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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (**December 19, 2006**)

“Fremont Flute found in Range Creek is music to our ears”

PRICE, UTAH – An ancient artifact recovered this weekend may represent the first of its kind from the prehistoric Fremont Culture of the West. Once its age is verified, it promises...

Possible Fremont flute represents promise of a one of a kind find that provides a unique window into the unexplored role of music in the Fremont culture. The flute, found in Range Creek recently, will be placed at the College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum for safekeeping. The Prehistoric Museum is federal/state repository and the flute will remain in secure storage while receiving conservation care until a new exhibit can be created that will cater to the special nature of the flute.

The flute was initially discovered by Division of Wildlife Resources officer Alan Green while on patrol. He was attempting to get a closer view of an entirely separate item when he happened across the flute on a footpath along the ledge. The artifact's precarious position, coupled with its vulnerability to upcoming winter weathering, led DWR officers, including archaeologist Katherine Davies to believe that the flute needed to be collected prior to exposure to another winter.

Alan Green, Mark Connolly, Brent Stettler and Katherine Davies from DWR along with archaeologists Jody Patterson and Patricia Stavish from Montgomery Archeology Consultants were there to do the actual collection of the flute and map the site. Rick Shaw from the Sun Advocate Newspaper was in attendance to document the event as well. Ute tribal elder Clifford Duncan conducted a ceremonial blessing prior to the artifacts recovery and Dr. Reese Barrick, Jeff Bartlett and Karen Green from the College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum were present to accept the flute. Upon the retrieval of the flute, Clifford Duncan concluded that the flute was not a part of a burial site, but that its purpose was likely ritualistic in nature and may have been used for ceremonies

such as greeting the rising sun. An initial search could not provide any example of flutes from the Fremont culture. At this point, this appears to be a one of a kind artifact. Carbon dating will validate the artifact as either Ute or Fremont.

The potential impact of this item to the archaeological community has not even begun to be realized. If indeed it is as initially anticipated, the one of a kind nature of this item will provide a wealth of new insight into the role of music and spirituality in the Fremont culture. The CEU Prehistoric Museum sees this as a truly spectacular opportunity to fulfill its mission, partnering with state and federal agencies in collaborative efforts to protect and eventually display this amazing artifact for the public in its regional context.

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