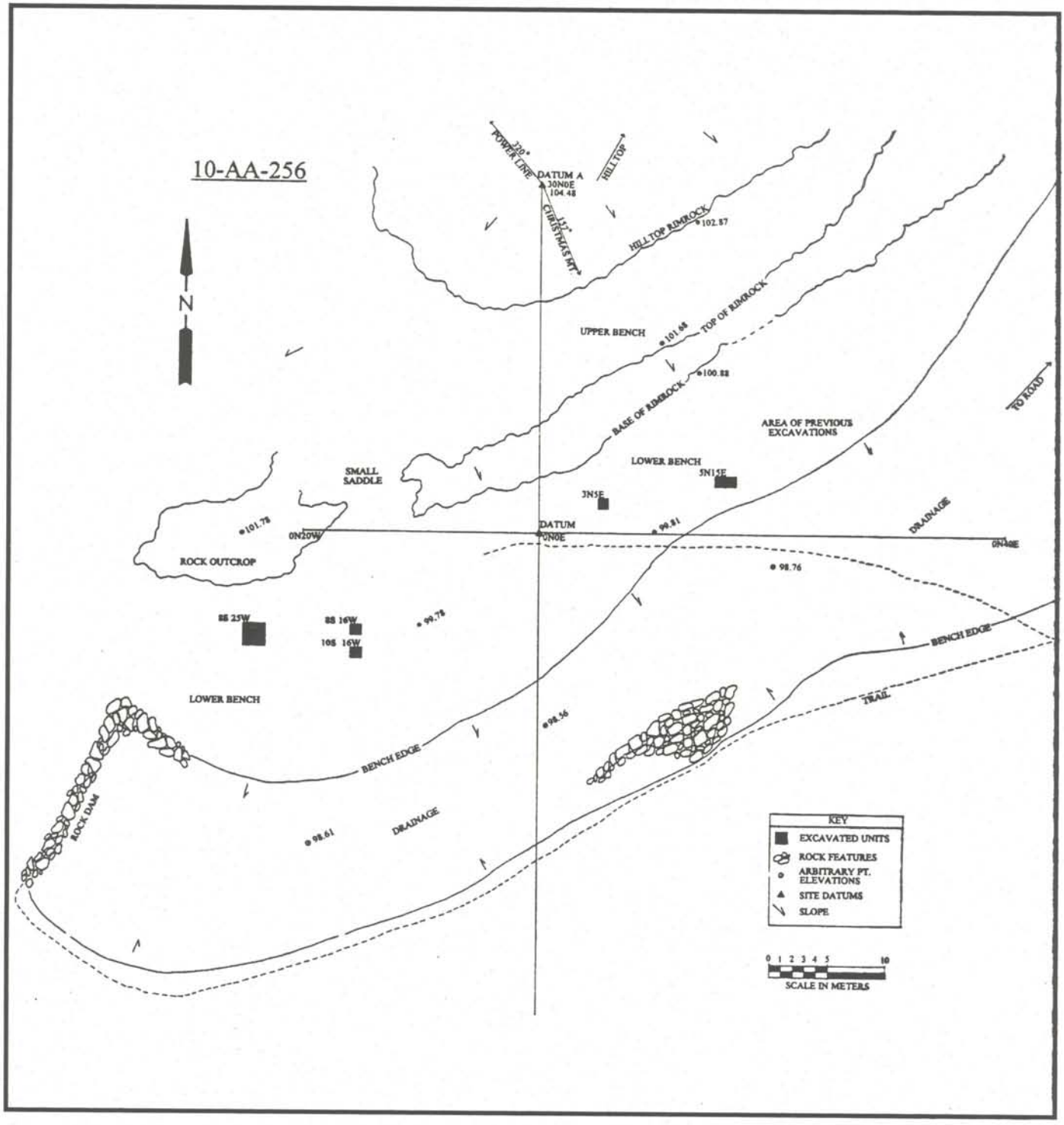
IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST

ISSN 0893-2271



Volume 21, Number 2

Volume 21, Number 2
Fall 1998

IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST

The ***IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST*** is published semi-annually by the Idaho Archaeological Society in cooperation with the College of Social Science and Public Affairs, Boise State University. The ***IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST*** is the journal of the Idaho Archaeological Society, a non-profit association of professional and amateur archaeologists, organized under the laws of the State of Idaho. Subscriptions are $12.00 per year and may be obtained by writing the ***IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST***, Department of Anthropology, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, Boise, Idaho 83725.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST EXCAVATIONS AT 10-AA-256, SOUTHWEST IDAHO

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Boise State University

INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) committing the parties to monitor archaeological sites in the Orchard Training Area (OTA) south of Boise. The agreement was based upon an earlier archaeological reconnaissance (see Addington 1987) which identified 70 cultural resource sites. Since 1989, the BLM has monitored the 28 significant sites as identified in the 1989 MOA with the Idaho Army National Guard. During the fall of 1993, the Idaho Army National Guard, Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Anthropology, Boise State University (BSU), initiated discussion regarding BSU's cooperation in monitoring the cultural resource sites in the OTA. These discussions led to a draft of an amendment to the MOA which includes Boise State University as a partner with BLM and IDARNG. The inclusion of BSU in the cooperative agreement will increase protection for the historic properties and facilitate the educational programs at Boise State University.

Following completion of the original agreement, BLM staff under the direction of Judith Willig, a University of Oregon graduate student, conducted test excavations at site 10-AA-256. The investigation was recommended on the basis of a monitoring report by Frank Jenks who observed evidence of vandalism on the terrace. A test excavation was undertaken to determine the nature and significance of the property. Willig's excavations indicated a range of cultural materials suggesting a variety of short term uses of the location. In order to further evaluate the site, BSU proposed to conduct a data recovery effort in conjunction with its annual Archaeological Field School. Following a site visit in March, 1994 in the company of BLM archaeologist Lois Palmgren, excavations were conducted between May 30 and June 10, 1994.

The data recovery plan emphasized a number of research parameters which are of relevance to the greater Birds of Prey Area (see Plew 1994). The following questions guided the excavations at 10-AA-256: (1) What was the depositional and post-depositional history of the site? (2) When and for how long was the site occupied? and (3) To what extent does technological diversity of the assemblage reflect settlement organization and mobility?

GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

The OTA, which is located 15 miles south of Boise, includes 130,000 acres as part of the greater Birds of Prey Area and is characterized by a relatively flat lava plain with scattered low basalt buttes and cinder cones interspersed by shallow intermittent drainages and small playas. A number of the more prominent features including Big Foot Butte and Christmas Mountain are remnants of shield volcanoes which produced the original lava flows upon which the existing plain rests (Malde 1965). These features rise above the surrounding plain which ranges between elevations of 2800-3300 feet ASL.

