



Petroglyph Escort Training Guide

2012



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NAWS Physical Security Disclaimer

The information presented in this guide and the escort training class are based on NAWSINST5530.1A, NAWS Physical Security Plan.

About the Petroglyphs at NAWS China Lake

Facts and Theories

The Coso Rock Art National Historic Landmark (NHL) located at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake is 36,000 acres in size, an area of over 56 sq. miles. It was designated a NHL because the district contains the most extensive and best-preserved concentration of prehistoric rock art in the United States. The Coso petroglyphs are considered to be one of the largest collections of elements in the Northern Hemisphere, if not the world.

The Coso Rock Art NHL is the only historic landmark of its type located on lands maintained by the U.S. military. 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.

The highest concentration of petroglyphs within the landmark are located in the Upper Renegade, Little Petroglyph, Big Petroglyph and Sheep canyons. Many other petroglyph panels exist outside the landmark boundary.

The Dead End Canyon petroglyph area, northwest of the Big and Little Petroglyph Canyons was also incorporated into the current Coso Rock Art NHL after its discovery during the course of extensive field surveys to define the boundaries for the historic landmark.

There are three types of rock art. The Coso petroglyphs, like other rock art traditions throughout the world, have distinctive style elements, such as the “boat-shaped” Coso sheep, and elements in common with other areas in the region (e.g. Great Basin abstract curvilinear).

Little Petroglyph Canyon was discovered in about 1929 by Pioneer Sheepman Carricut. The first published mention of tours of the canyon was in 1933. A 1942 edition of Desert Magazine referred to the canyon as Black Canyon, and it received its current moniker in 1968 in a book published by Grant, Band & Pringle.

There are competing theories about both the age of the petroglyphs and their function. One theory about the age of the petroglyphs is that they appeared 25,000 years before present while another states that they are between 2,000 and 15,000 years old. Whether the purpose of the rock art was for shaman practices or hunting practices is also debated. The Navy considers both sets of theories to be subjects of scientific debate and, therefore, does not officially or unofficially endorse any particular theory.

In addition to the Coso Rock Art National Historic Landmark (NHL) 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.

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. The phrase “E=mc²” can also be found on one of the rocks in Little Petroglyph Canyon. 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.

The Navy and the NHL

NAWS China Lake’s primary responsibility is fulfilling its mission, which is to assist its tenant commands in fulfilling their missions. But, the installation also bears the responsibility of protecting the rock art and cultural resources present within its gates and does so in compliance with the 1906 American Antiquities Act, the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, and the Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1979. NAWS China Lake also feels it has the responsibility of sharing and allowing public and academic access to certain areas containing these cultural resources.

A formal Cultural Resource Management Program was established at the installation over 25 years ago to preserve, study and maintain the rock art and other cultural resources found throughout the station. The award-winning program conducts systematic surveys and recordings each year guided by program plans and budget availability. Awards include first runner-up/honorable mention from the Secretary of Defense for fiscal year (FY) 2003, Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Award for FY 2003 and 2005, Secretary of the Navy Environmental Award for FY 2003 and 2005, and Department of Defense Meritorious Achievement Award for FY 2003 and 2005. The cultural program was also recognized with the 2003 California Governor’s Historic Preservation Award. NAWS China Lake is the first military installation ever to be so recognized. In addition, 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.

When the Navy undertakes a new program or builds a new structure, an up-front review of every proposed project is conducted by the installation’s archaeologist/ historian as part of China Lake’s environmental review process, which is formed around the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Any cultural resource or Native American issue is dealt with under National Historic Preservation Act procedures. In addition, the 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.

China Lake’s Cultural Resources Program also works closely with academic researchers and other cultural resources professionals on projects that would further or enhance the program. Those that wish to perform this type of work at China Lake must meet the Secretary of Interior Standards and submit a research design and proposal. Access is on a non-interference basis with respect to the Station’s mission. All safety and security procedures must be strictly adhered to.

Little Petroglyph Canyon Tour Guide

Prepared by Don Moore
Revised and updated October 1999 by Elva Younkin

Visitors to Little Petroglyph Canyon who want to understand the significance of this remarkable display of rock art face what amounts to a three-hour course in desert natural history, anthropology, archaeology, art, and science. We have attempted in the following pages to present the story of the petroglyphs and the early people who made them in a way that will give everyone a better understanding of this unique page in North American history.

The most remarkable thing about the rock art of the Coso Range as seen in Little Petroglyph Canyon, is the breadth of time it represents. Recent dating techniques suggest that the earliest drawings may be as much 14,000 to 16,000 years old. There are similar petroglyphs in thousands of sites throughout the Great Basin, which extends eastward into Utah. In Little Petroglyph (Renegade) Canyon the succession of different rock art styles, both abstract and representational, suggests a continuous cultural tradition that started near the end of the last Ice Age and persisted into the recent historic period. Its dominant artistic motif was the desert bighorn sheep. Human images ("anthropomorphs" to rock art specialists), range from simple stick figures to elaborately decorated shaman effigies. Recent pictographs (rock paintings using mineral pigments) in the desert-Sierra region perpetuate the symbolism of the Coso petroglyphs.

Who created this remarkable legacy in stone? Some anthropologists consider the rock artists of the Coso Range as part of the Great Basin Shoshone population who shared linguistic roots with the Hopi and Pima Indians of the Southwest and even the Aztecs of Mexico. They believe that the prehistoric Coso people originated an artistic style that spread throughout the Great Basin. The unmistakable continuity in the Renegade Canyon record suggests that the proto-Shoshonean culture existed for many thousands of years.

Other scholars dispute this idea, suggesting instead that Numic-speaking groups like the Shoshone entered the Great Basin no earlier than 1250-1450 A.D., long after much of the Coso rock art was completed.

Looking Back to the Beginning

At a point 15.2 miles from the museum the road crests a small hill where a domed camera station overlooks the dry bed of ancient China Lake.

Imagine the valley below as it would have been 10,000 years ago. Glaciers have retreated into the Sierras and streams flow from every canyon into the twelve-mile-long lake that extends from the present site of the Navy's Armitage Field to the lava flows that rim the northern valley.

The outlet to this marsh-fringed body of sparkling fresh water is at its southern end, a rocky sill between the Argus Range and Lone Butte (B Mountain).

For thousands of years this was a flourishing ecosystem, a broad savanna broken by clumps of cottonwoods, willows, and alders that mark the water courses. On the higher slopes are scattered stands of pines and oaks that extend upward to still snow-covered peaks of the southern Sierra. In this idyllic setting a small population of paleo-Indians live in an easy equilibrium with nature. Food is plentiful, the climate mild, and survival largely a matter of prudence: don't tease the saber-toothed cats and don't get in the way of the mammoths.

How do we know what it was like?

The ancient lakeshore is easily discernible where it hasn't been covered by drifting sand. Along its western margins professional and amateur archaeologists under the guidance of Dr. Emma Lou Davis of the San Diego Museum of Man patiently delineated the trails and villages of an aboriginal people who were almost certainly the first Coso petroglyph-makers. They left scattered on the ancient shoreline an astonishing quantity of stone tools, including a distinctive type of crescent-shaped scraper found in only a few other Great Basin sites. Embedded in the eroding surface of the ancient lakeshore are the fossilized remains of Pleistocene grazing animals - horses, camels, bison and mammoths - and the carnivores that hunted them - saber-toothed cats and jackal-like dogs. (It was not conclusively proven that man (in this area) co-existed with these creatures, although workers at the site were on the lookout for bones with butchering tool marks or embedded arrow-points.)

