

TRAIL GUIDE



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



*Welcome to the
MT. IRISH ROCK ART &
ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT!*

This trail guide offers THREE WALKING TOURS of some of the more accessible rock art areas. We hope you will enjoy them.



In 1970, the Bureau of Land Management designated 640 acres to what is known as the MOUNT IRISH PETROGLYPH SITE. The Mt. Irish District is located east of Hiko, Nevada (approx. 110 miles south of Ely and 130 miles north of Las Vegas).

There are thousands of petroglyphs in Mt. Irish. Due to the complex topography, many of the panels are not easy to locate. Please feel free to explore on your own and practice the “leave no trace” principle.

Thank you for visiting the
Mt. Irish Rock Art & Archeological District!

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HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, NV 89301
(775) 289-1800

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South US 93
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MT. IRISH SITE ETIQUETTE

Please respect the rock art for future visitors to enjoy.

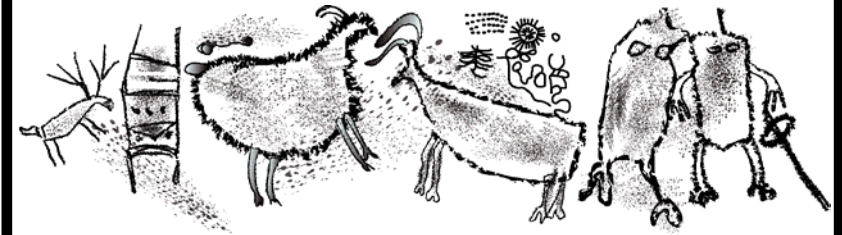
The following things can cause permanent damage to the rock art:

walking, climbing or touching,
defacement or removal of the artifacts,
making molds or rubbings,
and removing lichen from rocks.

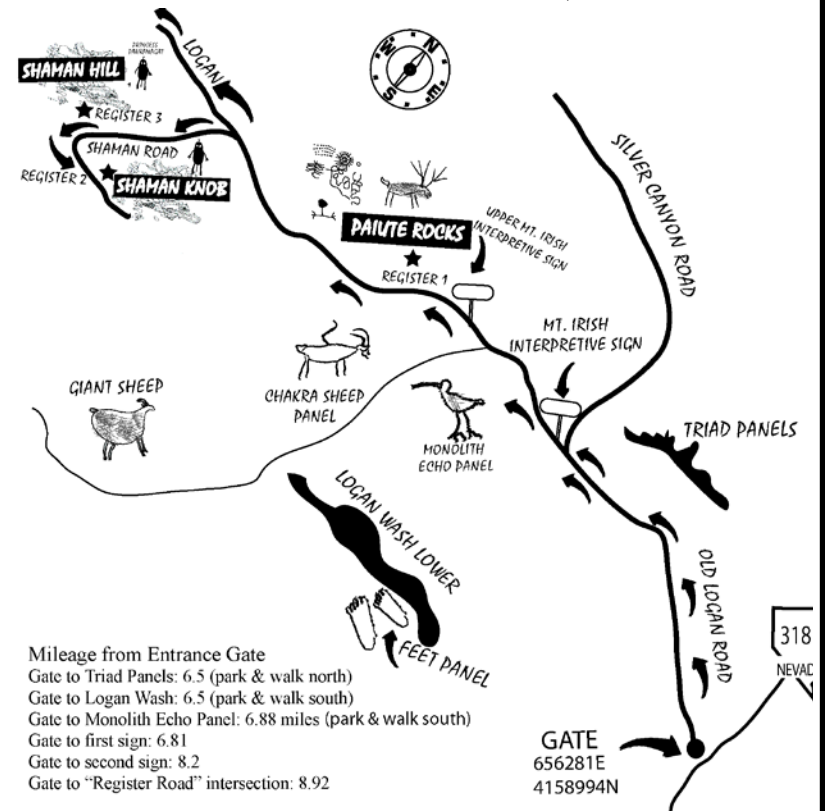
Camping or sleeping in the ruins,
and fires near the rock art can also
cause damage.

Please report any suspicious digging, defacement or disturbances.

LOVE, TREASURE & PROTECT NEVADA'S HERITAGE
BY LEAVING IT UNDISTURBED.



MT. IRISH ROCK ART & ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT



Please note, there are three registers to accommodate the THREE WALKING TOURS.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO SCALE, BUT IT GIVES A GENERAL IDEA OF THE AREA.

