

# GREAT BASIN GLYPH NOTES

NEVADA ROCK ART FOUNDATION

3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER 2013 MEMBER INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ROCK ART ORGANIZATIONS

Volume 12-3

## Traces of Fremont: Society and Rock Art in Ancient Utah

Nevada Rock Art Foundation 2013 Distinguished Lecturer,  
Steven R. Simms, Professor of Anthropology, Utah State University, Logan

The 2013 NRAF Distinguished Lecture Series features Professor Steven Simms who will explore the people and culture we know as the “Fremont” at lectures in Las Vegas and Reno on October 18th and 20th. Named after the Fremont River in central Utah, these ancient farmers were descendants and relatives of both the indigenous hunter-gatherers of Utah, and the Puebloan farmers of the Southwest.



A degree of isolation north of the canyons of the Colorado River fostered a distinctive rock art tradition, a specialized form of maize cultivation, and local expressions of culture. The Fremont culture inhabited sites in what is now Utah and parts of Nevada, Idaho and Colorado from around 1,500 to 700 years ago. The Fremont culture is particularly well known for its art, which includes clay figurines, pottery, and rock art, all distinguished stylistically from the arts of Great Basin foragers. The lecture presents current archaeological thinking about the form of Fremont society. Professor Simms argues that to know the Fremont, one must know the rock art. But to know the rock art, one must know the Fremont.

Fremont culture had its genesis in frontier settlements, first evident around 2,000 years ago, with a sprinkling of farming outposts inhabited by both immigrant and indigenous peoples. People following a hunter-forager way of life encountered immigrants with a more sedentary lifestyle based on variable horticultural production. This intersection of diverse peoples ultimately resulted in the Fremont cultural pattern around 1,500 years ago.

More complex than previously thought, many Fremont were heavily invested in farming, and had intensified economies of settled villages, surplus food storage, and shortage. The social consequences included inequality, leadership, collaboration, and conflict. These topics are illustrated using current research near Capitol Reef National

Park, documenting for the first time a complete Fremont irrigation system that had been lost to science since local farmers showed it to Harvard archaeologist Noel Morss in 1928.

Professor Simms’ research modeling Fremont society, politics, and world-view has been published in articles and books, including *Ancient Peoples of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau* and *Traces*

*of Fremont: Society and Rock Art in Ancient Utah* that uses photographer François Gohier’s captivating photographs of Fremont art and artifacts. Simms’ research is part of more recent reassessments of Fremont culture that assume a more complex society and explore the social and cultural reasons for the same environment being used differentially by hunter-foragers and Fremont farmers.

Steven R. Simms is Professor of Anthropology at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, where he has taught since 1988. He has done archaeological fieldwork across the United States and in the Middle East for over 40 years. Many of his earliest archaeological experiences were at Anasazi and Fremont sites, and he attended the University of Utah Archaeology Field School in 1973 at the Evans Mound, a large Fremont site, under the direction of Jesse D. Jennings. Simms has authored over 100 scientific publications, technical reports, and monographs. His most recent books include *Ancient Peoples of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau*, published in 2008 by Left Coast Press, and the award winning *Traces of Fremont: Society and Rock Art in Ancient Utah*, published in 2010 by the University of Utah Press and the College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum.

The 2013 NRAF Distinguished Lecture Series is made possible with the support of the Nevada Humanities, the College of Southern Nevada, and the National Automobile Museum. For more information see page 5.

## From the President

In May the NRAF Board met to finalize goals and objectives for the next three years and I reported on it at our annual meeting. For those of you not present at the meeting, let me assure you that our mission has not changed. Ten years into its existence, NRAF is still promoting the protection and conservation of Nevada and Great Basin rock art through documentation, archives, research and public education.

NRAF's goals have shifted somewhat as we have achieved our major objective of recording the bulk of threatened rock art in Nevada. What's next? Research will be a main thrust and I'll discuss more on that subject in a future report. One of our goals continues to be the development of education programs for the public and for members of the organization. Staff and the Board provide opportunities through bi-monthly lectures; site tours at places such as Grimes Point; quarterly newsletters; an Annual Meeting; and an Annual Distinguished Lecture.