The evidence for early plant and tree forms has come from fossil pollen grains. The tough microscopic skeletal structure of many types of pollen appear when core samples from the valley floor are examined under the microscope. Recently, paleobotanists and palynologists, specialists in pollen identification, have turned up a wealth of information in the debris of ancient pack-rat nests; accumulations of plant material that have survived the drying climate for as much as 8,000 years. They show that the familiar pine-oak woodlands of the western slopes once extended well into this valley.

The gradual drying of this Basin-and-Range Territory commenced when the diminishing rainfall no longer maintained the level of the chain of inland lakes that stretched from Owens Valley to the Death Valley basin and beyond. Challenged by a more hostile climate, the earliest Indian bands became opportunistic hunter-gatherers, driven by the quest for food from their winter quarters on the valley

floor to the game-rich uplands in spring, and finally into the meadows of the Sierra and the pinyon forests that provided their winter stores. The rigors of nomadic life in bands that rarely numbered more than four or five families were met by intimate knowledge of their environment, innovative crafts, and a belief in the supernatural. There is little doubt that their rock drawings represent efforts to communicate with the agents of the underworld upon whom they believed their survival depended. The petroglyph record - extending as it does over more than ten millennia - attests to the persistence of this shamanistic belief.

A View of Basin-and-Range Topography

Leaving the valley floor, we travel up through Mountain Springs Canyon, out of the creosote-burrobush desert and into one of the finest stands of Joshua trees in the the American west. At the top of the canyon we get our first view of Telescope Peak, 11,049 feet, which surmounts the great upturned geological layer-cake that forms the Panamint Mountains. Here is the essence of basin-and-range topography. From the eastern scarp of the Sierra Nevada, across the state of Nevada, and well into Utah, the geography is dominated by alternating desert basins and two-mile high ranges that would appear from an astronaut's vantage point "like an army of caterpillars on the march from Mexico to Canada," as one geologist put it. The Coso and Argus ranges form the western-most wrinkle in this corrugated physiography. They were shaped by two main types of volcanic activity, basalt flows and rhyolite domes. Basalt flows are quite fluid when still molten, and have filled many ancient canyons and river valleys. Rhyolite is lighter in both color and density than basalt, owing to a lower content of iron and magnesium and a higher content of silica. Rhyolite lavas tend to pile up, or dome, near their vents. Lumpy rhyolite domes are common in the Coso Range, and dominate the skyline. Throughout the Cosos a network of canyons provide drainage from the highlands to the desert below. It is on the chocolate-colored walls of the blocky defiles that the rock-artists left their mark.

After reaching the head of Mountain Springs Canyon, our tour heads north into Etcherson Valley at the foot of Maturango Peak, at 8850 feet the highest point on the Naval Air Weapons Station. Leaving the paved road at mile 37.4 we head west to Little Petroglyph Canyon, following the route taken by early Nadeau stagecoaches from the mines at Darwin to the distant San Fernando Valley. Topping the rise above Wild Horse Mesa, we see the Sierra crest from beyond Owens Peak on the south to Olancho Peak, Mt. Langley, and Mt. Whitney on the north. The six-mile dirt road ends at our destination, a picnic area constructed by the China Lake Seabee detachment. Here we will assemble for the actual canyon tour, allowing 3 to 4 hours to view what we can of the Coso's thousands of examples of Native American rock art.

Many of the symbols which appear in this region are common throughout the Great Basin and the Southwest. A

few examples follow:

The SUN symbol appears in many forms. It may be drawn as a circle with fringe of rays, as concentric circles or as a circle surrounded by dots. Variations of this common design are nearly endless.

The SNAKE is associated with water in the mythology of many Native American groups. Drawn realistically with head and tail, or merely as a simple wavy line, it may symbolize a river. Shown as a concentric spiral, turning either clockwise or counter-clockwise, the SNAKE may represent a pool of water or catchment.

In some tribes the spiral has special significance as the PLACE OF EMERGENCE symbolic of the center of the cosmos or the Mother Earth navel from which the earliest people emerged. It is also known as a whirlwind or twister symbolizing breath or life. It is a place for communication with spirits.

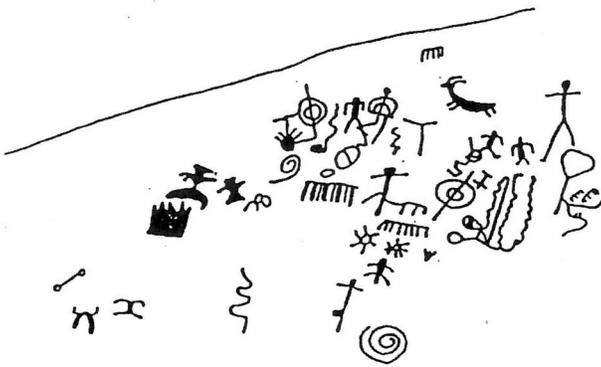
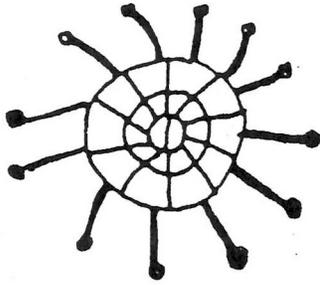
The RAKE or COMB is a rain motif used from California to West Texas. Lizards, frogs, toads and turtles are all bringers of rain. The Bighorn sheep was an important symbol used by COSO shamans to invoke rain.

Starting the Tour - The Dedication Monument

The bronze tablet that identifies Little Petroglyph Canyon as a National Historic Site is set in a boulder (see map, location 1) which provides many examples of "rock art style" and a range of ages typical of the local assemblage. Of particular interest here is one simple man-figure - a "patterned-body anthropomorph" in anthropologist's terms - which has been reworked by some later artist. The original figure, on the east face, may be several thousand years older.

The extent of repatination, the process by which the fresh rock surface exposed by the artist is gradually weathered back to the original dark color, has been found to be an inaccurate measure of age. Some of the pattern has been brightened by a second artist. The reworking, perhaps as part of a tribal ceremony hundreds of years later, looks relatively fresh today. (The boulder was repositioned by a Navy work crew. One can see that the side opposite the main petroglyph panel was once buried and escaped weathering. In another thousand or so years it, too, may have turned dark brown.)

The tour will start at the upper end of the canyon and progress down canyon. In the upper end are found deeply-cut abstract patterns of pits and grooves, shield-like emblems and circular symbols. These petroglyphs were once considered to be the oldest in the canyon (partially because they appeared more 'primitive'). This perception is a hold-over from the concept of the "evaluation of art styles" which had its origin in nineteenth-century Darwinism, wherein Darwin had shown that biological species evolved



from simple to complex.

Two notable features in this section of the canyon are long continuous lines low on the basalt wall (2). The one on the east side, which may be 30 feet long, has been partly worn away by erosion, but the one on the west side is in better shape. It cuts through a circle and has several pendant circles attached along its length (suggesting a genealogical record, perhaps?). Note how deeply it is cut, and how tough the rock is. The depth of the groove may have resulted from repeated abrasion of the pattern in the course of decades of ceremonial use.

On the ledges above the canyon floor are two kinds of kitchen equipment: metates, appearing as smoothly-worn depressions in the rock surface where a flat mano has been used to grind seeds into flour, and bedrock morteros, or mortars, hemispherical cavities in which larger nuts and acorns were pounded and ground with a stone pestle. A group of foot-deep mortars is on the rock surface above the east wall of the canyon (3), however, you will have to take our word for this as one is not allowed to climb up the walls or walk on the Canyon rim. This measure has become

necessary to protect many petroglyphs that have been impacted by well-intentioned feet walking over them.

