



STUDY of ANCIENT LIFEWAYS and TECHNOLOGIES

S.A.L.T. MISSION STATEMENT

S.A.L.T.'s primary goal is to understand, practice and share all life skills and arts of the ancient world. This is accomplished by regular Skills Meetings and informing the public through various Events.

www.saltskills.com

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Volume 11, Issue 5

S.A.L.T. e-NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

S. A. L. T. CALENDAR

NEXT S.A.L.T. SKILLS MEETING...

**ALL MEETINGS AND
EVENTS ARE CANCELLED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

at PUEBLO GRANDE MUSEUM

4619 E. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85034 602-495-0901



Due to coronavirus concerns, Pueblo Grande Museum has cancelled all programming, events, tours, lectures, and meetings until further notice.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Laura Andrew, Visitor Services Supervisor
City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation
Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park
Office: 602-495-0901

**S.A.L.T. LOOKS FORWARD TO
GETTING BACK TO PGM
WITH SKILLS MEETINGS
IN THE FUTURE.
WATCH FOR E-MAIL UPDATES.**



HOMEWORK

For all S.A.L.T. Members and Associates!

While you are looking for something to do at home... please go to our S.A.L.T. Website, www.saltskills.com and scroll way down to the bottom beyond CONTACT US and open the S.A.L.T. SKILLS pdf under S.A.L.T. INFO. Look through all the skills and please e-mail us the ones you are interested in learning to saltskills@gmail.com We can include "How To" information in our newsletters and on the website.

THANK YOU!!!

S.A.L.T. MEMBERS PROJECT GALLERY

Pine Needle Basket by Tom Wax

I started making a pine needle basket and decided to continue making it for however long the Coronavirus quarantines, etc. lasts. I wonder how big it is going to be...



March 28, 2020



April 4, 2020



April 11, 2020



April 18, 2020



April 25, 2020 WOW, BEAUTIFUL PINE NEEDLE BASKET!

Some states have already started to open up and ours should be next week HOPEFULLY, if they have got any common sense, which I doubt.

Making a Socket Style Atlatl by Ron Moses



The atlatl or throwing stick is used to launch a dart that resembles a cross between a spear and an arrow. Invented long before the bow and arrow, atlatls have been used as a weapon and for hunting for at least 25,000 years.

They appear in ancient and even some modern cultures all over the world. There are many variations in design and construction. Some possibilities are:

Material – antler, bone, simple tree branch, worked wood, modern materials

Shape – thin and flexible, broad and rigid, narrow and springy, shaped and with added weight

Size – 15 cm to more than 60 cm coupled with dart lengths of 120cm to more than 240 cm.

Holding method – bare handle, handle with cross peg, wrist strap, finger straps, finger hole(s) in handle, attached finger loops

Dart engagement – loop to dart end notch, spur or nub to dart end recess, socket or pocket to dart end

All the designs serve the same function, that being to offer an increase of force, accuracy, and distance compared to a hand thrown spear. This is due to the mechanical advantage provided by extending the length of the human forearm arm. An atlatl launched dart is capable of killing animals from the size of a small bird up to a mammoth.

Where possible, replica ancestral tools, made of wood and stone, were used during construction.



The atlatl featured here, paired with a 120 cm dart would have been effective for hunting small animals at close distance in a confined environment such as a thicket



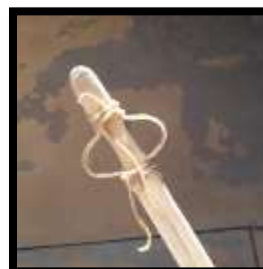
It is carved from an ash tree limb of about 3 or 4 cm diameter and about 45 cm long.



The base of a branch joint at one end of the limb is carved, to form an elevated socket for the dart.

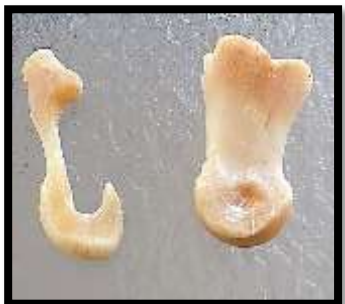


The handle portion and attached rawhide finger loops are covered with buckskin leather to provide a better hand grip.



Making a fish hook from the middle phalanx toe bone of a deer hoof

by Ron Moses



TOOLS USED:

- Scoring; obsidian flake blade
- Cutting; discoidal rock blade
- Boring; pointed discoidal blade
- Anvil; rock flake with sharp edge
- Hammer; antler baton
- Chisel; shaped antler
- Vice; tree branch with split end
- Smoothing; sandstone

STEPS:



1. Acquire deer middle phalanx or foot knuckle bone. This is the bone immediately after the pointed toe bone inside the hoof. A fresh "green" bone is easiest to work but if the bone is older, soak it in water over night to soften. Bone is harder than wood and softer than stone but it is also brittle, so work slow and patiently. Making a nice looking fish hook may take several hours.