The environment is dry desert with precipitation ranging between 8" and 12" per year. Sediments consist mainly of eolian (loess) deposits which have been further sorted and redeposited by constant wind action. Some alluvial deposition containing higher levels of silt are found in association with small intermittent drainages. Vegetation is characterized by a series of intrusive and alien species which result from overgrazing by domestic livestock and wildfires (Yensen 1982). At present cheatgrass, mustards and exotic weeds constitute approximately 65% of the vegetative cover of the OTA (see Addington 1987:9) with lesser percentages of sagebrush, shadscale and winterfat. Paleoenvironmental contexts would have been characterized by wider distribution of the sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass-Thurber needlegrass community which includes a variety of plants utilized by historic populations of the region.

The paleoenvironmental context has been explored by Henry (1984) whose excavations at Murphey Rockshelter some three miles south of the OTA provides a vegetative chronology spanning more than 10,000 years. Henry argues that the sequence begins with the appearance of a "grass-like" vegetation approximately 10,350 years ago.

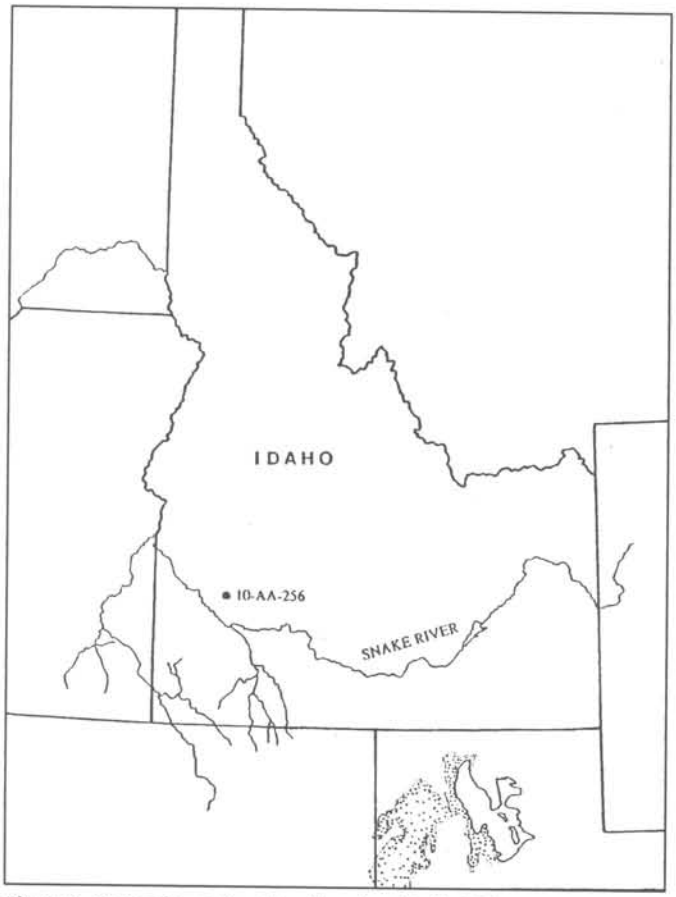

Figure 1. General Location Map Showing 10-AA-256

This would have supported the megafauna believed to be commonly distributed throughout the area. A second period from 9,900 B.P. to 6,250 B.P. marks the emergence of the shadscale steppe community which suggests a somewhat warmer and drier climate. A third rather brief episode occurs between 6,350 B.P. and 5,900 B.P. and is characterized by a return to cooler-moister conditions. Between 5,900 B.P. and 3,500 B.P. sagebrush became an important element of the vegetative community. The period also exhibits greater diversity of species. After 3,000 B.P. the shadscale community is predominate. These episodic changes, which were no doubt affected by varied local precipitation and moisture, suggest patterns which would have been variously utilized by native populations.

Associated with the modern vegetative distributions are forty-one documented animal species (Groves and Mark 1985). These include a variety of small mammals and birds. Common mammals include the Townsend's ground squirrel and the badger. The ground squirrel, mentioned by Steward (1938) as an important food resource during camas collecting expeditions to Camas Prairie, are most abundant during the spring. Common birds include owls and hawks which hunt rabbits commonly found in sagebrush areas. Though no longer occurring within the OTA, antelope, bison, mule deer, elk and sage grouse are noted in earlier contexts and may have served as important food sources (see Addington 1987 for discussion).

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The most intensive investigation of the area is the Class III inventory completed in 1986 which recorded over 70 archaeological sites within the OTA (see Addington, 1987). These sites consist of lithic scatters, rock alignments, possible campsites and a range of historic materials. The OTA survey served as a basis for the development of possible testing and monitoring activities by the Idaho Army National Guard. Twenty-eight of the sites have been annually monitored by Boise State University since 1994 (see e.g. Sayer, Plager and Plew 1997).

Though not reflecting the range or level of activity found in the adjacent riverine context (see e.g. Hauer and Hughes 1996; McCabe 1998; Sayer, Plager and Plew 1997; Schellbach 1967), the OTA is marked by a number of important cave sites including Higby, Tank and Cathedral caves. These sites were the focus of test excavations conducted by Mario Delisio between 1973 and 1978. Though not fully reported, the occupations appear to date from the Early Archaic into Historic times. In one instance Elko materials have been found in association with modern bison remains. Plew (1994) has reported on pottery sherds from Higby Cave. Willig's (1988) test excavations at site 10-AA-256, suggests a varied but highly temporary use of the location.

DATA RECOVERY METHODS

Site 10-AA-256 is located on the southern base of a hill, just below a series of terraced basalt outcrop rims, adjacent to Sand Creek which skirts the hill on the south. The surface evidence on the site consists of a small lithic debris scatter with the highest concentration of flakes in the western portion of the site just below a prominent basalt outcrop. The eastern portion of the site exhibits a significantly greater vegetation cover which may have been associated with the Willig's earlier excavation.

Excavation of the site was directed by two fundamental objectives. The first was to investigate and establish the vertical and horizontal extent of the site, as well as any intersite variability in material culture. The second was to examine the site stratigraphy with particular attention given to how it may inform on the temporal context, functions and depositional context of the site.

The excavation was conducted using a meter grid system with unit coordinates given in meters north/south and east/west of the primary datum. The transit was used to lay out the grid and establish and maintain vertical control throughout the site. The site was also topographically mapped and compass bearings were taken to permanent geographical control points. In laying out the grid system we were unable to relocate the previous datum. We estimated its approximate location and established a secondary datum point ("A") which formed the northern anchor of the north-south datum line. The primary site datum was located 30m due south of point A. A terminal southern point ("B") was established on the datum line 53m south of the primary site datum. The datum line in addition to the east-west base line which also intersects the datum served as the basis for determining the location of the units excavated (See Figure 2).

