

GREAT BASIN GLYPH NOTES

NEVADA ROCK ART FOUNDATION

4TH QUARTER 2012 MEMBER INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ROCK ART ORGANIZATIONS

Volume 11-4



As 2012 ends and 2013 begins, we can reflect with pride on the work accomplished during the year and its contribution to NRAF's 10-year history of promoting rock art conservation through site documentation, research, and public education. Notable accomplishments include:

- recording the Gathering Petroglyph site in Lincoln County;
- enhancing NRAF's public education program by publishing an e-book on the Lagomarsino Canyon Petroglyph Site; and
- developing an interpretive component to our website.

These accomplishments were made possible with the assistance of grants from BLM, the Nevada SHPO and highlights the productive strategic partnerships that NRAF has developed with government agencies over the past decade.

NRAF submitted a National Historic Landmark nomination for Lagomarsino Canyon, again with the support of the Nevada SHPO and STOREY COUNTY. Given the importance of Lagomarsino Canyon to the history of NRAF, particularly its role in developing our recordation methods and the special place it held for Alanah Woody, it was fitting that the nomination process for the site began in our anniversary year.

Work commenced on a project to publicly interpret rock art at the White River Narrows Archaeological District (Lincoln County) through a website and brochure, supported by a grant from the LCAI administered by the BLM.

When NRAF was founded in 2002, the tasks of site recordation, monitoring, and public education were emphasized as the most immediate priorities. Research was a long-term goal, to be worked on when better data was available and the sites most at risk were recorded. From the outset, Alanah Woody knew that recording sites in isolation, producing mountains of uninterpreted data, does not in itself lead to better knowledge of rock art or its protection. She always envisaged that for NRAF to fully meet its mission that the data gathered during fieldwork needed to be presented to the public and professional communities, and organized into a robust archive that serves both site management and research.

In ten years with your support and that of our strategic partners, NRAF has made enormous strides toward establishing such an archive of Nevada rock art data. Research is the best way to ensure that the knowledge of prehistoric lifeways embedded in rock art is preserved for posterity. If nothing else, time is slowly eroding away rock art, making the work you have supported and done for the last decade such an important contribution to science. It also provides the basis where we can now start answering the questions about rock art that we all want to know, as well as providing a unique perspective on prehistoric lifeways.

As NRAF enters its second decade, we can reflect on the accomplishments in site recordation made to date and look forward to building the research infrastructure that will define our future.

Changes for the Board of Directors

As reported in the previous issue of Great Basin Glyph Notes (11-3), changes in Board leadership and roles were expected at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in November, following the announcement by **Pat Barker** of his intention to step down as Board President. Pat will continue to serve on the Board as interim Treasurer while volunteering as a research associate to the Foundation. Pat served as Board President for four years and is the last remaining charter Board member.



Alice Baldrice,
President of the
Board of Directors

Taking on the challenge of Board Presidency is **Alice Baldrice** who, prior to retiring, was the Deputy Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer. Alice has long worked for the protection of archaeological sites, but in recent years she has devoted more time to public archaeology and historic preservation, helping to develop Nevada's Archaeology Awareness and Historic Preservation Month celebrated every May. Alice believes that public education and actively engaging the public are critical for effective historic preservation.

Other changes in Officers include the election of **Anne Higgins** to serve as Vice-President of the Board of Directors and **Kevin Rafferty** as Secretary. Anne is well-known as a volunteer in the field and office, and has used her background as a database programmer/analyst to develop a research database for NRAF. Kevin is the Department Chair of Human Behavior at the College of Southern Nevada and has supported archaeological research and historic preservation in southern Nevada for 30 years.

Retiring from the Board after six years service is **Dianne Jennings**. During her tenure on the Board Dianne was an active member of the Development and Finance Committees and was particularly interested in fostering greater public appreciation for rock art's artistic and heritage legacy.

Mark Boatwright continues to serve as a Technical Advisor. He has worked as a professional archaeologist for over 25 years and is most interested in issues related to historic preservation and conservation of cultural resources.

The Board welcomes two new members—**Roberta (Bobbie) McGonagle** and **Matt Schneider** who respectively bring additional archaeological and legal expertise to the Board. Bobbie McGonagle has been involved with archaeological research in the Great Basin since 1970 and earned a PHD from the University of Missouri, Columbia, in 1974. She worked for 31 years as an archaeologist for the BLM Battle Mountain District and has recorded rock art as well as aspen carvings. Matt Schneider is an Attorney who specializes in representing the interests of children. Matt's public service includes volunteering for a range of organizations devoted to environmental conservation and animal welfare, as well as rock art conservation.



Volunteer Profile: Teri Ligon

by Janice Hoke

Teri Ligon startled everyone at the NRAF Northern Nevada potluck in September by arriving on her new, fast, brightly colored Ninja motorcycle. But we should have expected it! Teri is an adventurous woman who loves to learn new skills.



