

PRESENTATION SCRIPT

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Hi everyone! Thank you for letting us be a part of your symposia, we're excited to be here and share what we've been working on

My name is Kristen Francis; I'm a student at USU doing my first professional internship at SHPO with my mentor Elizabeth Hora-Cook.

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This isn't typical work for State History to be engaged in, but we want to help The Smith Family Preserve become a place where people can go to learn about the past and appreciate rock art. This is why our part in the project is to get the preserve listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

I'd also like to introduce you to the preserve, the cultural resources it holds, and what's gone on there through history.

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The National Register is the federal government's "official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation", and a program designed to bolster efforts to "identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archaeological resources."

We believe that the archaeological resources at Smith Preserve are important and "worthy of preservation". We hope to learn from and protect these remains better than before and create a more appropriate relationship between this site and the curious and sometimes careless public. This supports URARA's mission to understand, appreciate, and share rock art.

You may recognize these scenes from Butler Wash, which is listed on the register. There are sites that are listed solely for their rock art.

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The Adelbert Doyle Smith Family Archaeological Preserve - which goes by its shorter moniker "The Smith Family Preserve," consists of nearly 200 acres donated to the Archaeological Conservancy by the Smith family. The Smith Family owned this property since the fifties. On the east edge of its boundary near the shore of Utah Lake lies all of its archaeology.

I'll spend a few minutes talking about the types of archaeological resources across the Preserve, then we'll get into a more detailed discussion about the kinds and quantities of rock art on the property.

The preserve had been surveyed in the seventies by BYU and then again just a few years ago by the Mannings, who also photographed all of the panels they could find.

A question to think about is why would there be a concentration of artifacts here? It's an area of uplift that wouldn't be affected by changing lake levels and has a sandstone cap, it all has to do with prominence and opportunity.

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These are some photos from our visit to the preserve a couple of months ago. We were able to record several rock art panels and get a good feel for the site. We made the unfortunate decision to go during “spider season”, which we laughed off at first, but let me tell you, spider season is no joke! It was worth it to see the rock art in person. This is a pretty cool site.

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Between the north and south knoll there are hundreds of petroglyphs. Other cultural resources such as stone tools, pottery, and groundstone have been found on both knolls and concentrated in an area in the middle of the knolls closer to the shores of Utah Lake. There is valuable information to be learned from all of this that has been left behind and we’re going to use it here to situate the preserve in time and talk about who we think has used this area.

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The artifacts tell the tale of a temporary camp. People would stay here for a few days, weeks, or months at a time, depending on how productive their hunting and gathering was.

Some of these artifacts date to the Archaic Period

The black (basalt) point base is an Elko Eared point, the white one is an Elko Corner-notch. Both were crafted by people during the Archaic Period to hunt the antelope that come down to the water to drink.

The stone disk is a net sinker. People would spend hours weaving together cords into gigantic fishing nets. They would string these stone sinkers along the bottom of the net and either cast it into the water or drag it through to capture fish.

The abundance of groundstone also indicates that people were grinding up and using other lakeside plants either for food or for medicine. Now the lake is socked in with invasive plants, but in prehistory edible cattails may have grown along the banks of Utah Lake, even willow and mint could have grown on the freshwater banks.

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The people who made rock art at the Smith Preserve during the Archaic Period were far-flung travelers, which makes the delineation of rock art styles difficult. As Polly Schaafsma notes, “Great Basin Abstract Style shows general distribution throughout much of the southwest, but boundaries are not currently known.”

We started searching through records of recorded rock art in the Great Basin and northern Colorado Plateau to find similar rock art styles and elements to what we see at the Smith Family Preserve. The line drawings in pale gray are from Castleton’s Petroglyphs and Pictographs of Utah, we were able to use this book to help us figure out what rock art elements to look for

Abstract linear elements include rakes and parallel lines.

Great Basin Curvilinear style includes meandering curved lines, circles, concentric circles.

Generally we see connectivity of elements.

Representational elements like anthropomorphs and quadrupedal zoomorphs in the Glen Canyon linear petroglyph style are abundant.

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Something interesting we came across were the similarities to Grand Gulch, which is very far away in southeastern Utah. We see the same circles, fringes, parallel and wavy lines in both locations - but the ways the elements interact with each other are different. The elements are more closely clumped together at Smith Preserve. This just helps to confirm the likelihood that these are archaic period styles.

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In the Utah Valley we have evidence of an extensive Fremont occupation. On the east side of the lake underneath the modern day Provo/Orem area, we find Fremont pithouses. There are Fremont mounds under the Provo airport on the shores of Utah Lake, an extensive habitation under the present day marina, and many others that are more or less common knowledge. While the Fremont on the eastern shores of Utah Lake spent weeks, months, or years living in their pithouses and tending their crops, the archaeological record on the western side of the lake tells a different tale.

At the Smith Preserve, life in the Fremont Period continued on much as it had in the Archaic Period. It's likely that the Fremont people who stayed at these knolls were from the nearby Fremont villages to the west. They stopped here for hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants. During their trips to the eastern shores of Utah Lake they continued the tradition of writing on the rocks.