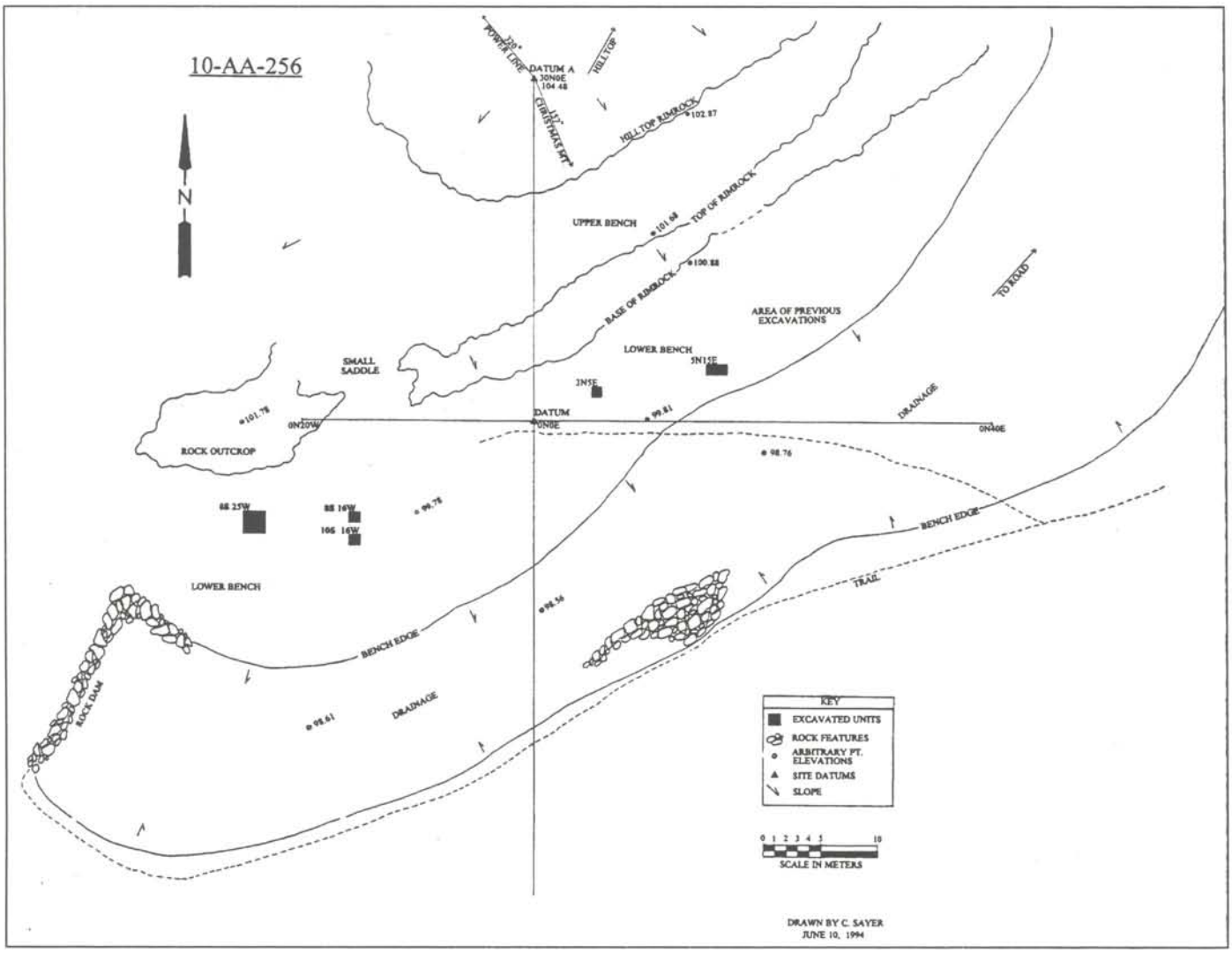

Figure 2. Map Showing the Location of Excavation Units

A total of nine square meters were excavated and included one 2x2m unit, one 1x2m unit and three 1x1m units. The northeast corner of each unit served as the pit datum point and all were excavated in arbitrary 10cm levels. Unit 2-3N/5-6E, located near the center of the site, representing the most deflated area, was excavated to 40cm below datum point. Unit 4-5N/15-17E, the furthermost eastern unit, was located near where the previous test excavation occurred. The western half of this 1x2m unit was excavated to 50cm below datum point while the eastern half was taken down to 70cm. In the western portion of the site, units 8-9N/15-16W and 10-11S/15-16W were both excavated to 30cm below datum point. Unit 8-10S/23-25W is located near the western edge of the site. The two eastern quadrants of the 2x2m unit were excavated to 20cm below datum, while the quadrants composing the western half were excavated to one meter below datum point.

All excavated sediments were passed through a 1/8" hardwire mesh, and all recovered materials were bagged and catalogued by material type and provenience. Material categories included lithic debris, artifacts, bone, shell, historic, and red ocher. Upon completion of the excavation, sediment samples were taken from the sidewall of the northwest quadrant at each 10cm level. All units were sampled in this manner. The precise coordinates within the quadrant were documented for each sample. Flotation samples were also taken from all units and in the vast majority of the arbitrary levels. The general location and elevation was recorded for each sample. Processing of the flotation samples produced almost no micro-floral/faunal data. All samples were catalogued including the horizontal and vertical provenience for each. Black and white and color photographs were taken of the floors at the base of each level. Profiles were drawn of all opened units. All of the participating students, in addition to the field director and assistant field director, kept detailed field notes.

GEOMORPHOLOGY AND STRATIGRAPHY

The geomorphic context of site 10-AA-256 is related to the development of aridisols from the parent lava flows which characterize the plain. These sediments have intermixed with wind deposited loess, organic materials and in some instances local alluvium from intermittent drainages. The development of landscape features

through erosion and deposition has resulted in a leveling of basalts and the filling in of depressions. Eolian and alluvial activity has developed and exposed the sediments and basalt outcrops characterizing 10-AA-256.

The sediments at 10-AA-256 are extremely homogeneous. Stratification is only marginally observable and consists of four strata which vary in width, but occur uniformly across all units excavated. Figure 3 is a profile drawn of the west wall in unit 8-10S/23-25W which is located in the western portion of the site. The lowest stratum lies between 100-85cm below the surface and consists of a whitish colored, mottled calcium carbonate which is highly compacted. Stratum 2 which ranges 85-40/30cm is a light tan/brown, loose to moderately compacted sandy-silt with calcium carbonate and clay inclusions occurring in the lower levels. The third stratum consisting of a highly compacted light tan/brown sandy-clay with calcium carbonate inclusions, measures approximately 20-40 centimeters in thickness and lies between 40 and 10cm. Stratum 4 extends from the surface to 10-20cm below datum and consists of loose sandy-silt. All strata exhibit numerous krotrovina, evidencing extensive rodent activity throughout the site. A recent instance of post-depositional disturbance was noted in unit 8-10S/23-25W at 30cm below the datum where a fence post with a round wire nail protruding from it was exposed. The homogenous nature of the sediments and the variable thickness of the upper strata in particular, suggests considerable eolian mixing and redeposition of sediments across the site.