*Teri on her bike.
Photo by Janice Hoke*

Currently, Teri works at Naval Aviation Station Fallon, using her Geographic Information System knowledge for range support. She is very tech savvy but unlike most “geeks,” she also loves to get away from the office and put her boots on the ground. She has spent many happy miles wandering Nevada, following an early GPS hooked into a laptop. She discovered geocaching, biking, hiking, and camping and traveled with an inflatable kayak in the back of her 1995 Toyota 4Runner and a shovel, axe, massive car jack and supplies in the rack on top.

So in 2003, when she met three people wearing shirts with the NRAF logo wandering through the Carson Nugget where she worked in marketing support, she was intrigued. They were in one of the first training sessions taught by NRAF co-founder Alanah Woody at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City. Although not enrolled, she “crashed” the

training session on the second day and impressed Woody with her attention to detail and her dedication.

“You’re going to go to Lagomarsino,” Woody told her at the end of the training. Teri didn’t know where or what “Lagomarsino” was, but she was hooked. Woody asked her to start with a menial job: labeling slides, which Teri did to perfection with her tiny, precise handwriting. “I’ll do the dirty work. I want to be with the people in the background. I don’t like being in charge,” Teri explained. Volunteering each year but one of the five years of sessions that accomplished the feat of documenting more than 2,500 rock art panels at Lagomarsino Canyon, she learned all sorts of skills – drawing, IMACS, GPS, photo support, and loved it all. She also helped document sites at Grimes Point and Dry Lakes.

In 2006, Woody asked Teri if she knew what GIS was. NRAF needed help and Teri said, “How do I learn it?” The answer: Go to college. Although Teri graduated from Carson High School, she hadn’t planned on higher education. But she enrolled in Western Nevada Community College, even toughing out an English class she hated. She has kept at it, one class per semester, including an long-overdue anthropology class, and now is only three classes away from an Associate degree in GIS.

What draws Teri to NRAF and Nevada is “a sense of place.” Looking down from an airliner inbound to Reno over the Lovelock area, she thought to herself, “I know this place. I know the tiny traces of history from fifty to 5,000 years ago.”

She’s driven and truded over the terrain, from Rye Patch Reservoir to Seven Troughs, to Antelope and Sulphur and the Applegate-Lassen immigrant trail, an area of 130 miles with no paved roads. “There is layer upon layer upon layer of Nevada there.” She intends to keep on discovering Nevada and its treasures, including its rock art. And she’s signed up to learn a new skill: motorcycle maintenance and repair.

The Stylistic Context of Northern Sierra Nevada Rock Art

by Angus R. Quinlan

The term “Style 7” is used to describe the abstract-dominated rock art of the northern Sierra Crest, found at elevations above 5,000 feet, and associated with the Middle Archaic Martis archaeological complex (ca. 4,000-1,500 BP), a specialized economic adaptation. Style 7 is often contrasted with abstract rock art traditions elsewhere in the Great Basin, although a closer look suggests that Style 7 may not be distinct enough to be differentiated stylistically from other abstract Great Basin rock art traditions. However, the general approach used in the northern Sierra has revealed some important patterning between rock art and seasonal residential patterns that should stimulate similar research elsewhere. And the study of Style 7 rock art raises wider questions about how style is identified in Great Basin rock art and what style can tell archaeologists about cultural systems.

Archaeologists have a great interest in style because it is seen as a potential indicator of cultural affiliation and dating, but it is a notoriously elusive concept and one for which a unitary theory has not been agreed upon. Sackett (1990) raised the question *where does style reside?* Is it the way that something was made (technique), the raw material selected (medium), or the characteristics that distinguish the finished product from other functionally similar products that are classed as belonging to other cultures or times (form)? We could also add style as how something was used, revealed archaeologically by context of deposition. That is, style is also behavioral rather than just a formal property, something exemplified by northern Sierra rock art.

In Great Basin rock art, definitions of style have drawn heavily on the morphological attributes of only a subset of motifs (primarily anthropomorphs and zoomorphs). Style is more generally identified by tracking variability of expression in common subjects or themes, rather than subsets. Among Basin and Range tradition rock art (which characterizes much Great Basin abstract rock art) that Style 7 closely resembles formally, rectilinear and curvilinear abstract designs, and stylistically undifferentiated stick-figure anthropomorphs and zoomorphs are prevalent. Because technique, medium, and form are similar, stylistic identification depends on quantitative analysis to categorize

variation in motif assemblage composition that can be related to archaeological cultures and periods.

Style 7 was first defined by Louis Payen, with later work drawing attention to an apparent association in distribution with Martis sites at high elevation in the northern Sierra. Payen rejected stylistic approaches that considered only subject matter or technique, viewing these instead as attributes that should both be taken into consideration in identifying stylistic unity and differentiation. Contextual considerations, such as landscape and associated archaeology, played an important role in Payen’s classification as he worked with the problem of ordering and differentiating assemblages composed of generic abstract motif types. Accordingly, Payen’s approach is surprisingly sophisticated for its time.