Importance of the Bighorn

A single large bighorn sheep is also found here, once thought to be the oldest example of representational art (4). Again, the great depth of the grooves may suggest repeated retracing of the pattern in ceremonial ritual. Throughout the Cosos the importance of the bighorn sheep is inescapable. This was once hypothesized, by anthropologists studying rock art, to depict a sheep hunting cult. Later studies, however, have not proven this to be the case. One anthropologist, Dr. David Whitley, has found a wealth of early ethnographies that should set the record straight - "...As is quite clear in the ethnographic record, the Coso petroglyphs were made by shamans; the sites themselves were shamans' vision quest locales; and the petroglyph motifs depicted the hallucinatory images seen by shamans when in the supernatural realm..." "...a series of shamanic specialities existed which were associated with particular animal species as helpers..." Isabel Kelly, writing in 1936, recorded the following comment: "It is said that rain falls when a mountain sheep is killed. Because of this some mountain sheep dreamers thought they were rain doctors." "...This interpretation of Coso petroglyphs, moreover, is confirmed both ethnographically and iconographically. ...numerous informants throughout the Numic realm recorded the fact that the Coso region and its inhabitants were renowned as rain shamans."

Dr. Whitley has written several monographs directed explicitly towards interpreting the art. In a chapter in the Maturango Museum's new book, COSO ROCK ART: A New Perspective, Whitley states "The shaman, or Pohagunt (literally "[man] having power"), was the primary religious functionary in Numic Society. He was responsible for curing illnesses caused by disharmony in the band and imbalances in the supernatural world. He might also be able to predict the future, control rain, find lost objects, cure snake bites, and retrieve lost souls. Some shamans, further were believed impervious to gun or arrow wounds."

One small deer-figure is found at eye level on the east wall (5). It has weathered back to the original color of the native rock and appears only when the sun strikes it obliquely. The finely-pecked outline, the artist's animation of his subject and its delicate proportions all set it apart from the coarser work around it. It is one small mystery in a gallery of mysteries.

A bit farther down-canyon past dozens of examples of abstract patterns, someone will notice a pair of recently drilled inch-diameter holes in the basalt (6). Here geologists have taken core samples for dating the rock using the potassium-argon isotope ratio technique. The slow decay of one potassium isotope as it is converted to atoms of argon provides a geological clock that can be read in the laboratory. As rocks go this basalt is fairly young - a few 100,000 years at the most.

Signs of the Old People

Beyond this point the canyon widens briefly, then drops between high walls that give the rock-artist more room to work. On the right is an elongated symbol that might be taken for an emblem of one of the clans that claimed this space for their rituals (7). Or it might even represent a ceremonial opening into the underworld from whence the spirit of the rock could be summoned.

Here, too, are random patterns of pits which the ancients painstakingly ground into the tough volcanic rock. The pit-and-groove style has been identified as both a fertility symbol and an important part of rain-making magic in more recent California Indian cultures.

From Primitive Throwing Stick to Modern Bow

In this part of the canyon there are animals aplenty: sheep in a variety of poses, deer- crude, but with recognizable antlers instead of horns - dogs (or cats) harassing the sheep (8). Hunters with bows identify these figures as belonging to a later period when the spear-thrower or atlatl was supplanted by the more deadly bow and arrow. The atlatl appears frequently from this point on, usually as a vertical shaft carrying a central disk, representing the stone weight attached to the center of the throwing-stick, and with a hook at the top and finger-loops at the bottom. By extending the reach of the spear-thrower's arm it gave his missile greater speed and range, and it served his people's hunting needs for millennia. The killing of the sheep depicted in Coso rock art served as a metaphor for the death of the shaman. It was believed that when the shaman entered an altered state of consciousness he died and emerged in the under or supernatural world. The depiction of the bighorn sheep was synonymous with the shaman in the supernatural realm.

The human population of the Eastern California desert was never large and probably did not exceed 500 in the region from Death Valley to the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada. Yet these people somehow accounted for the production of over 100,000 works of rock art. How did they do it? The answer, of course, is the great span of time in which they lived and left their mark. Allowing 8,000 years to create the present petroglyph record requires only a dozen new works each year, a task which has been easily accomplished in replication experiments by rock art researchers.

On the high west wall, facing the morning sun, stand four shaman-figures that represent the highest refinement of the Coso pictorial art (9). These patterned figures are clearly supernatural. They are also right-handed, if we take the object in the right hand to be an atlatl and those in the left, darts or arrows. It is likely that they represent the featured celebrants in tribal rituals that took place on the spot where we now stand.

Just Doodling? Not Likely.

But some distance southward there is an uneven scattering of rock drawings. The best display here is on one west-facing panel that has collected petroglyphs like graffiti on a subway wall (10), with a variety of motifs, real and abstract, drawn one atop another. To the uninitiated, such disorder is likely to suggest that this art is nothing more than doodling, an idle occupation to pass the time when food was plentiful and the living comparatively easy. But that is hardly the case. The time scale is anything but brief; even here one finds a succession of older motifs superimposed with newer ones in a continuum that spanned thousands of years.

The creation of a single new drawing was a singular event, and its creator an individual of some distinction. These were a people without written language or everyday acquaintance with graphic forms of expression. To them the image on stone must have been the embodiment of magic itself. The connection between the artist's rendering of a sheep and the objective (of invoking rain) was not trivial, and the meandering abstractions laboriously engraved on basalt must have conveyed an awesome significance to the aboriginal eye.

Shortly the canyon drops down a series of bedrock chutes (11), worn into the tough, unyielding granite by the abrasive action of thousands of flash floods. The canyon walls nearly converge overhead, and pools of greenish water in depressions dug by thirsty burros, horses and other wildlife may still remain from spring runoff. Here begin some of the finest and most varied examples of transitional forms of rock art, identifiable by the appearance of both atlatls and bowmen, and a variety of dot array patterns that suggest primitive counting games or tally systems, perhaps used in recording seasonal events or calendrical observations (12). (A few recent additions in arabic numerals are also present.) At the canyon mouth (13), where a fence once stood to enclose herds of modern sheep, there is a fine procession of stick-figures - nearly a hundred in all - marching south on the western wall and up toward the mesa above. Some have packs, suggesting that the figures record a migration, the annual trek to the mountains that followed the springtime gathering here? Or perhaps they record a dance celebrating the successful entreaty of the shaman to bring rain.

A few yards down the canyon (14), far enough for most tour groups to go, a pair of sheep are seen on the west wall, one appears in the normal upright attitude, the other has been speared and lies in death throes on its back.

The hike back to the parking lot will consume another hour, and the changed perspective will bring a host of new details to view. You may have observed, during your walk down the canyon, 3" metal discs with identifying numbers embossed on them. If not, see if you spot any on your way back up the canyon. These discs are survey markers installed by students from Fresno State University under the direction of Dr. Raphael Reichert. These markers will facilitate future research in the canyon by allowing exact

location and mapping of specific petroglyphs and/or panels. The Museum has published a small guide book, written by Dr. David Whitley, to Little Petroglyph Canyon using these markers to guide the visitor to specific panels interpreted by Dr. Whitley.

At a short side-branch (15) we see a panel of "medicine bags", a peculiar Coso symbol that resembles the fringed deerskin bag used by a shaman to carry the sacred objects of his craft. By now the visitor, in an effort to grasp the sheer diversity of rock art themes that he has seen here, is probably starting to shape his own ideas on their origin and meaning. But - before going too far, try reading some of the books by anthropologists who have spent years researching the archaeological and anthropological record. Dr. David Whitley, in particular, has perused hundreds of ethnographical accounts by Native American informants about the meaning of rock art symbology in the Great Basin and, in particular, in the Coso Range. The Museum's publication *Rock Drawings of the Coso Range*, though out of date in theory, still has the best illustrations of the Coso rock art. The Museum also has two new books, both mentioned above, published in 1998 that specifically target the Coso Range Petroglyphs.

