

September 20, 2013

INTEREST IN ARCHAEOLOGY

PRESENTED – Sept. 6 talk given to Park County Historical Society

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At its Sept. 6 meeting, the Park County Historical Society hosted an archaeological presentation by Susan Bender, who does research in South Park each summer.



Susan Bender

Archaeologist Susan Bender speaks to members and guests of the Park County Historical Society on Friday, Sept. 6. (Photo by Torrey Shutes/courtesy of the Park County Historical Society)

Bender's work in South Park

Bender's work in South Park was highlighted in a press release from the historical society, which stressed "Dr. Bender's presentation on ancient cultures – some reaching back 12,000 years."

Those people from long ago came to South Park for its abundant game, water, a mild

summer climate, natural resources for tool-making, and plentiful salt, said the release.

Bender, who received a Park County Historic Preservation Award in 2012, works with volunteers to map and document remnants of the historic cultures of the people who once lived in South Park.

"As of today, over 600 sites have been identified, including significant discoveries within the Threemile Gulch area just north of Hartsel," said the press release.

Good response

Bender's Sept. 6 presentation received some enthusiastic reviews.

"I enjoyed the presentation Dr. Bender made on September 6, 2013. I was especially struck by the observation that people have been living and traveling through South Park over many thousands of years," said Park County Historical Society board member Bill Kulenburg in an email. "Many times the evidence of their passage is the stone chips and remnants of having worked materials to make tools, or possibly piles of stone that I would not recognize as evidence of their being here, but did have meaning to them. I was especially surprised to hear that they used petrified wood for some of their tools."

He also said he was impressed by the number of documented sites in South Park and hoped to see the research expanded to the Platte Canyon area.

Attendee Eve Kuenn of Bailey also was impressed with the event.

"Dr. Bender gave a lively and enthusiastic talk and slide presentation on the archaeological sites in the Buffalo Peaks area of South Park. She informed the listeners as to the meanings of what we

would see that pertained to the Indian tribes that inhabited the land over the years,” she said. “Dr. Bender left us feeling that we should go hiking the mountains, after having absorbed her information, to observe what we would have previously overlooked.”

Dee Brown, Park County Historical Society president, noted that Bender, who got her doctorate from the University of Albany in 1983, has been the research director for the South Park Archaeology Project for the last 12 years, and in 2012 she successfully nominated the Threemile Gulch area just north of Hartsel as an archaeology district to the National Register of Historic Places.