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IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Publication of the Fall 1990 and Spring 1991 issues of the *IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST* have been delayed due to financial difficulties. The absence of previous sources of support have resulted in the development of a formal agreement between the Idaho Archaeological Society and Boise State University for publication of the journal. Two major changes are of note. Beginning with submissions for the Fall 1991 issue, we will encourage authors to submit their papers on 3.5 inch diskettes written in Wordperfect 5.1. This will greatly reduce publication costs and streamline the editing process. A single hard copy should be included with the submission. Authors not having access to a computer may continue to submit hard copy. In addition, Boise State University will assume responsibility for all non-member subscriptions.

The journal continues to solicit manuscripts from all members of the archaeological community in Idaho and adjacent areas. The policy of peer review continues and we encourage individuals to submit their names for our reviewer pool. Individuals wishing to serve as reviewers should submit a brief statement detailing areas of expertise.

Mark G. Plew
Editor

ARTICLES AND REPORTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEST EXCAVATION AT DEEP CREEK ROCKSHELTER (10-OE-1859), OWYHEE COUNTY, IDAHO

by
Mark G. Plew
Boise State University

INTRODUCTION

Deep Creek Rockshelter was tested as part of the Southcentral Owyhee County Archaeological Project initiated in 1977 with the support of the Idaho State Historical Society (see Plew 1980). The purpose of the project was to expand the data base generated by the Camas Creek survey conducted in 1975 by a joint Boise State University-Indiana University Museum project (see Plew 1976). The project had as a primary goal identification of assemblage variability as the basis for description of a settlement pattern for the Owyhee Uplands. The project recorded over 700 sites of which 13 were tested (Plew 1985), including Nahas Cave (Plew 1986a). Though a chronology was established on the basis of surface data (see Plew 1980), culture history was not the primary orientation of the project. Rather the intent was to posit questions regarding the nature of aboriginal settlement-subsistence patterns and address the extent to which those had changed over time.

The collection of surface data combined with subsurface testing provided the basis for describing a settlement pattern for the Camas Creek III phase of the southcentral Owyhee Uplands (see Plew 1985). In this context, the project undertook a test excavation at Deep Creek Rockshelter near the downstream end of Deep Creek approximately 4 km from Nahas Cave (see Figure 1). The purpose of the test was to establish the age of the site and determine the degree of assemblage comparability with Nahas Cave. A test excavation was conducted in August 1983.

EXCAVATION

Deep Creek Rockshelter is a relatively large shelter situated approximately three meters above the present course of Deep Creek. The shelter, which has an eastern exposure is 12 meters wide, 8 meters in depth, with an approximate interior height of 3 meters (see Figure 2). As the shelter opening is on a magnetic north-south axis, a datum was established at the northernmost corner of the shelter with a base line extended to the opposite corner.

A 2 x 2 meter test pit was staked to form the baseline at two meters from the shelter wall to avoid disturbance caused by cattle and what appeared as possible vandal activity. Testing was conducted using arbitrary 10 cm. levels with all excavated material passed through 1/4 inch hardware mesh. Twelve levels were excavated to a depth of 120 cm. below datum at which point sterile sediments were encountered.

Stratigraphically, five sedimentary strata are distinguishable. Stratum 1, the upper most level (0-10 cm.) consists of grey dust intermixed with cow dung. Stratum 2 c. (10-60 cm.) is a light brown sand/silt stratum containing numerous bits of charcoal scattered from a thin charcoal lense at c. 30 cm. and 2 hearths.

Additionally, numerous mussel fragments were encountered. Stratum 3 (60-90 cm.) is a lighter grey-brown, sandy/silt stratum containing significant quantities of animal bone and mussel but no features. The lower 10 cm. of the level consists of sand and is markedly lighter and appears to have been disturbed by rodent activity. Stratum 4 (90-110 cm.) is an extremely light sand stratum containing almost no cultural remains. Stratum 5 (110-120 cm.) is a sterile and compacted sand/clay deposit. The deposit contained little roofall and no manuports (see Figure 3).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

Feature 1: Feature 1 is an oval shaped fire hearth measuring 40 x 50 cm. Located in the northeastern quarter of the test pit, it is approximately 20 cm. in depth and is dish shaped in cross-section. It contained much charcoal and small bits of mussel shell. The hearth was associated with an Elko Point and an Eastgate Point. The feature was within Stratum 2.