Payen identified nine broad motif classes: dot, line, circle, wavy line, spiral, U-shape, vulvaform, tracks, and naturalistic [zoomorphs and anthropomorphs]). He then used ‘styles’ to describe the relative frequency of the occurrence of his nine motif classes at his sample sites, identifying seven “styles” in the process.

Style 7 is defined as the High Sierra Abstract-Representational, a petroglyph style characterized by a greater range of motif type variation and number of motifs at its sites. Circles, lines, wavy lines, and animal tracks are the primary motif types used, but dots, spirals, U-shapes, and “naturalistic” motifs also occur regularly though in much lower frequencies. Animal tracks, specifically bear paw prints, are a “diagnostic trait for defining this style, since it occurs in varying frequencies at all but two sites” (Payen 1966:64). Sites lack strong archaeological associations and occur above 5,000 feet, concentrated along the Sierra Crest north and west of Lake Tahoe.

Based on its formal criteria, it is difficult to discriminate Style 7 from Payen’s Style 6 since both are defined as emphasizing circular forms. Both styles could be accommodated in Heizer and Baumhoff’s classification of the Great Basin curvilinear substyle; a pecked tradition characterized by a predominance of circular forms, meanders, and undulating lines. It is noticeable that in practice Payen’s schema is a thematic

The Stylistic Context of Northern Sierra Nevada Rock Art (continued)

classification that describes observed patterning, with the most critical variables being elevation and geography rather than the formal properties of rock art. The schema lacks both statistical measures to quantify impressionistic observations and morphological criteria for differentiating stylistic variations in motif types. Consequently, although Payen's work may describe well the properties of Sierran rock art, it does not formally or quantifiably differentiate it from abstract traditions of rock art to the east in the western Great Basin. Payen's work does, however, identify the important theme of variability in the landscape and settlement contexts of different subject matter, correlating regional differences in rock art themes to seasonal residential patterns.

Payen's stylistic classification has largely been used minimally unchanged by subsequent researchers who have used it to order rock art data from a much larger sample of sites. Foster et al. (2005) identified 92 sites as examples of Style 7, focusing their motif analysis on anthropomorphs and bear paw prints. They concluded that the latter are formally indistinguishable from generic specimens of this type in North America, and that the former occur only as stick-figure types and are rare.

The larger sample described by Foster et al. is located on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada crest, with two exceptions, and range in elevation from 4,620-7,640 ft. Illuminating that Style 7 rock art is not defined on a consideration of style as a formal property but, rather, style as a behavioral attribute (in this case, the choice of where to make rock art), Foster et al. exclude three of Payen's original Style 7 sites that are located in the lower foothills. Effectively then, Style 7 is simply rock art found above 5,000 feet in the northern Sierra crest. Commenting on the general properties of Style 7's location, Foster et al. do make the important observation that it was "created with relationship to cultural activities that were specific to these restricted high-elevation environments" but do not explore the difference between it and lower elevation sites in the Sierra.

Consideration of Style 7 in isolation does not resolve the broader issue of whether Martis is a cultural unit or an archaeological label. Although Martis artifact assemblages have been reported at or near Style 7 rock art sites, the general archaeological

signature associated with Style 7 sites is scant and undistinguished in terms of feature types. The distribution of Style 7 sites within the zone of high-elevation Martis sites is suggestive, but the question should be: if Style 7 is Martis rock art, why is it not coterminous with the wider distribution of Martis archaeology and why does its character apparently change so dramatically at lower elevations?

Thus, the status of Style 7 as a distinctive style is unproven on formal and quantifiable attributes. Maybe it is better to view it as a localized expression of widespread abstract rock art traditions found throughout western North America. Distinctive economic adaptations (if Martis is such) are not necessarily accompanied by distinctive symbolic systems of representation and signification (such as Style 7 rock art). Rather, it is distinctive social practices that may survive in the symbolic record.

What research on Sierran rock art has revealed is the significant question of "why these sets of symbols, artifacts, at these places in the landscape; what made these material culture sets appropriate to be placed or marked in distinct topographic features?" (Bradley 2000) *i.e.*, is the character of Style 7 distinctive to upland summer activities, or to places only seasonally accessible and located high above winter aggregation sites; is Style 7 an expression of different social categorizations of the landscape reflected in different seasonal residential patterns? Studies of Style 7 indicate a general direction for other researchers to pursue, to explore style in rock as the different ways that peoples marked their social landscapes.

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As a member of the NEVADA ROCK ART FOUNDATION, you will become an important participant in discovering and preserving the cultural and artistic legacy of the prehistory of Nevada. Your membership will support the protection and preservation of Nevada Rock Art through programs of documentation, research, and public education.

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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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