REGISTER ☆

INTERPRETIVE SIGN T

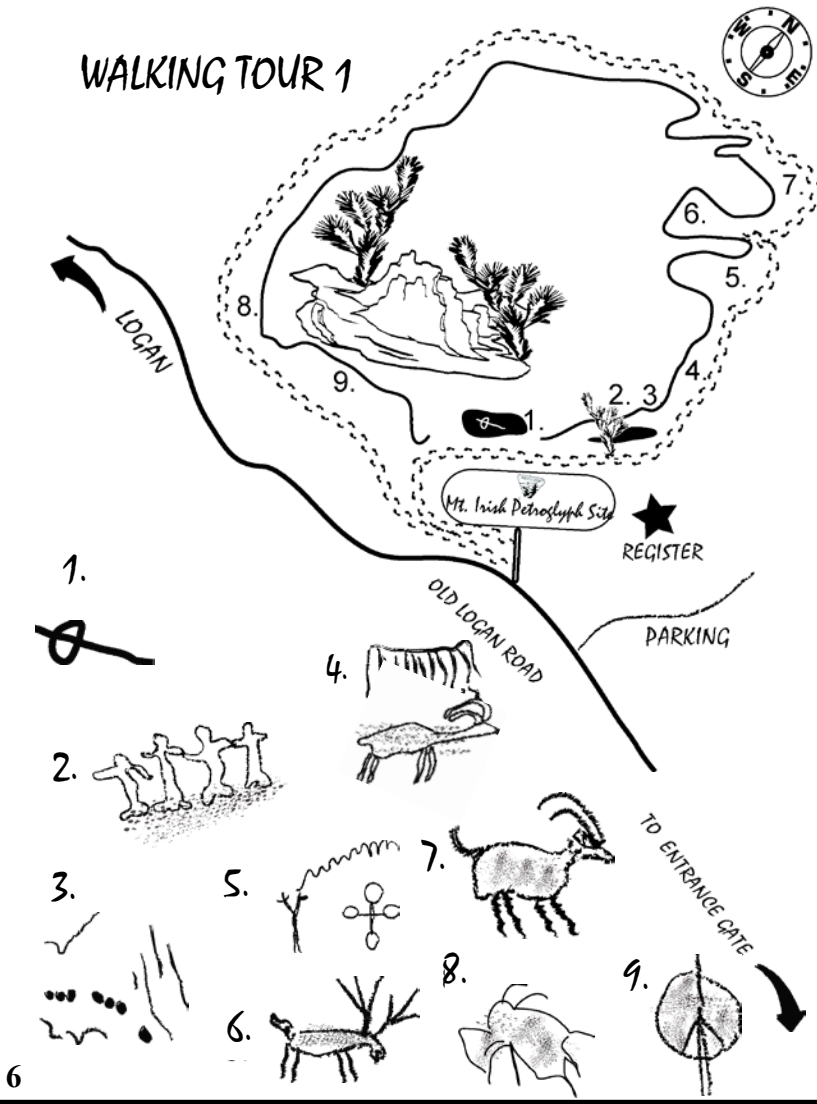
ROCK ART AREAS





A SHORT WALKING TOUR AROUND PAIUTE ROCKS AREA

WALKING TOUR 1



The Paiute Rocks area in the Mt. Irish Rock Art District (along with several other locations) served as a camping and activity center for thousands of years. The predominant rock art style is the Great Basin Pecked Style. This includes the substyles of Great Basin Representational, Great Basin Curvilinear Abstract, and Great Basin Rectilinear Abstract. There are also numerous examples of the Great Basin Painted Style in the Mt. Irish District.

(Heizer and Baumhoff, Prehistoric rock Art of Nevada and Eastern California, pp. 197-208; 1962).

1. ATLATL ROCK



Directly behind the Mt. Irish interpretive sign is a low boulder with many petroglyphs. Noteworthy is the possible atlatl (a hunting weapon) which, according to many experts, was replaced by the bow and arrow in western North America approximately 1500 years ago. Continue around the rock to your right (north) to Marker #2.

2. IS THIS A FAMILY?



Human forms (anthropomorphs) can be seen on a large boulder approximately 3 feet up from the ground. To the right of the figures, can you locate the Desert Bighorn Sheep motif in a natural rock pocket? Walking to the right, you will see Marker #3.

3.



