

# Ancient Petroglyphs of the Northern Sierra Nevada

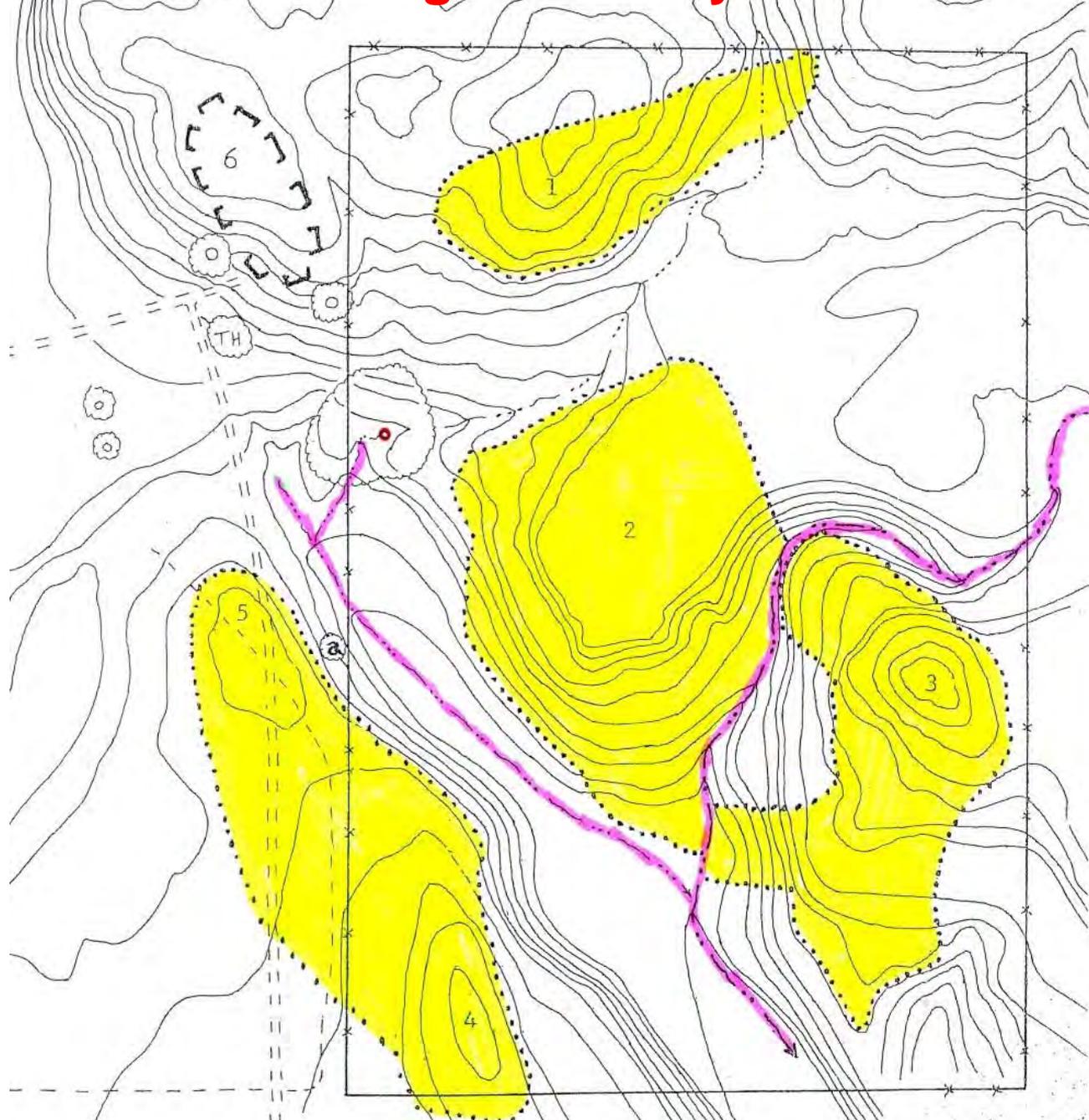


Presented by:

Dan Foster - October 16, 2009

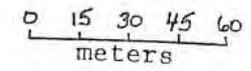
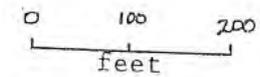
In Celebration of the SCA's Archaeology Month (October)

# Archaeological Survey of Maidu Park -- 1983



- ..... = site boundary
- = contour line
- ← = Strap Ravine
- ← = tributary
- = spring
- \* \* \* \* \* = fenceline
- == == == = dirt road
- - - - = mowed grass (firebreak)
- o = oak tree
- a = apricot tree
- TH = tree of heaven

- 1 = CA-PLA-37
- 2 = CA-PLA-87
- 3 = CA-PLA-38
- 4 = CA-PLA-85
- 5 = CA-PLA-86
- 6 = historic ruins



Contour interval = 2 ft.





**Bedrock Mortars “BRMs”**

**Midden**



**CA-PLA-87**

CA-PLA-37



Petroglyphs

# Maidu Interpretive Center



# USFS – CAL FIRE



- Federal Agency
- Public Lands
- 30 million acres in CA
- 70 Archaeologists
- State Agency
- Private/State Lands
- 31 million acres (SRA)
- 6 Archaeologists



# SRA Lands

Area of  
 Jurisdiction  
 for CAL FIRE  
 Archaeologists

31 million acres

# **CAL FIRE Projects**

**N = 2000+ per year**

- **Timber Harvesting Plans**
- **Controlled Burns**
- **Facility Construction and Repair**
- **Fuels Reduction Treatments**
- **Wildfire Suppression**

# Provide Archaeological Site Recognition Training to State and Private Foresters (Classroom Setting)



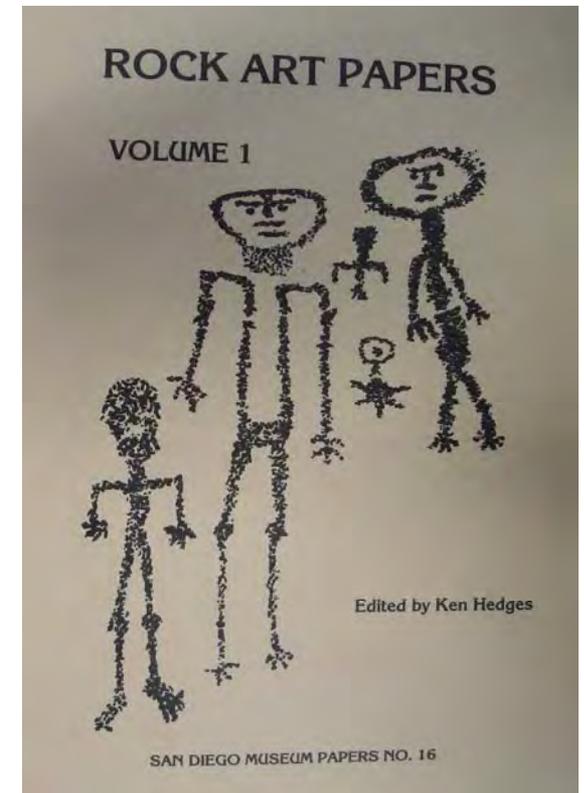


**Archaeological Site Recognition Training  
(Field Exercises)**

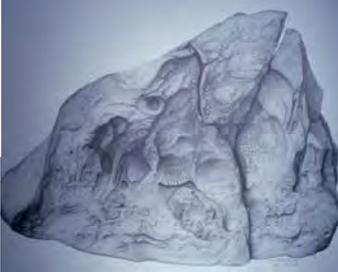
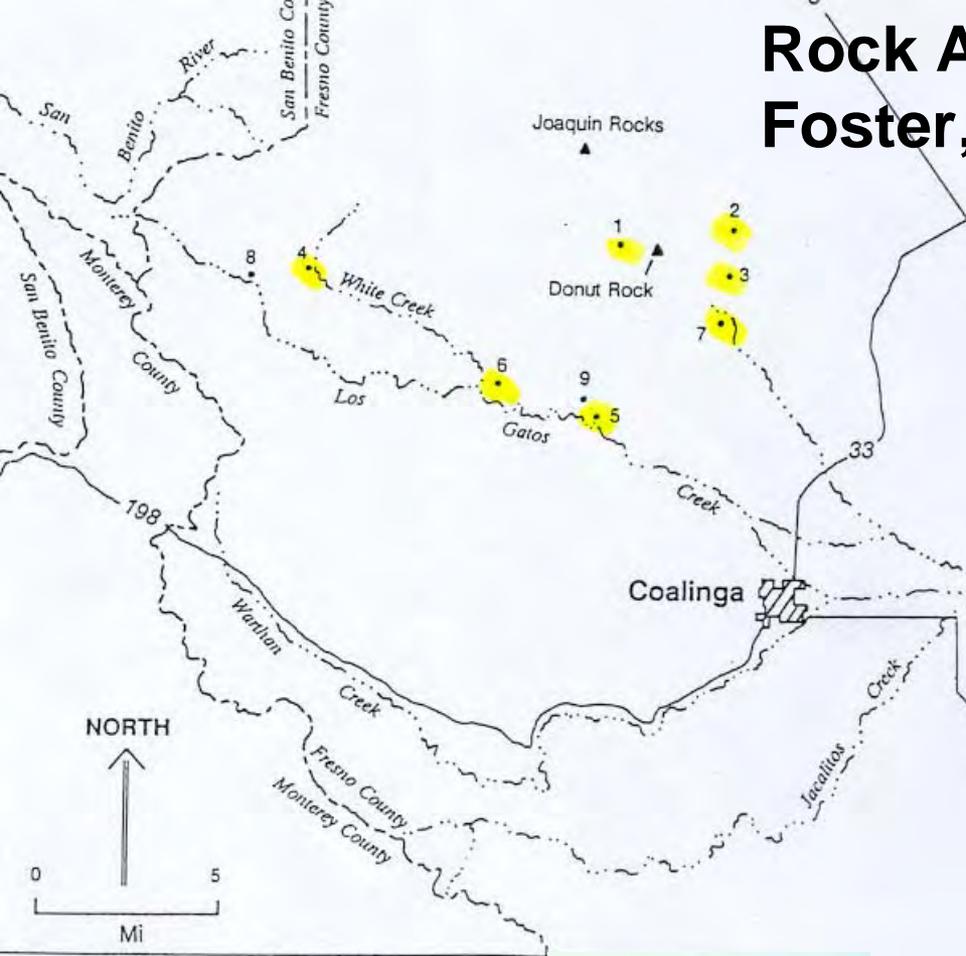




# Spyrock Road Site MEN-1912 Foster 1983

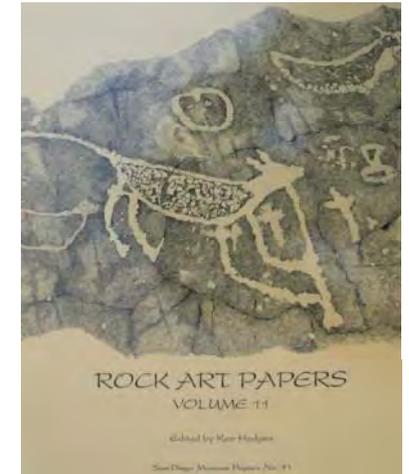
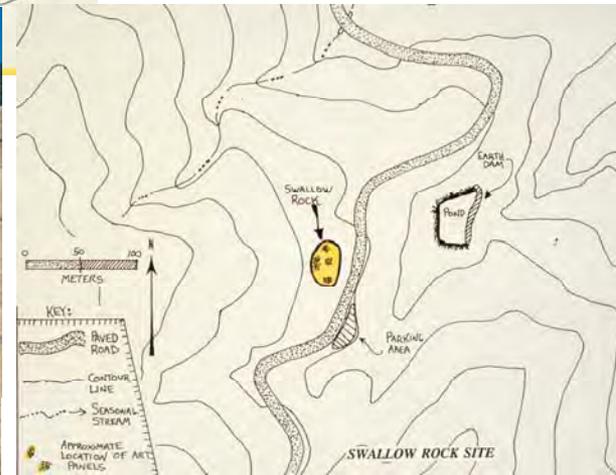
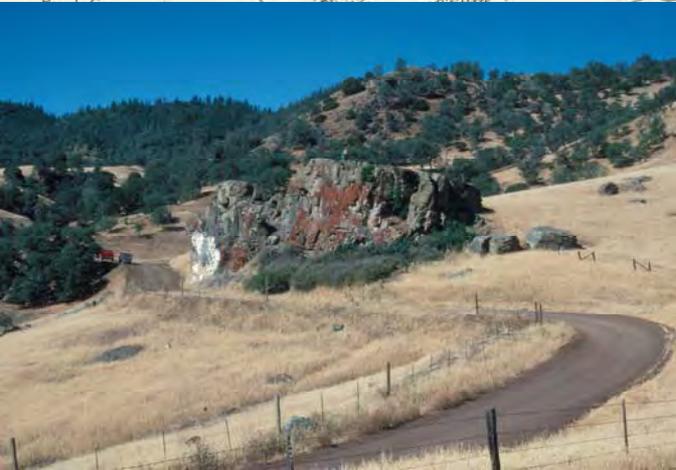
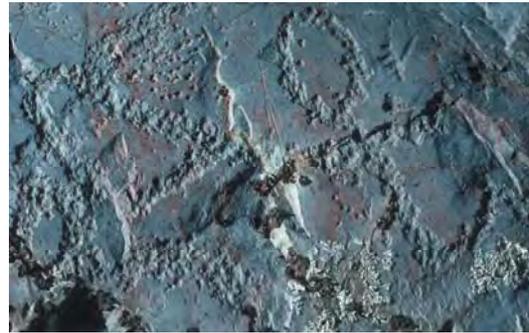
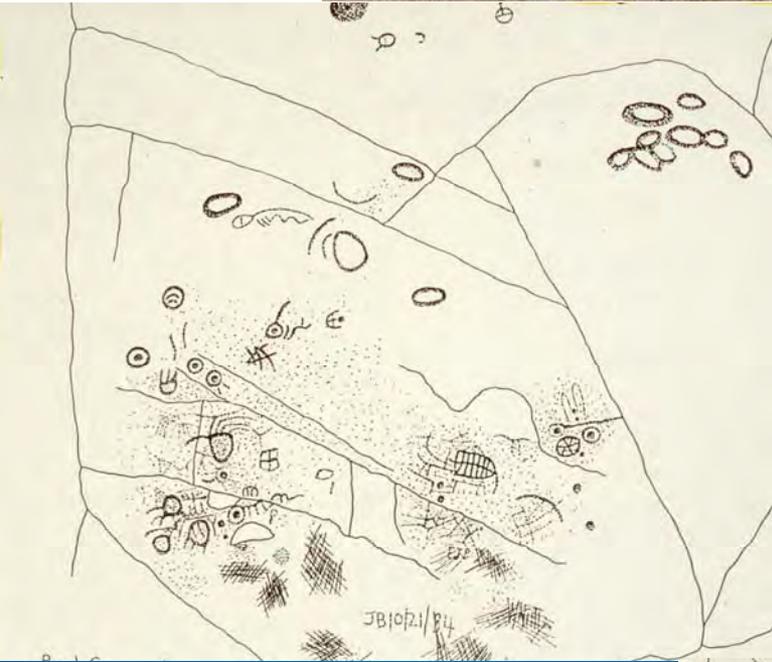