Sediments analysis produced results consistent with our field observations. Sediment samples from a 100cm column profile taken Unit 8-10S/23-25W were processed for each 10cm level. Sand constituted the largest category of material accounting for a range of 54-78%. The majority was composed of fine to very fine grain particles. The remainder of the sediment consists of silt/clay which ranged from 21-45% through all level samples. The range of error documented in the processing of the ten samples ranged from .1-2.4% with a mean

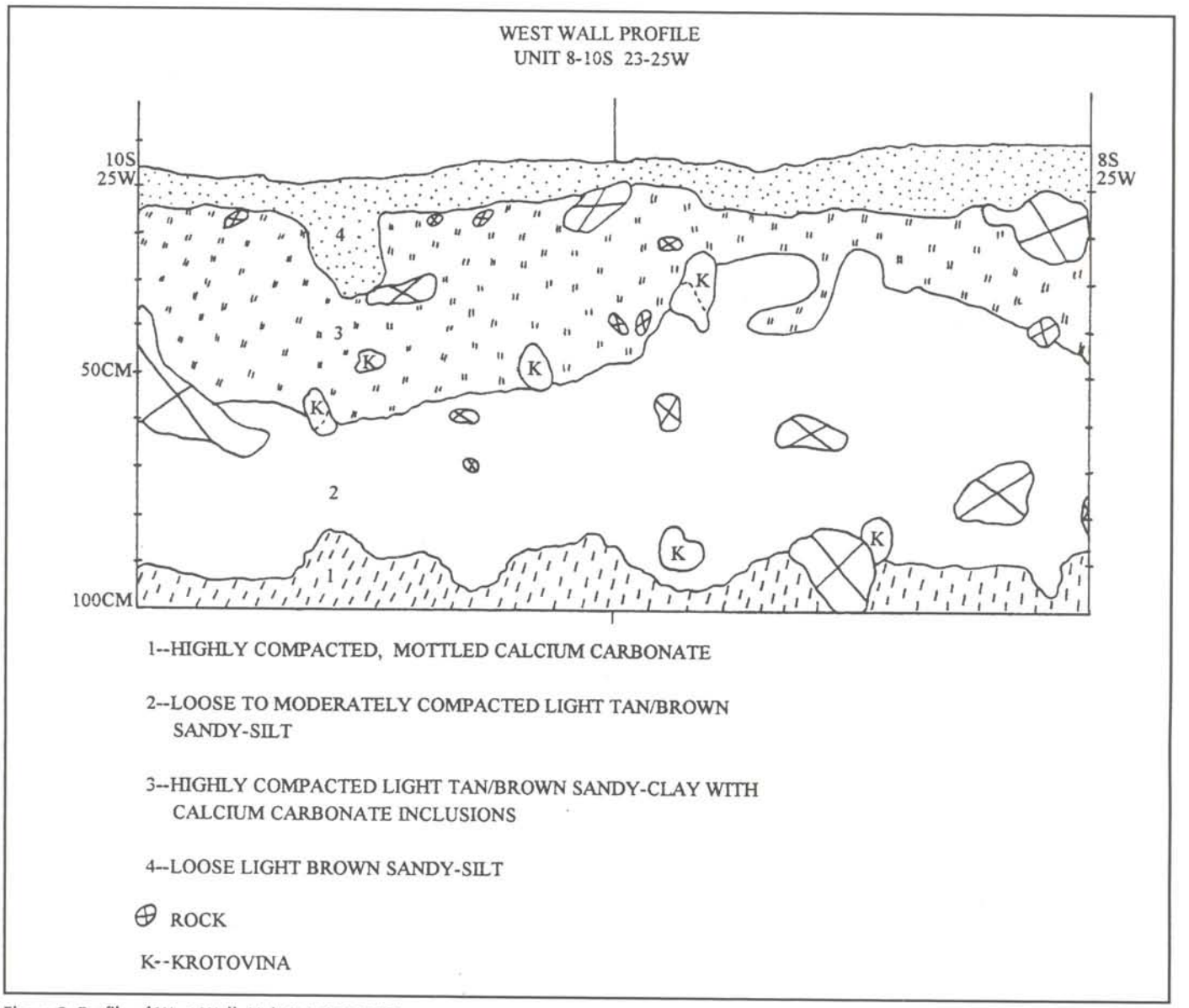

Figure 3. Profile of West Wall, Unit 8-10S 23-25W

of 1-1.7%. As noted, our analysis confirmed our field observation that the deposition is largely aeolian in nature.

A single possible cultural feature was encountered in the southeast quarter of unit 10-11S/15-16W. The possible hearth feature consisted of a somewhat circular charcoal and ash stain roughly 20cm in diameter which exhibited a basin shape in cross-section.

The center of the basin-like feature measured 7cm in depth and extended from 6-13cm below datum. The feature fill was finer and less compacted than the surrounding matrix and the bottom of the basin was marked by hard packed sediment. Small bone fragments, many of them charred, were found in the fill and lithic debris was recovered throughout the level. A few basalt nodules were noted in the centimeters above the feature, but no obvious fire cracked rocks were found in association. The charcoal was too fragmentary and sparse to provide an adequate Carbon 14 sample. The feature was mapped and photographed.

Additionally, an area of mixed charcoal/ash was recorded in the first level of the southeastern portion of unit 4-5N/15-17E, but appears to be the result of a sagebrush root burn. This determination was due to the meandering linear patterning and vertical orientation of the staining, and the presence of actual organic fibers at the base of the feature.

MATERIAL CULTURE

The artifacts recovered from 10-AA-256 consisted of six lithic items, of which none were decidedly diagnostic (See Figure 4). In the descriptive summary to follow all measurements are given according to length, width and thickness. The artifacts included one side and basal notched obsidian projectile point base (a) which measures .7cm L x .9cm W x .2cm T. The point base appears to fall within the Desert Side-Notched typological sequence. Located in the same unit and level as the side-notched point base was an obsidian projectile point basal fragment with a concave base (b). The specimen measures 1.9cm L x 1.2cm W x .5cm T and morphologically falls within the Humboldt series. Three obsidian

Table 1
ARTIFACTS

Level	Units		
	4-5N 16-17E	9-10S 24-25W	8-9S 24-25W
0-10 cm			
10-20 cm	obsidian Humboldt point base; obsidian point base		obsidian point tip
20-30 cm	obsidian point tip		
30-40 cm			
40-50 cm			
50-60 cm			
60-70 cm			obsidian point tip
70-80 cm		chert point mid-section	