LOWER BOULDER ROCK ART

A juniper tree partially obstructs the view of the lower panel with dots and curvilinear elements. Go around the juniper tree and turn left (west) to Marker #4.

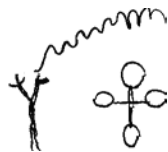


4. TWO PANELS

In front of you are 2 panels. Different color layers of Desert varnish (patina) can be observed. There is probably a large time difference between these patina layers. Enjoy this peaceful setting. Follow along boulders to Marker #5.

5. DOES THIS REMIND YOU OF A HAPPY PERSON?

Human motifs, curvilinear elements and multiple circles dominate this panel.



6. WHAT IS IT, DEER, ELK OR OTHER?

In a natural sheltered area, you will notice a well preserved zoomorphic figure. Continue downhill to the right.



7. MOUNTAIN SHEEP & DEER (OR ELK)

On a large boulder, fairly low to the ground, you will see more animal like figures nicely preserved and looking picturesque with the colorful lichen.



8. ABSTRACT SHEEP & CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

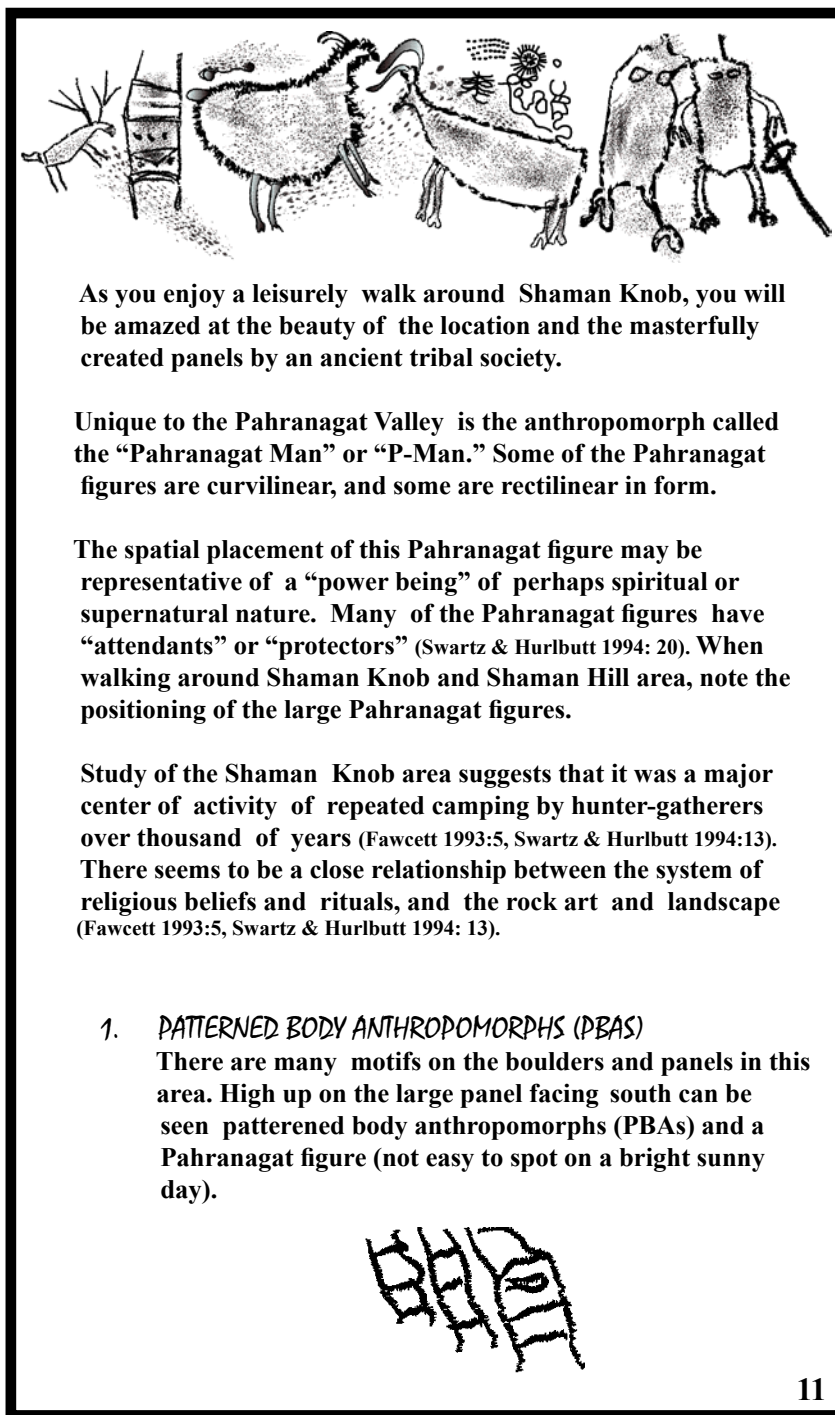
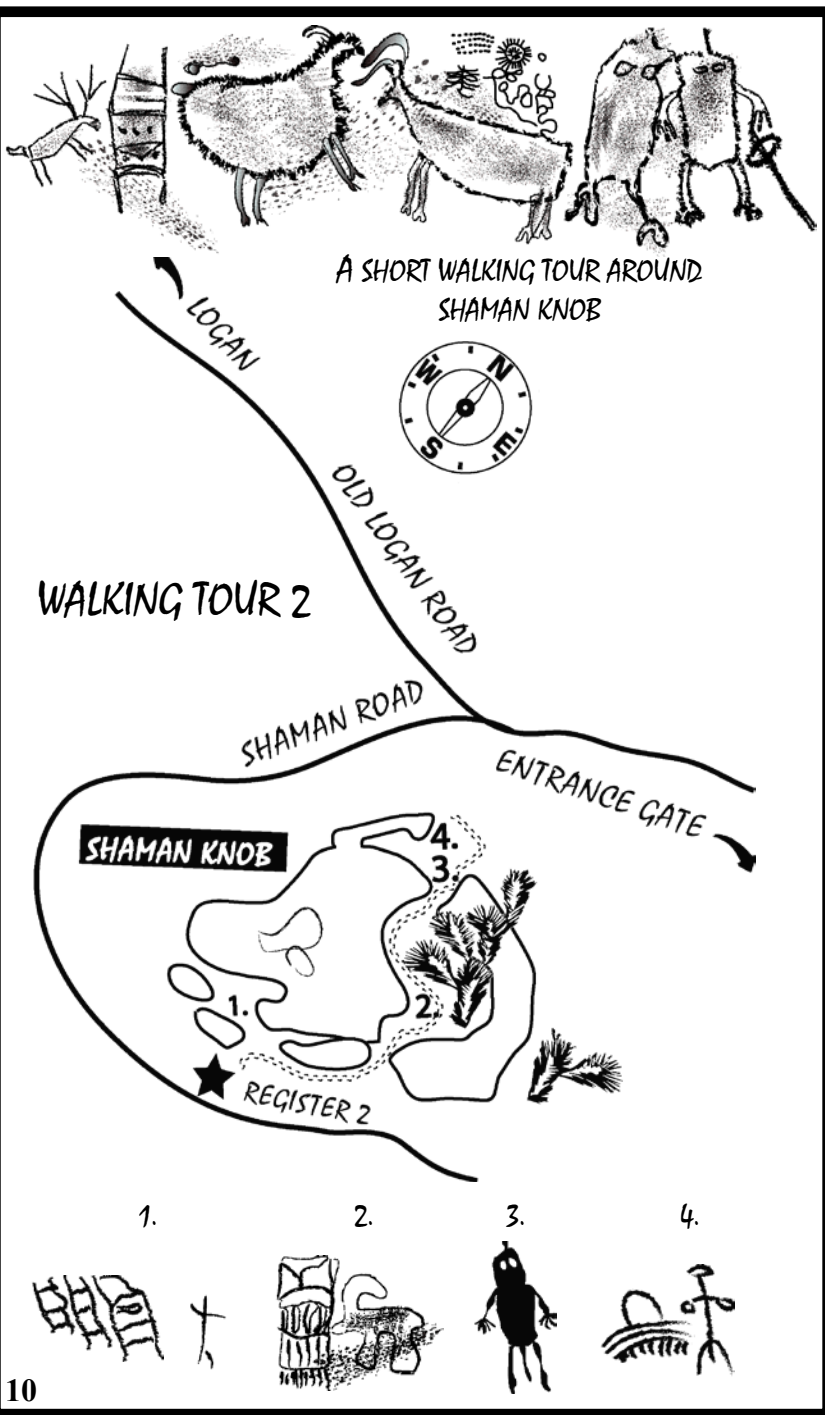
Following around and heading toward the road, you will observe several panels of rock art. At this marker, you will notice an abstract sheep and concentric circles. On the large boulder to the right, how many sheep can you point out (without touching the panel)?