# Rock Art in the Coalinga Backcountry Foster, Jenkins, and Betts 1990

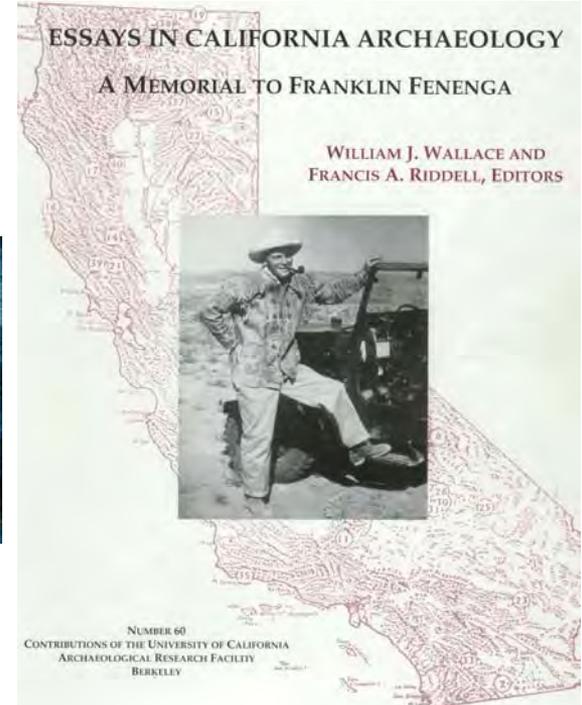


ROCK ART PAPERS  
 VOLUME 7  
 Edited by Ken Hodges

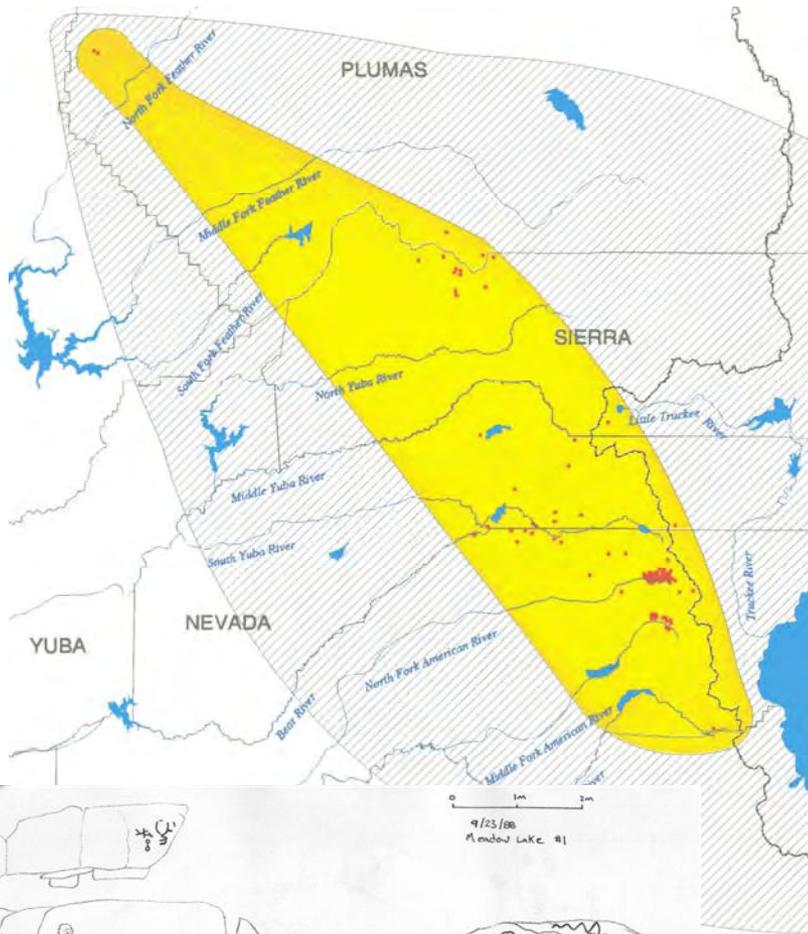
# Swallow Rock FRE-2485 Foster and Betts 1994