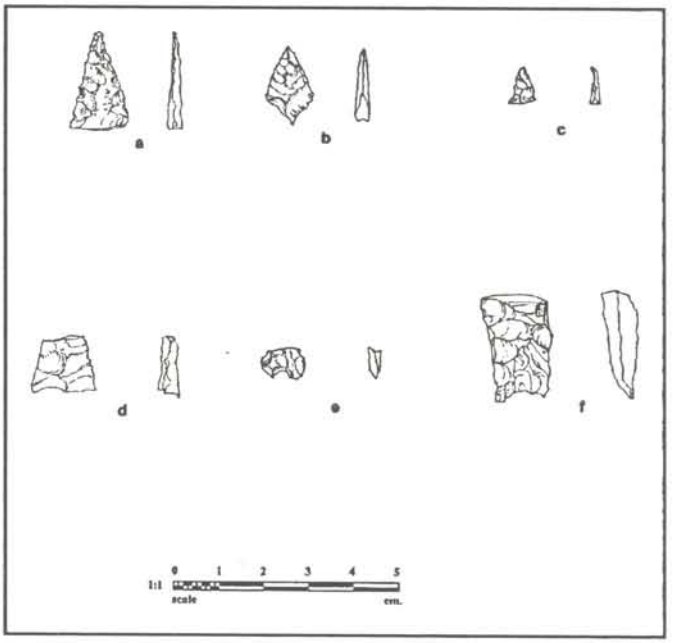

Figure 4. Artifacts from Site 10-AA-256: a-c, obsidian projectile point tips; d, chert projectile point mid-section; e, obsidian projectile point base; f, obsidian Humboldt-like projectile point

projectile point tip fragments were recovered. One was located in the same unit, one level below the two artifacts just described and measures 1.3cm L x 1.1cm W x .3cm T. A second, smaller, point tip (d), measuring .8cm L x .7cm W x .2cm T, was also recovered from the upper stratum of the site. The third obsidian point tip (e) was recovered from one of the lower strata in the site and included a substantial portion of the mid-section as well. This specimen measures 2.5cm L x 1.7cm W x .8cm T. The last item, a chert projectile point mid-section (f), was also recovered from a lower stratum, and measures 1.2 cm L x 1.5cm W x .4cm T. As shown in Table 1, four of the six artifacts were located in the upper 30cm of the site while two were recovered from below 60cm, but appear to be associated with rodent burrowing activity.

No groundstone or ceramic artifacts were recovered. An insignificant number of mussel shell fragments (N=4) were collected. Red ocher was collected, but occurs naturally in the basalt outcrops on the site, and was not found in association with cultural materials. Historic materials recovered from the site included round wire nails, bullet casings, b.b. shot, wire, plastic and a fence post, all of which indicate relatively recent intrusion or deposition.

Willig's (1989) earlier excavation recovered 11 chipped stone artifacts. These materials are similar to those recovered in the recent investigation. Notably, there are projectile and projectile fragments as well as biface fragments, a retouched flake and a possible scraper. Three additional items were described as bone tools. Our examination of the items does not confirm that conclusion.

Though speculative, the artifactual materials suggest a late Archaic occupation. This is based on the small, triangular form of the point fragments and the side-notching on one of the two basal fragments, characteristics which

fall within the Eastgate/Rose Spring and Desert Side-Notched typological sequences. The projectiles recovered in Willig's investigation include one Eastgate, one Rose Spring Side-Notched and a possible Cottonwood Triangular variant which date the materials recovered in the previous excavation to the same Late Archaic time frame. These sequences date from roughly 1,300 years B.P. into the historic period. While the Humboldt form is typically attributed to the middle Archaic (5,000 to 3,000 B.P.), the form exhibits morphological and temporal variability which extends into the late Archaic overlapping with above time-frame.

DEBITAGE ANALYSIS

Table 2 provides a general summary of the additional material remains collected during excavation. The lithic debris recovered from the site consists of obsidian (79%), basalt (15%) and cryptocrystalline (6%), indicating a strong preference for obsidian. Using Magne's classification scheme (1985, 1989) the flakes were examined and grouped into early, middle and late stages determined on the basis of the number of dorsal scars and the percentage of cortex. Cortical flakes lacking any dorsal scars and flakes evidencing only one dorsal flake scar were classed as early manufacturing stage flakes. Middle stage flakes are defined as those having two dorsal scars, while those exhibiting three or more scars are considered late stage flakes. In addition to dorsal scars, the number of platform scars was examined to determine the stage of production. The separation of flakes into stages of production provides a basis for examining the functional aspects of the site and addressing questions of technological organization and mobility. While the 10-AA-256 flake assemblage does not constitute a sample large enough to offer confident statistical statements, it does suggest a limited short term use of the site area based upon a large number of late stage flakes. The predominance of late stage flakes suggests retooling or resharpening. The larger flakes consisting of CCS and basalt materials were probably acquired locally and represent expedient tool production. Cursory examination of the lithic debris recovered from Willig's investigation indicates a large number of late stage flakes.

FAUNAL REMAINS

A total of 429 identifiable and 1,291 unidentifiable bone specimens were recovered. The faunal remains are composed largely of small and medium sized mammal bones. Species noted in the collection include rabbits (*Sylvilagus sp.*) ground squirrels (*Thomomys sp.*) and small rodents (*Rodentia*). A few larger mammal bones were concentrated in the eastern portion of the site and appear to be the remains of an antelope (*Antilocapra sp.*). Due to the extensive rodent activity in the area, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the faunal remains were deposited by cultural or non-cultural forces. Only 411 faunal remains showed evidence of charring which suggests that not all of the assemblage is associated with food procurement and processing (See Table 2). None of the bones exhibit cut or butchering marks. No fish or reptilian bones were noted.

Table 2
SUMMARY OF MATERIAL REMAINS RECOVERED FROM SITE 10-AA-256

Level	Lithic Debris			Bone		Shell	Historic
	Obsidian	Cryptocrystalline	Basalt	Charred	Green		
Unit 2-3N 5-6E							
0-10 cm	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
10-20 cm	5	0	1	4	1	0	0
20-30 cm	7	3	3	0	3	0	0
30-40 cm	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unit 4-5N 15-16E							
0-10 cm	15	3	0	0	2	0	0
10-20 cm	21	6	0	2	120	0	0
20-30 cm	14	3	0	0	15	0	0
30-40 cm	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
40-50 cm	15	1	1	1	17	0	0
Unit 4-5N 16-17E							
0-10 cm	11	0	1	0	4	0	0
10-20 cm	38	9	5	4	32	0	0
20-30 cm	45	0	6	34	84	0	0
30-40 cm	13	2	4	14	22	0	0

