

Cherokee Ranch Science Institute (CRSI)

The CRSI was created in 2013 by the Cherokee Ranch & Castle Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit. The purpose of the Institute is to conduct rigorous research in geology, archeology and petrified wood in the south Denver Basin and share its findings with the public. The Institute is directed by Allan J. Koch, Ph.D. and comprised of six volunteers, supported by academic advisors from key educational institutions from across the United States. In addition to many other publications, the Institute produced two significant papers in 2017 and 2018 that were published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.



The Institute is located on Cherokee Ranch, 3400 scenic acres of well exposed geology, an abundance of archeology sites including native rock shelters, and a uniquely well-preserved forest of petrified wood logs. In 1926 the local rock formations were used to construct Cherokee

Castle which is comprised of rhyolite and 4000 pieces of petrified wood.

Members: Al Koch, Geologist; Reid Farmer, Archaeologist, John McKinney, Educator, Tom Michalski, Geologist, Chris Woods, Geologist, Peter Brown, Educator.

Institute Advisors:

Donna Anderson, Colorado School of Mines
Drew Coleman, University of North Carolina
Noel Hughes, Mathematician, Castle Rock, Colorado
Magdalena Kascak, GIS Specialist, Denver, CO
Jonathan Kent, Metro State University, Denver, CO
Ian Miller, Bob Reynolds, Denver Mus. Nature & Sci.
George Mustoe, Western Washington University
Elisabeth Wheeler, North Carolina State University

Key Publications: 1)Allan J. Koch et al., 2018, Provenance of the upper Eocene Castle Rock Conglomerate, south Denver Basin, Colorado, U.S.A. in Rocky Mtn. Geology, v. 53, no.1, p.29-43.
2)George E. Mustoe and Mike Viney, Mineralogy of Paleocene Petrified Wood from Cherokee Ranch Fossil Forest, Central Colorado, USA, in Geosciences, 2017, 7, 23.
3) In preparation: Elisabeth Wheeler, Peter K. Brown, More Paleocene Woods of the Denver Basin, Cherokee Ranch, Colorado. (2019?).