# Slakaiya Rock (CA-TRI-1) Foster and Foster 2002

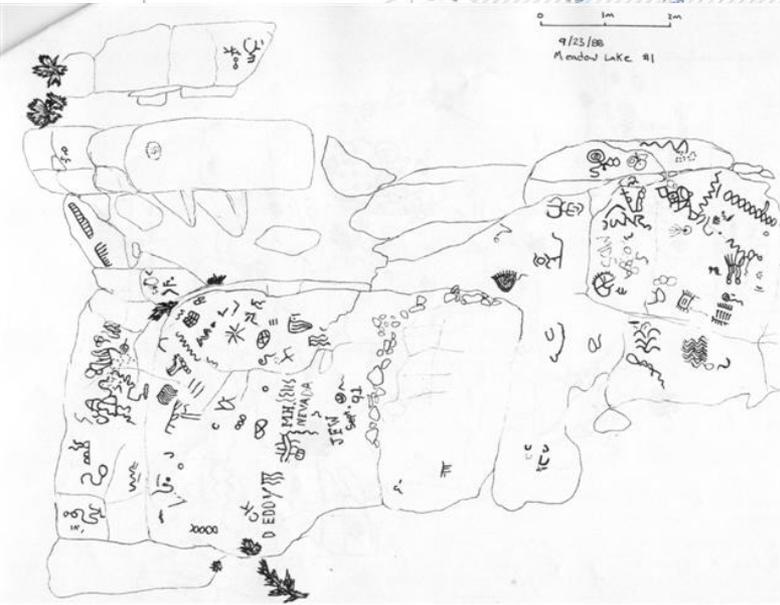


# Style 7 Rock Art (92 Sites) Foster, Betts, and Sandelin 2005



1983

2009



*Archaeology without Limits*

**Site Name: SPAULDING RIDGE**

**Site Number: CA-NEV-426**

**Recorded by: Foster and Withrow (1982), Betts (1993)**

**Number of Elements: 45**

**Elevation: 5140 feet**

**Setting: On top of a trending ridge**

**Number of Bear Track Elements: 7**

**Number of Anthropomorphs: 1**

**Incorporation of Rock Features? No**

**Ponds?: Yes**

**Waterfalls?: No**

**Archaeological Associations?: Yes**

**Bedrock Mortars: 1 small mortar cup**

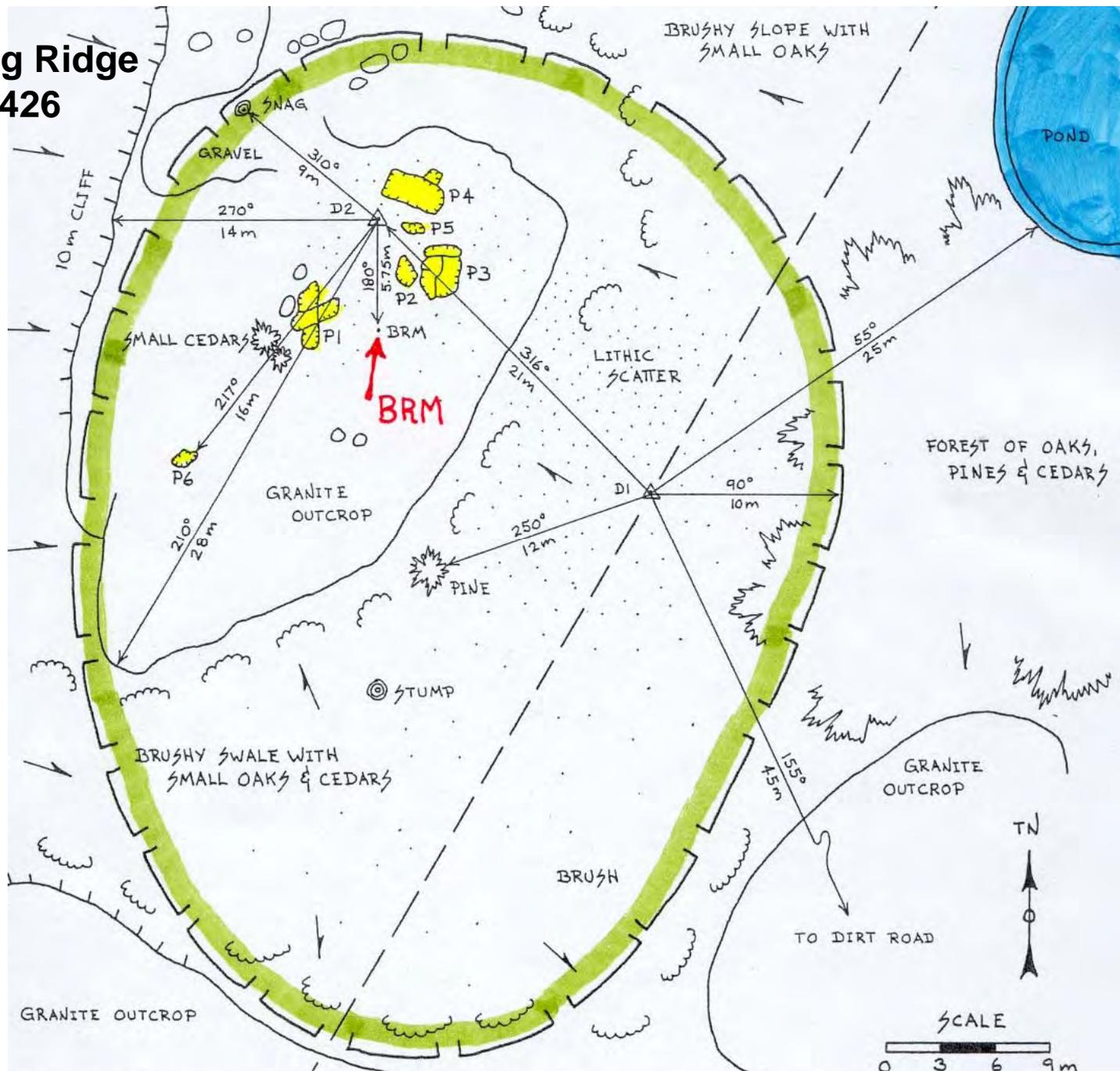
**Milling Slicks: No**

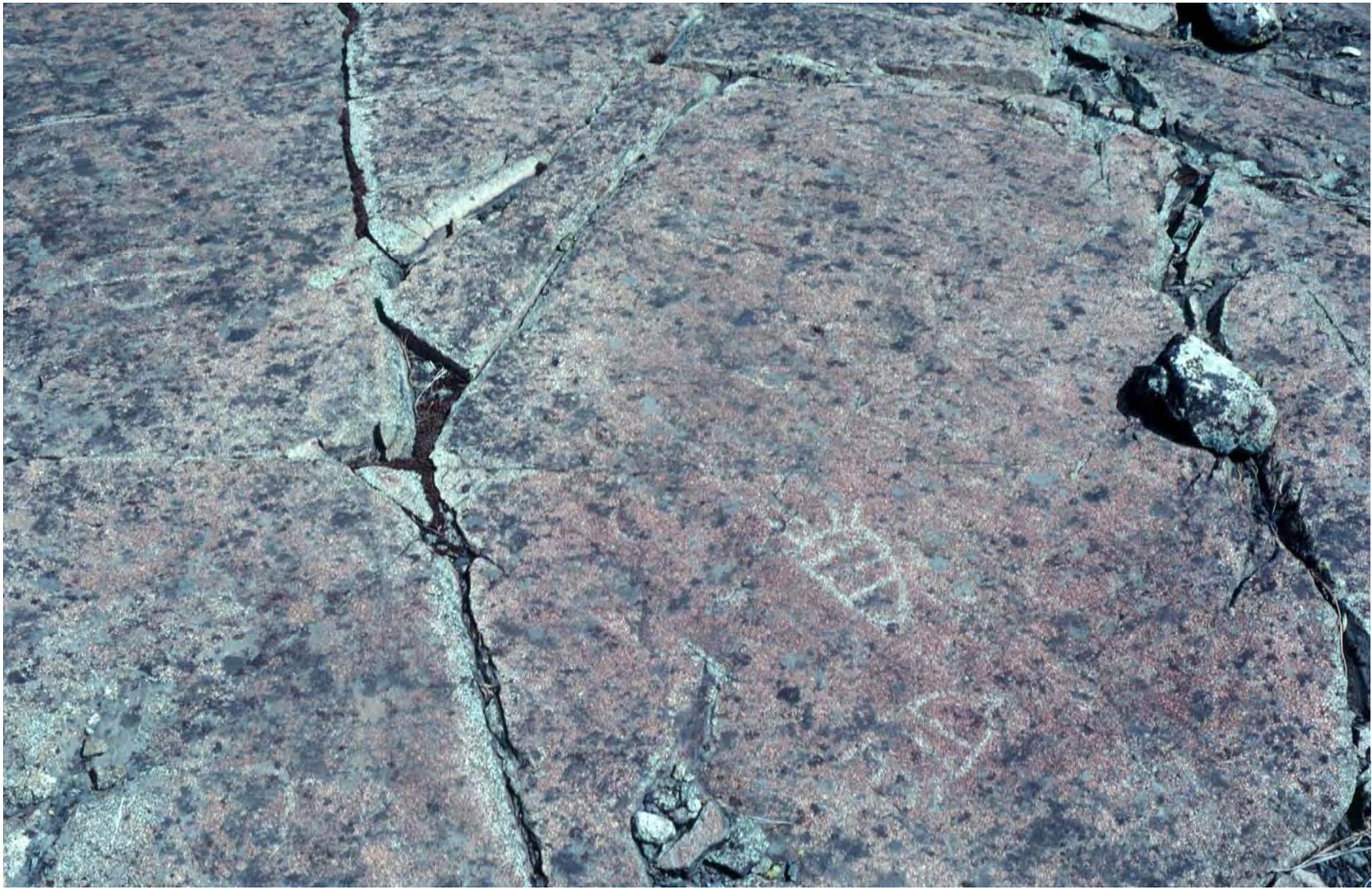
**Lithic Scatter: Yes**



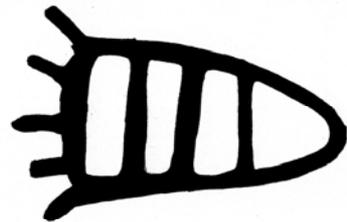


# Spaulding Ridge CA-NEV-426





**CA-NEV-426 Bear Track Petroglyph Elements**



← 10 inches →





**Black Bear  
Left Hind Foot**



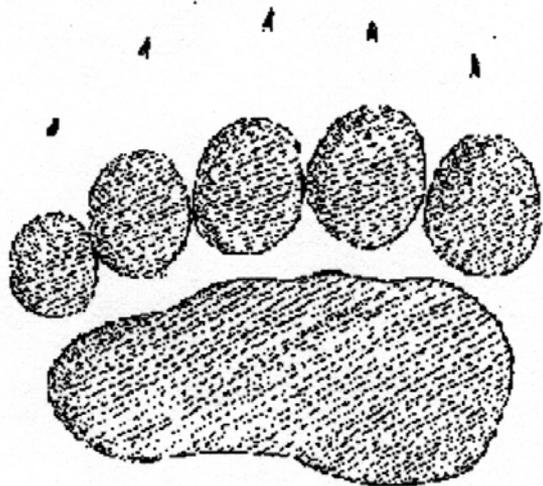
# Track comparison



Human Right

Bear Right Hind

# Black Bear Tracks



**Track of the Front Foot**  
**5 Inches long X 5 inches wide**



**Track of the Hind Foot**  
**7 Inches long X 5 Inches wide**



**Black bear trail**  
**pattern**



**Left Front  
Black Bear Cub  
In Mud**



**Front**



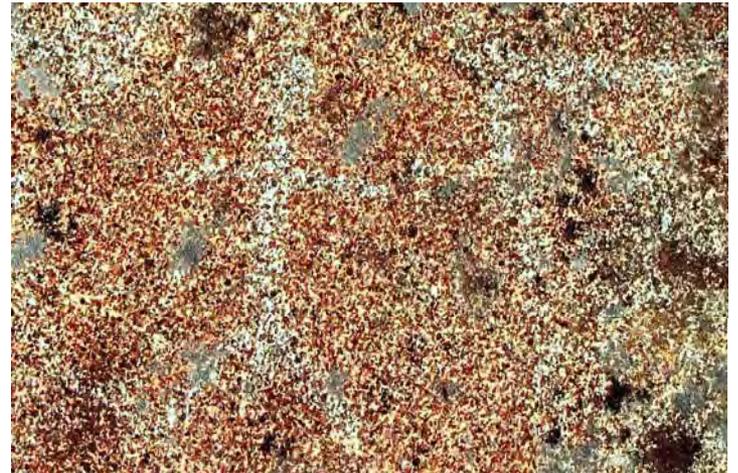
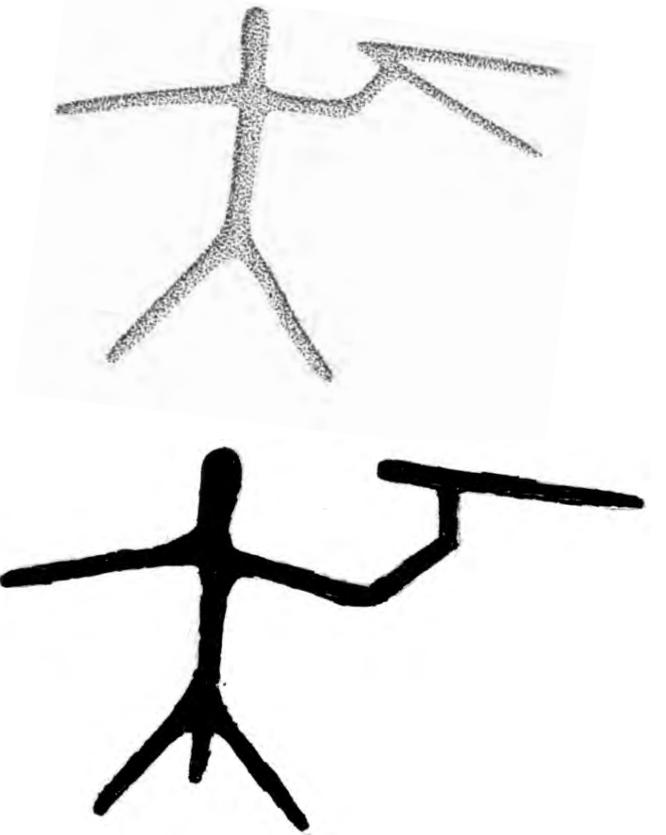
**Left Hind**

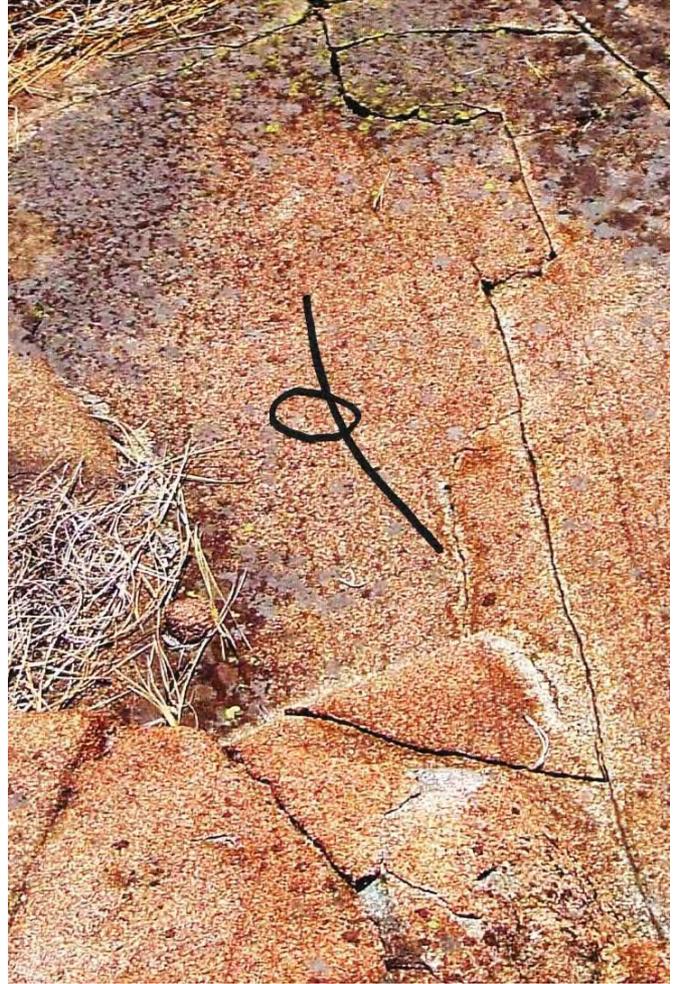


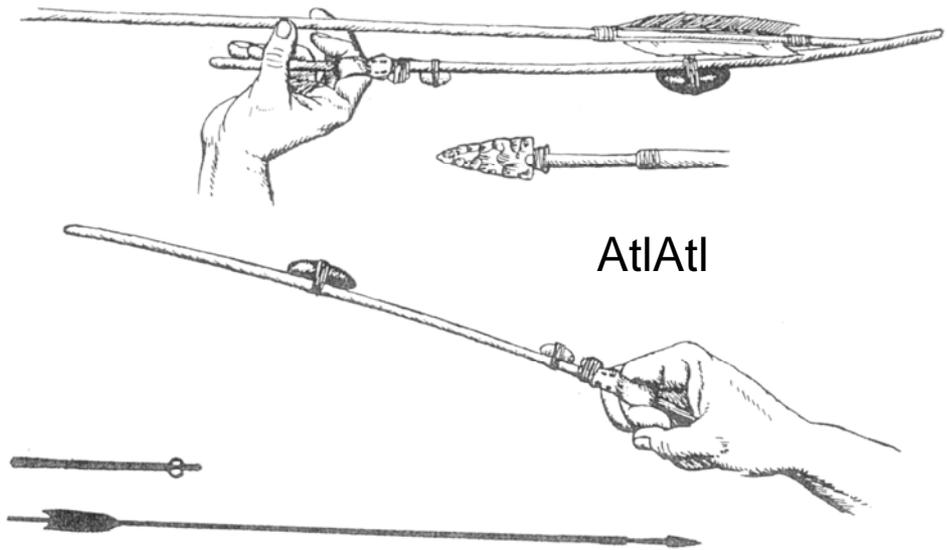
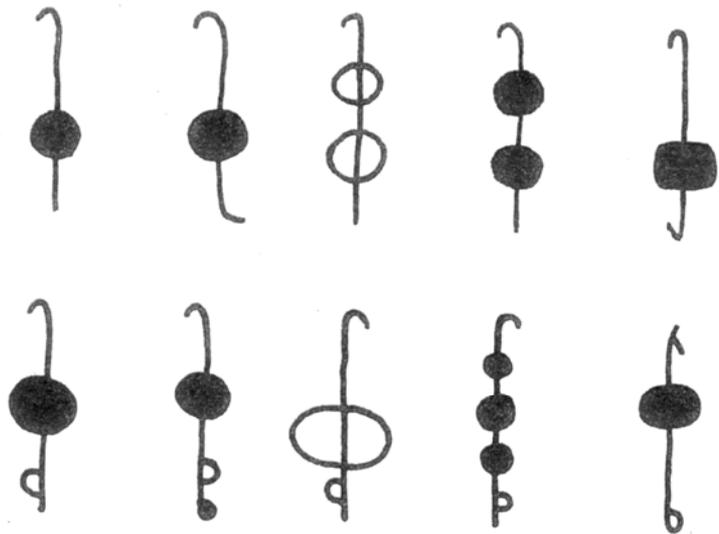
**CA-NEV-426 Spaulding Ridge**



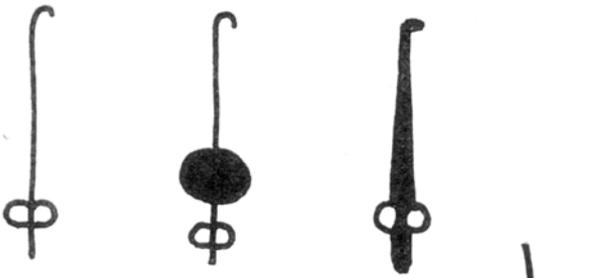
**CA-NEV-426 Spaulding Ridge**







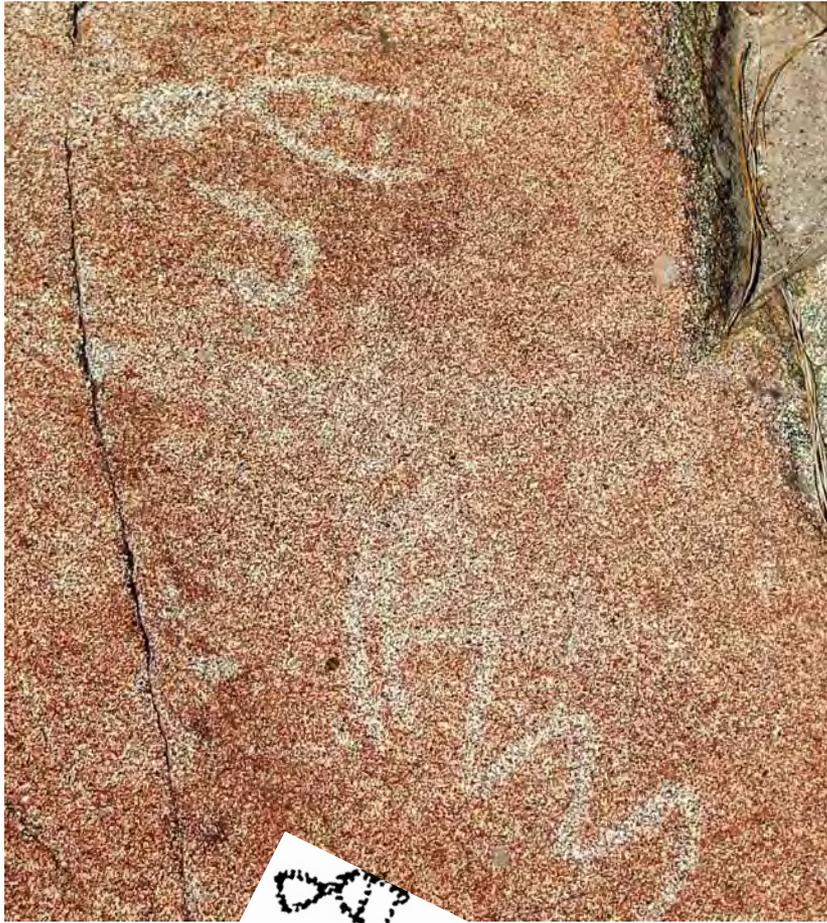
Atlatl



Digging Stick



Sun Stick



Handwritten text on a white tag, possibly identifying the rock art as "Petroglyph".