Table 2 continued
SUMMARY OF MATERIAL REMAINS RECOVERED FROM SITE 10-AA-256

Level	Lithic Debris			Bone		Shell	Historic
	Obsidian	Cryptocrystalline	Basalt	Charred	Green		
40-50 cm	4	0	1	9	18	0	0
50-60 cm	4	0	0	7	10	0	0
60-70 cm	1	0	0	12	24	0	0
Unit 8-9N 15-16W							
0-10 cm	28	5	3	0	4	0	1
10-20 cm	24	10	0	7	18	0	0
20-30 cm	13	0	4	1	0	0	0
Unit 8-9S 23-24W							
0-10 cm	2	1	0	0	12	0	6
10-20 cm	27	5	1	12	81	0	5
Unit 8-9S 24-25W							
0-10 cm	12	4	0	0	0	0	8
10-20 cm	15	1	0	0	4	0	1
20-30 cm	14	3	0	0	29	0	2
30-40 cm	23	0	0	7	57	0	0
40-50 cm	15	0	0	0	38	0	0
50-60 cm	17	1	0	3	27	0	0
60-70 cm	16	1	0	1	83	0	0
70-80 cm	8	2	2	3	61	0	0
80-90 cm	1	1	0	3	12	0	1
90-100 cm	3	2	0	1	23	0	0
Unit 9-10S 23-24W							
0-10 cm	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-20 cm	17	2	6	2	2	0	0
Unit 9-10S 24-25W							
0-10 cm	5	0	0	0	0	0	3
10-20 cm	16	1	0	0	18	0	3
20-30 cm	15	4	0	4	27	0	1
30-40 cm	18	2	0	6	103	0	0
40-50 cm	13	1	1	6	26	0	2
50-60 cm	11	3	0	4	54	0	0
60-70 cm	11	1	1	6	86	2	1
70-80 cm	15	3	1	14	132	0	1
80-90 cm	2	1	0	1	36	9	0
90-100 cm	5	2	1	3	28	0	0
Unit 10-11S 15-16W							
0-10 cm	10	7	3	200	0	0	0
10-20 cm	34	5	4	40	6	0	0
20-30 cm	16	3	1	0	0	0	0

CONCLUSIONS

The test excavations at 10-AA-256 provide useful though inconclusive evidence regarding prehistoric activity. The questions which guided our data recovery did provide, however, a limited means of assessing the geomorphic nature of the site as well as its probable temporal and functional contexts.

Excavations indicate that the deposits consist of aridisols developed from the surrounding parent basalts which have mixed extensively with wind deposited loess, and in some instances alluvium from intermittent drainages. These sediments have filled depressions eroded from the basalts giving the appearance of a relatively leveled landscape. The sediments which are extremely homogeneous contain noticeable calcium carbonate levels. The deposits show little organic material except for that introduced by rodent activity.

Though cultural materials were noted as much as one meter below the surface, the majority of remains were found in the upper 30cm of the deposit. Cultural material consists of lithic debris, animal bone and six (6) generalized tools. Though temporally undiagnostic, the five projectile point fragments appear to be from Late Archaic types. Faunal remains represent fauna found presently in the area. The absence of any cultural features suggests short term occupations.

Analysis of lithic debris is inconclusive with respect to the level of production activity at the site. Though overall the analysis of flake attributes suggests late stage manufacturing or retooling activity, the assemblage is too small to allow for a definitive conclusion. The predominance of obsidian suggests that some materials are being brought onto the locality while more expedient tools appear to have been manufactured locally from cryptocrystalline and basalt materials available nearby.

On the basis of the excavations, it is impossible to determine the precise use of the site. It seems unlikely, however, that the site is a butchering location as described in the original site form. We found no evidence in the faunal collection that would suggest butchering activity. Nor are there tools of the type normally associated with such activity. The paucity of faunal data suggest a very temporary and specific task area. In this regard, 10-AA-256 appears to represent a series of very short term uses of the location. Given the absence of water and game during summer months its seems likely that the area may have been visited during the spring and perhaps winter months by small groups in transit or by small hunting parties.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier version of this report was submitted to the BLM in fulfillment of our MOA. We wish to thank Carl Madsen, our Assistant Field Director, and Dana Schuster for her illustration of the artifacts. Lois Palmgren, BLM, and Majorie McHenry (IDARNG) helped facilitate the project. They and their respective agencies have been very supportive of efforts to preserve and protect cultural resources on the OTA.

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SHORT CONTRIBUTIONS

NET SINKER FROM HIGBY CAVE, SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

Mark G. Plew
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Though evidence of the role of fishing in aboriginal subsistence in southwestern Idaho has increased in recent years (see Plew and Plager 1998), it is based largely upon recovery of fish remains (Huelsbeck 1981, Pavesic, Follet and Statham 1987; Plew 1980; Plew and Sayer 1994; Plew and Plager 1998). Little in the way of fishing gear has been described for southern Idaho. Exceptions include the fishing gear recovered at Schellbach Cave No. 1 (Schellbach 1967; Pavesic et al. 1987) which includes harpoon points, possible net sinkers, a length of rope and a fishhook and net sinkers from sites 10-AA-15 (see Swanson and Tuohy 1960), 10-AA-176, 10-AA-188 (see Sayer, Plager and Plew 1996), 10-AA-198, 10-OE-23 (see McCabe 1998). Though fishing gear or equipment has been reported throughout the Southern Plateau and Great Basin (Johnston 1987, Greenspan 1990; Sappington 1997; Tuohy 1990) reporting of fishing gear has been rare. This may reflect sampling or recovery methods or failure to identify the function of items used in fishing activities as is implied by the recent suggestion that Bliss points are fishing spears (see Yohe, Pavesic and Reed 1996).