2. Score the softened bone around the entire perimeter edge using a sharp obsidian blade. A deep even score helps to produce a clean break, similar to cutting window glass. The score should penetrate the hard outer surface of the bone. Use some type of holding device for the bone or keep plenty of bandages handy.



3. Crack the bone along the scored groove. Hold it over a sharp stone anvil such as a flint flake and gently tap the bone with some type of baton. Again, a holding device will help as you will need both hands. Work your way around the entire edge of the bone.



4. Once you feel you have cracked the entire bone circumference, try separating the two halves. You may need to use an antler chisel gently tapped with a baton to loosen the halves. Do not pry as the bone likely will break where you do not want a break.



5. Select the best looking half and grind down the inside surface on sandstone slab to remove excess material. You might be lucky and end up with two useable blanks. It all depends on how the bone cracks.



Break, cut, saw, grind out the thinner side and any remaining center section with obsidian and other discoidal stone blades. Try using a downward pressure against a flat backing to snap away small bone pieces. Prying will probably just break the hook blank. Wear away any really rough edges with a discoidal blade.



Grind all edges smooth with sandstone fragments of appropriate shapes and sizes.



6. Bore a hole for line in the top end using a sharply pointed discoidal blade. Use a gentle twisting action alternately working from both sides.
Rub the finished hook with animal fat (I use bacon grease), to prevent drying and calcification. Critters and calcification are the primary reasons very few bone tool artifacts are ever found.



7. Complete a hand fishing rig by adding a twisted fiber line. (I used four strands of cotton fiber combined in a two ply z-twist) The line may need to be lightly coated with pine pitch to help water proof the fibers. A clam shell with a bored attachment hole can be added to provide a weight and possibly act as a lure. Wind the line onto a short stick that feels comfortable in your hand. Use the stick to help cast and to retrieve the fishing rig.

Thanks for looking at my project and have fun making your own hook. A good source for the toe bones, if you need to buy them, is: Moscow Hide and Fur in Idaho.

<https://www.hideandfur.com/>

S.A.L.T. MEMBERS OUT ON THE TRAIL

Skull Mesa Hike with Steven Hall

Skull Mesa is one of two large Mesas (the other being New River Mesa) creating part of the Cave Creek canyon North of Phoenix.



The fort is at the very Northern tip of the Mesa. Our round trip was just over 16 miles with 2000' in elevation gain.



Just a couple more miles of steep trail to the top.



Walking on the "knives edge" portion of the Mesa. The fort is on the hill up ahead. We camped just this side of that green patch in the center of the photo.



The beginning of a fairly large habitation site below the fort.



More rooms scattered up the hill to the fort.



A mortar holds ground into a large boulder. Quite deep, but not very smooth compared to others I have seen.



Just reaching the top of the hill with the first view of the fortress wall.



A large slate slab resting on a boulder just outside one of the rooms. In my opinion they are somewhat reminiscent of the sandstone doors Found at dwellings in Utah. I have seen two more of these at another site on the slope of the Mesa.



Finally standing in one of the large areas of the fort after more than 3 years of wanting to do this hike.



May 25th - May 30th, 2020
Primitive Skills for Self-Sufficiency Northeastern Washington
Ancestral Skills & Self-Sufficiency Gathering

Between the Rivers Gathering 2020 IS CANCELLED

After much deliberation we have decided that it is in the best interest for all to cancel Between the Rivers Gathering this year due to the COVID19 pandemic. Projections for group size and travel restrictions in our region are beyond the gathering end date at this point, and we want people to be able to stay home and stay well in these times. Please know that we care for your welfare, and for the welfare of your loved ones.

For those who have paid for tuition and deposits for this year's BtR, we will refund your payments in full. If you paid through PayPal it will be electronically returned. If you mailed a check or money order we will send you a refund check.

If you have been accepted for our work trade crew this year we will keep your application on file, and you have pre-approval & first option for next year without having to redo your application.

Please plan to join us for Between the Rivers Gathering in 2021, May 31st - June 5th. We will look forward to a joyful reunion with our dear community of friends and family! Until then, please stay well and take care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,
Patrick and the BtR Crew

Contact us: patrickf@bridgestothepast.org



WINTER COUNT

February 7 - 13, 2021 AT THE BOULDERS!

About 1/2 hour east of Florence, AZ on the East Florence-Kelvin Highway which is just south of Florence off Hwy. 79.