We don't always know what attracts members of the public to our events but we want to know what appeals to you as a member of NRAF. In a world in which dollars, staff and board time are limited, finding out what appeals to NRAF members is critical to our choosing events to plan in a given budget cycle. That's why at the last Annual Meeting we passed out a questionnaire to determine what events members were attending and what events were their favorites. Most people ranked Distinguished Lectures at the top of the list for educational events attended and enjoyed, but these events are not well attended by people outside the organization, and not always well attended by NRAF members, depending on the venue. In the future, the Board and staff will be carefully evaluating existing education programs to focus on events and publications that provide the best value for the energy and funds expended. And we may modify existing programs to a biennial format, or provide more information online that can be accessed by NRAF members as well as the public. Respondents to the questionnaire made other suggestions that we will look into as resources become available.

I am excited that we will be hosting Professor Steven Simms as the 2013 Distinguished Lecturer. Professor Simms is one of our own, an archaeologist from this region, who has studied how people made a living in the Great Basin through time. He received a Master's Degree from the University of Nevada, Reno, and a PhD from the University of Utah, conducting fieldwork throughout Nevada and the Great Basin. Some of his most recent work regards rock art and what it can tell us about the Fremont people—their world view, their society and their politics. This connection between what is known from the archaeological record, the rock art and ethnographic analogy brings to life a culture which no longer exists. It is what NRAF aspires to do in its proposed research of rock art in Nevada so we will be paying close attention to what Professor Simms has to say. I hope you plan to attend if you value Distinguished Lectures as part of NRAF's education goals. Hope to see you at the lecture.



Alice Baldrice, President,  
Board of Directors



### Upcoming Lecture: **Animal Imagery in Nevada and Great Basin Rock Art** by Pat Barker, Ph.D.

October 2, 2013, 12 noon, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

*Over at least the last 10,000 years people throughout Nevada and the Great Basin have been creating art on rock surfaces, boulders and cave walls. Rock Art researchers categorized these images as either abstract or representational based on the degree to which they resemble recognizable figures. The vast majority of images in Nevada are abstract, but an estimated 12% are representational – depicting either animal-like (zoomorphs) or human-like (anthropomorphs). Attempts to understand animal imagery in Nevada and the Great Basin, usually with reference to hunting magic or shamanistic transformation, have not been convincing. Animal imagery in Nevada and Great Basin rock art is now being explored by placing it in its environmental, archaeological and, ethnographic context.*

# Oldest North American Rock Art Dated in Nevada

A petroglyph site in northern Nevada has recently been reported as North America's oldest, scientifically dated rock art site, dating back to at least 10,500 years ago, and possibly as far back as 14,800 years ago. A team of researchers led by Dr. Larry Benson, an emeritus scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey and adjunct curator of anthropology at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, presented their findings at the 2012 Great Basin Anthropological Conference and, more recently, in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*.\*



The petroglyph site, located in the Pyramid Lake area, is considered to belong to the Great Basin Carved Abstract (GBCA) style. The style was first identified almost 30 years ago by researchers Bill Cannon (BLM) and Mary Ricks (Portland State University) at the Long Lake type site in Warner Valley, Oregon. The GBCA style is distinguished by the depth of carving (up to 12 mm), complexity of designs, and absence of 'white space' in panel compositions. At Long Lake, rock art in this style was found buried by a deposit of ash from the eruption of Mount Mazama around 6,850 BP. Thus, Cannon and Ricks inferred that the GBCA style at Long Lake was at least as old as 6,850 BP and that this style of petroglyphs was among the oldest in the Great Basin.

The GBCA style has also been dated to Paleoindian times by research correlating that style with ancient projectile points found at many GBCA sites. Emily Middleton presented the findings of her Master's thesis at NRAF's 2013 Annual Meeting, which concluded that Paleoindian projectile points are over-represented in artifact assemblages associated with GBCA rock art sites. This provided additional evidence for the idea that GBCA rock art could be of considerable antiquity.

Benson et al.'s work at Winnemucca Lake provides confirmation of the great antiquity of the GBCA style, as well as identifying North America's oldest scientifically dated rock art site. Benson's work focused on white crusts covering the rocks and petroglyphs, and dating fluctuations in lake levels in the area. The white coverings (crusts of carbonate) on the petroglyphs suggested to Dr. Benson that these coatings were probably left from the last time the rocks were submerged in water, indicating that the petroglyphs may be older than 11,000 years. To pursue the matter, Benson needed permission from the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to sample the coatings on the rocks. Because of the cultural sensitivity of the petroglyphs and surrounding land, it took several years for Benson to get permission to sample the rocks near the petroglyphs, though not to directly sample coatings within the petroglyphs.