9. SHIELD

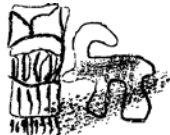
Coming around to the most densely covered rock art panels, it is not hard to imagine this area as a gathering place for activities both social and spiritual.

The fun challenge is trying to figure out who these people were, what were their likes and dislikes and exactly how to understand their "writings on the walls."





2. **WALKWAY PBAS**

As you walk through the natural passageway, look to the left for PBAs. See if you can locate the Solid Body Anthropomorph (SBA) with horns. Continue on through  ing left.



3. **PAHRANAGAT MAN**

This amazing Pahrnagat figure is approximately two feet tall. It is positioned 4.5 feet from the ground. There are several PBAs placed around it. On the same panel to the left of the P-Man is faint red paint.



4. **IS THIS A SPACESHIP OR A SOMBRERO?**

Continuing to the right is a low panel with stick people, zoomorphic figures and other curious motifs. What do you see when you look at the panel? Is there a spaceship with an alien next to it, or could the "spaceship" really be a sombrero type hat? Perhaps there are other ideas that come to mind.

On top of the boulder is a large looking tinaja (a naturally eroded cavity useful for collecting rainfall).

At this point, you might want to enjoy looking around before you backtrack to the register.





AN INTERMEDIATE WALKING TOUR
SHAMAN HILL



1. PAHRANAGAT FIGURE, BEE HIVE CLUSTERS

One of the large Pahranaगत anthropomorphs, this bird like figure is positioned approx. 4.5 feet up the boulder face. Its head and left arm are partially covered by lichen. It is similar in size to the Pahranaगत Man #3 at Shaman Knob. From its prominent location, it is surrounded by other petroglyph panels of figurative motifs.

See if you can locate the bee hive clusters on a panel behind and to the right of the P-Man panel.



2. CIRCLED CROSSES

As you continue to your right, you will notice a large fractured boulder with numerous elements and motifs. The circled crosses are not unique to Mt. Irish but occur in rock art in many regions in North America.

3. HORNED MAN (SOLID BODY ANTHROPOMORPH)

Farther along and into a small natural enclosure is what appears to be a horned figure resembling the body of a Pahranaगत Man. Approx. 12x7 inches, it stands a little over 2 ft. from the ground. There is possibly an atlatl being held by the figure.





4. **BLANKET PBA PANEL**
Is this a PBA? What do you think? As you study the setting, glance up and to your right to see a group of zoomorphic figures keeping an eye on the area from their boulder.



Continue on approx. 400 feet.

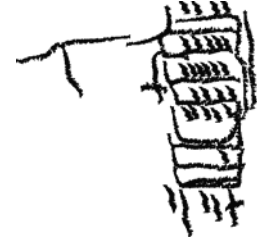
5. **PRINCESS PAHRANAGAT ANTHROPOMORPH**
Looking up the hill, you will see a large Pahranaagat anthropomorph on a panel that has an excellent view of the area. Well preserved and beautiful, could this figure be a female?

Backtrack to marker 1 and continue to marker 6.

6. **LIZARD PANEL**
This busy panel appears to have at least one lizard, sheep, a fence and circle. There are natural depressions (dimples) that have been outlined or defined. Continue to your left, and do a little jog to the right into a sheltered area for Marker #7.



7. **PBA ATLATL PANEL**
Looking down from its commanding position, you will see a very large PBA with a possible atlatl. Other motifs accompany it. Walk to your left (south) to continue to Marker #8.



8. **MANY SHEEP PANEL**
You will be stunned by the beauty of this gallery. Before you return to the parking area, why not take a few minutes to enjoy the sounds and smells?





DESERT SURVIVAL SAFETY TIPS

When planning a desert trip, always inform someone where you are going, your route and when you expect to return.

Use the buddy system, and try to take someone with you. Make sure your vehicle is in good condition.

Remember where you parked when taking a hike. Take walkie-talkies for communication with each other.

Wear hiking shoes with good tread and appropriate clothing for the season.

Carry lots of water, a hat, sunglasses, sun block and gloves.

You may want to bring along a camera, compass, GPS and a whistle.

Watch out where you walk or put your hands when climbing. Certain times of the year bring out rattlesnakes and critters. Most of all, have a good time while assuming a “desert safety mentality.” Love nature with caution. Protect our natural resources with a vengeance.