Feature 2: Feature 2 is an open and relatively oval-shaped fire hearth located in the northwest quarter of the test unit within Unit 2 between 50 and 60 cm. below datum. It measures 32 x 40 cm. and is dish-shaped in cross-section. It contained small bits of charcoal and mussel.

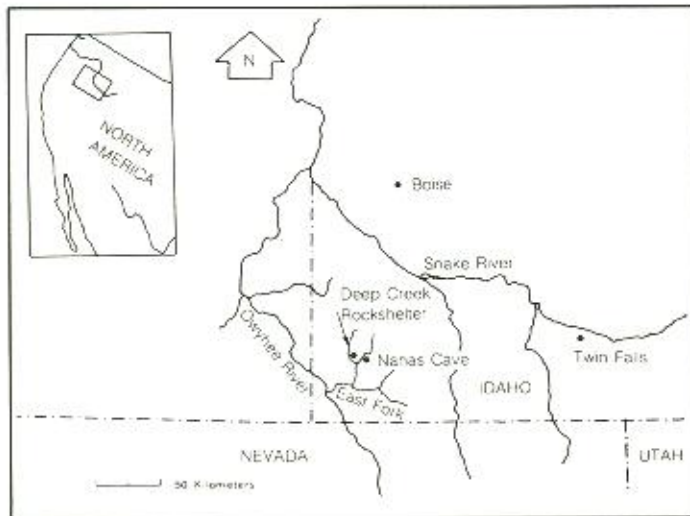


Figure 1. Map showing the general location of Deep Creek Rockshelter.

Feature 3: Feature 3 is a large oval fire hearth in the southwest quarter of Stratum 4 at 100 cm. below datum. The feature measures 70 x 40 cm, and was approximately 10 cm. in depth. It was not possible to determine the cross-section of the feature which appears to have resulted from a large open fire. Quantities of burned bone were recovered from the hearth.

MATERIAL CULTURE

The cultural inventory from Deep Creek Rockshelter consists of 30 artifacts including 7 diagnostic projectile points. The classification and description of artifacts represents an implicit morpho-functional typology. The distribution of artifacts per arbitrary level is presented in Table 1.

PROJECTILE POINTS

Eastgate Expanding Stem

Figure 4, a

Number of Specimens: 1

Description: Triangular blade outline with deep corner-notches and expanding basal elements with convex

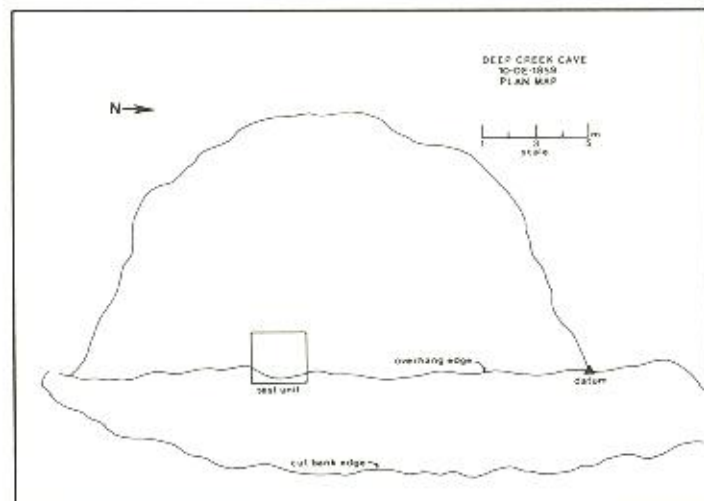


Figure 2. Plan map of Deep Creek Rockshelter.

bases. Blade width is nearly as great as total projectile length. It is plano-convex in cross-section and measures 2.1 x 1.9 x 0.4. It is made from cryptocrystalline material.

Elko Series

Figure 4, b-f

Number of Specimens: 5

Description: Side and corner notched points having generally triangular blade form. Blade elements are relatively broad with slightly concave bases. Flaking is irregular. All specimens are plano-convex in cross-section. Three projectiles are manufactured from obsidian and two from cryptocrystalline material. The specimens are within a size range of 4.0-2.7 x 2.3-1.9 x 0.5-0.4 cm.

