

Indians complain about secrecy surrounding ancient find in Utah

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - In a possible repeat of the Kennewick Man controversy, some Indian tribes are likely to assert a connection to the string of ancient settlements that have yielded mummified remains in Utah's remote Book Cliffs region.

But establishing a convincing relationship to the Fremont people, who vanished without a trace more than 1,000 years ago, could be as difficult as the Kennewick case has shown. That legal battle involves ownership of a 9,000-year-old skeleton found on the Washington bank of the Columbia River.

The Book Cliffs site in Utah has been dated as old as 4,500 years and further study could show it was occupied 7,000 or more years ago, said Jerry Spangler, an archaeologist with the College of Eastern Utah. That makes it harder to establish a link with modern tribes.

The settlements were kept secret for more than 50 years by a rancher who turned it over for public ownership and retired. As archaeologists and graduate students scoured Range Creek canyon for the past two summers, federal and state agencies also kept silent.

Last week, some of Utah's Indian leaders complained it was

kept too quiet.

"I'm not surprised we weren't consulted or that there's thousands of human remains," said Forrest Cuch, director of Utah's Division of Indian Affairs and a Ute Indian, whose modern-day reservation is the closest of any tribe's to Range Creek.

Patty Timbimbo-Madsen, cultural resources manager for the Northwest Shoshone tribe, characterized the omission as a slight against all American Indians. "We know our ancestors are out there somewhere. When you find them, out of respect, let the native people go in and do ceremonies because you have disturbed something that we think is sacred," she said.

The state and federal governments, and a trust that arranged the sale, were duty-bound to report human remains and sacred objects on the ancestral lands of the Northern Utes, said Melvin Brewster, historic preservation director for the Skull Valley Band of Goshutes.

"They need to bring in the traditional spiritual leaders," he said. "It looks like all this non-compliance went on."

Waldo Wilcox, the rancher who protected the Range Creek site, first disclosed the recovery of mummified remains to The Associated Press last week. But

when archaeologists conducted a tour Wednesday, they kept reporters from viewing burial mounds or human remains.

State archaeologist Kevin Jones said that when researchers stumbled across human remains, they were leaving them in place covered with dirt. Because of secrecy, it's not clear how many skeletons have been found or removed from the site.

Cuch said the remains, some wrapped in beaver skin and cedar plank, could be his own ancestors. From time to time, his tribe - along with the Goshutes and Paiute Indians - has claimed Fremont ancestry.

Still, he concedes, the case could be hard to prove, just as Northwest Pacific tribes found when they asserted ownership over Kennewick Man, who was found washed up in 1996 with a spear point in his hip bone.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in February that the remains of Kennewick Man don't come under protection of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act, which requires tribes to show a kinship with remains that they wanted reburied before study. Tribes are weighing an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"The jury's still out on that question," Cuch said of Ameri-

can tribes' efforts to prove a link to North America's earliest inhabitants, who hailed from Siberia and Mongolia more than 10,000 years ago via the Bering Strait.

The arrival of Europeans and the Mormon settlement of Utah erased an oral history that kept tally of Indian antiquity, he said.

"A lot of the wisdom keepers were killed off and that knowledge was not transferred from one generation to another. Collective knowledge would indicate there's a relationship, but we don't have the cultural connection through oral history. On the other hand, they can't prove there isn't a connection, either," he said. The Fremont refers more to a period of human history, peaking about 1,000 years ago, than a particular people, said David B. Madsen, Utah's former state archaeologist who now is a research fellow at The University of Texas at Austin.

According to his research, the Fremont were a loose collection of highly adaptable hunter-gatherers and farmers who may have spoken different dialects or languages. By 2,000 years ago, they were growing corn on both sides of Utah's Wasatch Plateau, but remained nomadic nearly year-round.