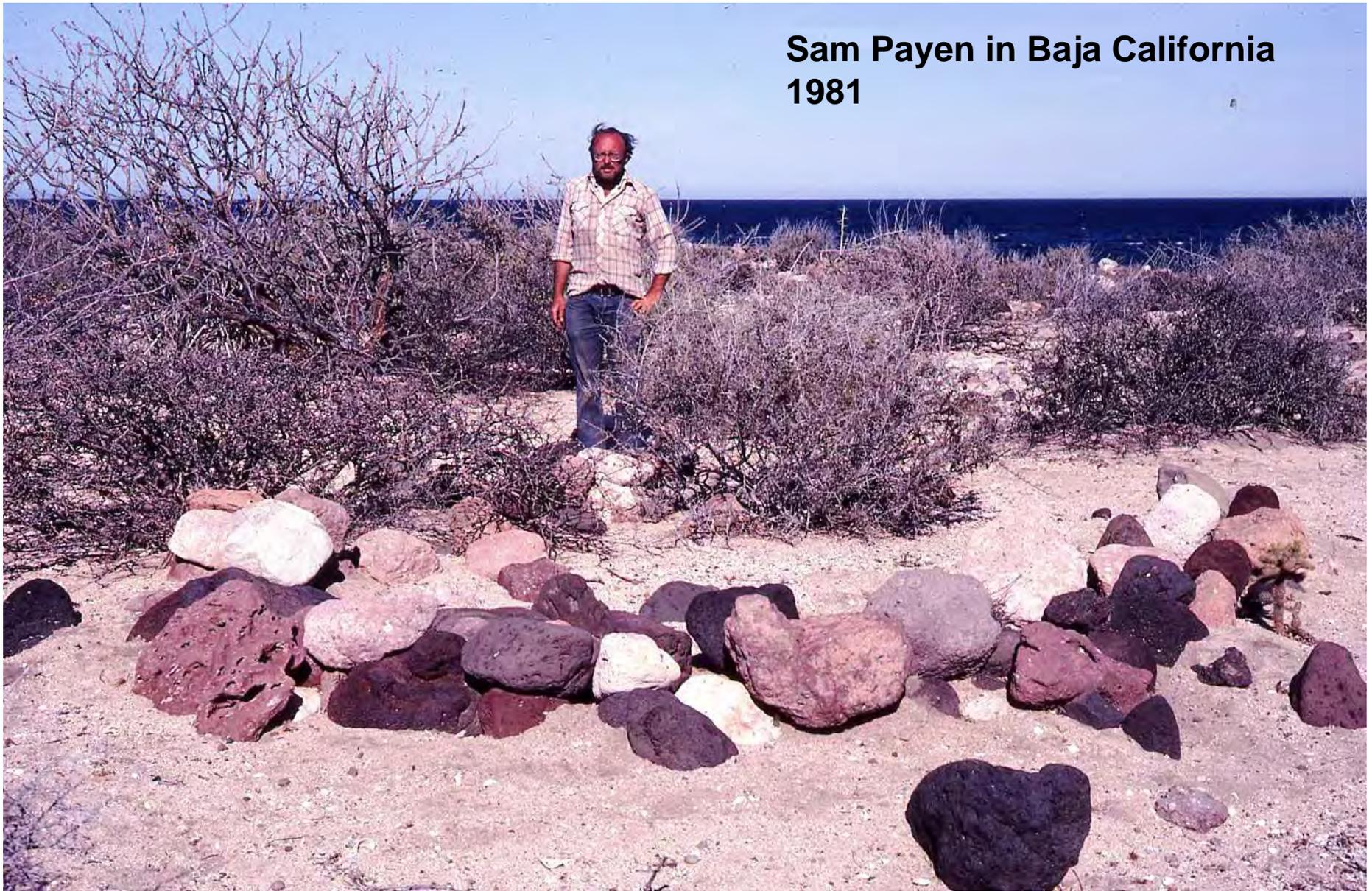


**Small Bedrock Mortar**





**Sam Payen in Baja California  
1981**



**Payen, Louis A.**

**1966 Prehistoric Rock Art in the Northern Sierra Nevada, California  
Master's Thesis – Sacramento State College**

# Payen's Rock Art Classification (133 Sites)

## **Pit-Groove Tradition**

- Style 1 – Pitted Boulders (24 sites)
- Style 2 – Pit and Groove (14 sites)
- Style 3 – Complex Pit and Groove (12 sites)

## **Abstract-Representational Tradition**

- Style 4 – Simple Abstract Monochrome (31 sites)
- Style 5 – Abstract Polychrome (9 sites)
- Style 6 – Valley-Sierran Abstract (28 sites)
- Style 7 – High Sierra Abstract-Representational (15 sites)



**Style 1**  
**Kyburz**



**Style 2**  
**Smelter Site**



**Style 3**  
**Bamert Cave**



**Style 4**  
**Pate Valley**



**Style 5**  
**Canal Cave**



**Style 6**  
**Brushy Canyon**

**Site Name: DONNER PASS**

**Site Number: CA-NEV-4**

**Recorded by: Wilson (1956), Betts (1998)**

**Number of Elements: 205**

**Elevation: 6860 feet**

**Setting: East Side of Sierra Crest at Donner Pass**

**Number of Bear Track Elements: 1**

**Number of Anthropomorphs: 0**

**Incorporation of Rock Features? Yes**

**Ponds?: Yes**

**Waterfalls?: No**

**Archaeological Associations?: Yes**

**Bedrock Mortars: No**

**Milling Slicks: No**

**Lithic Scatter: Yes**







# SACRED SYMBOLS FROM ANCIENT The Donner Pass Petroglyphs



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*Drawing courtesy of John Betts*

Petroglyphs are fragile and irreplaceable; help preserve them by following these guidelines:

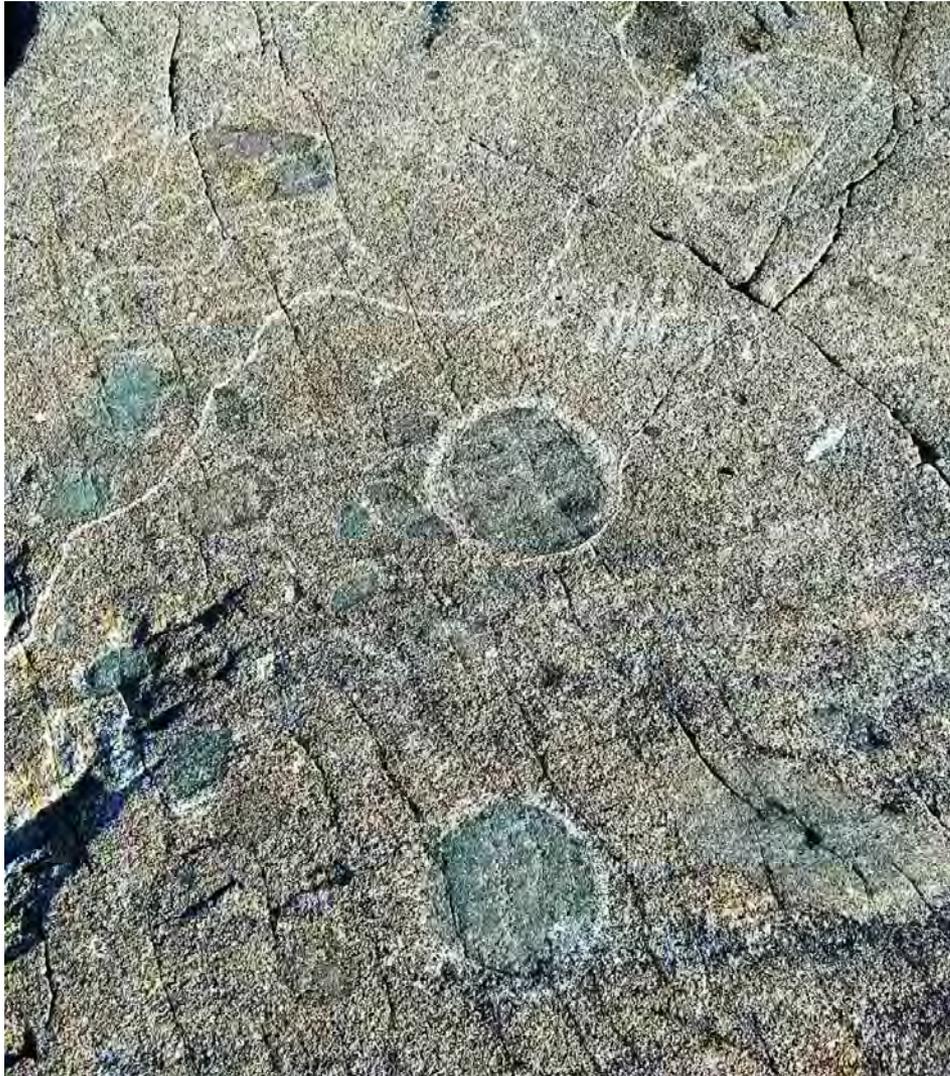
Well... destroy the images.