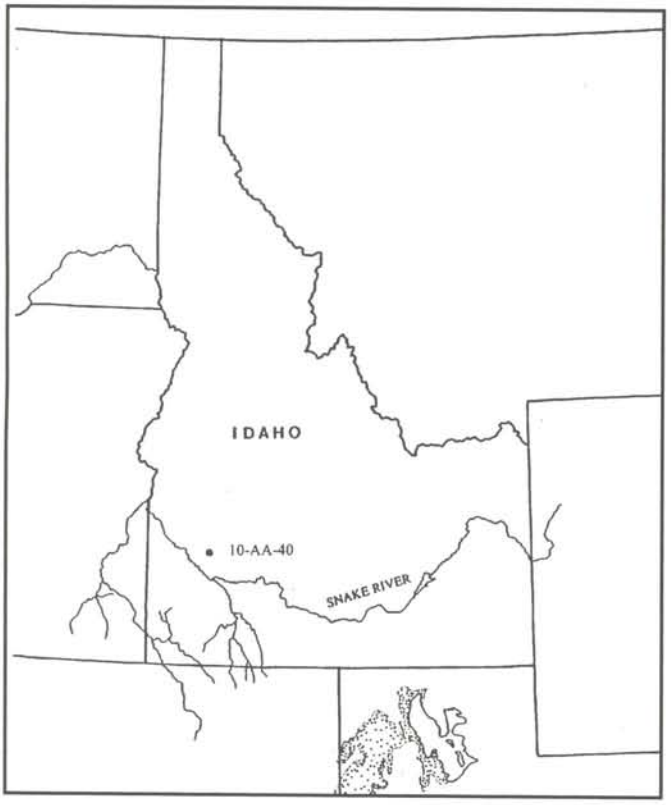

Figure 1. Map Showing the General Location of Site 10-AA-40

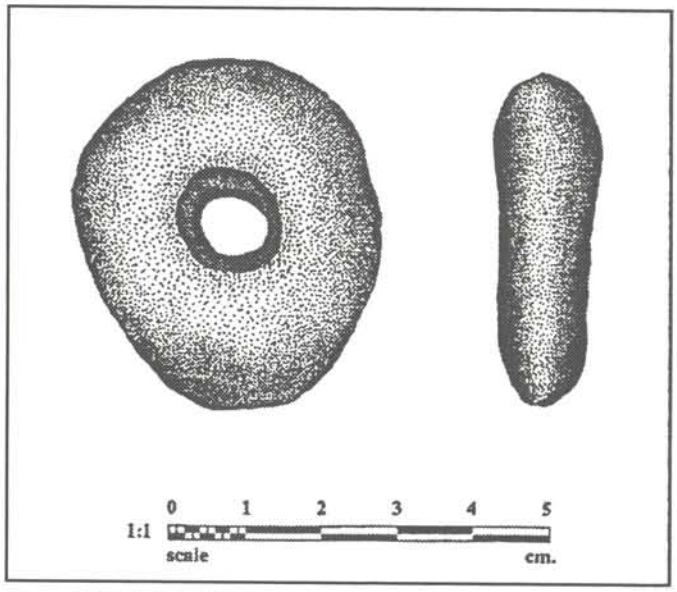

Figure 2. Higby Netsinker

These brief notes report on an apparent net sinker from Higby Cave (10-AA-40) located in the desert south of Boise and north of the Snake River (see Figure 1). Mario Delisio investigated the site, which has been visited by locals for many years, in the late 1970's though only a minimal reporting of the findings is available. In the early 1960's Mr. Roy Robinson, who collected a number of materials from around the mouth of the cave, visited the location. Among a variety of chipped stone items,

Robinson collected a number of unusual pottery sherds, which suggest some use of the area by Late Archaic peoples (Plew 1994). Notable among the items recovered by Mr. Robinson was a circular perforated artifact made from a welded tuff.

The item in question, which measures 4.5 X 4.0 X 1.4 cm., has been modified around the outer perimeter of the artifact (see Figure 2). In cross-section, the item is slightly tapered on one side. The diameter of the perforation is c. 1.3 cm. Under microscopic examination at 20X magnification remnants of the drilling or perforation are visible. A single surface exhibits a slight patina.

Objects similar to the item from Higby Cave seem not to have been described from a local context. The artifact is generally similar to the Pyramid Lake net sinkers classified by Tuohy (1990:141, 145f) as Class II, Perforated Net Sinkers (see also Loud and Harrington 1929:127). These range from ovate to elliptical in form with perforations located near the proximal ends of sinkers.The location of the artifact is of some interest. Some distance from the river, it would appear that the item was purposely transferred to Higby Cave. Such specialized gear was most probably taken from riverine localities and cached at some distance from activity areas. This may in part account for the very limited distribution of some types of fishing related equipment found along the Snake River. The association of the net sinker with pottery suggests a Late Archaic connection though it is not possible to draw a direct association between the net sinker and the ceramic sherds found at the site. It is notable, however, that there is greater evidence of fishing activity in Late Archaic time frames of the Middle Snake River. Evidence from other areas such as that noted by Tuohy (1990) at Pyramid Lake suggest the use of net sinkers for several thousands of years in some areas of the Great Basin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The netsinker was gifted to Boise State University by Kathy Robinson. Andy Williamson provided the illustration.

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ABSTRACTS: 25TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

edited by
Kathy L. Hamlett
Idaho Archaeological Society

The twenty-fifth annual conference of the Idaho Archaeological Society was held October 31, 1998 and hosted by Boise State University. A total of ten papers and two poster sessions were presented. The range of papers and posters represented the state geographically in covering areas near Warren, the Payette River Drainage, Lewiston, and the Craters of the Moon. Presentations addressed several archaeological time periods. Of these, the earliest was a Windust Phase, (ca. 8-10,000 B.P.) Paleoindian elk processing site outside of Lewiston, Idaho. Though most papers dealt with prehistory, issues of historical archaeology were addressed. The papers also reflected the increasing use of technical/technological methods including digital imaging, GIS and XRF applications. There was also ample evidence through papers presented that Idaho's sites are being protected and used to educate the public about the importance of the archaeological record as demonstrated by the Centennial Rock Shelter site near Twin Falls.

The conference was officially opened Friday evening with a presentation by Dr. Steve Simms of Utah State University. Dr. Simms' paper, *The Great Salt Lake Fremont: Evidence for a Behavioral Perspective*, summarized the archaeological and bioarchaeological data in support of the presence of adaptive diversity among Fremont peoples. Simms argued for a very fluid society, melding and cycling between different behaviors over the course of their life histories. Simms' stable carbon isotope analysis of a minimum of 85 individuals reinforced his argument for residential cycling.

The Idaho Archaeological Society would like to thank all those who presented at this conference and those who attended. The importance of preserving Idaho's cultural heritage requires the continuous support of both professional and amateur communities. Primary to successful protection of Idaho's past is public education. The Idaho Archaeological Society conferences provide an important means of sharing information with other professionals and the interested public.

The Chinese in Warren, Idaho: Volunteerism at Work on the Payette National Forest

Kolleen Bean, Payette National Forest

In July, 1998, the Payette National Forest held a Passport-in-Time volunteer project on a Chinese mining camp, just outside of Warren, Idaho. Ten volunteers, from as far away as Florida, worked with professional archaeologists to test a small Chinese occupation located along Warren Creek. This paper will present the results of this testing and discuss how this site fits into the history of Warren.

The State of Historical Archaeology: the Historical Archaeology of the State

Richard A. Goddard, University of Nevada Reno

In recent decades, historical archaeology has developed a distinctive character within the larger discipline. Although it uses the same approaches and techniques as prehistoric archaeology, a unique set of issues and topics has evolved as its focus. Within the general public, and even within the larger disciplines of archaeology and anthropology, this focus is often not well understood. This paper will summarize some of the recent trends in historical archaeology, particularly those which are applicable to Idaho.

The Drug Store in the Front Yard: Pharmaceutical Ethno-Botany on the Payette River Drainage

Katherine L. Hamlett, Idaho Archaeological Society

In a one acre plot of pine-forested riparian habitat a survey of native and Euro-imported flora numbered over forty species possessed of medicinal or special nutritional note. This paper presents twenty-two plants known to have been utilized by either the indigenous inhabitants or the early settlers and miners or both. The presence of lithic debitage and oxen shoes and other homesteader debris confirms the dual usage of the area. The variety of pharmaceutical properties suggest a wide range of remedies were available.

Projectile Point Typology and Chronology in Eastern Idaho

Poster Session

Richard N. Holmer and Sharon R. Plager, Idaho State University

A classification key similar to the one Thomas developed for Monitor Valley, Nevada is being developed for Eastern Idaho. Specimens have been selected from 18 sites whose 3,500 projectile points have been radiocarbon dated to document stylistic change spanning 11,000 years. Computerized digital images have facilitated precise and accurate measurements of diagnostic attributes of 500 relatively complete points. The Proximal Shoulder Angle along with size measurements such as Maximum Blade Width are proving to be the most useful variables for discriminating temporal types.

