



# CULTURALLY MODIFIED TREES

## *In the Shining Mountains of Colorado*

**By: John Anderson**

**Overview:** This presentation is based on the book written by John Wesley Anderson and published by the Old Colorado City Historical Society (OCCHS). The *Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region* is not just a story about Culturally Modified Trees; it's about the advanced culture of the deeply spiritual people behind the trees. The Ute were among the indigenous people of the Pikes Peak Region who skillfully modified trees for navigational, spiritual, burial, medicinal, nutritional and educational purposes. The Ute name for Pikes Peak was Tava, meaning the Sun Mountain. Tava was the most sacred of all the Shining Mountains for the Ute believed the Creator allows the day to start there first and each day is a gift from the Creator. The Ute believe that anything created by the hands of the Creator has a spirit, including a horse, an eagle, a bear, a person or a tree.

**Bio:** John Anderson is an author, artist and historian. He retired from Lockheed Martin in 2012 to launch a small consulting business allowing him the freedom to pursue his love of history, writing and the arts. Prior to working ten years in the corporate world, John served two-terms as the elected Sheriff for El Paso County, Colorado (term-limited in 2003). He completed an MBA while working as a police officer with the Colorado Springs Police Department and retired at the rank of Sergeant in 1995. Although John has travelled around the world, including several adventures on a catamaran sailing the Caribbean, three corporate security assignments into a combat zone on the Horn of Africa and landing on an aircraft carrier at sea in the Pacific Ocean, he remains most fascinated by the rich history and art discovered in his own back yard in the American Southwest.

**Logistics:** This presentation is typically 50 minutes in length, followed by a 10 minutes Q&A session and a 30 minute book signing; however, it is easily tailored to fit the time allowable. John prefers to email his PowerPoint slides prior to the presentation or he can bring his presentation on a USB thumbdrive; however, the slides require a large view screen, projector, PC or laptop and depending upon the room, oftentimes a microphone.

**Speaker Fee:** John does not charge a speaker or program fee; however, honorariums and reimbursement for any previously agreed upon out of town travel expenses are always appreciated (honorariums typically average between \$25-250). John will bring copies of his book *Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region* for sale and signing, although copies can be purchased at the OCCHS gift shop in Old Colorado City ([www.occhs.org](http://www.occhs.org)).