**Donner Pass Site**  
**Incorporation of Mafic Inclusions into Rock Art Design Elements**

**Site Name: WABENA**

**Site Number: CA-PLA-591**

**Recorded by: Foster (1986), Betts (1990)**

**Number of Elements: 40**

**Elevation: 6560 feet**

**Setting: Edge of Ridge Overlooking Deep Canyons**

**Number of Bear Track Elements: 11**

**Number of Anthropomorphs: 0**

**Incorporation of Rock Features? No**

**Ponds?: No**

**Waterfalls?: Yes**

**Archaeological Associations?: Yes**

**Bedrock Mortars: No**

**Milling Slicks: No**

**Lithic Scatter: Yes**





08.15.2008 10:00



08.15.2008 10:00

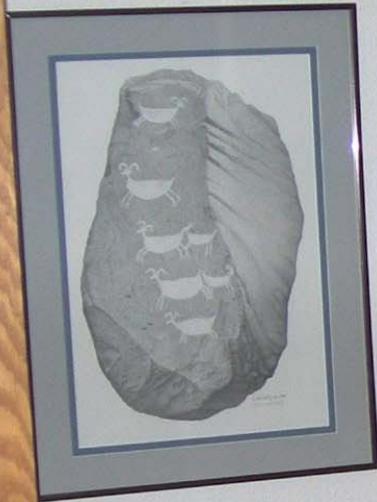


**Waterfall 2600 Feet Below**



08.15.2008 10:38





**Tinkers Knob**



**Lyon Peak**



**Needle Peak**



**Devils Peak**



**Castle Peak**

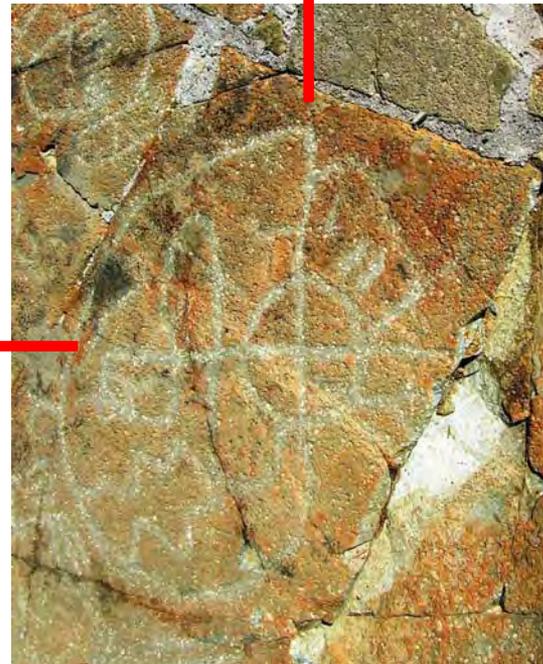




**Tinkers Knob**



**Devils Peak**





**Preservation Treatments – August 1989**



**Placing Rocks Into Position**



**Preparing to Fill A Void**



**One Rock Piece at a Time – Three Days**

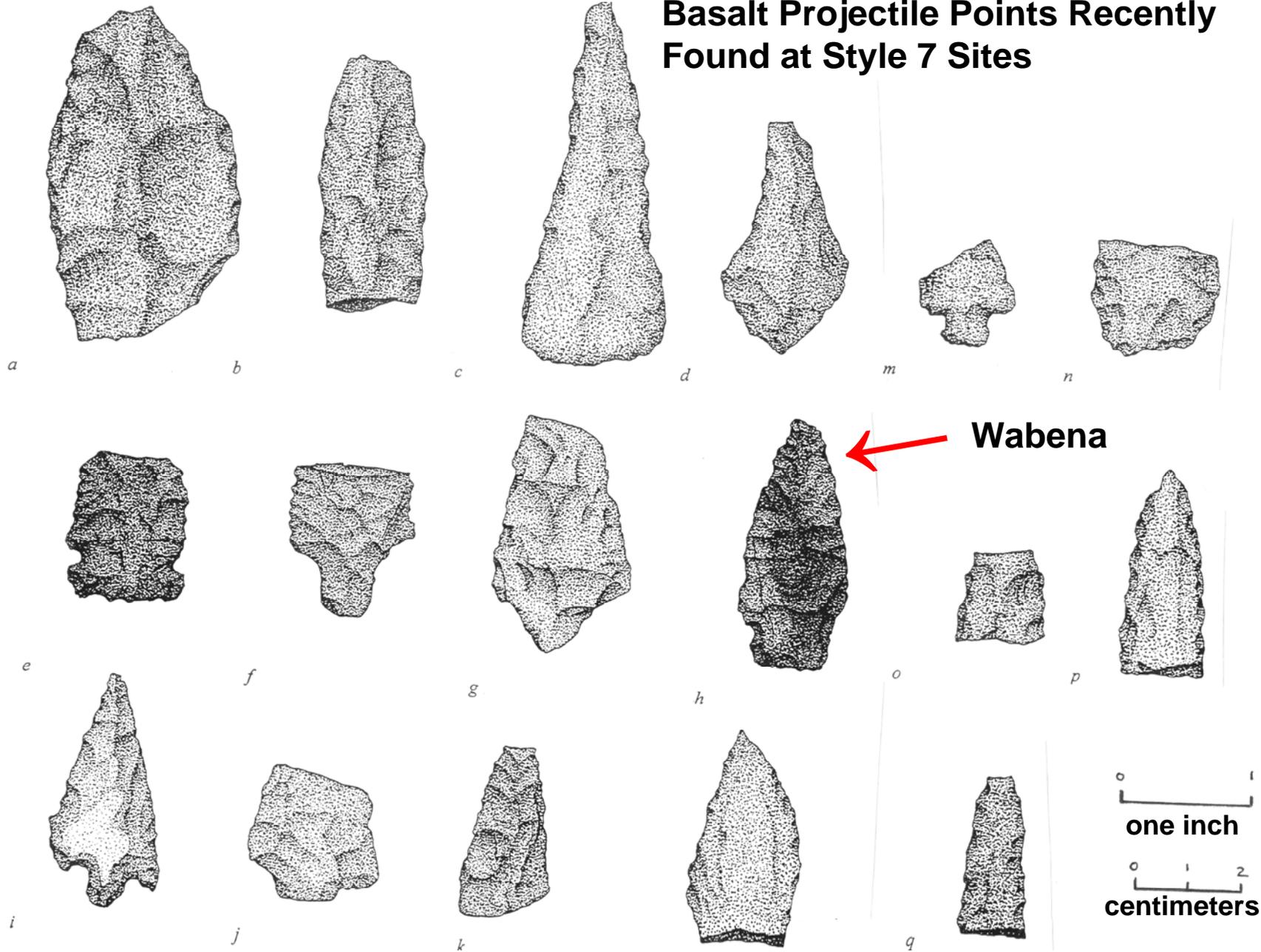


**End of Day 2 - Almost Done**



**19 Years Later -- August 2008**

# Basalt Projectile Points Recently Found at Style 7 Sites



**Site Name: CISCO GROVE #2**

**Site Number: CA-NEV-507**

**Recorded by: Foster and Jenkins (1986), Betts (2008)**

**Number of Elements: 45**

**Elevation: 5560 feet**

**Setting: On a Rock Dome within a Stream Canyon**

**Number of Bear Track Elements: 10-13**

**Number of Anthropomorphs: 1**

**Incorporation of Rock Features? No**

**Ponds?: No**

**Waterfalls?: Yes**

**Archaeological Associations?: Yes**

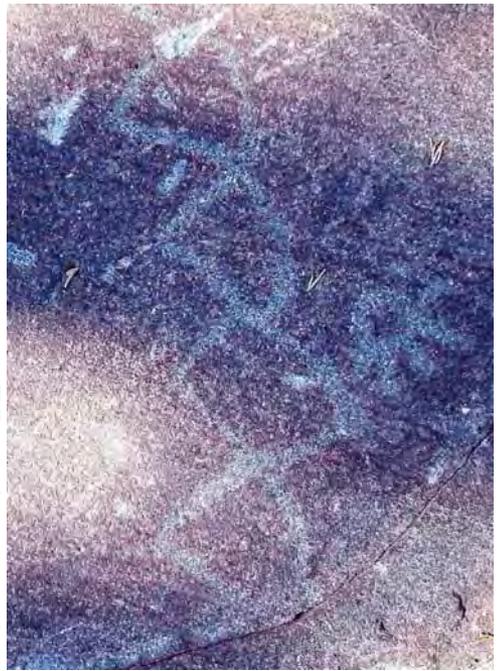
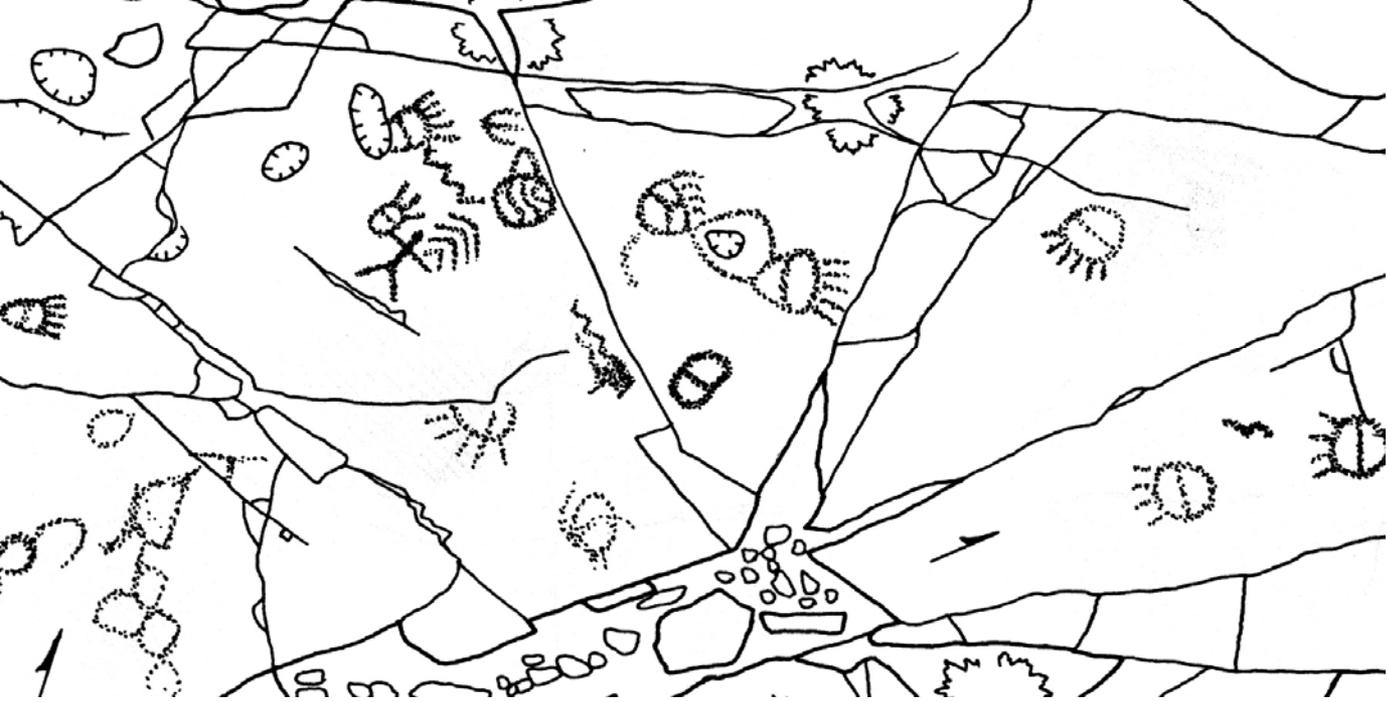
**Bedrock Mortars: No**

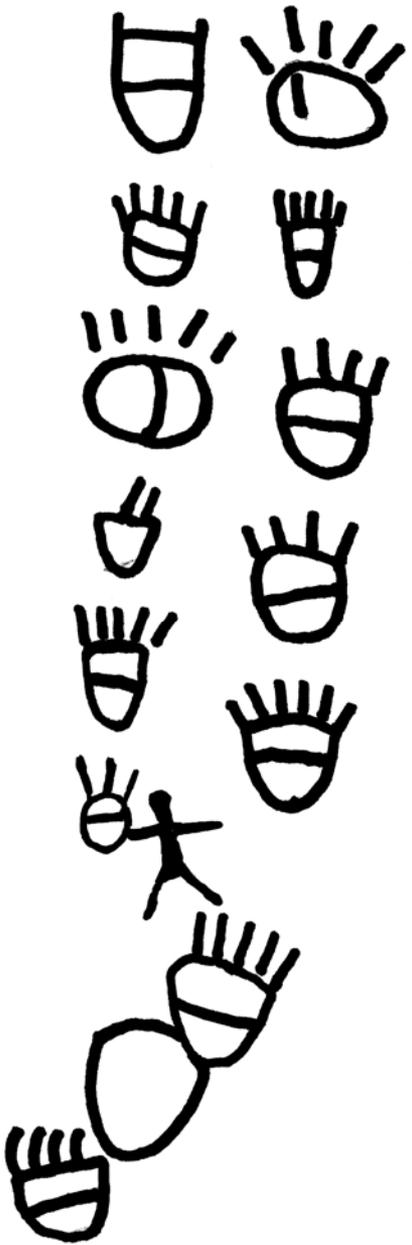
**Milling Slicks: Yes**

**Lithic Scatter: Yes (Two Projectile Points)**











# Milling Slicks and Lithic Scatter



**Milling Slicks**



**Glacial Polish**

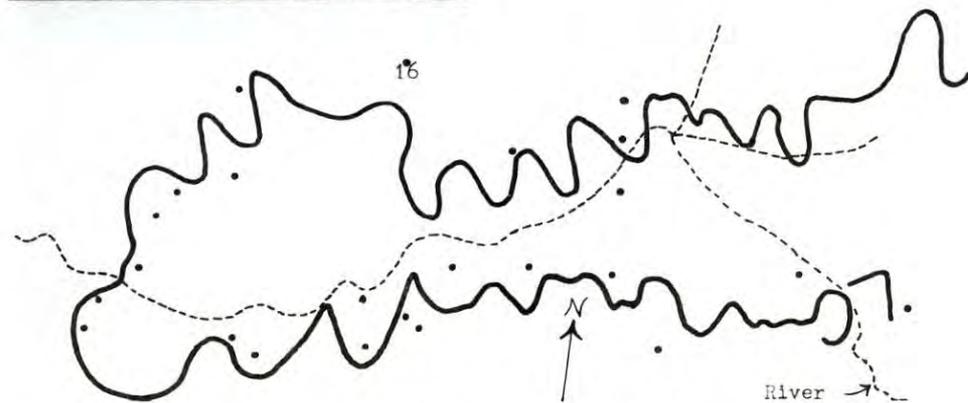
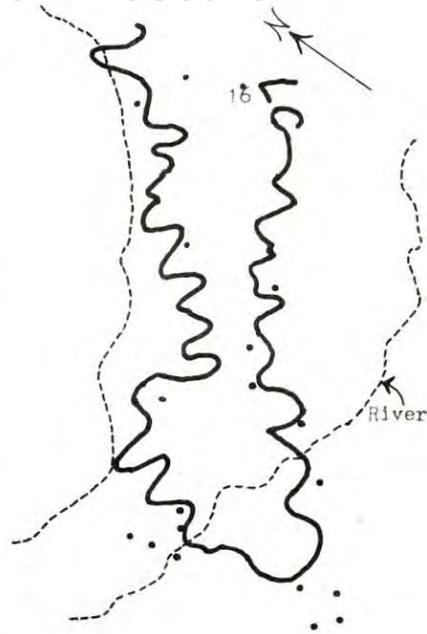




**Cisco Grove # 1**  
**CA-NEV-506**

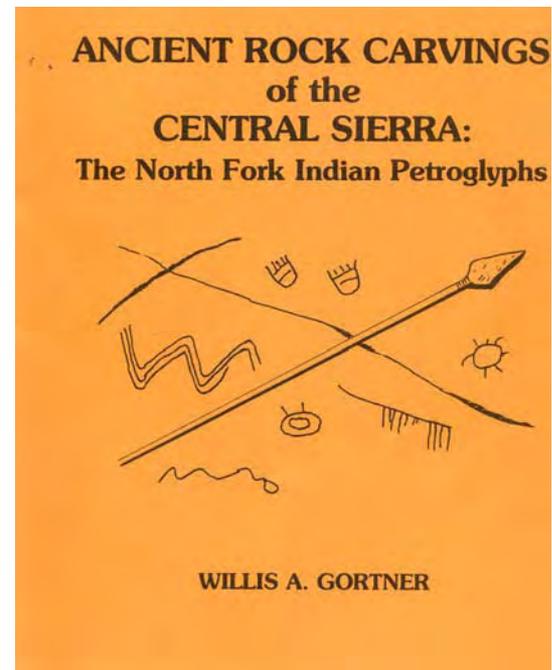


# Willis Gortner's Style 7 Research



Map #3? Two possible interpretations of the symbol at Site #22 are shown. Tracings of the symbol are superimposed on two alternative contour map tracings of petroglyph sites and the North Fork of the American River and tributaries.