Styles became more geographically restricted, though they still share broad commonalities.

In contrast to Great Basin Archaic Styles, Fremont styles tend not to connect or overlap. When they do, it's part of a narrative centered on anthropomorphic figures, or sometimes animals.

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I think everyone here is pretty well versed in Fremont Rock Art. We don't see much of it at the Smith Preserve, but there are definitely humans, and some of them have things that we might consider headdresses.

There are several other sites within 40 or so miles of the Preserve that also have Fremont rock art, and specifically these human figures. Stansbury Island and Fairfield are the closest, but these kinds of figures are tapping into a more widespread Fremont tradition that stretches down to Glen Canyon and all the way east to the Colorado border.

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Here is a Historical Photo of Ute Indians and an early map of the area featuring Utah Lake at the top with Mount Timpanogos

The cooling climate after about A.D. 1300 brought significant changes to the lives of Utah's indigenous population. People became more mobile again, and as they did different groups of people flowed into the Utah Valley.

By the time of Euro-American contact the Utah Valley was inhabited by the Timpanogos band of Utes, so named for their ancestral homeland centered on Utah Lake with its abundance of freshwater fish.

Although we know there were Utes, Goshutes, and likely even Shoshones in the area, the rock art at the Smith Preserve doesn't feature any explicitly Ute designs. Perhaps these people "freshened up" some earlier images by re-pecking or abrading them, because some rock art does appear to be more recently created or modified than others. The landowners have

found projectile points dating to this time period, suggesting that Utes continued to use this area for hunting. Historical accounts of people fishing in Utah Lake at this time makes it possible that this area remained a popular fishing spot.

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Likewise, the Smith Preserve doesn't have historic inscriptions or other rock art created by Indigenous Americans or Euro-Americans. Although Highway 68 was constructed in 1931, it remained a dirt and gravel rural highway until 1968 and didn't see much more than local traffic. If people during the historic era visited the Preserve, they were respectful and didn't leave much behind.

Modern use of the Preserve branches into sanctioned and unsanctioned uses.

This land has been in the Smith Family for years, and they were excellent stewards of the land. They maintained the natural landscape and protected the archaeological record to the best of their ability. They collected artifacts from the surface of the site as they found them in order to keep them together as an assemblage and prevent looting.

Unofficially, the area around Smith Preserve is a natural harbor where fishers and daytrippers dock their boats. For several meters immediately adjacent to the water's edge this is permitted by state law, although people trespass from the water's edge with some regularity. Sport shooters enter from highway and state land to the north. This area is popular with gun owners, and some people regrettably trespass and shoot at the prehistoric rock art.

Alan Spencer, who was responsible for a survey of the area's rock art in the 1970s, suggested that there was evidence for people taking rock art from the site to display on their own property. This is impossible to prove, but not unlikely.

Not everything is doom and gloom, though. There is relatively little damage overall to the rock art, and I don't believe we've seen any intentional defacing.

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We can now look at the rock art in more detail.

[Click] Starting with the North Knoll, there are at least 145 panels of rock art.

[Click] The South Knoll contains at least 89 panels. Many of the same types of elements are found on south knoll, but there is so much variation in style.

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The variability we see has not only to do with style, but also with method and repatination.

Some elements are stipple pecked like in the middle photo, and some are etched out more evenly like on the left. Some are etched deep into the rock while others are more shallow.

While there is no surefire method of dating rock art, it is easy to see the possibility that style and repatination could be a clue. For example, perhaps in some cases we can look at how light or dark the petroglyphs look to compare relative ages.

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We want to leave you with a sense of not only element variability and diversity - but the sheer quantity of these images as well.

[Click]

While most elements are unidentifiable because of extreme repatination or because they run into each other, several kinds of elements appear again and again. These next few slides will give you a sense of the most common recognizable elements we've encountered.

Coming up on the screen now is a sampling of elements that look like fringes. There are.... Quite a few of them

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The anthropomorphic elements in particular were unique from those at north knoll.

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Some zoomorphic elements you'll see include bighorn sheep and other quadrupeds, lizards, snakes, and more. The creature with funny toes in the top left is said to be a mountain lion.

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Some types showed up again and again, but we couldn't be sure exactly what they were representations of.

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Circles and spirals are common in rock art pretty much universally, and it is no different here. They were all over.

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We can never know the exact meaning behind rock art, but many researchers have made interpretations of "hunting magic" in rock art that features prey animals and obvious hunting activities. We didn't find anything like this at smith preserve aside from the occasional deer or sheep, but we did find what could possibly represent nets that makes us wonder if there could be a story of "fishing magic" here.

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We'll end with that and leave a reminder that if you missed the september tours there is still an upcoming opportunity to see the rock art at smith preserve.

Come find us later this afternoon at the breakout sessions if you have any questions or want to help record this rock art in the coming weeks and months.

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Before we go, we'd like to say a few "Thank yous" to people and organizations who helped make this work possible

The Archaeological Conservancy, the Smith Family Preserve
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And thank you all for your interest!