Once the different coatings on the rocks were dated, confirmation came that the artwork was at least 10,000 years old and maybe as much as 14,800 years old. Early North Americans would have created these designs during a dry interval between two very wet times: 14,800 and 13,200 years ago and again between about 11,300 and 10,500 years ago. Sediment cores from the lake bottom also helped Benson with dating these fluctuations in ancient lake levels.

Team member Dr. Gene Hattori remarked, "Our work demonstrates the value of studying previously studied archaeological sites in light of different research questions and new methodologies. Furthermore, U.S. Geological Survey geochemist, Larry Benson, worked with archaeologists in the Great Basin, Southwest and Midwest for decades. His specialized expertise and wide-ranging interests demonstrates the value of cross-disciplinary research for archaeologists."

\* L.V. Benson, E.M. Hattori, J. Southon, and B. Aleck, 2013, Dating North America's Oldest Petroglyphs, Winnemucca Lake Subbasin, Nevada. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40(12):4466-4476.

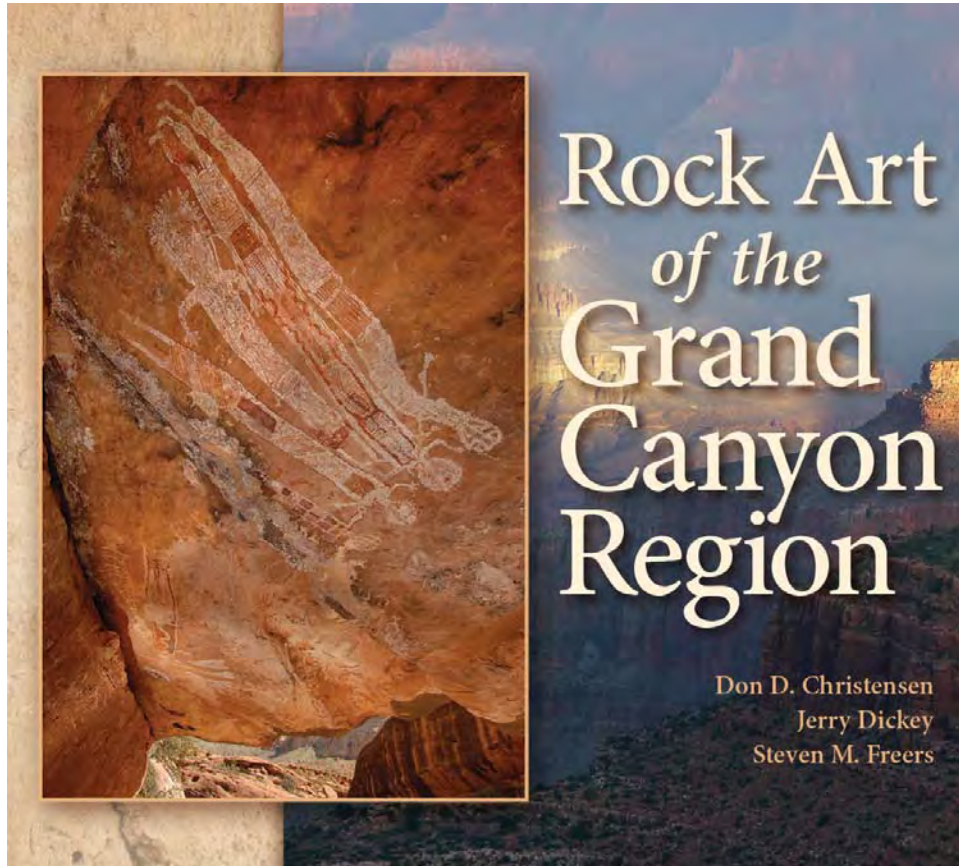
# Rock Art of the Grand Canyon Region

Don D. Christensen, Jerry Dickey,  
and Steven Freers

2013 Sunbelt Publications. Index, numerous illustrations, 272 pages. \$24.95 on Amazon

Reviewed by Pat Barker, NRAF

Don Christensen and Jerry Dickey are well known for their excellent rock art research in the Desert West, in particular their work defining and refining knowledge of The Grapevine Canyon style. In this book, they team up with Steven Freers to describe the results of their 25 year fieldwork project recording nearly 450 rock art sites in the larger Grand Canyon Region.