Winter Count
2119 Calle Tecolote
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Winter Count 505-570-9484
WinterCountCamp@gmail.com
www.WinterCountCamp.com

ATTENTION

S.A.L.T. Members and Associates!

Please send in pictures and articles for this newsletter! Send in information on projects you are working on, information you have found on primitive skills, pictures from trips to archaeological sites, etc.

Send it to saltskills@gmail.com



STONE AGE TECHNOLOGY FROM PRIMITIVE WAYS



**ALSO, THINK ABOUT TEACHING ONE OF OUR
SKILLS CLASSES!**

Contact Charlie Tadano at 602-524-6910

**"Knowledge is not complete until
it is passed on." Steve Watts**

The Oldest String Ever Found May Have Been Made By Neanderthals

NELL GREENFIELDBOYCE



Tiny bits of twisted plant fibers found on an ancient stone tool suggest that Neanderthals were able to make and use sophisticated cords like string and rope.

Cords made from twisted fibers are so ubiquitous today that it's easy to take them for granted. But they're a key survival technology that can be used to make everything from clothes to bags to shelters.

This prehistoric piece of string, [described](#) in the journal *Scientific Reports*, was preserved on a flint tool that dates back to around 41,000 to 52,000 years ago. It came from a cave-like rock shelter in southern France that was once inhabited by Neanderthals.

The discovery adds to growing evidence that our closest extinct human relative wasn't as dumb as scientists had long assumed.

"They are this sort of ultimate 'other,' this creature that is very similar to us yet somehow is supposed to be too stupid to live," said [Bruce Hardy](#), a paleoanthropologist at Kenyon College in Ohio. He points out that Neanderthals were smart enough to have persisted for hundreds of thousands of years before eventually disappearing around 40,000 years ago.

But understanding their lives has been hard because archaeologists typically only find human remains, animal bones and stone tools. "Almost everything that we want to see is gone," Hardy said. "And so we have to try to find ways to get as much as we can out of the material that we do have."

On the surfaces of stone tools, he explains, it's sometimes possible to find residues of materials that would otherwise decay. How this preservation happens isn't well understood. But if a tool is put on top of another material, for example, it might create a kind of capsule or micro-environment that can keep things stable.

"Starch grains, bits and pieces of plants, hair, feathers — things like this can all survive," Hardy said.

He was examining one stone tool when he saw some flecks of white that he then peered at through a microscope. "It was a mass of twisted fibers," he said. "It was clear that we had something, as soon as I saw it."

Additional work with a more powerful microscope revealed what looks like a classic structure used to make string. "What we have found is a small fragment of a three-ply cord," said Hardy, adding that it's made from fibers that come from the inner bark of some kind of evergreen tree.



"There are three bundles of fibers that are twisted counterclockwise, and then those bundles, once they are twisted, are twisted back the other way, clockwise, around each other to form a cord or string," he added.

Previously, the oldest known fragment of cord dated back to around 19,000 years ago, from a site in Israel. Scientists had also found impressions left in clay by something that looked like woven fibers, from 27,000 years ago.

[Marie-Hélène Moncel](#) of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, who is part of the research team that worked on this new discovery, said it's impossible that the twisted structure found on the tool just appeared spontaneously from nature — it had to be intentionally constructed.

"It was amazing," she said.

And given where the artifact was found, and the other bones and tools found at the site, she said, "It is clear that this is related to Neanderthals," and not the anatomically modern humans that began showing up in Europe around 40,000 years ago.

[John Shea](#), a paleoanthropologist at Stony Brook University in New York, isn't so sure.

"The idea that this cordage is necessarily made by Neanderthals, that is open to question," he said, even if Neanderthal remains were found right nearby. "You still have to keep an open mind. That just means that Neanderthals were present. It doesn't rule out the possibility that humans were wandering around this same part of the world at the same time."

Still, he added, "We've long suspected that earlier humans and Neanderthals had some kind of cordage, some means by which to attach one thing to another. This is, as far as I know, some of the first definitive proof."

Cordage was probably in use as far back as half-a-million years ago, Shea said. He noted that some extremely old stone tools appear to have been made to fit handles, and such tools will work loose from a handle pretty swiftly without glue and cordage to keep it bound tight.

It's pretty easy to use almost any weed to make cordage, Shea said: "You can make simple cordage in minutes."

Making high-quality string and rope, however, takes some know-how. And he said there's no reason to think that Neanderthals wouldn't be capable of that.

"There's not one shred, and I mean not even the slightest trace of evidence," he said, "that Neanderthals were deficient in terms of their intelligence compared to humans."