## Prepared Site Records for 56 Style 7 Sites



**Site Name: SODA SPRINGS**

**Site Number: CA-PLA-26**

**Recorded by: Elsasser (1954), Smith (1957)**

**Number of Elements: 750+**

**Elevation: 6060 feet**

**Setting: Near Large Meadow within a Stream Canyon**

**Number of Bear Track Elements: 80**

**Number of Anthropomorphs: 0**

**Incorporation of Rock Features? Yes**

**Ponds?: No**

**Waterfalls?: Yes**

**Archaeological Associations?: Yes**

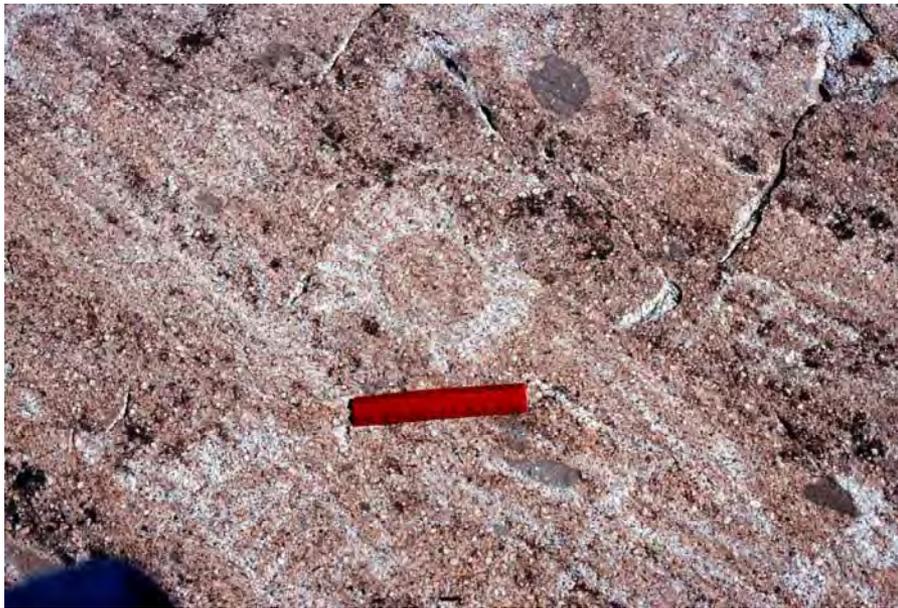
**Bedrock Mortars: No**

**Milling Slicks: No**

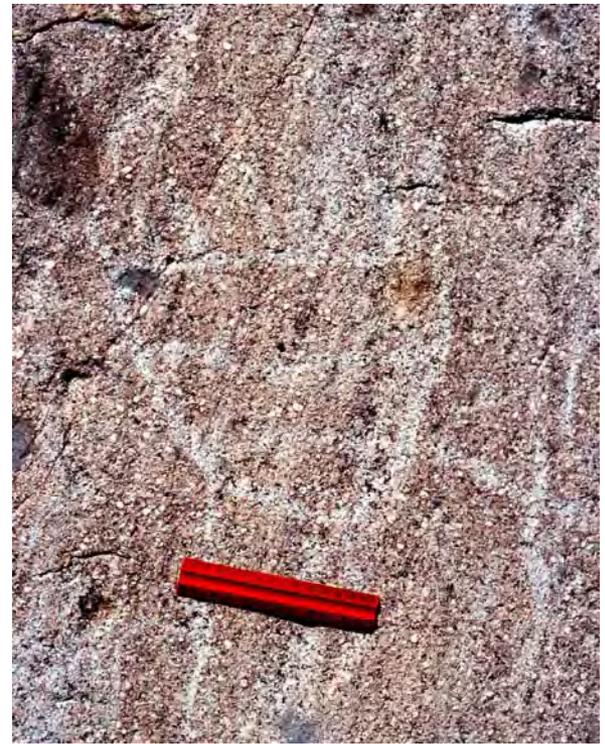
**Lithic Scatter: Yes (Many Projectile Points found in general area)**



**CA-PLA-26 Soda Springs**



**Soda Springs CA-PLA-26**



**CA-PLA-26 Soda Springs**



**CA-PLA-26 Soda Springs Use of Mafic Inclusions**



**FF Saxe**  
**June 28/ 88**



**Hattie B. Sproul**  
**June 29/ 88**

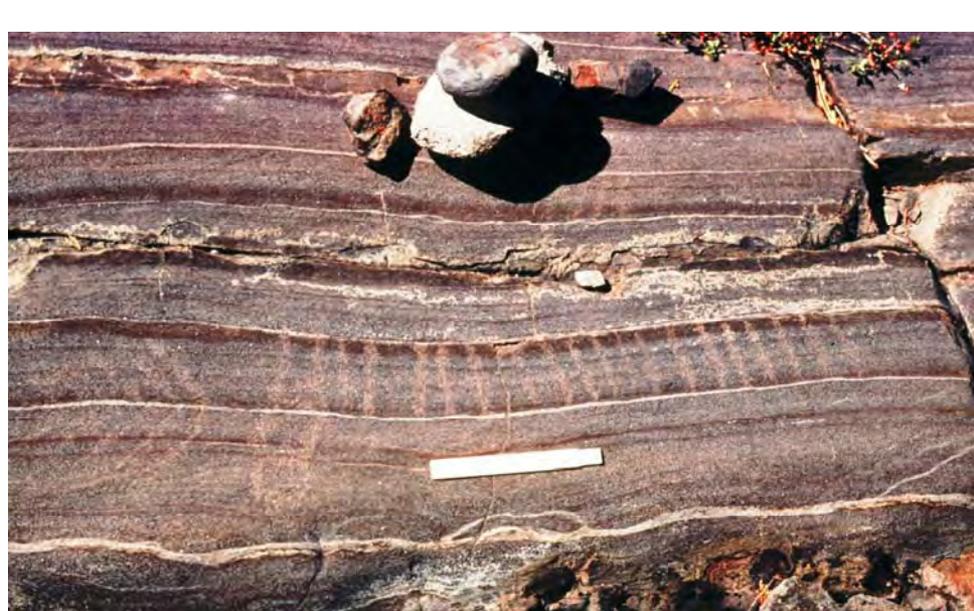
**CA-PLA-26 Soda Springs**



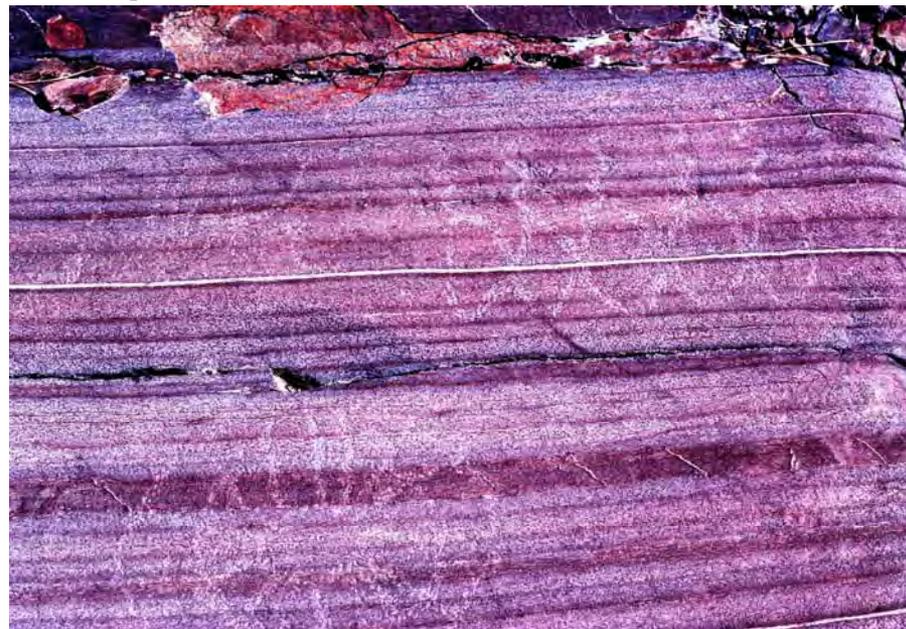
Photos by Kate Harper

CA- PLA-26 Soda Springs  
North Fork American River

**CA-PLA-551 Willis Gortner Site  
Middle Fork American River**



**Incorporation of Rock Feature**



**“Spoked-Wheel” Linked-Circles**



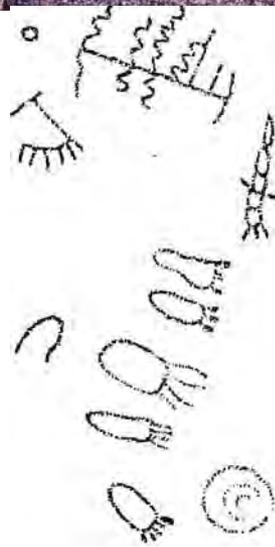
**Walter Freeman Site CA-PLA-550  
Middle Fork American River**