Suggested Reading:

Grant, Campbell; Baird, James; and Pringle, Kenneth
 1968 *Rock Drawings of the Coso Range*, Maturango Museum Publication No. 4.

Schaafsma, Polly
 1980 *Indian Rock Art of the Southwest*, University of New Mexico Press.

Von Werlhof, Jay
 1987 *Spirits of the Earth: A study of Earthen Art in the North American Deserts*, Vol. 1 of *The North American Desert*, Imperial Valley College Museum Society.

Betancourt, Julio L.; Van Devender, Thomas R. and Martin, Paul S.
 1990 *Pack rat Middens*, University of Arizona Press.

Dorn, R. I.
 1994 *Dating petroglyphs with a 3-tier rock varnish approach*. In *New Light on Old Art: Advances in Hunter-Gatherer Rock Art Research*, edited by D. S. Whitley and L. Loendorf, pp.12-36, UCLA Institute for Archaeology Monograph 36.

N
 Whitley, David S.
 1987a *Rock Art Chronology in Eastern California*. *World Archaeology* 19:150-164

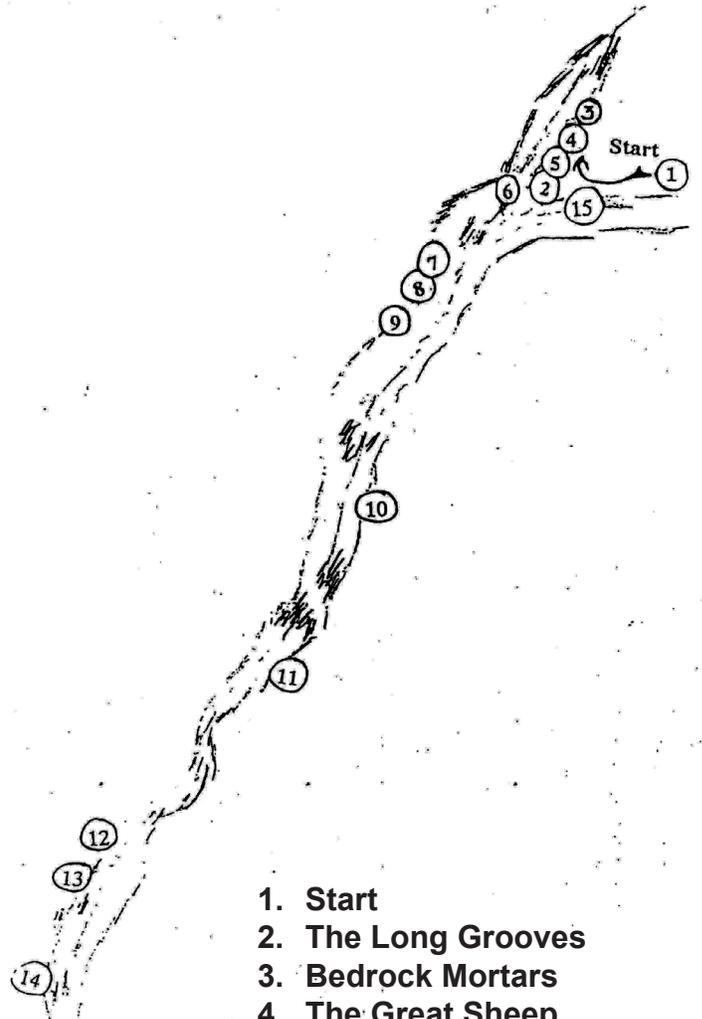
1993b *New Perspectives on the Clovis vs Pre-Clovis Perspective*. *American Antiquity* 58:626-647

1994c *Ethnography and Rock Art in Far Western North America: Some Archaeological Implications*. In *New Light on Old Art: Recent Advances in Hunter-Gatherers Rock*

Art Research, edited by David S. Whitley and Lawrence L. Loendorf, pp. 81-93. UCLA Institute of Archaeology Monograph 36.

1998 *Following the Shaman's Path - A walking Guide to Little Petroglyph Canyon Coso Range, California*

1998 *Coso Rock Art: A New Perspective*, edited by Elva Younkin. Maturango Museum Publication #12.



1. Start
2. The Long Grooves
3. Bedrock Mortars
4. The Great Sheep
5. Running Deer
6. Geologist's Cores
7. Key Symbol
8. Dogs & Sheep
9. Shaman Quartet
10. Subway Wall
11. The Chutes
12. Transitional Art
13. Stick Figure Parade
14. Speared Sheep
15. Medicine Bags

Escorts/Guides

Who are tour escorts/guides?

Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake command-approved petroglyph tour escorts/guides are volunteers who have received special training in environmental, security, safety and administrative issues related to the petroglyphs and the installation.

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 cannot ask for compensation, but they can accept gas money or a modest gratuity in appreciation of their time and efforts.

Escort Duties

- Escorts are the eyes and ears of command.
- Escorts ensure all environmental and security regulations are upheld.
- When contacted to do a tour, escorts ensure the requestor has already contacted the Public Affairs Office to reserve a date.
- It is not the responsibility of escorts to do the administration work of a person who is trying to set up a private tour. You may answer questions, but the requestor must find the required escorts for the tour and complete their own application.

Training

All aspiring tour guides must take the Petroglyph Tour Escort Class and obtain command approval and a tour escort badge prior to conducting tours. CPR certification is recommended but not required. New tour escort classes are offered once a year and include a trip to Little Petroglyph Canyon. Refresher classes for current escorts are held every two years.

Training dates are publicized via local print and radio media and internal communications, as well as on NAWS China Lake's website, Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Escort Badges

Escort badges will be renewed every two years in May to coincide with refresher training classes. The badge application form can be obtained from the NAWS China Lake website at www.cnic.navy.mil/ChinaLake. Badges issued in May 2012 will expire in May 2014 or when the escort no longer wishes to guide tours.

Petroglyph escort badges require a photo and verification of information provided on the application. Therefore, badges must only be picked up by the escort. Once you know the badge renewal application has been processed, call Pass & ID at (760) 939-3160 to ensure it is ready for pick-up.

Tours

Security increased considerably following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks resulting in the closure of tours of the petroglyphs. 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 for each tour, as opposed to one; requiring proof of citizenship; and physical inspections of all vehicles.

Tours are held on weekends and holidays. Certain Fridays are also available for school or scout tours. Only three tours total (public and private) are allowed to take place each weekend day for a maximum of six tours for an entire weekend, unless a Friday tour has been arranged.

Types of Petroglyph Tours

Public Tours

Public tours consist of 20 visitors joining together. The group can be local residents or visitors to the area, or a combination of both. The Maturango Museum and the Friends of Last Chance Canyon coordinate and conduct public tours for a fee. Please call (760) 375-6900 to arrange a tour through the museum or (760) 377-4976 through Friends of Last Chance Canyon.

Private Tours

Private tours are also offered. Participants may choose to coordinate the tour themselves at no cost or ask a private organization to coordinate the tour for a fee. Both the Maturango Museum and Friends of Last Chance Canyon can assist in coordinating a private tour. There must be at least six people in the group for the museum to agree to coordinate and conduct the private tour.

Applying for a Private Tour

Every tour requires the completion of a Recreation/Range Access Application. The application and step-by-step instructions for filling it out can be found on the NAWS China Lake website at <https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ChinaLake>.