This well organized book includes 11 chapters ranging from physical and cultural context through preservation and conservation. The descriptive material is organized by time period – Archaic; Transitional; Ancestral Puebloan; and Protohistoric/ Historic as well as a chapter on historic inscriptions. Within each period, the rock art is organized by content and style. While describing and illustrating typical panels for each style, the authors also are careful to point out motifs and panels that do not fit their classification.

Each descriptive chapter is well-illustrated with clear color photography and an occasional line drawing to clarify an image. The gallery compilation at the end of each chapter is especially useful for an overall impression of the period.

These chapters could have benefitted by generalized maps

showing stylistic and temporal distributions without revealing specific site locations. Although the book is intended for the general audience, it would have also benefitted by tabular summaries of stylistic variation in motif counts. Along with the list of rock art organizations, a list of sites managed for public interpretation would be useful for a general audience.

In addition, the authors discuss theoretical issues including dating, style, classification, and meaning. In these discussions they are careful to point out the pitfalls of interpreting beyond the data or of interjecting personal biases to force interpretations where none are possible. This caution is especially important when assigning meaning to motifs and panels. For, example, the authors rightly point out that ethnographic interpretations are useful for recent imagery, but become increasingly problematic farther back in time. The dating chapter is a good discussion of various techniques, especially relative dating by superimposition and repatination. It correctly points out that AMS (accelerator mass spectrometry) dating of pigmentation on pictographs is the only direct dating technique currently available.

This book represents the best of avocational rock art research and is a worthy addition to anyone's rock art library. If you don't have it – buy it.





## Nevada Rock Art Foundation 2013 Distinguished Lecture

Traces of Fremont: Society and Rock Art in Ancient Utah  
 by Steven R. Simms, Professor of Anthropology  
 Utah State University, Logan

The dramatic imagery of Fremont rock art is presented against new archaeological insights. Professor Simms discusses social complexities among the Fremont, who were heavily invested in farming, and had intensified economies of settled villages, surplus food storage, and shortage. The social consequences included inequality, leadership, collaboration, and conflict.



Las Vegas, Friday, October 18, 2013  
 6 pm, College of Southern Nevada,  
 6375 West Charleston Blvd, Bldg K, Room 101

Reno, Sunday, October 20, 2013  
 2 pm, National Automobile Museum Theater,  
 10 South Lake Street

Tickets: \$10 for members of NRAF, National Automobile Museum, and Students. \$12 general admission.  
 Tickets available from the Nevada Rock Art Foundation ([www.nvrockart.org](http://www.nvrockart.org)) or at the door.

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# Hawley Lake Petroglyph Site

During mid August, 2013, NRAF volunteers and staff worked in Sierra County, California, recording the Hawley Lake petroglyph site for the Tahoe National Forest. The site is located on the west side of the northern Sierra crest, at approximately 6,500 feet in elevation, on a local exposure of magnetite. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the local area saw mining and mineral exploration related to gold and iron ore deposits. A historic pack mule route runs just above the site, and carefully chiseled initials and dates from perhaps as early as 1864 or 1868 through 1935 were noted on-site. Some of these historic inscriptions appear to have been made using stone masonry tools.

The Hawley Lake petroglyph site is one of the largest rock art sites in the northern Sierra Nevada in terms of quantity of designs. The rock art is densely distributed on eight discrete outcroppings of magnetite that cover an area of some 1,300 square meters. The petroglyphs are often very formal in appearance, deeply pecked, and sometimes large in size. They are difficult to see except under optimal lighting conditions because of the lack of any contrast between the rock art and the dark grey color of the magnetite. The dense distribution of motifs also obscures the rock art's details because of abundant superimpositioning and the general spatial continuity of motifs covering large areas with no break. In places, rock art runs almost the entire lengths and widths of these magnetite outcrops.

The rock art is dominated by abstract motif types such as complex curvilinear meanders, circles, circle chains,

arcs, dots, etc. The site is notable for particularly finely

made portrayals of deer tracks (often arranged in long lines) and numerous stylized "bear paw prints." Unusual variations on stick-figure anthropomorphs were also noted, as well as two bighorn sheep figures. The site is traditionally classed as belonging

to the High-Sierra Abstract Representational style or "Style 7" identified by Louis Payen. This style has been associated with the Martis Complex (ca. 4,000-1,500 BP) and upland areas in the northern Sierra Nevada appears to have been used most intensively beginning around 4,000 years ago.

