



*This 1.5 mile loop will take you to a different ecosystem away from the canyon floor. It is a nature trail with no rock art panels. The first part of the trail is steep, but once you get on top it will be worth it.*



# ALMA CHRISTENSEN TRAIL

## STOP 1

This trail was built in 1986 to allow access to the tablelands above the cliffs on the north side of Clear Creek Canyon. In 1992, a segment of the trail was converted to an interpretive walk from which we will look at the environment from the perspective of the people that once lived here. The trail starts in Fremont Indian State Park and goes into Fishlake National Forest and was built in a cooperative effort between the two land owners.

## STOP 2

Alma Christensen, who this trail was named after, lived and worked on this land from 1917 to 1944. The foundation of his home, straddles the fence of I-70 near the parking area just on the other side of the frontage road. He lived here with his wife and four children in a two story house that doubled at times as a boarding house, restaurant and school and had the only telephone in the canyon.

*Warning: The rock on the trail just ahead might be slippery!*

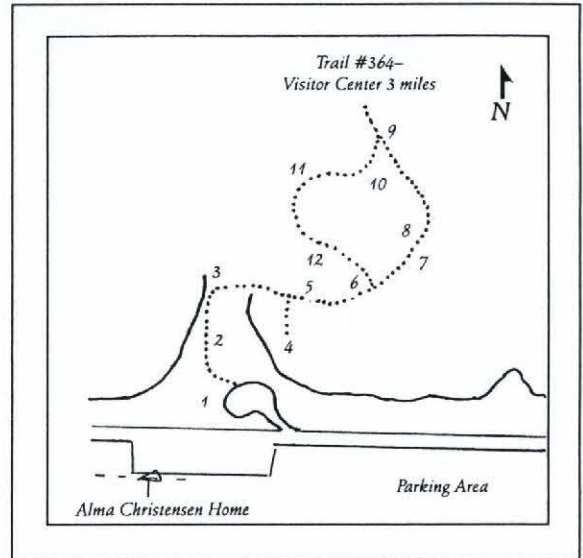
## STOP 3

On the hillside behind the trail marker, you might see tracks left by mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) on their nightly trek from the forest above you to the canyon floor. Mule deer spend most of their nocturnal hours foraging for food and sleep during the day. The Christensen's depended on deer to stock their larder with meat. Deer were so plentiful that settlers often ate more venison than beef. A field dressed doe can provide between 50 and 60 pounds of meat. Early and late in the day, you may see a small herd of deer on the move here.

## STOP 4

*Follow the side trail to the rim.*

On the rim of the canyon, near here, archaeologists found evidence that Christensen had scoured the hillside for firewood and fence posts. They also discovered Numic artifacts including finger-indented pottery, an arrow point and an old hearth. The Numics were hunters and gatherers from southeastern California who came about A.D. 1250 and became



the modern day Utes, Paiutes, Shoshones and Gosiutes.

Feel free to walk around this reconstructed Numic camp. The shelter, called a *wickiup*, is built of juniper branches and has been covered with rabbitbrush. The floor is blanketed with juniper bark. A wickiup could probably accommodate a small family. To the west of the wickiup, the ground is littered with obsidian, a black volcanic glass that was used to make tools. This is a recreated manufacturing area, where arrowheads, knives, scrapers and drills were made and flakes of the obsidian were left behind as debitage. Most obsidian found in Clear Creek Canyon comes from the Mineral Mountains 30 miles to the west. East of the tool workshop is a metate and mano. These stones were used mostly by Numic women to grind cat-tail roots into flour and pin-yon nuts into a meal.



*Wickiup*

*Return to the main trail and turn right.*

## STOP 5

The Fremont used the light-color rock to make tools. This material, called Joe Lott Tuff, was better for making large tools because it is less likely to shatter upon impact than obsidian. Several large hand axes have been found on this hill side. Joe Lott Tuff is the result of a volcanic eruption at the Belknap volcano in the Tushar Mountains about 19 million years ago. Showers of volcanic



ash and ash-flows fused to form the tuff as it cooled. The Joe Lott Tuff covers an area of 23 square miles.

### STOP 6

The outcrop before you is the Sevier River Formation. The round and elongated river pebbles of varying sizes were left when the canyon bottom was at this level. Streams deposited the pebbles from the peaks of the Tushar Mountains to the south and the Pavant Range to the north. The underlying deposits of fine-grained material suggest periods when Clear Creek was slow moving. The canyon was carved over millions of years to a depth of about 150 feet beneath the present canyon floor. Later, sediments deposited by annual spring run-offs from the side canyons filled the canyon to its current level.