Tour Guest Rules

- Non-United States citizens are not allowed on tours at this time.
- Tours can be canceled at any time due to military testing, security concerns or inclement weather.
- During all tours, the tour escorts are in charge. Escorts have the authority to cancel any tour if the guidelines are not being followed.
- Please ensure tour requestors are realistic about their physical ability when deciding to go on a tour. The terrain is rough.
- Tour escorts, the organization coordinating the tour, and the NAWS China Lake Commanding Officer are not responsible for injury, death, or property damage on, or resulting from, a tour.
- Children under 10, unless they are in the fourth grade, are not allowed on tours. For safety reasons, infants are also not allowed on tours.
- Large vehicles, such as RVs and cab-over campers, alcohol, glass containers and firearms are prohibited.

Guiding Tours

Tour Escort Procedures

Before the Tour

When contacted about conducting a tour, please ensure that the requestor has checked the availability of the desired date with the Public Affairs Office (PAO) at (760) 939-1683/1283. Once a date has been confirmed and guides have been selected, it is up to the requestor to fill out the recreational pass application and get it to PAO no later than 10 working days prior to the tour. The recreational pass application and process for setting up a tour can be found on the NAWS China Lake website. Click “Petroglyphs” under “Popular Links” on the homepage.

Work with the requestor on deciding when and where to meet the day of the tour. Be sure the requestor knows to inform his or her guests to bring a photo ID, proof of citizenship, sunblock, a hat, plenty of water, sturdy shoes (open-toe shoes will not be allowed and can cause a significant delay, if not cancellation, of a tour), a good vehicle and a full tank of gas.

On the Thursday or Friday afternoon before the tour, call Microspeech at (760) 939-6954 to ensure the range is open. Occasionally an operational test, security concerns or weather will close the range for all or part of a weekend.

Completed tour paperwork, radios and first-aid kit can be picked up by the lead escort at Microspeech no sooner than the Friday afternoon before the tour. The radio should be turned on and tested immediately.

Day of the Tour

When meeting your group prior to the tour, do a person and vehicle count. Make sure the guest and vehicle numbers on the recreation pass application are correct. The lead escort needs to sign “Block 2” of the application. While the lead escort is doing that, the second escort should read the “Do’s & Don’ts” list to the rest of the group.

Once all people and vehicles have been accounted for, the group should form a caravan with the lead escort in front and the second escort in the rear. Proceed to the inspection area next to Pass & ID. Guards there will inspect vehicles, personal belongings, photo IDs, and possibly proof of citizenship. They may also ask the drivers for current registration and proof of insurance.

Inspection

- Exit vehicles and assemble in the tented area away from vehicles.
- Drivers should open all doors, hatches, trunks, engine hoods, compartments, etc.
- Each driver will provide their driver’s license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.
- Officer or guard will ask for the completed NAWS PAO/Physical Security-approved recreation pass and photo IDs of tour guests. Proof of citizenship may be requested.
- Officers/guards will log in and inspect all vehicles and contents.
- Obtain recreation pass.

Proceeding to the Canyon

After the inspection, proceed down Inyokern Road to Lauritsen Ave. and turn left. Proceed to the

Lauritsen gate. The lead escort will show the recreation pass to the guard and follow any instructions. Photo IDs may again be requested at this time.

After going through Lauritsen gate, proceed on to the Mountain Springs Canyon gate. The lead escort should be checking the rear mirror to ensure the rest of the group is keeping up, while the escort in the rear makes sure no one deviates from the planned route. Stop at Mountain Springs Canyon gate to ensure all the vehicles are accounted for. Proceed on to the canyon.

Stay on designated roads. You are on a paved road until the Etcherron Valley gate. Turn left at the gate on the dirt road. There is a sign pointing to the petroglyphs.

Arrival at the Canyon

Park all cars in the parking area. Cars parked in the road may be ticketed, as they block emergency vehicle access. At this time, the lead escort should notify Microspeech of the group's arrival via radio. This is a requirement. If you don't get a response, face a different direction and try again.

Cameras may now be taken out. Restrooms are only available in the parking lot. Ensure everyone uses them prior to the tour.

The Tour

Escorts must maintain control of all individuals on their tour. Remember to keep groups together and don't allow anyone to go off without an escort.

Do not leave the canyon and go up on the rim for any reason. Walking on any of the ledges is prohibited – this is a safety issue.

Do not pick up anything in the area except litter. Remind your party to leave anything alone that could be ordnance. Advise Microspeech of any ordnance immediately.

The use of CB's, ham radios or any other transmitter are prohibited. Cellular phones may be used only when necessary (emergency).

Returning to Main Side

Please remind your guests to take care of the restroom facilities and to clean up after themselves. Check the restroom facilities before leaving.

Before leaving the parking area, make sure all photo and video cameras and camera phones are properly secured.

Escorts must notify Microspeech prior to leaving the parking lot for the return back to base. This gives Microspeech an idea of when to expect the group back, plus gives them time to notify Range Control that people are traveling in the area. Obey all posted speed limit signs on the way down. Instruct visitors to use lower gears when going down the mountain.

When the tour is complete, each escort must fill out a "Tour Summary Report." Return this to Microspeech with the recreation pass.

Drop off tour paperwork, radios and first-aid kit back at Microspeech. If you have more than two escorts with your group, the lead may drop off the items while the other escorts guide the group off the installation. If you only have two escorts, the return of the items to Microspeech will not be possible until the tour group has been escorted off of the base. Please do not pull the tour group off the road at any time in order to return items and do not take the tour group to Microspeech.

Please remember:

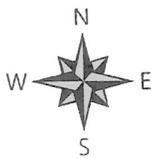
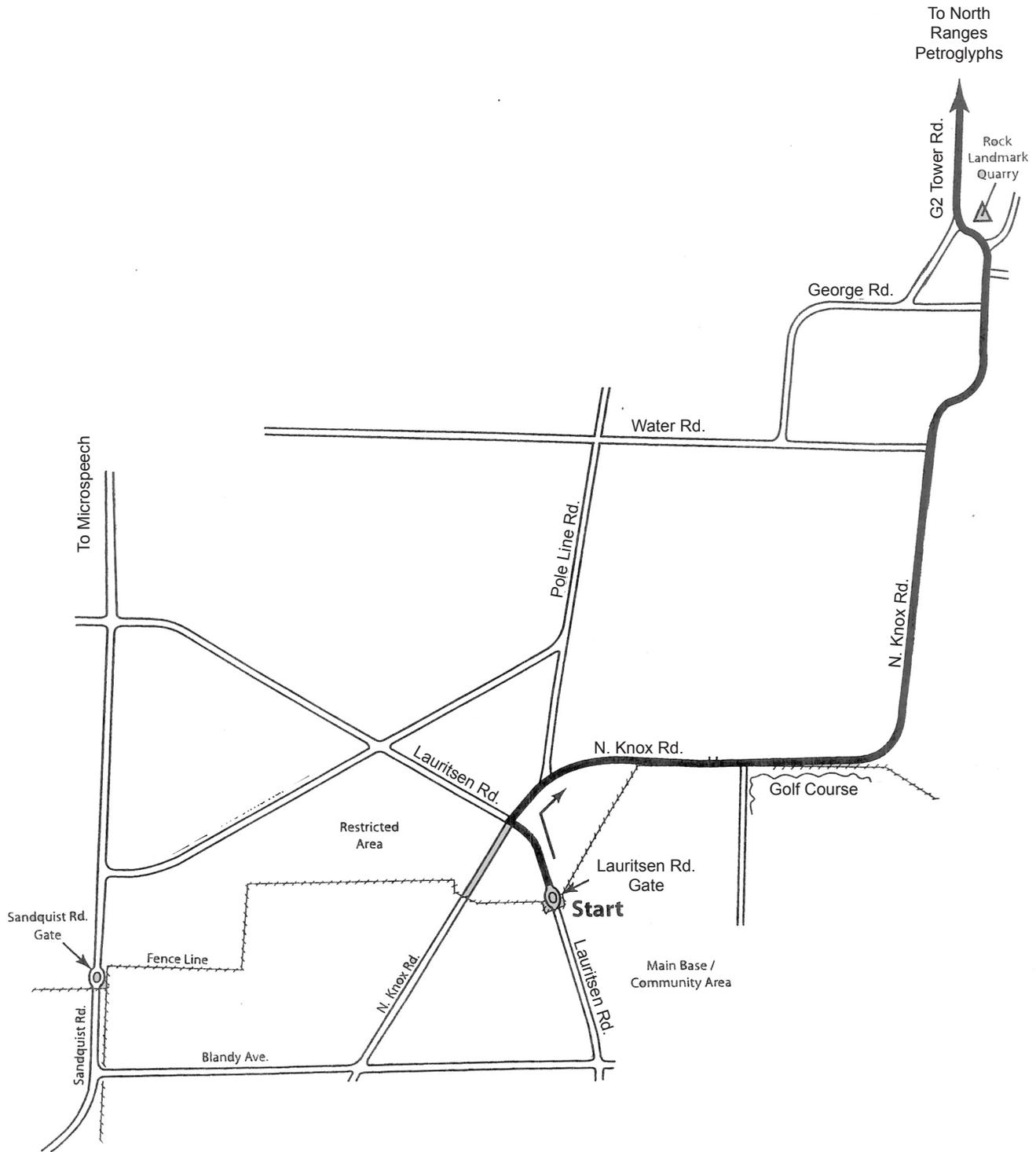
- You are the Command's eyes and ears.
- Keep security in mind throughout the tour.
- Report anything that looks or sounds suspicious.