**Sun-Symbol Bear Track Concentric Circles**

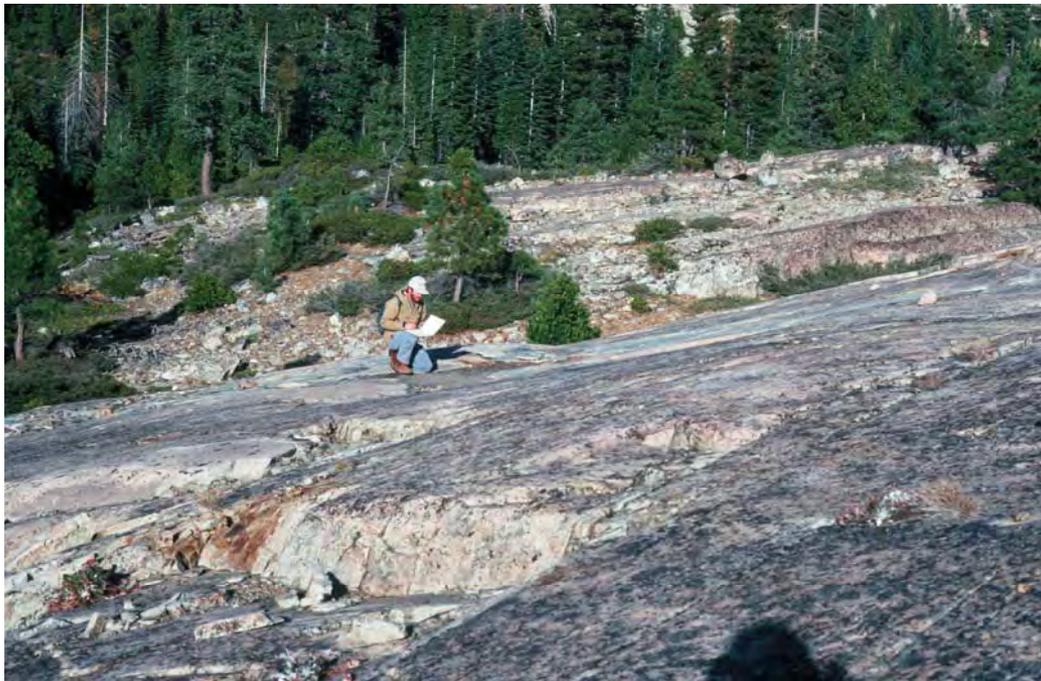




**CA-PLU-88 Lakes Basin  
South Fork Feather River**



**CA-PLU-4 Long Lake  
North Fork Feather River**



**CA-NEV-582 Canyon Creek  
South Yuba River**

Site Name: **POWER PAWS**

Site Number: **CA-NEV-1371**

Recorded by: **John Betts and Kyle Ross (2004)**

Number of Elements: **5**

Elevation: **5120 feet**

Setting: **On Broad Ridge**

Number of Bear Track Elements: **2**

Number of Anthropomorphs: **0**

Incorporation of Rock Features? **No**

Ponds?: **No**

Waterfalls?: **No**

Archaeological Associations?: **No**

Bedrock Mortars: **No**

Milling Slicks: **No**

Lithic Scatter: **No**



PETROGLYPH PANEL 1

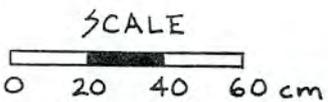
BROKEN ROCK

PETROGLYPH PANEL 2

SLOPING BEDROCK

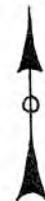
BROKEN ROCK

SLOPING BEDROCK



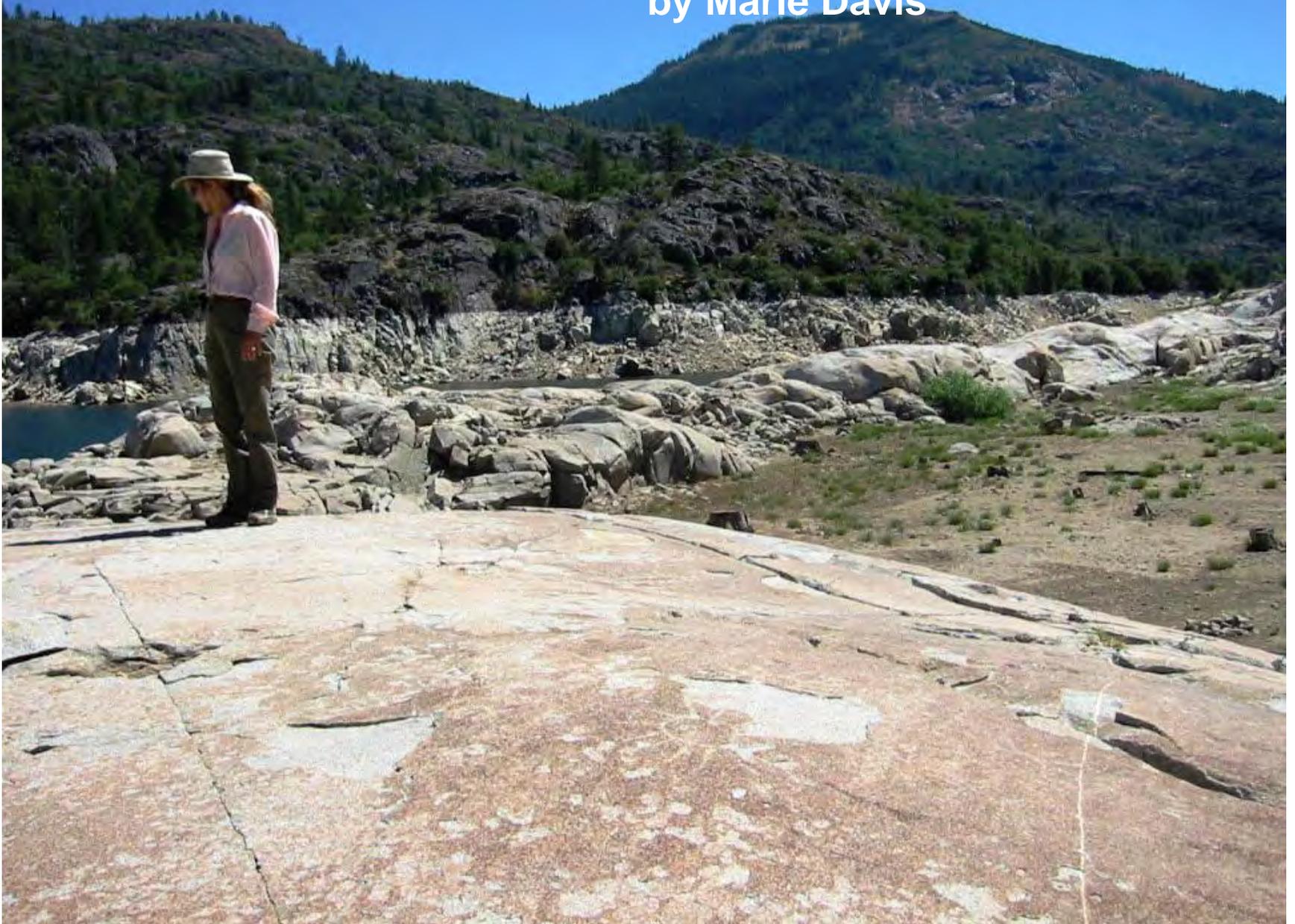
- LEGEND
- PETROGLYPH ELEMENT
  - ROCK EDGE
  - ROCK FRACTURE
  - ROCK VEIN
  - GRAVEL
  - UPSLOPE

TN





CA-PLA- Sun Grotto Site - Re-discovered on July 21, 2008  
by Marie Davis





**CA-PLA- Sun Grotto Site**

**Site Name: MEADOW LAKE**

**Site Number: CA-NEV-3**

**Recorded by: Pilling (1949), Betts (1998)**

**Number of Elements: 500+**

**Elevation: 7280 feet**

**Setting: On Broad Rocky Flat Near Sierra Crest**

**Number of Bear Track Elements: 5+**

**Number of Anthropomorphs: 5+**

**Incorporation of Rock Features? Yes**

**Ponds?: Yes**

**Waterfalls?: No**

**Archaeological Associations?: Yes**

**Bedrock Mortars: No**

**Milling Slicks: No**

**Lithic Scatter: Yes, near pond. Payen reported a Martis-type projectile point found nearby.**













**Meadow Lake  
Style 7 Site**

**Recent Vandalism  
(2007)**

# Old Vandalism





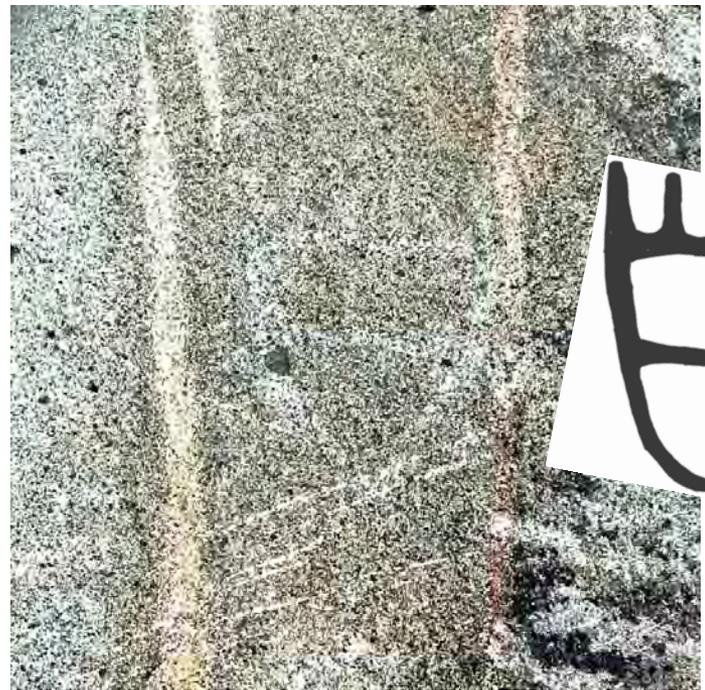
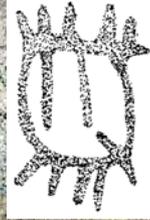
**Meadow Lake Site  
CA-NEV-3**

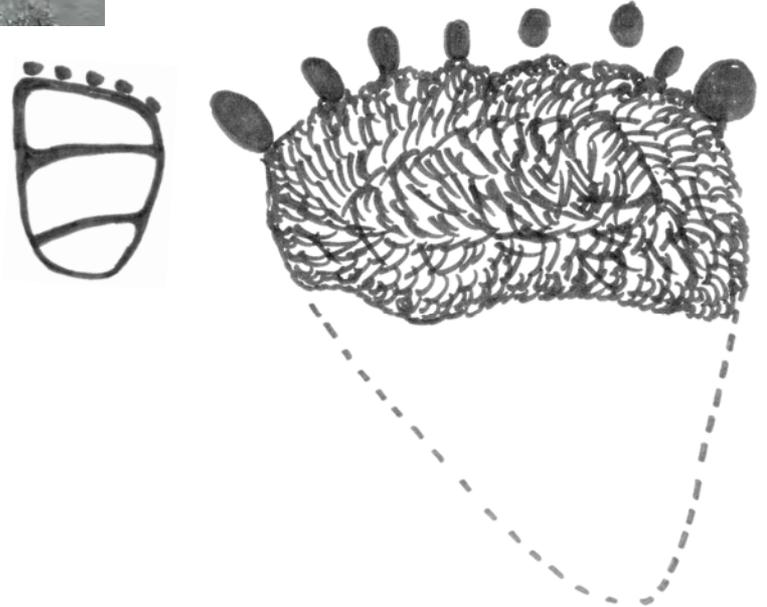
**Mimicry**



**Recent Vandalism (2007)**

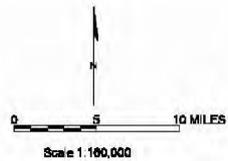




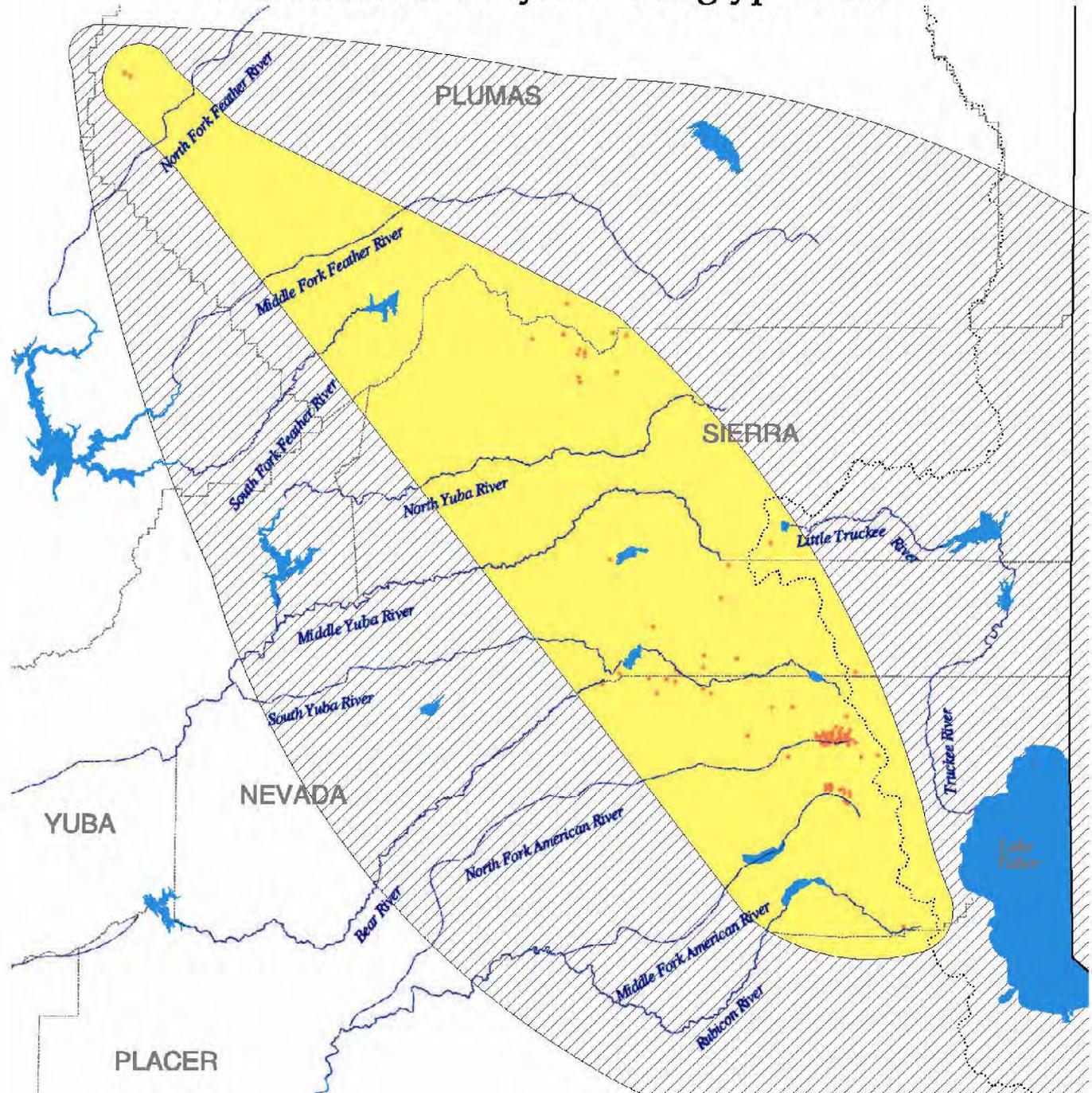




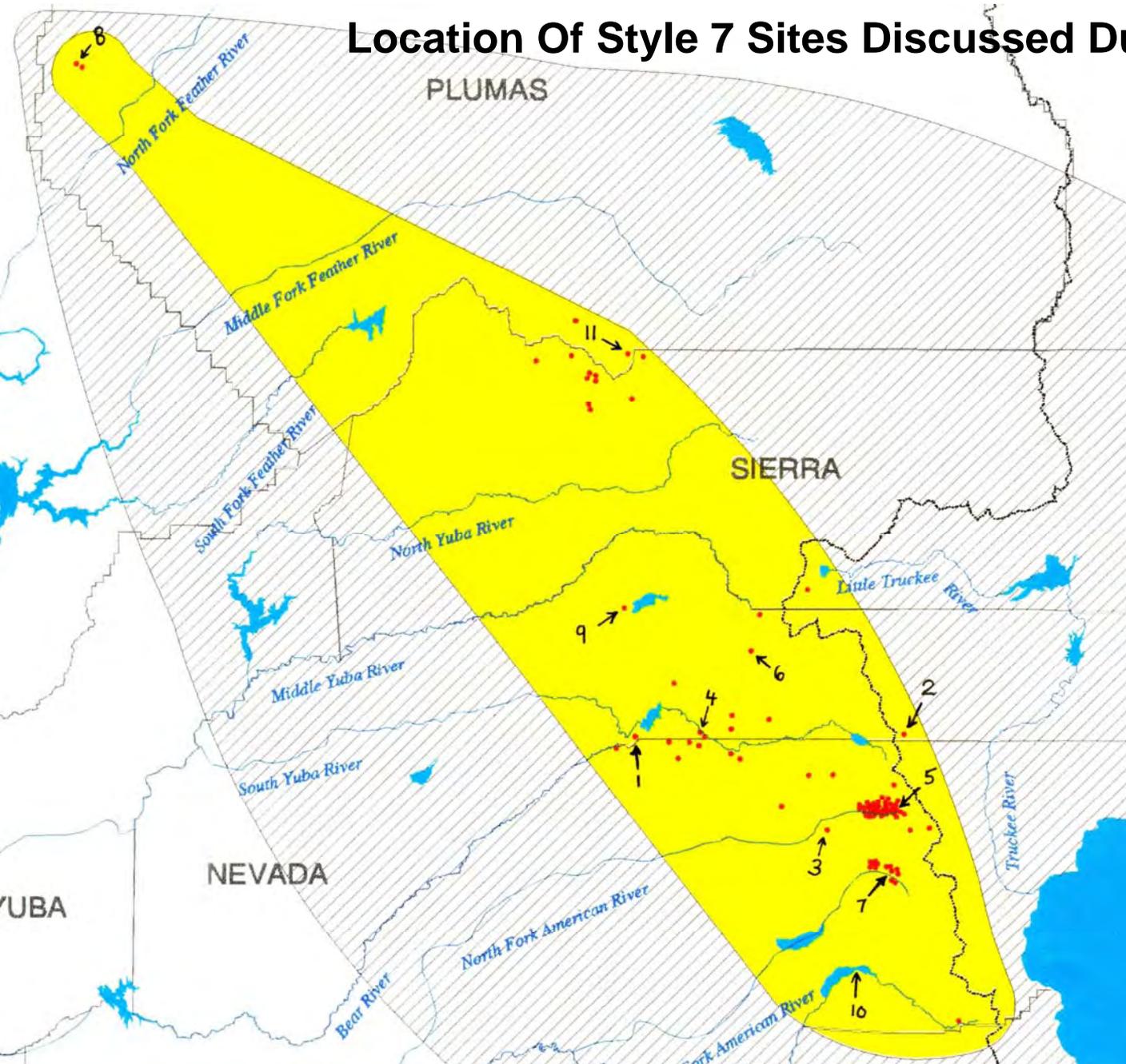
# Distribution of Style 7 Petroglyph Sites