Pole carved by criminal going to Seattle museum

MUKILTEO, Wash. (AP) - A handmade Salish totem pole, rejected by the Port of Olympia because of an uproar over the chief carver's criminal record, has been purchased for a museum in Seattle. Charles Panczewski, a retired accountant and Pacific Northwest coast Indian art collector who lives in this suburb north of Seattle, paid \$30,352 for the intricately carved 36-foot welcome pole in a sealed-bid auction last month. The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at the University of

Washington received the donated pole June 28 and placed it in a warehouse for storage until it can be erected with four other totem poles, officials said.

"The pole is a great pole," Panczewski said. "Extremely well done."

Designed by David Pasco and Duane Franklin, the pole was completed four years ago by Douglas Tobin of the Squaxin Island tribe and other carvers on a \$66,000 contract from the port, which planned to make it the centerpiece in a welcome plaza.



Warm Springs celebrated July Fourth with a parade through town, followed by a barbecue, kids games at the community center, and then a fireworks display.

Indian ranchers struggle with higher grazing fees

LODGE POLE, Mont. (AP) - Ranchers such as Darrell Doney are struggling with a 51 percent increase in fees charged to graze livestock on land within the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Doney figures the increase will cost him \$25,000 this year. He fears the rising cost of running a ranch could prevent young people from entering the business, and hurt one of the few successful industries on the reservation, where the unemployment rate is about 70 percent.

The increase resulting from a routine price adjustment by the Bureau of Indian Affairs gives Fort Belknap the highest grazing fees on any reservation in Montana or Wyoming, and will generate more money for owners of reservation trust lands, called "allotments."

But some Indian ranchers say the increase is based on a flawed new appraisal formula that allows non-Indians to price them off their own reservation. The Fort Belknap Indian Community Council appealed the increase, but the BIA ruled the appeal invalid.

The BIA last raised the Fort Belknap grazing fee in 1998, increasing it from \$7.50 to \$10.57 per animal unit month. Starting this year, Doney and other ranchers are seeing the \$10.57 rate jump to \$16 per animal unit month, a measurement of the amount of food necessary to sustain one cow and calf for a month.

Home to the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre tribes, the Fort Belknap Reservation about 45 miles east of Havre spreads across 650,000 acres.

The largest Indian-owned cattle herds number fewer than 500 animals. Doney runs about 400 cattle on 8,000 acres. Even at the old rate of \$10.57 per AUM, he struggled to make money.

Cattle forage last summer was unusually poor, and Doney's calves finished the year an average of 120 pounds underweight. That amounted to a loss of about \$100 per calf at the sale barn.

Then the record-breaking winter of 2003-04 hit. Snowdrifts were impossibly deep. Doney spent 40 percent more than usual on hay for his cattle.

"We spent about \$8,000 on snow removal just to get to the stranded cattle," he said.

With the new increase in the summer grazing rates, Doney said, he is in trouble.

Montana reservations are a mixture of tribally owned land and allotments, which are owned by individual tribal members and managed by the federal government. The tribe sets its own grazing rates (\$8.50 per AUM this year) on tribal land, while the BIA sets rates on allotted lands. Ranchers use both.

To get the new rate, the Department of the Interior's Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians completed an appraisal in December 2003. Created in 1994, the Office of the Special Trustee manages income generated from Indian-owned land.

It is the job of the BIA to act on behalf of the allotment owners and get the highest rates possible for their land, said Allan Hanley, supervisory rangeland management specialist at the BIA regional office in Billings. The goal is to determine fair-market value of lease rates for the land, Hanley said.

"Appraisals are done based

on comparable (lease) sales in the area," he said. Based on that formula, the Office of the Special Trustee said the new rate could be as low as \$15 per AUM and as high as \$16. BIA Superintendent Cleo Hamilton set the rate at \$16.

Doney noted that if Indian ranchers go out of business, allotment owners who receive the fees eventually will suffer, as well.

Ranchers question why the BIA changed its rate formula to consider only some of the highest-priced leases on the market. Under the old formula, some 61 properties were considered and Indian ranchers leased 51 of them. In the newest study, data was collected from just 18 land parcels, mostly bid on by non-Indians who paid as much as \$29.82 per AUM. Indians lease only five of those parcels. The ranchers say that skews the numbers.

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