeline text

Pre-1859	1849 – 1900	1900 – 1940	1940 – 1979	1980 – 2024	2025 -

Mesozoic – Dinosaurs (252 – 65 million years ago. Paleocene – Tropical Rain Forest in Castle Rock 1.4 million after the dinosaurs. Native Americans. First human inhabitants of the Palmer Divide live and hunt in the Palmer Divide 18,000 – 6,000 years ago notably seen at places like the	1849 CE This period marks the arrival of gold seekers like Green Russell to the Palmer Divide leading to t the establishment of initial settlements like Russellville Gulch. 1851 CE The Treaty of Fort Laramie gave the Palmer Divide area to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal peoples. 1859 CE The "Pikes Peak or Bust" Gold Rush lures thousands to the Palmer Divide. 1861 CE The Colorado Territory is established. The United States Civil War begins.	1905 CE The Cheesman Dam is built in southwestern Douglas County by the Denver Water Department. 1906 CE Louviers Works, an explosives factory, is built by the Du Pont Company. 1913 CE The state of Colorado begins licensing automobiles. 1914 CE World War I begins. 1916 CE The state of Colorado adopts Prohibition. 1918 CE World War I ends. 1920 CE Florence Martin donates her extensive holdings in	1945 CE World War II ends. 1954 CE Tweet Kimball purchases the Cherokee Ranch from Charles A. Johnson and Ray Blume. 1962 CE Established in 1962, PWSD was formed by local residents who recognized the need for a reliable and sustainable water supply to meet the demands of a growing population. 1965 CE A flood causes major destruction in Douglas County and Denver. The flood begins as a cloudburst near Larkspur and spreads northward	1981 CE The town of Parker is officially incorporated. 1990 CE Douglas County Libraries is formed as an independent taxing district. 1992 CE Castle Rock Factory Shops opens. 1994 CE The Castle Rock Historic Preservation Board is established. 1995 CE Douglas County becomes the fastest-growing county in the State of Colorado. 1996 CE June: The City of Lone Tree is officially incorporated. 1996 CE Tweet	2025 CE – Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide exhibit opens at the PWSD Headquarters building. 2025 CE – continued population growth of the Palmer Divide 2026 CE the Palmer Divide area will celebrate the 150th/250th sesquicentennial celebration.

Scott Spring and Lamb Springs sites. Rockshelters like Franktown Cave are seasonally occupied around 2000 years ago. The atlatl is introduced at this time. Around 1000 CE the inhabitants of the Palmer Divide introduce the bow and arrow, ceramic pottery and incipient horticulture.	Colorado, as part of the Kansas Territory, remains in the Union. 1862 CE The United States government passes the Homestead Act to encourage settlement in the West. 1864 CE The massacre of the Hungate Family in Douglas County worsens tensions between settlers and Native Americans. This tension culminates in the Sand Creek Massacre north of Fort Lyon on the Arkansas River. 1865 CE The United States Civil War	northern Douglas County to the Denver Mountain Parks system. The property is named Daniel's Park. 1932 – 1937 CE The Great Depression and the Dust Bowl strike the Palmer Divide area. 1933 CE August 2: The Castlewood Canyon Dam collapses after three to nine inches of rain falls in 9 hours. Floodwaters reach all the way to Denver. 1938 CE World War II begins.	along Plum and Cherry Creeks. 1967 CE Perry Park is sold to Lee Stubblefield of the Colorado Western Development Company. Late 1960's CE The Woodmoor Development begins to plan the residential areas of Woodmoor in Monument and the Pinery south of Parker. Early 1970's CE Roxborough Park was developed by a Denver-based company called the Woodmoor Corporation. Their vision was to create a residential	Kimball donates Cherokee Ranch and Castle to the Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation. Douglas County begins a phased purchase of a conservation easement on the ranch in order to protect wildlife, agricultural heritage, and historic buildings on the ranch. 1997 CE Mission Viejo Company is absolved and sold to Shea Homes. 199 CE Douglas County's growth has increased 160% since 1990. 2003 CE The U.S. Census	