The density and fine execution of the prehistoric rock art make work at the site well worth the hair-raising road into the area. Located on Forest Service land surrounded by private land, access is severely restricted. NRAF acknowledges the generosity and cooperation of the landowner and the support of the Tahoe National Forest.

Volunteers for this project were Anne Higgins, Janice Hoke, Jeff Thelen and Diane Thelen.



Digitally enhanced photograph  
Image of a seemingly four-armed  
anthropomorphic figure at Hawley Lake.

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# Preliminary Report on LCAI Round 1 Project

Angus, R. Quinlan, Nevada Rock Art Foundation

Prior to the 1960s, rock art sites in Lincoln County were not surveyed or recorded systematically. Sites were identified on a generally informal basis and little more than the fact of rock art was noted. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, separate surveys by the Desert Research Institute and Robert Heizer located several important rock art areas in the region, leading to the identification of the Pahranaagat anthropomorph style, an important regional style. These early surveys did not intensively document the attributes of rock art sites identified. This work was not significantly added to until the 1990s when amateur archaeologists and private research into Lincoln County rock art, in particular by Alvin McLane, William White, and Grace Burkholder, helped to greatly increase the number of identified sites and better describe the Pahranaagat style.

More recently, work by David Lee, Far Western, and NRAF has contributed to better knowledge of rock art in Badger Valley, Pahranaagat Valley, and Mount Irish. But, a regional overview was still lacking and many sites remained poorly documented and located; the purpose of NRAF's LCAI Round 1 project was to fill this need by intensively recording identified rock art sites on public lands managed by the BLM.

From 2009-2011, NRAF surveyed rock art at 128 sites in the county. This work involved revisiting and updating site records for previously identified sites, paying particular attention to stylistic attributes and associated archaeological contexts. All sites were recorded to a baseline level sufficient to allow site condition and management needs to be assessed, as well producing data for research purposes.

The 128 project sites range in size from isolated petroglyph boulders, containing a few design elements, to extensive locations comprising hundreds of petroglyphs. Quality of execution ranges from informally made designs, where the act of making seems more important than the finished product, to carefully executed, complex formal designs. Although rock art is generally widespread in Lincoln County, some clustering of major concentrations of rock art is discernible in the areas of Badger Valley, Mount Irish, White River Narrows, and Upper Kane Springs Wash. Often, these major concentrations are characterized by a small number of major sites (in terms of quantity of rock art) surrounded by smaller satellite sites, such as at Mount Irish and the Shooting Gallery area (Badger Valley).

Project sites are mostly located in or at the margins of

the settled landscape, evidenced by associated archaeological features and general environmental contexts. Ground stone tools are the most common artifact type noted at project sites, a pattern observed with growing regularity elsewhere in the Great Basin.

Temporally diagnostic artifact types were generally not found strongly associated with particular styles of rock art, with the exception of Fremont ceramics that, when observed, tend to occur at sites with Fremont anthropomorph types.

Three rock art "styles" are discernible in the motif data recorded at our project sites; Fremont and Pahranaagat anthropomorph styles, and Basin and Range tradition. The majority of rock art sites recorded share with the rest of the Great Basin an emphasis on abstract design types and schematism. Basin and Range tradition abstract motifs are by far the most abundant in the rock art assemblages recorded and exhibit little spatial variability in terms of their formal attributes. This abstract tradition is present at all sites and accompanies the distinctive anthropomorph styles the county's rock art is known for.

Circular abstract forms make up 25% of the project sites' motif assemblages, closely followed by simple linear variants (23%); rectilinear abstract design types are slightly less common (14%). Stick-figure variants of Basin and Range tradition make up 3% of the project motif assemblages and distinctive anthropomorph styles (Fremont and Pahranaagat styles) are about as frequent (ca. 3%) when data gathered by Far Western (Gilreath et al. 2011) from Pahranaagat National Wildlife Refuge are added.

Although comparative data to make reliable quantitative regional observations is lacking, Heizer and Baumhoff's (1962) observation that bighorn sheep motifs are most frequent and prominent at southeastern Nevada rock art sites appears accurate. Approximately 65% of sites have bighorn sheep motifs and these account for 11.5% of all motifs in the region. Almost half of all bighorn sheep motifs in our sample were identified from sites in the Mount Irish and Shooting Gallery areas, illustrating patterning in their frequency of occurrence.