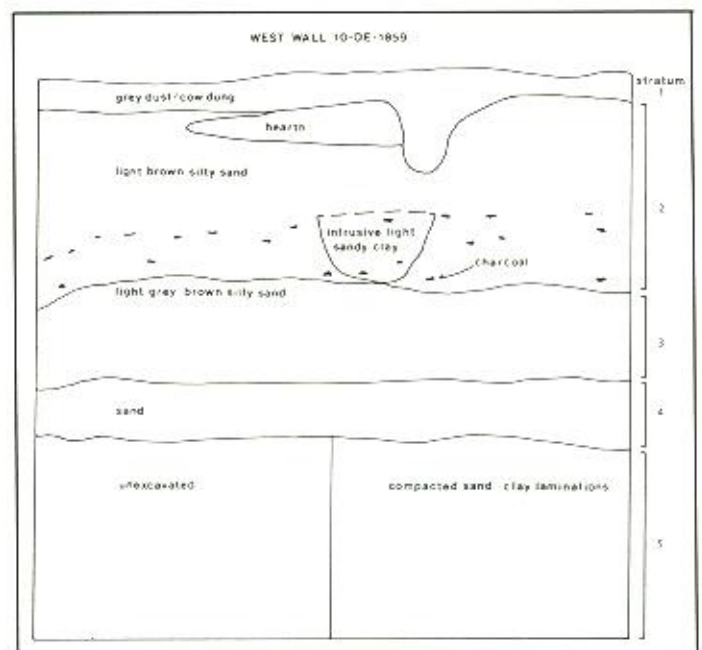


Figure 3. West Wall Profile.

Humboldt

Figure 4, g

Number of Specimens: 1

Description: Lanceolate form which is slightly shouldered at or near the mid-point of the projectile tapering to a parallel-sided base which is slightly concave. An irregular pressure-flaking pattern is noted. The specimen which measures 4.5 x 1.4 x 0.6 cm. is made from cryptocrystalline material.

PROJECTILE POINT FRAGMENTS

Figure

Number of Specimens: 2

Description: One mid-section and one basal element of the Elko series. The items are manufactured from obsidian and widths range between 2.3 and 2.1 cm.

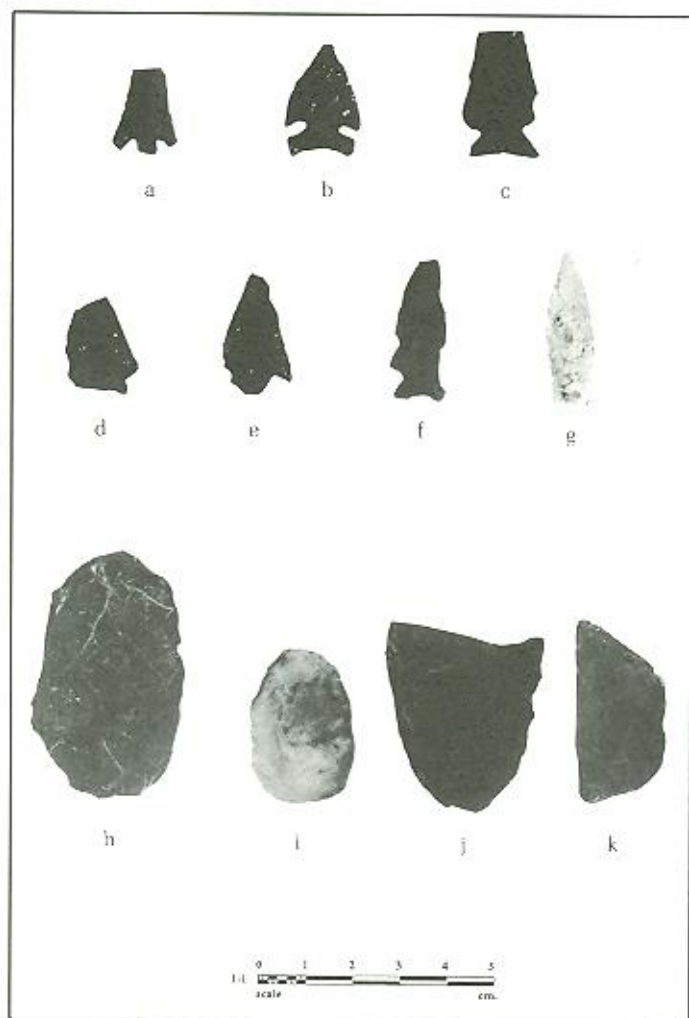


Figure 4. a, Eastgate; b-f, Elko Series; g, Humboldt; h-k, Bifaces.

BIFACES

Figure 5, g-i

Number of Specimens: 6

Description: Large ovate bifaces exhibiting large primary flake scars. Specimens are bi-convex in cross-section. Two of the items are manufactured from basalt, the remaining from cryptocrystalline materials. The size of the only complete specimen is 7.0 x 4.2 x 1.1 cm.