The Centennial Rockshelter Interpretive Project
Ronald James, Jerome, Idaho

This report focuses on the Centennial Rockshelter, located north of Twin Falls in the Snake River Canyon at Centennial Park, which is just below the Perrine Bridge. Volunteers under the supervision of James Woods and the Herrett Center, College of Southern Idaho excavated the Centennial Rockshelter in 1991. The archaeological excavation revealed a site used by prehistoric natives as a fishing camp for as long as 5000 to 6000 years; a variety of stone, bone, and shell artifacts were found. The year before, the Centennial Park site had been purchased by the Twin Falls Rotary Club who intended to donate the land to Twin Falls County as a public recreational facility. The site soon acquired tremendous interpretive potential, being located in the scenic Snake River Canyon at an increasingly popular park with close proximity to the visitor center at the Perrine Bridge overlook and its thousands of visitors.

The Centennial Rockshelter project, funded by a grant provided by the Twin Falls County Historic Preservation Commission, provided for the curation, cataloging, and public display of the artifacts. The Centennial Rockshelter Project supervised by Ronald James and assisted by James Woods and the Herrett Center has created an impressive interpretive exhibit that will be installed at the Twin Falls Buzz Langdon Visitor Center. The exhibit will feature artifacts and replicas depicting the complexity of the cultural adaptation made by prehistoric people living in the Snake River Canyon while also highlighting the contributions of both professional archaeologists and dedicated private organizations and individuals to cultural resource preservation.

Visualizing the Archaeology of Craters of the Moon Poster Session
Michael Jenks, Idaho State University

Archaeological and environmental information for Craters of the Moon National Monument is recorded with accurate point data. A wide variety of maps are readily generated by layering environmental and archaeological data onto raster-based topological or shaded relief maps. Such maps allow for a simple qualitative view of basic relationships of cultural sites to the environment. They also allow an effective "proof" of problem data.

Mapping Northern Paiute Witness Testimony, 1951 Indian Claims Commission
Michael Jenks and Patricia Dean, Idaho State University

Information including place names, subsistence, and social activities described by thirteen Paiute witnesses in testimony before the Indians Claims Commission in January of 1951 is presented. These testimonies offer insights into the dynamics of foraging ranges and home districts. The locational information was georeferenced and loaded in a GIS program. This application allows easy visual display of this important enthnohistoric information which, in turn, can be incorporated into any georeferenced project.

Stepping Back from the Cutting Edge: Continued Research into Volcanic Glass Utilization in Eastern Idaho
Sharon R. Plager, Idaho State University

Globally, most geologic flows are chemically homogenous in their trace element compositions characterized by a unique chemical combination that distinguishes a particular geologic source. There are more than 50 known sources of volcanic glass in Idaho, although many of these sources have not yet been geochemically typed. In eastern Idaho, artifacts of volcanic glass comprise more than 90% of the cultural materials recorded at many prehistoric sites. XRF analysis and a source's geochemical signature can identify the source of an artifact's raw material. An analysis of the distance traveled to procure volcanic glass can address questions regarding resource utilization and the ranking of source materials, can inform us on exchange processes and trade networks, and point to procurement patterns over time.

Fish Remains from Three Sites in Southwestern Idaho
Mark G. Plew, Boise State University
Sharon Plager, Idaho State University

The use of improved recovery techniques during the past two decades has resulted in the more consistent recovery of fish remains from archaeological sites in the region. The evidence to date suggests that fishing activity spans several millennia though it appears it may have been relatively more common during the past fifteen hundred years. Archaeological evidence suggests that salmon, trout and other species were utilized. This paper briefly reviews the status and interpretations of the archaeological data base and describes the results of recent osteological analyses of fish remains from three sites (10-EL-22, 10-EL-392 and 10-EL-1376) in southwestern Idaho.

Wewe'kiye Kill - Excavation at a Paleoindian Elk Processing Site
Sarah Schuknecht and Lee Sappington, University of Idaho

In July 1998, the construction of a 9-acre settling pond adjacent to the Snake River in Lewiston, Idaho led to the discovery of a prehistoric Paleoindian site. The Wewu'kiye kill site offers a unique perspective of a briefly occupied multi-activity area. Numerous elk bones were found, including a lower mandible with teeth intact. Charcoal samples were obtained from an oxidized stain, indicating a possible hearth feature in association with the elk remains. Two projectile points were found in situ; based on chronology of the region, the bipoints are characteristic of Windust ca. 8-10,000 B.P. Faunal remains not associated with the cultural material included a bear mandible with lower canine teeth, elk antler tines, bison bone fragments and mammoth/mastodon(?) tusk fragments. Construction resumed after one week of excavation, and the site was destroyed after all cultural material had been removed. Future research will focus on paleoenvironmental reconstruction and analysis of tools and faunal remains.

The Great Salt Lake Fremont: Evidence for a Behavioral Perspective

Conference Lecture, October 30, 1998

Steven Simms
Utah State University

A synthesis of archaeological and bioarchaeological data from the Fremont period along the Wasatch Front argues for the presence of adaptive diversity. That is, plasticity in behavior in response to varying circumstances that occurs within units traditionally defined as shared cultural traditions.

Archaeological evidence for adaptive diversity is found in site types and assemblage composition, the absence of constellations of artifacts matching cultural units, and variation in ceramics better explained by behavior than by the assignment of cultural badges. The archaeology, however, begs the question of whether this represents distinct cultures of farmers and foragers, or results from people cycling between different behaviors over the course of their life histories.

Bioarchaeological evidence from a minimum of 85 individuals enables this question to be investigated. Analyses of stable carbon isotopes, DNA, lifetime activity patterns, and osteology show that subsistence ranged from full-time farming to full-time foraging, but that the people were a single population in terms of lifetime activities, health, and population genetics. The evidence argues for adaptive diversity - residential cycling among adaptive strategies over the lives of individuals rather than distinct cultures of farmers vs. foragers.

This perspective enables our understanding of the past to look beyond the Biblical metaphor of immutable "peoples" and beyond the limitations of cultures as shared traditions. In the multicultural America of the present, ethnic difference is often celebrated to such a degree that differences in identity can be confused with the permeability of actual behavior. As archaeologists we have to be aware of such impositions of our cultural present upon a potentially very different past.

Recent Excavations in Central Idaho: An Update

Steve Stoddard, Payette National Forest

This paper presents an overview of several recent excavations in central Idaho, including 10IH2561 near the main Salmon River, 10AM433 and 10AM434 in Indian Valley south of Council, 10VY226 on the Secesh River, and 10VY80 on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Included will be a discussion of the results of these studies and their impacts on historic theories of settlement and boundary patterns.

Forensic Archaeology: An Idaho Example

Robert M. Yohe II, Idaho State Historical Society

In 1995, the State Archaeologist was asked by the Idaho Department of Law Enforcement to assist in the evaluation of a homicide crime scene in a remote portion of Valley County near Paddy Flat. Archaeological field methods were used to document the scene and collect evidence, including the cremated remains of a 19-year-old male who had been allegedly murdered at this location. Using both an archaeological approach to the crime scene investigation and a forensic osteological analysis of the recovered human remains, a strong case was built that ultimately led to the imprisonment of four men for murder.

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