At both these areas, a single site has large numbers of bighorn sheep motifs; at Shooting Gallery one site contains 59% of that area's bighorn sheep motifs and at Mount Irish a single site accounts for 45% of all bighorn sheep designs in the area. Bighorn sheep designs are much less common at

## *Preliminary Report on LCAI Round 1 Project (continued)*

sites with Fremont anthropomorphs and are variably present at Pahrnagat style sites. Bighorn sheep forms range from life-size (or larger) portrayals to the miniature. They very rarely form compositions that could be described as illustrating hunting expeditions. More common is the small number of sites that illustrate the repeated theme of sheep being chased by coyotes.

Basin and Range “tradition” rock art comprises rectilinear and curvilinear abstract designs, stick-figure anthropomorphs, and stylistically undifferentiated zoomorphs. It is a general rubric for rock art motif types whose formal attributes are very similar and are widespread in the Great Basin region. Quantitative analysis is necessary to determine whether variation in assemblage composition can be identified and related to spatio-temporal units. As more work is done analyzing formal variability in various zoomorph motif types and quantifying abstract design types, it may be possible to refine understandings of the stylistic properties of Basin and Range tradition rock art in Lincoln County and identify distinct regional signatures in its distribution. This tradition of rock art always accompanies other rock art styles in the region and its production is not period-specific.

Pahrnagat style anthropomorphs are well represented in our sample sites. This style was first identified at sites in the Pahrnagat Valley area by Heizer and Hester (1974) and its stylistic characteristics developed by the work of Steve Stoney and William White. It comprises two anthropomorph types that co-occur at the type site (Black Canyon) and at other sites in its distribution zone. One type is a rectangular bodied form that usually is internally decorated with grids, dots, lines and rows of dots, or geometric motifs, and often terminated by short vertical lines on the bottom line of the rectangle. It often lacks a head but has stick-figure legs and short arms that may hold an object, usually an atlatl-like design. At its most schematic this form lacks a head, arms, and legs, becoming “an internally decorated rectangle...difficult to identify on formal criteria alone.” This form is usually referred to as a Pahrnagat pattern bodied anthropomorph (PBA) (White 2005). The second form has a solid-pecked ovoid or rectangular body, large eyes made by using negative space, and a short line extending from the top of its head. Its arms are generally shown downturned or outstretched with long fingers.

Despite the attention this style has received it is, in fact, a relatively rare and narrowly distributed anthropomorph type. This style has been identified at approximately 27 sites

ranging from Black Canyon in Pahrnagat Valley to White River Narrows in the north; its easternmost distribution appears to be a single PBA at a site in Kane Springs Valley.

This style only occurs in large numbers in the vicinity of Black Canyon and Delamar Flat. At Black Canyon, Gilreath (et al. 2011) reported 103 Pahrnagat style anthropomorphs at 5 sites; 59 examples are known at Delamar Flat (Quinlan et al. 2013). The next biggest concentrations of this style are 13 at from a site in the Shooting Gallery area, 13 at a site in Six Mile Flat, and 25 at Shaman Hill in the Mount Irish area. The PBA variant is the most common expression of the Pahrnagat style; for example, at Shaman Hill only 6 examples of the solid-bodied type are present and only 17 at the Black Canyon sites recorded by Far Western (Gilreath et al. 2011).

This style is traditionally assigned a Middle Archaic to early Late Archaic age range based on the PBAs that appear to be holding atlatls (White and Orndorff 1999). Inventory of the archaeology of the type site’s area (Black Canyon) fitted this general range, but indicated that use of the area was most intensive in the Late Archaic (Gilreath et al. 2011). Similarly, archaeological survey of the Mount Irish area, where this style also occurs, by Utah State indicated a general period of use from the Middle to Late Archaic, with settlement most intensive during the Late Archaic (Fawcett et al. 1993).

The style of Fremont anthropomorphs in eastern Nevada is strongly associated with Sevier Fremont types. This form comprises triangular or trapezoidal torsos, triangular or rectangular heads, often executed in outline forms when pecked and as in-filled solid bodies when painted. At their most schematic they have “bucket”-shaped heads and no limbs. They frequently have bodily adornment, such as earrings or “horns.”

