

ABOUT THE PETROGLYPHS

Are there significant sites and/or artifacts other than the petroglyph canyons themselves?

Yes. In addition to the Coso Rock Art National Historic Landmark (NHL) (an area of over 56 sq. miles), there are the following National Register of Historic Places properties at China Lake: Coso Hot Springs National Register of Historic Places District (NRHPD); Sugarloaf Obsidian Quarries NRHPD; Pothunter Springs NRHPD; Old Coso Village NRHPD; Salt Wells NRHPD; China Lake Propulsion Labs NRHPD; Cactus Flats Village NRHPD; Senior Officers Quarters NRHPD; Historic Buildings: Michelson Laboratory; CL Administration Building; Supersonic Naval Ordnance Research Track; and Hangar One. There are over 2,200 recorded archaeological sites on CL lands.

There are rumors (of course) of recent and new archeological finds, a third major canyon with petroglyphs. Is there any truth to this?

This would be the Dead End Canyon petroglyph area to the northwest of the "old" (pre-1997) Big and Little Petroglyph Canyons NHL. All of these areas were incorporated into the current Coso Rock Art NHL. The "new" petroglyph areas were discovered during the course of extensive field surveys to define the boundaries for the NHL.

Are there aspects of the Coso petroglyphs that differ significantly from other known sites? i.e. in what way might these petroglyphs be unique?

The Coso petroglyphs, like other rock art traditions throughout the world, have distinctive style elements (e.g. the "boat-shaped" Coso sheep) and elements in common with other areas in the Region (e.g. Great Basin abstract curvilinear). See references available at the Maturango Museum gift shop. The Coso petroglyphs are one of the largest collections of elements in the Northern Hemisphere, if not the world.

Has the navy itself undertaken or sponsored any archeological investigations or any conservation measures?

Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake has had a formal Cultural Resource Management Program for over 25 years. The program conducts systematic surveys and recordings each year guided by program plans and budget availability.

PROTECTION OF THE SITES

Was there damage to the petroglyph sites that occurred before the base was established in 1943? (if this is the correct year)

Some historic "graffiti" has been found in petroglyph areas around the base. These include names and dates of people visiting the area in the late 1800s and early 1900s. There is what looks like a Model "T" automobile depicted at Little Petroglyph Canyon.

Is there evidence of illegal pothunters at the archeological sites in recent times?

Very little. The safety and security restrictions in place since the Station was established have resulted in de facto preservation of land-based resources. Compared to public lands, the resources at China Lake remain in pristine condition. Sites and sensitive areas are monitored by

staff, trained volunteers and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) enforcement-trained China Lake Police Department.

Comment on the petroglyph E=mc²?

NAWS China Lake does not have data about when this modern petroglyph was made. Interviewees have said it was already there in the early 1960s. The Station does not feel it detracts from the Canyon; but, rather, gives visitors an amusing "link" between prehistory and modern history.

When the Navy undertakes a new program or builds a new structure, is permission from an archeologist required?

Yes. China Lake's environmental review process, formed around the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), includes up-front review of every proposed project by the Station's Archaeologist/ Historian. Any cultural resource or Native American issue is dealt with under the National Historic Preservation Act procedures. In addition, survey, inventory and evaluation of sites on "non-project" areas of the Station is an on-going (every year) program. It is worth noting that new programs and facilities are directed toward existing developed areas whenever possible. This has resulted in less than 5% of China Lake's 1.1 million acres being disturbed in the Navy's 60-year tenure here.

What requirements must an academic researcher meet in order to carry out archeological research on the base? Is it possible for a recognized researcher to obtain access at all?

Academic researchers and other cultural resources professionals contracted to perform work at China Lake must meet the Secretary of Interior Standards. Researchers must present a research design and proposal. Work that would further or enhance the Cultural Resources Program at China Lake is considered for approval. Access is on a non-interference basis with respect to the Station's mission. All safety and security procedures must be strictly adhered to.

What recognition and/or commendation has NAWS China Lake received for their administration of the archeological sites on the base?

China Lake's cultural program was recognized with the 2003 California Governor's Historic Preservation Award. It is the first military installation ever to be so recognized. In addition, the Station's Cultural Resources Management Program received first place awards for fiscal year (FY) 2003 from the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy. China Lake was first runner-up/honorable mention from the Secretary of Defense for FY 2003. These awards are competed for world-wide among all United States Defense Installations. China Lake's public Petroglyph Tours Program won the Rear Admiral William Thompson Award for Excellence in Public Affairs from the Chief of Information for the Navy.

VISTORS' PROGRAM

Who becomes an escort? Why do they volunteer? Are they repaid in any way? Is there any objection to thanking an escort with a bottle of wine, a T-shirt, etc.?

Only U.S. citizens can become escorts. All escorts are monitored by other escorts, and anyone who can't, or doesn't, adhere to NAWS China Lake's guidelines are removed from the escort list. Escorts are volunteers. They volunteer because they believe in the tour program and want to allow others to see the remarkable rock art at Little Petroglyph Canyon. They also care about the resource itself and want to see it preserved. Escorts cannot ask for compensation, but they can accept gas money or a modest gratuity in appreciation of their time and efforts.

What is the arrangement that the Navy has with the Maturango Museum?

The Maturango Museum, which is a non-profit organization, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Navy to conduct public tours at Little Petroglyph Canyon. Under the MOU, the museum is allowed to charge for the administrative work of setting up a tour and is allowed to schedule up to four tours a month. In return, the museum assists the Navy by conducting local school tours at no charge and by providing a public place for Petroglyph Escort Training classes.

What use is made of the personal information required of visitors to the base, i.e. social security number, phone number, etc.?

Social Security Numbers are required for all badges. Instead of creating individual badges, we use a form called a Recreational Badge. The phone numbers are used in case of emergency, plus they may be used after a tour when the Navy does spot checks, ensuring that the tour went successfully and that guidelines were followed.

Have security checks on visitors significantly increased since September 11, 2001?

Security has definitely increased since September 11, 2001. For about a year, tours were totally closed. It wasn't until the tour program was redesigned, with security as a major focus, that tours were allowed to start up again. Some of the major changes include the requirement of two petroglyph escorts, as opposed to one; requiring proof of citizenship; and physical inspections of all vehicles.

OTHER ASPECTS OF LAND MANAGEMENT BY THE NAVY

Are there any endangered or threatened species on the base? Is there any special protection for these species?

Endangered Mohave Tui Chub; Threatened Inyo California Towhee; Threatened Desert Tortoise. NAWS China Lake has Biological Opinions and approved management plans from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for each of these species.

Are there exotic species present on the base, and is any remediation done?

Tamarisk (salt cedar) has been a big problem at China Lake (as it is throughout the desert west). These plants are invasive and water intensive. NAWS China Lake has undertaken an aggressive tamarisk removal program with the goal of complete eradication.