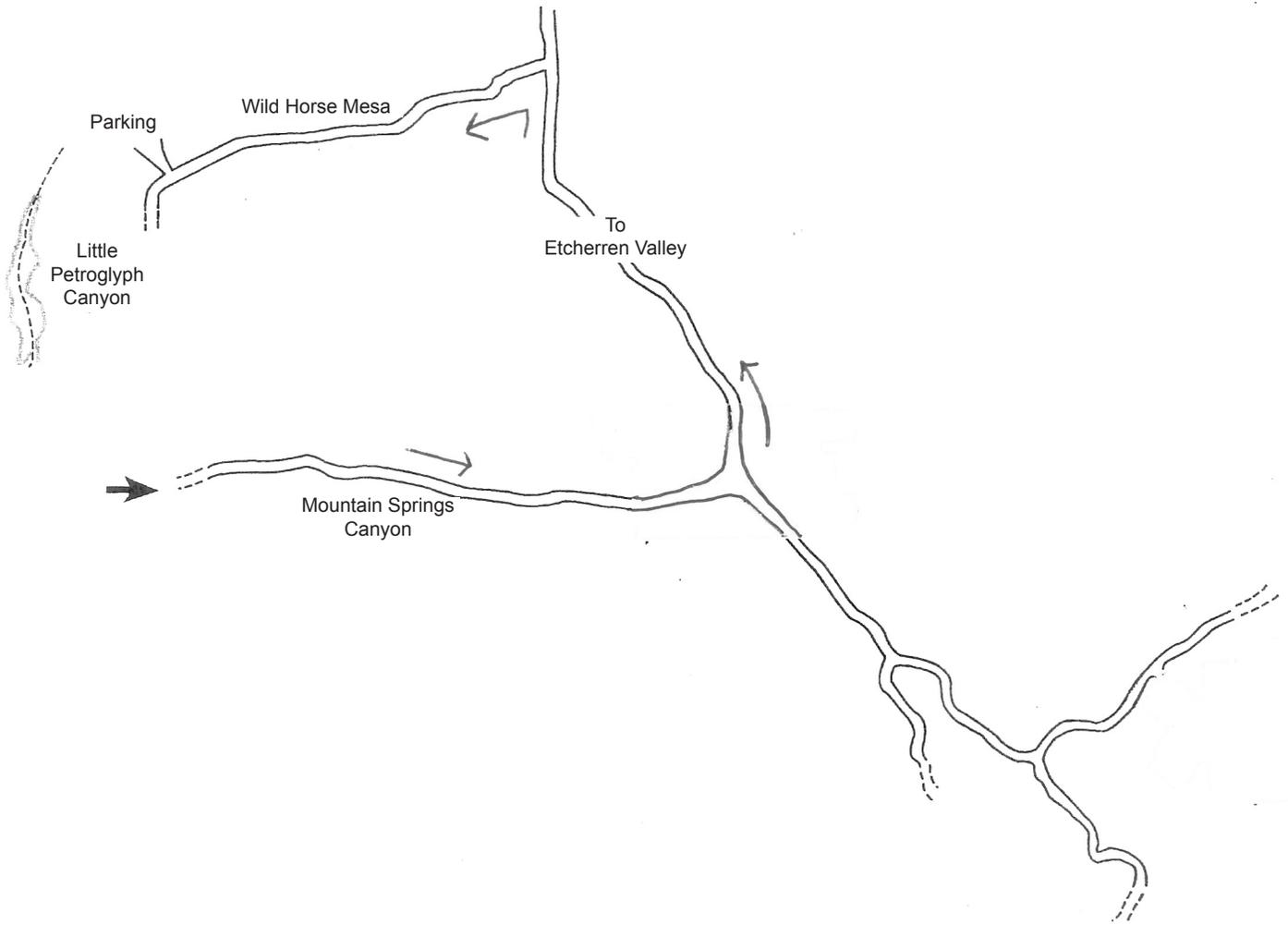
Directions To Microspeech

1. Go through Lauritsen Gate as if heading to Little Petroglyph Canyon.
2. After going through the gate, rather than turning right to head to the Canyon, continue straight Lauritsen Road until you reach the four-way stop
3. Turn right onto Sandquist Road.
4. Make the first right turn after the curve in Sandquist. This will take you to the Range Control Center where Microspeech is located.
5. When you reach RCC (has a bunch of radar antennas), turn in the second entrance to the parking lot on your left. Take an immediate left and park at the end of the first parking structure.
6. Take the sidewalk and walk toward the inside building. You will pass a common area with chairs on your left, a glass door on your right.
7. At the end of the sidewalk, a wall will be directly in front of you. Head just slightly to the right around the wall. The double door to Microspeech should be directly in front of you.
8. Call Microspeech for entrance at (760) 939-6954.



Maps to Little Petroglyph Canyon





Environmental

Requirements

Individuals are welcome to closely inspect the petroglyphs but are not permitted to touch or climb on the rock art. Please ensure that souvenirs are not taken and that chewing gum is not left behind on one of the panels.

Make sure that garbage is disposed of properly (trash cans). If you can pack it in full, you can certainly pack it out empty.

Known Issues

- Climbing on rocks
- Tracing or touching the petroglyphs
- Leaving the canyon to visit other sites
- Walking on the ledges
- Leaving the canyon from unauthorized exits
- Unsupervised, fragmented tour groups
- Vandalism
- Horse manure on trail
- Garbage from picnics left in the canyon

Animals and Endangered Wildlife

The majority of the land at NAWS China Lake is undeveloped and provides habitat for more than 340 species of wildlife, including wild horses and burros and endangered animals, such as the desert tortoise, Mohave Tui Chub and the Inyo California Towhee. The installation is also home to 650 plant types.

To ensure the safety of guests and wildlife on the installation, please,

- Do not feed or harass any wild animals on the range or in the canyon.
- Do not allow tour participants to pick up, tease or play with reptiles.
- Keep all coolers and equipment boxes closed when not in use.
- Do not place hands in bushes, holes or crevices as animals and insects may be inhabiting the space.