- Location of 1 or more confirmed Style 7 Petroglyph Sites
- ▨ Martis Archeological Complex Area (Elsasser, 1960)
- Style 7 Petroglyph Style Area
- Lake or Reservoir
- County Boundary
- River
- ⋯ Sierra Nevada Crest
- State Boundary



# Location Of Style 7 Sites Discussed During Presentation



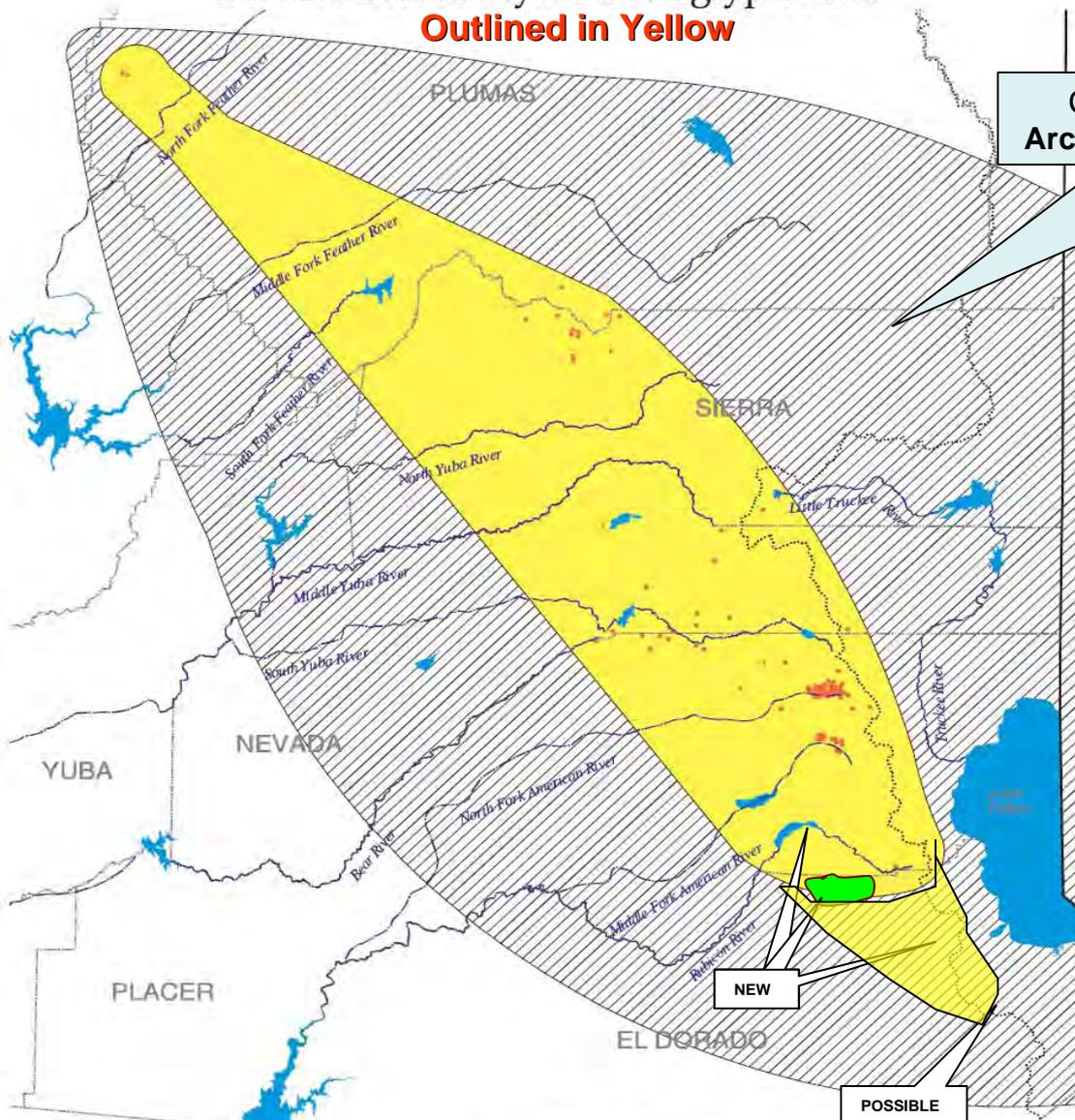
- 1 Spaulding and Power Paws
- 2 Donner Pass
- 3 Wabena
- 4 Cisco Grove #2
- 5 Soda Springs
- 6 Meadow Lake
- 7 Willis Gortner & Walter Freeman
- 8 Long Lake
- 9 Canyon Creek
- 10 Sun Grotto
- 11 Lakes Basin

# Distribution of Style 7 Petroglyph Sites Outlined in Yellow

Cross-hatched is area where **Martis Archaeological Complex** has been found

One archaeological theory is that the **Martis Archaeological Complex** (dating from about 4000 to about 1500 years ago) represents Hokan-language speakers ancestral to Washoe, and possibly the Yana.

Looking at the distribution of the Style 7 petroglyphs and the Martis archaeological materials, it seems likely that the Style 7 rock art is associated with ancestral Washoe people.



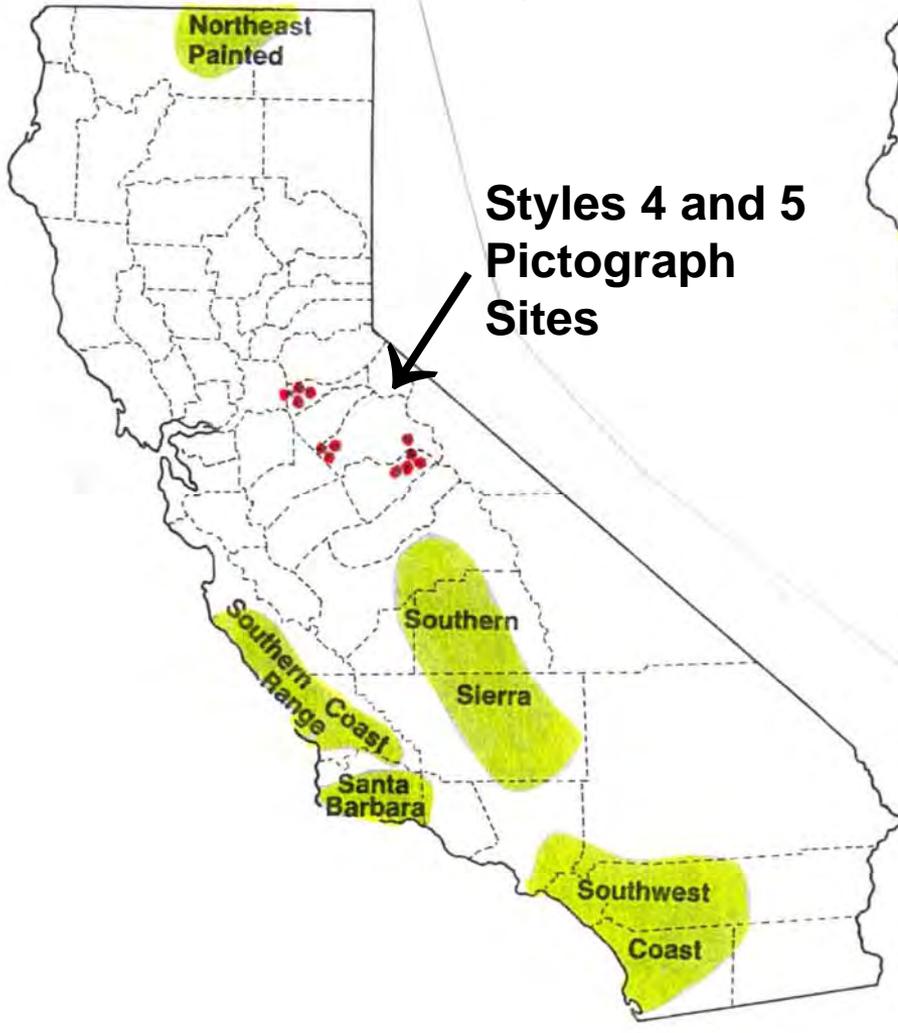
NEW

POSSIBLE

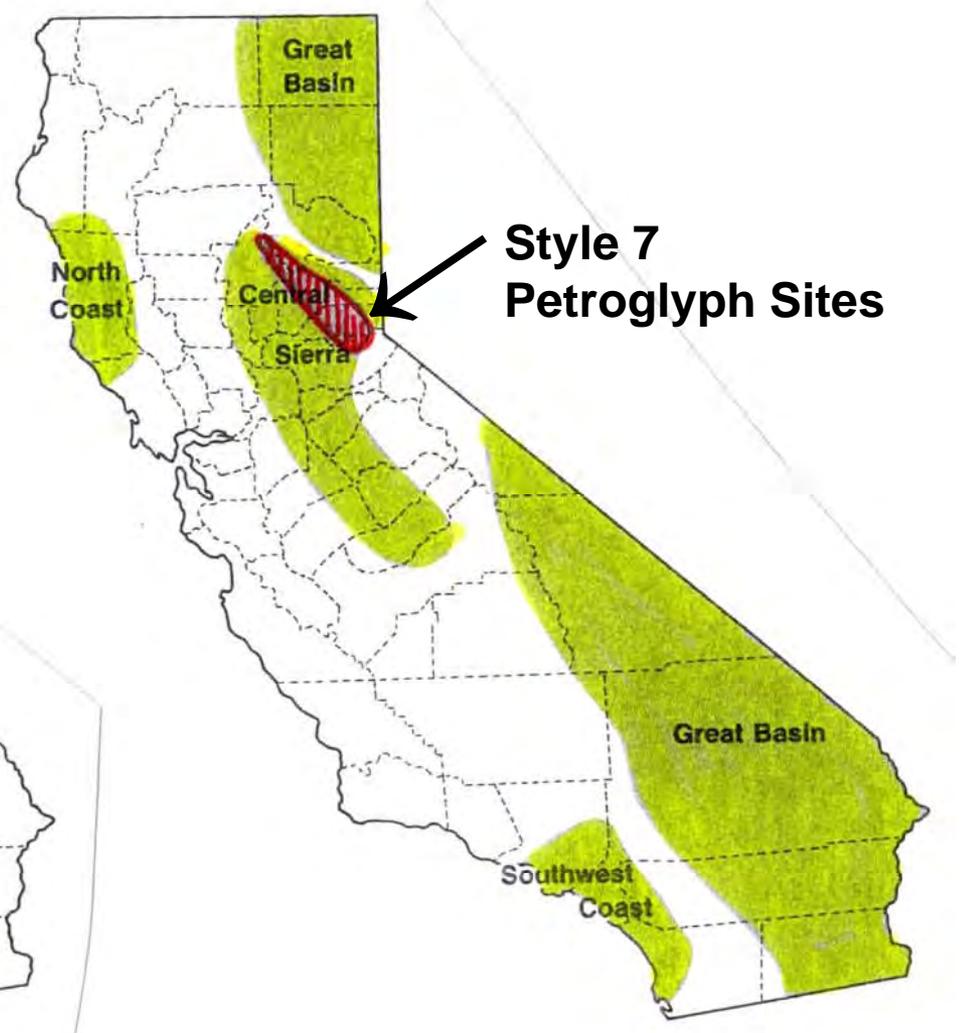
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- State Boundary



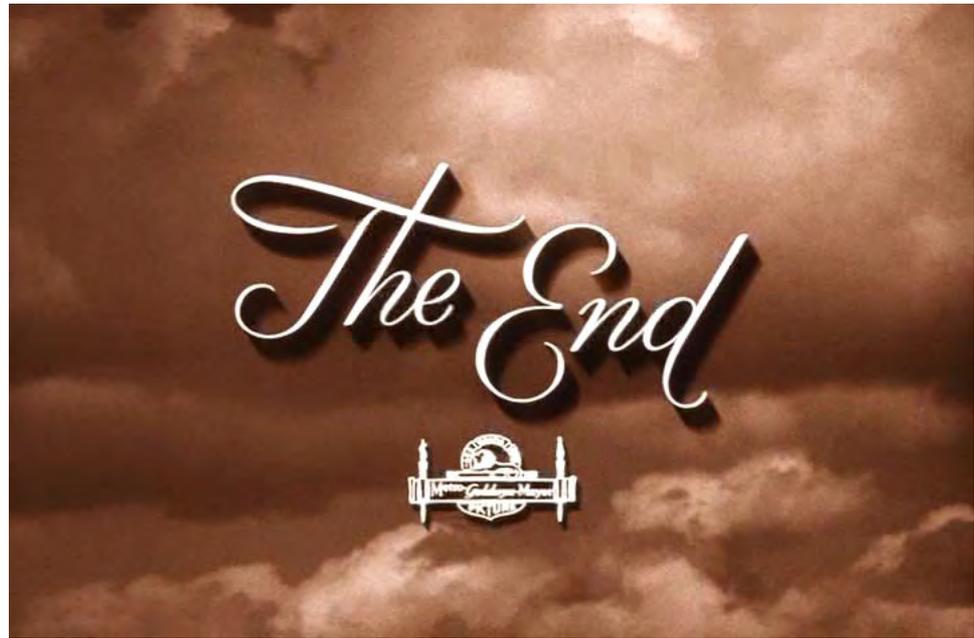
# California Rock Art "Style Areas" Described by Clewlow (1978)



**Pictograph Style Areas**



**Petroglyph Style Areas**



**Thanks for Coming!**  
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