*Go straight at the fork in the trail.*

### STOP 7

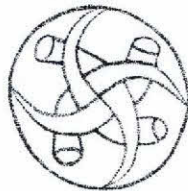
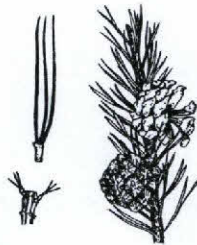
Take time to look at this view of Clear Creek Canyon. This east to west canyon which separates the over 10,000 foot Pavant Range to the north and the over 12,000 foot Tushar Mountains to the south, has been used for thousands of years. The earliest evidence of people in Clear Creek Canyon comes from Sheep Shelter where people camped 3,700 B.C. The hundreds of rock art panels, both prehistoric and historic were left by both travelers and residents. An 1826 date in the canyon was probably carved by Jedediah Smith. Latter day miners going to the gold fields at Kimberly left their names and dates painted on the cliffs using black axle grease. Some of these later miners and travelers might have boarded with the Christensen family.

### STOP 8

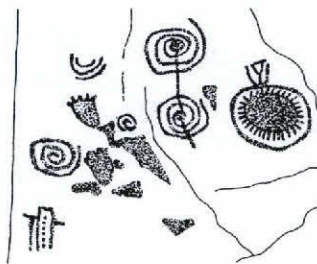
You are now in a typical pinyon/juniper forest. The Colorado Pinyon (*Pinus edulis*) and Utah Juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) are the predominate members of this 5,000 to 7,000 foot elevation life zone. It was this forest and the abundance of its resources that provided a home for many edible plants and animals that helped make it possible for both historic and prehistoric people to survive here. The pinyon tree, distinguished by two needles in a single sheath, provided a nutritious, high calorie nut that is harvested in the fall. The juniper is identified by its shaggy bark and is known for its rot resistant wood. Parts of this

*If you are not worn out, there are some interesting rock art panels near the trailhead. Go west from marker 2 to the cliff face.*

- *On the cliff are two circles that have curved horns in them that are the shape of an empty cornucopia. Both of these figures are historic. The most likely candidate for artist was Alma Christensen.*
- *Go to the cliff east of the entry road and follow it east along the frontage road. There will be prehistoric panels for about 100 yards and then a petroglyph called the Migration Panel. This panel depicts a migration by five clans (Snake, Spider, Blue-flute, Ghost and Sun) led by Spider Woman to all four shores of this continent. The most probable author for the 'RC' that you saw is Alma Christensen's son Reed.*



R.C.



tree were used by the Fremont to build houses, and for rope, twine, clothing, fuel and medicine.

### STOP 9

Look uphill to the northwest toward the small red knoll and the notch in the mountain that is visible on the skyline. If the light is right you can see a primitive trail that leads to the top of the mountain near an area called Big Bench. This trail was used from spring through fall by people living along Clear Creek to access the highlands above the pinyon/juniper forest. On the bench, archaeologists have found artifacts of the Fremont, Numic and historic period. The tree stumps, possibly show that Christensen was cutting trees down for his own uses.

*Turn left at the fork in the trail to continue on the Alma Christensen loop. The other trail (#363) goes to Big Bench. If you go right on trail #364, it will be 3 miles to the visitor center via the Hidden Secrets Trail (#7).*

### STOP 10

This land, although arid and rugged, is fragile and can be damaged by seemingly harmless acts. The scar on the hill side below you is a result of Christensen dragging home fence posts tied to the back of a horse. Similar scars can be caused by modern vehicles or even foot, horse or ATV traffic.

### STOP 11

The mountains to the south of I-70 are called the Tushars. They are covered with a forest of spruce, fir and aspen that are drained by sparkling creeks.

During the late 1800's due to overgrazing the meadows were stripped of grass and the creeks ran muddy. The flooding and condition of the mountain became so intolerable that 1.5 million acres of public land was established as a Forest Preserve. Today, Fishlake National Forest manages grazing, timber, mining, recreation, wildlife habitat and watersheds. Sound management practices now prevent environmental damage while allowing a conservative use of the natural resources.

### STOP 12

Fremont Indian State Park and Museum is also concerned about our cultural and natural resources. Whether it be an arrowhead, a granary or a homestead cabin, cultural resources on public lands are protected by State and Federal law. It is up to all of us to protect the past.

*Turn right at the fork in the trail to return to the trailhead.*