Remote Ranges Safety and Security



A sign typically found at the entrances to remote range areas of the installation.

Range Description

Remote areas

No services available in many areas

Weather can be unpredictable and severe at times.

Road conditions vary.

Must be as self-sufficient as possible (food, water, medicine, etc.).

Keep vehicles in good condition.

Multiple hazards (explosives, lasers, RF, etc.)

Range Log-in and Logout

Must have access permission BEFORE entering any Range area or facility.

Must log-in with specific information.

Must check out when clearing the ranges.

Don't assume someone has logged you in or out - MAKE SURE.

Escorts are responsible for the guests/personnel they are with until they leave the range.

Microspeech (RCC)

"Microspeech" on radio

Call (760) 939-6954, or 939-9128

Manned 24/7

[Link to 911 emergency services](#)

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)/ Hazmat

Over 60 years of weapons testing conducted on base.

Items include unexploded ordnance (UXO), wrecked aircraft, targets and equipment.

May look benign, but can be very dangerous

DO NOT pick-up, collect or scavenge anything. "If you didn't drop it, don't pick it up."

Notify Microspeech if you encounter UXO in or around the area you are in. Do not attempt to move anything on your own!

Roadguards

Roadguards are in place to protect the individual from entering an active range area.

Never continue past a roadguard until given permission to do so. This also applies to closed gates on the range.

If in doubt, ASK... Never assume it is safe to proceed. Call Microspeech.

Driving Safety

BASIC SPEED LAW

"No person shall drive a vehicle upon a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable or prudent having due regard for weather, visibility, the traffic on, and the surface and width of, the highway, and in no event at a speed which endangers the safety of persons or property".

Basically, just don't overdrive the conditions....



Radio Communications

Frequency Transmitters

Use of communications equipment that includes personal radios, two-way pagers, FRS & GMRS radios, CB & SSB radios is prohibited unless approved by the Frequency Management Office. This equipment may create a hazardous situation or interfere with tests or equipment. The radios provided by Microspeech are the only radios authorized for you to use during a tour.

Land Mobile Radio System (LMRS)

This system “policed” itself.

Every radio (base and portable) has a unique digital transponder code which identifies the radio.

All transmissions are recorded.

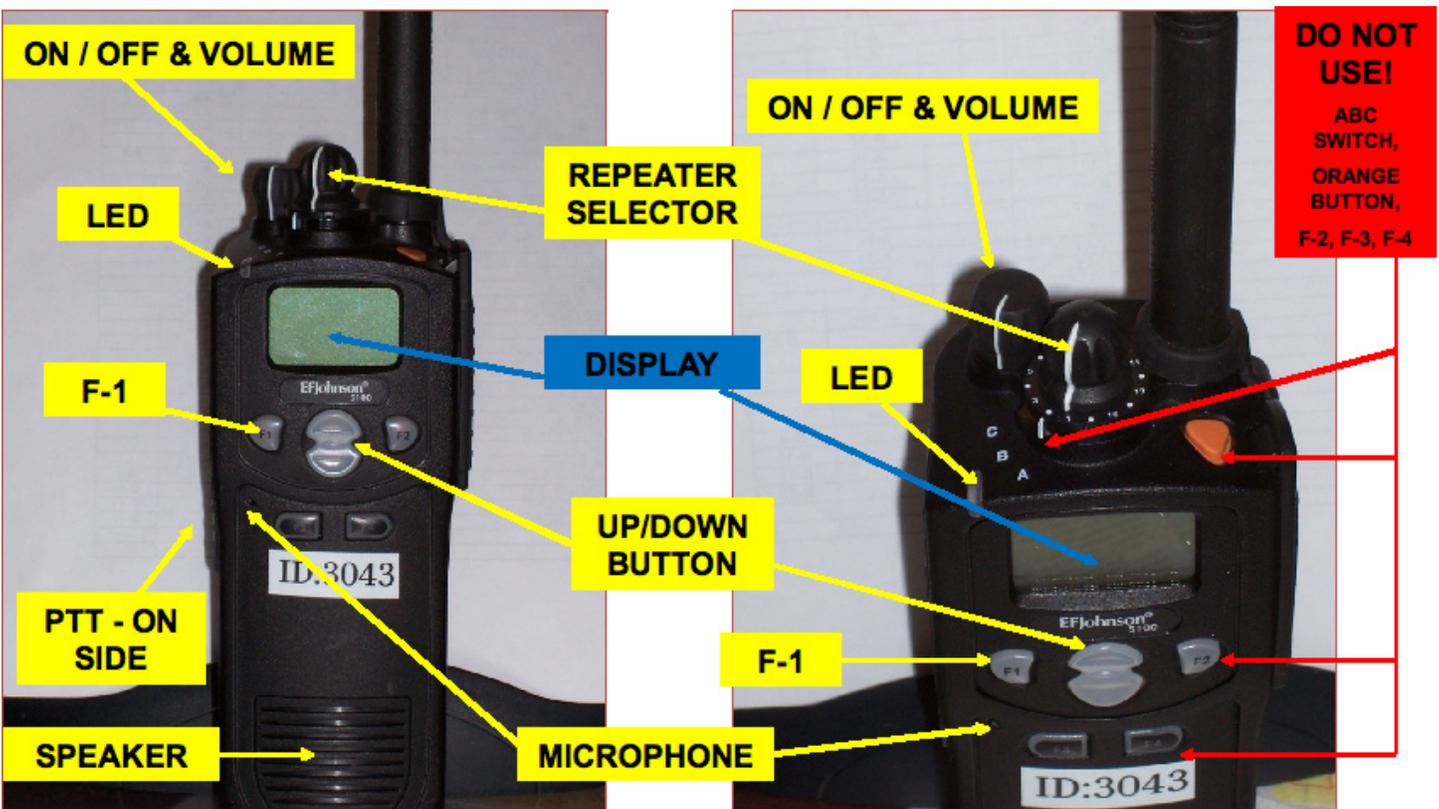
Any inappropriate traffic will be traced back to the radio from which it came.