DRILLS

Figure 5, d

Number of Specimens: 1

Description: Bi-convex tip of drill made from a white cryptocrystalline material. The specimen measures 3.4 x 1.2 x 0.6 cm.

SCRAPERS

Figure 5, e-f

Number of Specimens: 1

Description: Oval-shaped plano-convex specimen worked on lateral margins. Large flake scars are present on the dorsal surface. The specimen is made from cryptocrystalline material and measures 4.5 x 3.0 x 0.7 cm.

KNIVES

Figure 5, a-c

Number of Specimens: 3

Description: Two specimens are triangular bifacial forms with edge modifications on lateral margins. Both are plano-convex in cross-section. A third is a rectangular piece of thin lenticular quartzite which has been bifacially flaked on a single margin. Two specimens are cryptocrystalline and two are obsidian. The size range is 8.0-4.4 x 3.5-2.4 x 0.8-0.6 cm.

TABLE I.
DISTRIBUTION OF ARTIFACTS BY LEVEL
FROM DEEP CREEK CAVE ARTIFACTS

Level	EG	E	H	K	D	B	S	UF	PF	FCC
0-10					1					
10-20	1	1						2		1
20-30		3								
30-40							1	1		
40-50		1				1		1		
50-60		1	1	1				1		1
60-70						2				
70-80				1		1			1	
80-90						1		2		
90-100										
100-110										
110-120		1				1				

Eastgate-EG

Elko-E

Humboldt-H

Knives-K

Drills-D

Bifaces-B

Scrapers-S

Utilized Flakes-UF

Pipe Fragment-PF

Fired Clay Cylinder-FCC

MODIFIED FLAKES

Number of Specimens: 7

Description: Flakes exhibiting minor edge modification. One basalt and 6 cryptocrystalline specimens.

FIRED CLAY CYLINDER FRAGMENTS

Number of Specimens: 2

Description: Cylindrical shaped, fired clay fragments. Surface and interior walls are smooth to undulating. Surface and core color is reddish brown. Walls are strong and approximately 0.3 cm. in thickness. Specimens appear to have been rolled around another object and fired. Items are similar to those reported from Nahas Cave (Plew and Woods 1980).

STONE PIPE FRAGMENT

Figure

Number of specimens: 1

Description: Incomplete tubular specimen which is well-smoothed. The lip is at a slight angle to the wall.

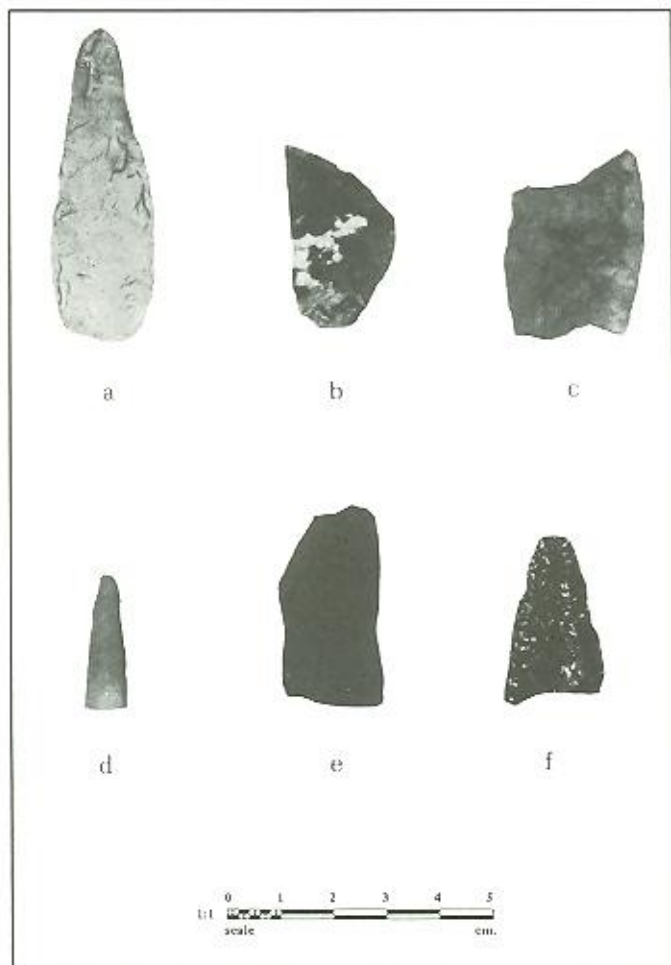


Figure 5. a-c Knives, d, Drill; e-f, Scrapers

The interior exhibits evidence of grinding associated with the manufacture. Approximately one-half of a probable "cloud blower" type pipe.