Around 1600 CE Native American groups begin from other areas of the mid-west seasonally hunt and camp in the Palmer Divide area. 1650's CE Spanish gold seekers and explorers are said to travel through the Palmer Divide area. 1682 – the Palmer Divide is part of Louisiana and under	ends. 1866 CE President Andrew Johnson vetoes a bill for Colorado statehood. Among his reasons are the Sand Creek Massacre. 1870 CE The Kansas Pacific Railroad completes a rail-line through the Palmer Divide. 1871 CE Colorado Springs is founded by General William J. Palmer. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad is built southward from Denver by Palmer. 1876 CE Colorado establishes		community that harmonized with the stunning natural landscape. 1970's CE Parker Properties Ltd., a development company, played a significant role in the town's growth and planning – laying the ground for the development growth through today. 1971 CE The Du Pont Company ceases dynamite operations at Louviers. 1975 CE The Woodmoor Corporation files for bankruptcy – part of the land is sold to	Bureau designates Douglas County as the second wealthiest county in the United States. 2023 CE the Parker Water and Sanitation Headquarters opens	

French authority. 1763 CE Louisiana and the Palmer Divide is sold to Spain. 1801 CE Louisiana territory is sold back to France. 1803 CE Louisiana territory and the Palmer Divide is sold to the United States. 1820 CE Major Stephen Long and the Long Expedition enter Douglas County. Numero	statehood. 1881 CE the town of Castle Rock is incorporated. 1887 CE The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe rail line is built through the Palmer Divide. 1890 CE The Douglas County courthouse is completed. 1893 CE Colorado becomes the second state (after Wyoming) to grant women the right to vote. 1899 CE The Denver & New Orleans Railroad's name is changed to the Colorado & Southern Railway.		the State of Colorado (creating Roxborough State Park). 1976 CE Lawrence C. Phipps, Jr. dies at the Highlands Ranch Mansion. 1978 CE The Mission Viejo Company enters into a two-year option agreement leading to the acquisition of Highlands Ranch. The Mission Viejo Company initiates a three-phase planning program to formulate a development plan for Highlands Ranch. 1978 CE The Douglas County courthouse burns down.		

us Native American tribes live in the Colorado area. The Utes live in the mountains and the Cheyenne and Arapahoe reside on the Plains from the Arkansas to Platte Rivers. 1843 CE John C. Fremont's second expedition takes Fremont and thirty-eight companions through Douglas County					

Short sidebar text (lower right corner on)

Sub theme Point 2: (Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	**Quenching Growth: Water Innovation on the Palmer Divide**
Indigenous Language	**Coo'oowuse (water in Northern Arapaho Language) – a vital resource**
Focus label: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	As the population on the Palmer Divide grew, so did the vital need for reliable water resources. Early plans aimed to build a reservoir in Castlewood Canyon, but legal challenges halted those efforts. Undeterred, Parker Water & Sanitation and the community adapted by selecting Newlin Gulch—a non-permanent tributary—as the site for the Rueter–Hess Reservoir. Named after the Rueter and Hess families, early settlers who owned the land, the reservoir symbolizes the collaboration between past and present generations to secure a sustainable future. It is a unique off-site reservoir with water pumped uphill from Cherry Creek. The reservoir has since been expanded to support the growing population, reflecting a continued commitment to adaptive living. Consider: How does securing water resources reflect our ability to adapt and thrive? Just as early inhabitants adjusted their lifeways for survival, modern communities innovate to meet essential needs. The story of Rueter–Hess Reservoir is a testament to the enduring spirit of adaptation on the Palmer Divide.

Call to Protect Historic and Archaeological Sites in the Area*

In substation to the Helen Power painting. See previous drafts for proposed text when and if funding is available.

Headline Theme: (Streakers) *(7 – 10 words)*	*Preserving the Past: Adaptive Protections*
Subtheme Point 1:	***Will future generations of the residents of Douglas County***

(Strollers) *(15 – 30 words)*	***have the opportunity to safeguard the past?***
Vandalism Photo 1:	
Vandalism Photo 2:	
Focus label: (Studiers) *(80 – 140 words)*	Point of Rocks is more than a landmark—it is a sacred place. This archaeological site, holds deep significance for the Southern Ute, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Apache peoples. It is also an archaeological site that helps tell the story of human resilience on the Palmer Divide. Unfortunately, recent vandalism has harmed this fragile place. These acts do not just deface rock—they erase irreplaceable connections to culture, identity, and heritage.

	Preservation is not just protection—it is respect. The choices we make today determine what remains for tomorrow. Will future generations have the opportunity to stand here and listen to the stories in the stone? Your awareness and care help ensure they can.