THESE ARE SCARY TIMES, AGAIN, GUIDELINES TO STAY SAFE

You've probably heard all of these at some point this week, but it's all good information worth repeating:

1. Don't touch people outside of your home. They'll understand. It's OK to be the awkward one right now.
2. Use the back of your hand or your knuckle to turn all switches, buttons, etc in public places.
3. Pump gas using a disposable glove or tissue and sanitize your hands when you get back in the car.
4. Use automatic door openers when available. Use elbow or wrist to open doors. Back through doors when possible.
5. Wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer that is alcohol based whenever you've been somewhere where others have been.
6. Keep a bottle of hand sanitizer or wipes in your car and clean your hands each time you get in and before entering the house.
7. Try your best not to touch your face. We do it all day and aren't aware. Touching your face is likely how one would contract the virus.
8. Limit social outings to only what is necessary. Work from home if that is an option. BUG IN as much as you can stand right now.
9. Exercise and health are synonymous. Spending time outside hiking, biking, practicing skills, foraging, and more is highly recommended!
10. A friend of mine in the medical profession who is on the front-lines of COVID-19 recommends also letting all of that fresh outside air INSIDE as well. It's always good in these cases to let your house breath by opening up some windows.
11. Sleep is your immune system's friend. Try to get lots of it.
12. Social isolation can affect mental health. Reach out to one another by phone, e-mail or texting. Being alone doesn't have to be lonely.

Most importantly, be especially vigilant when interacting with the elderly or those at high risk. Even if you don't feel remotely sick, it's not worth the risk. If you're helping an elderly neighbor or someone you know with food or supply deliveries, be sure to wipe down the packaging with a disinfecting wipe and also encourage them to thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables.

If you're not helping an elderly neighbor, consider it, so they don't have to leave for supplies.



33RD RABBITSTICK SEPTEMBER 13 - 19, 2020

in Rexburg, Idaho

***"Rabbitstick is the Mother Church
of Primitive Technology"***

-Steve Watts, Past President of the Society of Primitive Technology

Rabbitstick Primitive Skills Gathering, held the 3rd week of September in ID, is the premier Backtracks event. Rabbitstick is the oldest of all of the modern primitive skills events and has been the model for most of the events currently running worldwide. Each year we host nearly 150 instructional and support staff who provide a camp with hands-on classes that run 9am-5pm for 5 days for about 400 registered participants. This is an unparalleled opportunity to learn skills and get to know teachers that you can trust. Visit our new website - rabbitstick.com - for complete event and registration details.

Backtracks has assembled one of the largest and most complete rosters of primitive skills teachers and practitioners available anywhere. Backtracks is your source for the best instructional staff you'll find at any event. Join Us!

www.rabbitstick.com

[Register On-Line Today](#)
[Share a Ride Bulletin Board](#)
[Meet Our Staff](#)

Rabbitstick | (208) 359-2400 | backtracks905@gmail.com | societyofprimitivetech@gmail.com



Bulletin of Primitive Technology website at primitive.org. Order back issues, download a complete index of topics and titles, or view the entire first issue and newsletters for free. Don't miss out on this amazing collection of information. It's up and running and ready to take your orders now.

<https://www.facebook.com/Backtracks-Keeping-Traditions-Alive-213565755397099/?fref=nF>



7448 S. J-B Ranch Rd.
Roosevelt, AZ 85545

www.reevismountain.org



Our Farm and Sanctuary

Reevis Mountain School began in 1980 as a community focused on self-sufficiency and the teaching of survival skills. Today it is a more quiet place: a sanctuary, organic farm, and off-grid homestead. Nature has endowed this remote canyon with paradise-like features: a year-round creek, two underground springs, and an altitude (3,300 feet) that takes much of the misery out of Arizona summers. Human effort has added an orchard of one hundred fruit and nut trees, a one-acre garden, a flock of some fifty chickens, a greenhouse, a community house, a beautiful native stone shower house, a solar power house, and shelters including a teepee, cabins, and yurpees (Bigfoot's design, a combination of teepee and yurt).

Our first-rate "Nature's Classroom" is enjoyed by a permanent staff of two and a varying number of interns and retreat seekers. It is cherished by those wishing to experience a place free from most modern-day pollutants (including cell phones!) and to reconnect with Earth, Self, and Spirit. Visitors rave about the wholesome, nourishing, and tasty meals, featuring fresh, organically home-grown ingredients prepared with love.

What to bring: Camping gear or, with yurpee reservation, a sleeping bag or bedding; water bottle; sun-protective hat; flashlight or headlamp; battery-powered lamp (optional); sunglasses; towel and toiletries. Also: openness, appreciation, and desire to learn. The temperature at RMS is usually about 12 degrees cooler than Phoenix, and nights can be cool in the spring and fall—bring warm clothing.