NON-ARTIFACTUAL REMAINS: BONES, SHELL AND LITHIC DEBRIS

A rather large collection of non-artifactual debris was recovered from Deep Creek Rockshelter. Figure 7 summarizes the distribution of these remains. Notable are the quantities of bone and in particular, shell debris. The faunal remains though presently unidentified, appear to consist primarily of ungulate remains, most probably deer. Equally interesting is the relatively low density of lithic debris, the majority of which suggest rejuvenation or re-tooling activity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Text excavation at Deep Creek Rockshelter documents a relatively undisturbed cultural deposit approximately 1.5 meters in depth. The sediments are largely alluvial and associated with a high energy system accounting for significant annual deposition (see Plew and Pengilly 1987 for discussion). Five major sedimentary strata are present. The upper three strata are extremely sandy and contain significant amounts of clay.

The age of the deposit is established inferentially by the presence of Elko series, and a single Humboldt point,

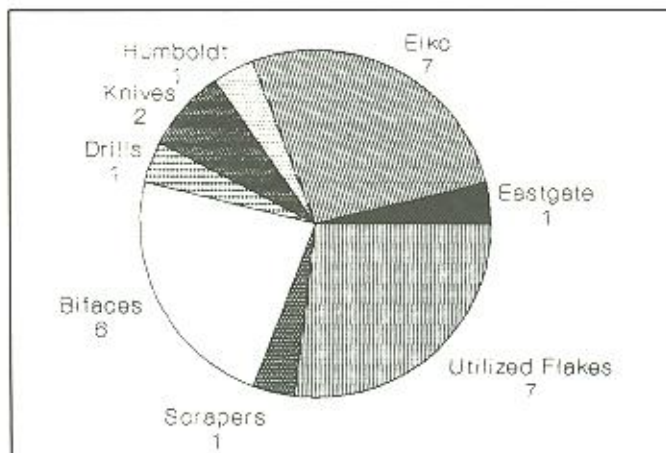


Figure 6. Frequency distribution of Chipped Stone Tools.

suggesting an age range of 5000 to 1000 B.P., with intensive usage in the period of 3500 to 1500 B.P. (Hanes 1988: 162-165; Pettigrew 1989: 73; see also Wilde 1985: 149). This is in general accord with the dating of Elko and Humboldt materials from Nahas Cave where approximately 1.5 meters was gradually deposited over 6000 years. The presence of Elko and Humboldt series are associated with the Camas Creek II phase, placing Deep Creek Rockshelter within the Middle Archaic (Plew 1986b: 29). This is of interest as few Middle Archaic sites have been located within the southcentral uplands.

Based upon the recovery of weapons, processing tools and faunal remains, Deep Creek Rockshelter may have served as a hunter's camp. The site was also a mussel collecting station though it is not possible to know if these activities were concurrent. The latter is of considerable interest as no evidence of mussel collecting has been documented within the southcentral uplands. These conclusions are, however, highly speculative given the small sample size.

The test excavation at Deep Creek Rockshelter provides for the following conclusions: (1) that the culture histories of upland drainages may vary substantially depending upon the nature of hydrologic systems as suggested by Plew and Pengilly (1987); and (2) that the range of variation in Middle Archaic sites is more diverse than presently documented.

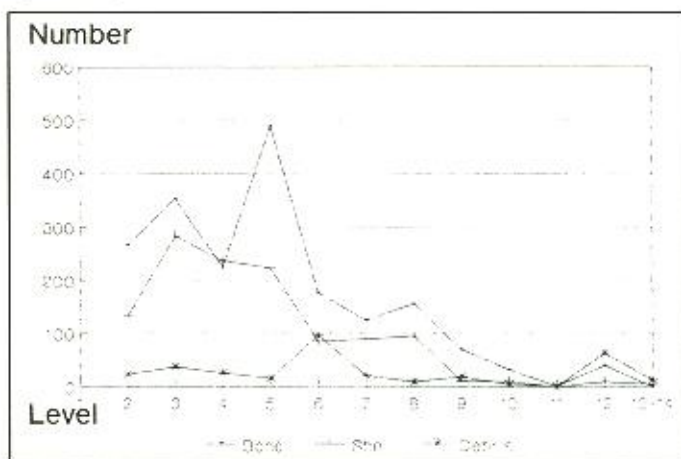


Figure 7. Graph showing the distribution of Bone, Shell and Lithic debris.