End Credit Panel & (Feedback QR Code)

Thriving Through Time Exhibit Team:	Todd McMahon CIP, Interpretive Planner – Interpret Site LLC; Elena Haverluk, Artist; Matt Lancaster, Sr. Exhibit Designer - Condit Exhibits; Kara A. Kudzma Director of Museum Services – Condit Exhibits; Shayna Gesick, Graphic Designer – Condit Exhibits; Carl Granath Project Manager - Condit Exhibits; Brittany Cassell, Curator Douglas County History Repository; Lauren Pulver, Planning Supervisor – Douglas County Department of Community Development; Aspyn Hansen, Intern Douglas County History Repository; Deirdre Mueller, Communications Manager – Parker Water and Sanitation District
Special Thanks To:	Ron Redd, P.E., District Manager - Parker Water and Sanitation District; Artifacts and Fossils Courtesy of History Colorado, Office of the State Archaeologist
Take our survey	After you experience, "*Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide"* please participate in our short exhibit survey/quiz. You can also learn about other historic resources in Douglas County. (include QR Code link) Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide Feedback and Knowledge

Effectiveness Monitoring and Re-Tooling

Key indicators for success based on the proposed interpretive goals should be monitored and fine-tuned over time. It is recommended that once the plan has been implemented and established, that all the agency partners create a uniform evaluation plan and that the agencies meet and share their evaluations indicating success or need for improvement to the plan, as well as any of the strategies or media products. This could be articulated in a separate plan, protocol or memorandum of understanding that identifies areas in need of improvement.

Evaluation techniques and strategies

The following is a summary of selected approaches based on the National Park Service's *Interpretive Planning Tools for Heritage Areas, Historic Trails, and Gateways.* Evaluation can be direct (audience interacts with evaluator) or indirect (visitors' actions and responses are tracked without their knowledge). Qualitative measures assess the depth and effectiveness of the experience (perhaps by interviewing respondents), while quantitative approaches produce measurable results (determining, for example, what percentage of visitors surveyed were able to describe the significance of the site or region).

Since it is impossible to evaluate each visitor's experience, evaluators must rely on well-designed sampling (surveying a specific number) of visitors to represent the whole. In order to be valid, sampling techniques must be random and representative of the whole spectrum of visitors. For example, every tenth person who visits the site while a recorder is at the site would be asked to respond to a survey – not just the visitors who look the friendliest. Informal evaluation can also be revealing. For example, interpreters conduct informal evaluation during every visitor contact to gain a general impression of exhibit effectiveness. While the results of the conversations are not scientific, they still play a role in assessing interpretive services.

Planning for evaluation – A robust evaluation plan should be adopted. A regular schedule of evaluation should be an ongoing activity of each agency. The evaluation accomplishes the following:

- Provides a balanced view of program effectiveness
- Utilizes feedback that has been gathered systematically (not just anecdotally)
- Gathers empirical evidence of strong and weak areas of a program or service
- Fuels opportunities to improve effectiveness

Monitoring

Trained PWSD staff can help monitor the exhibit to ensure that these resources are not damaged and that any infractions are reported to the Douglas County History Repository Staff promptly.

Evaluating the Plan (Ename Charter)

ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) has created a "Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites," also known as the Ename Charter. The Charter puts forth principles for effective interpretation, addressing the following:

- Access and understanding
- Information sources
- Context and setting
- Authenticity
- Sustainability
- Inclusiveness
- Research, training, and evaluation
- The need for ongoing evaluation and adjustment

The implementation of the *Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide* Interpretive Plan and all its elements should be evaluated using this internationally recognized standard rubric and evaluation tool.

Moving the Interpretive Plan Forward

Even small-scale, inexpensive implementation projects can attract media attention and demonstrate steady progress to constituents and financial supporters, so these should be celebrated and publicized with each milestone and victory, no matter how small. Publicly thank the appropriate partners and supporters and commemorate their efforts through special events, news releases, plaques, and other means.

Showcasing ongoing programs will motivate managers, staff and partners and will maintain existing sources of public support and add new ones. Implementation may lead to increased visitation, strengthened engagement of residents through greater use of the sites or region's assets and enhanced stewardship through financial contributions or volunteer efforts. It is vital to continue to communicate the implementation plans and milestones to the public and all partners, using the strategies put in place during planning.

References

Douglas County 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan

Douglas County Recreation and Tourism Plan 2035

Douglas County 2030 Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan

Douglas County History Repository Collections Management Policy and Procedures Plan 2020

ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)
2008. *Charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites*. General Assembly of ICOMOS, Québec, Canada.

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2009 *Wayside Exhibits a guide to developing outdoor interpretive exhibits*. National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

2010 *Interpretive Planning Tools for Heritage Areas, Historic Trails, and Gateways.* National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office: Annapolis, MD