What to leave at home: Drugs, alcohol, firearms, smoking materials, electronic equipment, pets, junk food, and negative attitudes.

Registration

Visit www.reevismountain.org to register online. Or mail your name, phone number, postal and email addresses, and a 50% deposit (check or money order) to RMS, 7448 S. J-B Ranch Rd., Roosevelt, AZ 85545. Indicate whether you will need our free shuttle service from Roosevelt and/or wish to stay in a yurpee or cabin instead of camping. Balance due prior to class. *Deposits are nonrefundable unless RMS reschedules or cancels the class.*

Early Registration: 10% discount if you register with full payment 30 days prior to class date.

Important Information

Classes held at RMS include: meals (arrival night meals are a potluck party—bring a healthful, natural dish to share!), class supplies, hot showers, and campsite. Camping is free, or stay in a yurpee (shared, \$10/night/pers.) or cabin (single \$25/night or double \$50/night).

Class fee includes shuttle service from Roosevelt—or caravan in your own 4X4. Shuttle pickup is at 4 p.m., first day of class (note exception for Stone Masonry), at M&S Marine, Hwy. 188, Roosevelt (between mile posts 233 & 234). Further details will be provided after registration.

For more information, please contact us—see below.

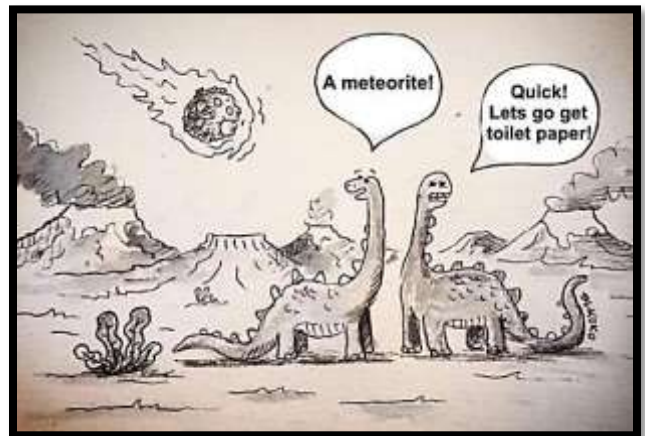
Reevis Mountain School of Self-Reliance
7448 S. J-B Ranch Rd., Roosevelt, AZ 85545
(928) 257-1544 info@reevismountain.org
www.reevismountain.org

Arizona's visual guide to Social Distancing



COVID-19

Stay 6 feet away from people, the same way you stay 6 feet away from jumping cholla



"Oool Now here's a nice one we built last fall."

S.A.L.T. STORE

T-SHIRTS & PATCHES will be available at all S.A.L.T.
Skill Meetings



S.A.L.T. T-SHIRTS are available in all sizes at \$20.00 each
(Special pricing for Members)



S.A.L.T. PATCHES \$5.00 each
(Memberships receive one free)



Have a place to store and carry all of your S.A.L.T. Projects
and Tools! \$15.00 each
(Special price for members)
Call Charlie for availability on Totes
602-524-6910

**"Primitive (first) skills are our
shared inheritance. It is the shared
thread which links us to our
prehistory and binds us together as
human beings." Steve Watts**

2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE!

SINGLE \$12.00 & FAMILY \$24.00
(New memberships are
pro-rated throughout the year)

Please bring it to the next Skills Meeting or
mail them to S.A.L.T. Treasurer,

TAMARA TADANO
12840 N. 45th Drive
Glendale, AZ 85304

Please make the check out to
Tamara Tadano

S.A.L.T. MEMBERSHIP ITEMS

The Tan "Fishing Shirt" Style S.A.L.T. Membership Shirts
are available by pre-order. Please contact Charlie Tadano
to order your Shirt at 602-524-6910

**S.A.L.T. T-SHIRTS
and S.A.L.T. PATCHES
are still available!**

There may be some Tote Bags, too.

The S.A.L.T. "Sonoran Desert, Sorting out the Weak" T-SHIRT is available to
anyone interested for \$15.00 each. They will be available at most S.A.L.T. Monthly
Skill Meetings and Events until they are gone. (Only a few left!)

S.A.L.T. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Website: www.saltskills.com

e-mail address: saltskills@gmail.com

For MEMBERSHIP information call Charlie Tadano at
602-524-6910 or Bob Sizemore at 520-705-9780 or e-mail
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Moses at 602-384-1359 or saltdonna1@gmail.com

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