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SHORT CONTRIBUTIONS

**ABSTRACTS OF THE XVIIITH ANNUAL IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE*

May Anne Davis, Idaho State Historical Society

A PELICAN'S VIEW OF WILOTH LANDING, 10-CN-7

This past summer, the Idaho State Historical Society directed an archaeological testing project at 10-CN-7, a prehistoric site near the Guffey Railroad Bridge on the Snake River. As a cooperative venture with the Canyon County Parks and Recreation Department, we set out to determine if there were subsurface archaeological deposits at the proposed Wiloth Landing boat ramp. This project also gave us the opportunity to increase our knowledge of riverine sites. No cultural material was found within the construction boundaries for the boat ramp. A total of 64 artifacts were recovered north and east of the project area. Stylistic comparison of projectile points suggests an occupation for the last 5,000 years at 10-CN-7. It is hoped that the information gained this summer will add to our understanding of the relationship between terrace formation and site character recently proposed for sites within a mile of 10-CN-7 (Willig 1989).

William James Nance, Idaho Archaeological Society

"BONES 'N BACKDIRT" A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT 10-OE-3686

10-OE-3686, Jump Creek Cave #1, is the focus of ongoing archaeological investigations. Although heavily impacted by pot hunting activities, evidence has been recovered suggesting the presence of aboriginal usage of the site for the past 2000 years. Excavation strategies and preliminary results are discussed.

***Note:** As a matter of editorial policy, the journal publishes Abstracts which are submitted prior to the annual conference. The journal assumes no responsibility for abstracts of papers presented but not submitted.

Ronald James

SURVEY OF CHINESE MINING SITES IN THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON

The history of the Snake River Canyon mining camps is still not well known. The Chinese miners who made up a large proportion of the Snake River Canyon camp's population have a relatively long yet forgotten history. The 1989 Mon-Tung excavation and recent proposed hydroelectric development on the Snake River resulted in the Twin Falls County Historic Preservation Commission to provide for a survey of historic and archaeological sites. Under the direction of Ronald James, a survey of historic mining sites was conducted during the spring of 1990. Approximately 15 miles of the canyon was surveyed; from Dry Creek near Murtaugh to Shoshone Falls, resulting in the documentation of many sites that were previously unknown.

E.S. Lohse, Idaho State University

"RETURN TO BIRCH CREEK 1990"

Idaho State University conducted its 1990 summer archaeological fieldschool in the Birch Creek Valley. We excavated two sites: 10-CL-40, a rockshelter near Bison and Veratic, that yielded a cultural and natural sequence extending back some 12-14,000 years; 10-BT-62, an open spring site with diagnostics indicating cultural occupations over the past 7-8,000 years. 10-CL-40, the James Olsen Rockshelter, supplements and better defines the cultural sequence established by Swanson. Cultural occupations span at least 7-8,000 years and are separated by thick layers of natural deposition, making the site an ideal master sequence for diagnostic artifacts in southeastern Idaho. 10-BT-62 was tested in the 1960s by ISU. Our re-testing demonstrates little stratigraphy at the site but a wealth of early diagnostic artifacts that may prove valuable in detailing prehistoric reductive strategies.

*R. Wayne Thompson and Robert Lee Sappington,
University of Idaho*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
AT YAHKANIMA'PUH, THE LITTLE BEAR
CREEK SITE, NEAR TROY, IDAHO**

University of Idaho archaeologists tested and recorded the Little Bear Creek site in August 1989. Initial investigations consisted of seven 1 x 2m test units along a terrace adjacent to the West Fork of Little Bear Creek and just below its juncture with Big Meadow Creek. Due to the significance of the site, more extensive excavations were conducted during the fall 1989 and spring 1990. A series of six radiocarbon dates and diagnostic projectile points date the occupation at 10-LT-216 to the late Tucannon and Harder phases, ca. 3000-300 years B.P. Most features consisted of hearths and ovens while the tools represent hunting and processing activities. Overall, it appears that the site functioned as a temporary base camp which was reoccupied intermittently, probably during the fall. This is one of the few stratified sites excavated in north Idaho; its upland setting away from the Clearwater and Snake River Canyons also make it unique.

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