This style of anthropomorph is associated with the Fremont culture based on formal similarities with clay figurines that belong to that culture’s material culture repertoire. Also, when this Fremont anthropomorph type is found in association with dateable archaeological materials, these materials tend to be Fremont in age.

During our survey we found Fremont style anthropomorphs to be concentrated in distribution to Meadow Valley Wash (Condor Canyon), Rainbow Canyon, and Upper Kane Springs Wash. Possible Fremont style anthropomorphs were identified in association with Pahrnagat style types at the Shooting Gallery area and at Mount Irish though the cultural affiliation of the latter style



## *Preliminary Report on LCAI Round 1 Project (continued)*

remains unresolved. That is, Fremont rock art is concentrated in Fremont settlement areas in southeastern Nevada.

Rock art is often assumed to potentially be an indicator of cultural identity, so it is tempting to associate the archaeological signatures associated with the region's Archaic hunter-foragers, semi-horticulturalists, and Numic hunter-foragers with distinctive anthropomorph styles. But, as a manifestation of symbolic and social practices, rock art may be more reflective of localized expressions of regionally widespread social processes.

The general emergence of elaborate non-stick-figure anthropomorph types in rock art is typically associated with Ancestral Puebloan and Fremont cultural adaptations in the southwest and eastern Basin, though is also famously evidenced at the Coso Range of eastern California. Both Fremont and Pahrnagat styles are reflective of this general regional development in rock art of making idealized and ideological representations of the human form. We can only speculate on the role that Pahrnagat and Fremont style idealized visions of the body may have played in the daily presentation of self and the negotiation of identity. These styles may reflect changes in the social and ritual practices that accompanied changes in economic adaptations and land-use patterns. Social legitimation is often achieved by establishing a link to the past by making manifest in the present the actions of past cultural agents and institutions. Using enduring symbolic marks in the landscape is potentially one powerful way for present social agents to create precedents for the veracity and authority of their social performances and roles.

Although rock art is abundant in Lincoln County, it is only found at certain places in the settled landscape. Rock art is found only at certain habitation sites that contain milling stations, for example, or only at certain hunting locales. This begs the question of why the locales of these milling stations or these hunting locales were marked by rock art; why certain aspects of daily life were performed against a backdrop of cultural symbolism.

Identifying spatial variability in rock art styles, themes, and archaeological contexts may allow the structure of culturally significant landscapes recognized by prehistoric populations to be described. Current explanatory approaches such as hunting-magic and shamanism can be generalized to testable propositions concerning rock art's distribution in the landscape and patterning in its associated archaeological contexts. Exploring whether styles and motif

assemblage composition can be related to specific landscape, environmental, and archaeological contexts refocuses attention to why rock art is distributed the way it is in the landscape. Ultimately, all archaeology attempts to explain why the residues of past economic and social behaviors occur in the places they do. Rock art is no different, but its study offers the chance to reconstruct how prehistoric populations categorized their environments as social landscapes in addition to the economic land-use classifications that much archaeology concentrates on.

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The Nevada Rock Art Foundation's principal objectives are to document rock art sites at risk and work to conserve and ensure the integrity and future protection of all Nevada Rock Art sites.

The Foundation respects the cultural heritage and traditions of all indigenous people in all its activities.

The Past  
Deserves a Future

## Code of Ethics

*The NEVADA ROCK ART FOUNDATION subscribes to the following code of ethics and its members, as a condition of membership, agree to abide by the standards of conduct stated herein.*

1. NRAF respects the cultural and spiritual significance of rock art sites and shall not engage in any activity that adversely affects site integrity. NRAF members will be respectful at rock art sites—many are regarded as sacred by indigenous peoples and as such will be treated as a valued part of our shared cultural heritage.
2. NRAF members will strictly adhere to all local, state, and national antiquities laws. All research or educational activities taking place at rock art sites shall be subject to appropriate regulations and property access requirements.
3. All rock art recording shall be nondestructive with regard to the rock art itself and any associated archaeological remains that may be present.
4. No artifacts shall be collected unless the work is done as part of a legally constituted program of archaeological survey or excavation and with express permission of the landholder.
5. No excavation shall be conducted unless the work is done as part of a legally constituted excavation project and with the express permission of the landholder. Removal of soil shall not be undertaken at any time for the sole purpose of exposing subsurface rock art.

*Working for the Conservation of Nevada's Rock Art Heritage*

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