

## **SJMA Expands Cultural Stewardship Efforts**

The San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) is expanding its cultural stewardship efforts through two new projects within the Cultural Site Stewardship Program (CSSP). The CSSP is an award-winning cultural stewardship effort that has trained over 150 site stewards to monitor prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in the southwest Colorado. This program operates in partnership with the San Juan National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, and Canyons of the Ancients



National Monument. Stewards receive class and field training and assistance as they monitor the condition of irreplaceable significant cultural resources. Stewards contribute over 2500 hours a year to assist with the preservation of archaeological sites.

The SJMA is currently expanding the stewardship program with two new projects: Steward Hands-On Preservation Projects and the Family Stewardship Project. The Hands-On Projects will train veteran stewards in field activities such as site mapping and preliminary documentation of specific structures and sites for treatment and stabilization. Class trainings will supplement on-the-ground preservation projects directed by professional archaeologists. These activities will provide stewards with an active role in the overall preservation process and the chain of activities necessary to preserve cultural resources. In addition, stewards will become a trained team for future projects and they will extend their education outreach efforts as they communicate the opportunities and responsibilities for preservation to the public.

The Family Stewardship Project will recruit and train youth and their parents to become family stewards using the procedures established in the successful CSSP program. Family members will learn about aspects of archaeology and history together in a mutual learning environment. Families will participate in monitoring activities together as they hike or walk to their adopted cultural sites. This program provides a mechanism for an interesting family outing with worthwhile activities that are genuinely needed for the preservation of cultural resources in our area. These learning experiences will help to develop an appreciation for the irreplaceable cultural and historic resources that were so instrumental to the diverse cultural development of our community and region. Finally, the youth in this program will become the next generation of preservationists and will be the best teachers for future generations.

We are currently beginning our efforts to interest and recruit youth to participate in this interesting, fun, and important work. Special training for families will include some in-class training and field visits to their new sites. We will be instituting this program this fall. Once established, the Family Stewardship Project will be the first of its kind in the

Nation. The project offers wonderful family activities and learning experiences and will help to train the next generation of preservationists.

For information about the Cultural Site Steward Program or the Family Stewardship Project, please contact Ruth Lambert, Cultural Program Director at San Juan Mountains Association. She can be reached at 970-385-1267.