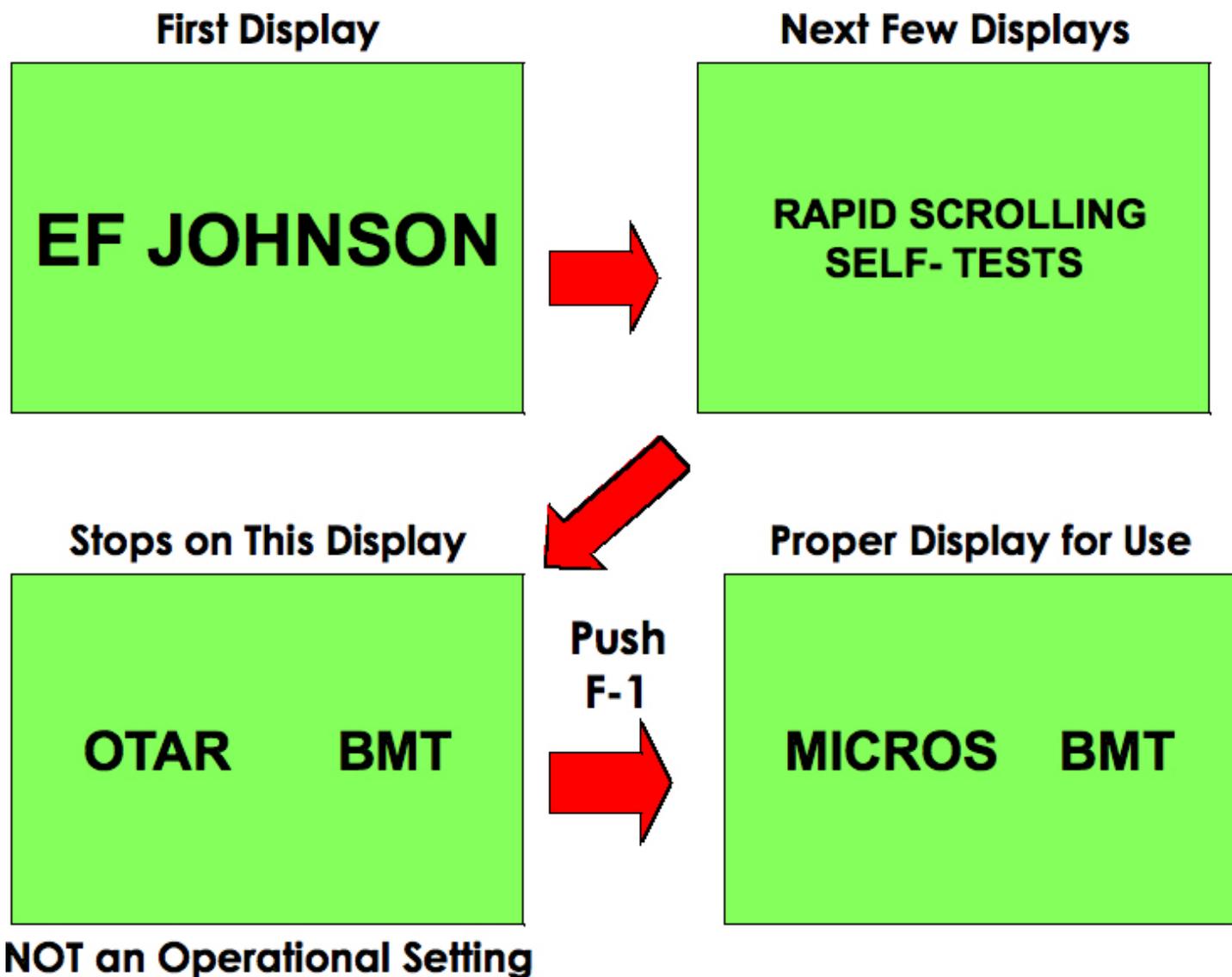
Radios can be disabled and enabled remotely.

Radios are programmed and updated by OTAR.

The Radio

In the photos below, you will find labels for all of the knobs and buttons on the radio. Your radio will be orange, not black. Please note the microphone that you will speak into is very small and located just above and to the left of the radio identification number. You do not speak into the speaker.





Talk Group - Name of each of the 22 talk groups.

Micros - Microspeech (Range Control) and Microspeech 54 (CLPD).

Repeaters - Located at various sites.

BMT- "B" Mtn
 LMT- Laurel Mtn
 PPK- Parrot Peak
 CIN- Cinder Peak
 COS- Coso Peak
 WIN- Windgate
 ERL – Earl's Peak
 PYR- Pyramid Peak

If you cannot contact MicroSpeech on Micros BMT, switch to another repeater. To do this, turn the repeater selector knob clockwise.

SAME TALK GROUP. DIFFERENT REPEATER.

MICROS BMT

**Microspeech Talk Group
“B” Mountain Repeater**

MICROS PPK

**Microspeech Talk Group
Parrot Peak Repeater**

MICROS LMT

**Microspeech Talk Group
Laurel Mountain Repeater**

MICROS CIN

**Microspeech Talk Group
Cinder Peak Repeater**

Radio Care

- Learn how it works.
- Carry/handle by the body only, NOT by the antenna.
- Keep it secured. Do not lose it.
- Do not drop it or allow it to slide around.
- Keep clean and dry.
- Speak normally. Do not yell or scream. Do not use profanity.
- Do not disassemble or attempt repairs.
- Report any problems.
- Turn off when not in use or charging.

Emergencies and Incidents

Vehicle Trouble

The driver should pull completely off the road and flash their lights.

The escort at the end of the caravan should notify the lead escort (or vice-versa depending on where in the caravan the vehicle is located), who should pull the rest of the caravan off the road.

If the problem cannot be resolved, the lead escort will notify Microspeech, who will coordinate with CLPD for a tow truck at the owner's expense.

Give Microspeech the make, model, license plate number and location of the vehicle.

Ensure Microspeech knows that the vehicle is either on or off the road.

Find space in another vehicle and continue with the tour. When finished, note the incident on the "Tour Summary Report."

Vehicle Accidents

All traffic accidents must be reported.

If a "fender bender" occurs, have the drivers go to the China Lake Police Department upon return to the main side after the tour. All others should be reported immediately.

If in doubt, contact Microspeech.

Medical Emergencies

MODERATE TO SEVERE ACCIDENTS

1. Contact Microspeech and state that you have an emergency.
2. When Microspeech responds, clearly and calmly state what the emergency is and your location.
3. State the extent of injuries/illness and what, if any, treatment is being rendered.
4. If you need to leave the location to establish radio communication, set up some type of "messenger system." Be sure Microspeech understands you are in a different location.
5. If the victim is in danger of further injury/illness, inform Microspeech.
6. It may be necessary to provide information such as age, gender, and pertinent medication information about the victim.
7. If no one saw what happened, and the victim is unconscious, try to determine the last thing the victim was doing.
8. It's important to understand that the key to getting quick and proper attention is by remaining calm and providing clear information as to the location and type of emergency, and the extent of injuries/illness.
9. Do not attempt to move anyone with a spinal or cervical injury.

MINOR INJURIES

1. For minor injuries, perform first aid.
2. As with all injuries or issues, report it on the "Tour Summary Report" which will be turned in to Microspeech with the rest of the tour paperwork.

Please note: Anti-venom is only available at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital, (760) 446-3551.

PLEASE REPORT ALL ISSUES, LARGE OR SMALL, ON THE "TOUR SUMMARY REPORT."

Cameras, Video Recorders and Cell Phones

Photography and Video

Photography and video recording are only authorized while in Little Petroglyph Canyon. All cameras must be securely stowed away until the tour group has reached the Canyon and when returning to main side of the installation.

Violating this rule WILL result in your being escorted off the base and your access being revoked.

Cellular Phones

Cell phone use is only permitted as a secondary means of communication for emergency use only. Cell phones shall be turned off north of the Mountain Springs gate.

Cell phone camera use is now permitted in Little Petroglyph Canyon and, like other photography and video equipment, must be turned off and stowed until the group has reached the Canyon and when returning to the main side of the installation.

Additional and Contact Information

Petroglyphs, tour and escort information as well as badge renewal forms and tour applications and rules can be found on the NAWS China Lake website at www.cnmc.navy.mil/chinalake. Click on “Petroglyphs” under “Popular Links.”

Information about tours and escort training updates can also be found on NAWS China Lake’s social media channels:

Facebook - www.facebook.com/NAWSChinaLake

Twitter - www.twitter.com/NAWS_CL

Further questions can be answered by calling the NAWS China Lake Public Affairs Office:

Main phone: (760) 939-1683

Petroglyph tour coordinator: (760) 939-1283 or jessica.armstrong@navy.mil

Additional Useful Phone Numbers:

NAWS Pass & ID Office (760) 939-3160

Microspeech: (760) 939-6954

Maturamgo Museum (760) 375-6900

Friends of Last Chance Canyon (760) 377-4121

Badge Renewal Applications can be submitted by:

Email - jessica.armstrong@navy.mil (you will need to type your name in the signature box or digitally sign if you have the capability).

Fax - (760) 939-2796



NOTES