A LITTLE HISTORY

In 1865, Southern Paiute Indians drove off prospectors in this area. The next year, more prospectors returned and developed the silver deposits in the region. As a result, the little town of Logan City grew to a population of 300, and in 1867, a post office was established. As luck would have it, the whole town dried up in 1869 when new finds were located near Pioche.

The mid-1870s proved to be a violent time between the local Paiutes and Anglo residents in Lincoln County. There was much bloodshed as well as numerous lynchings resulting in many of the Indians being killed or run off. In the 1880s, a growing number of Paiutes lived around ranches and traded goods (Goodman 1991). 1890 marked their participation in the revitalization movement known as the Ghost Dance. (Kelley and Fowler 1986:384).





VESTIGES OF MT. IRISH

The numerous petroglyphs of Mt. Irish--along with scatters of chipped and ground-stone, pottery and rock shelters--suggest the sites were occupied from 1000 B.C. to the 1860s. Most of the petroglyphs are of the Great Basin Representational style (A.D. 1-1500) often depicting mountain sheep and deer (Heizer and Baumhoff 1962).

Although archaeologists are uncertain when Indians began to create the rock art of Mt. Irish, it is known that Southern Paiutes continued to use this area until they were driven out by Euroamerican miners and settlers in the 1860s (Hulse 1971: 13-20, Townley 1973: 5-34).

The archaeological record in southern Nevada reflects the activities and lifeways of people who, during the past several thousand years, were experts in living in an arid environment. They learned to utilize natural resources. They were “hunters and gatherers” of their food. They lived in open camps, brush structures and caves. They moved in family groups throughout a selected territory collecting seeds and capturing animals on a seasonal basis (Archaeology of Southern Nevada, BLM Fact sheet).



The earliest occupation in southern Nevada began about 11,000 B.C. at Tule Springs in the northwest portion of the Las Vegas Valley. The ancestries of the earliest Native Americans have not been traced to the present, but the contemporary Paiutes and Shoshones are considered the descendants of the last hunter-gatherers in southern Nevada (Archaeology of Southern Nevada, BLM Fact Sheet).

It is far from easy to understand the meaning of the individual symbols we call rock art, especially since we have no written documents from these ancient inhabitants. There are, however, various hypotheses that have been developed to explain the “existence” of rock art such as the expression of: hunting, trade route mapping, shamanistic practices, doodling during idle time and even as maps of water sources (Fawcett and Smith 1993).

Possibly, all of these hypotheses are correct.





TERMINOLOGY

Anthropomorph: figure resembles a human body.

Atlatl: The atlatl is often depicted as a circle with a line through it such as above. It was used to propel darts or small spears until replaced by the bow and arrow around 500 A.D.

Cupule: cup shaped depression in the surface produced by grinding, pecking or a combination of both (NRAF 2003). They are also referred to as “Pit-and-Groove.” These cuplike depressions or pits in boulders are thought to be the oldest form of rock art, first appearing in parts of the Great Basin 7000 years ago (BLM Publication).

Desert Varnish (Patina) : a coating, crust or film often found on rock composed of iron, manganese oxide and clays. Many petroglyphs are covered with “desert vanish” and over time are revarnished (repatinated). Varied shades of this patina indicate age differences.

Elements: individual marks that comprise portions or parts of a motif (NRAF 2003).

Geoglyphs: large ground figures produced either by building up rock alignments (such as cairns) or scraping away rocks or desert pavement (intaglio) (NRAF 2003).



Grinding Slick: a flat or shallow surface formed by the grinding or crushing of foods with a stone.

Motif: a single rock art figure comprised of one or more elements (NRAF 2003).

Panel: aggregates of designs occurring on one surface or rock canvas.

Patterned Body Anthropomorph (PBA): anthropomorph with complex designs on body.

Petroglyph: rock art produced by engraving, pecking, abrading or otherwise “taking away” rock surface (NRAF 2003).

Pictographs: designs are applied with pigment to rock surfaces.

Rock Art: cover term referring to petroglyphs, pictographs, geoglyphs or any combination of these (NRAF 2003).

Solid Body Anthropomorph (SBA): anthropomorph without complex designs.

Superimposition: when rock art is covered over by other rock art executed later in time. It is often difficult to view and record superimposed rock art.

Tinajas: naturally eroded cavities useful for collecting rainfall.

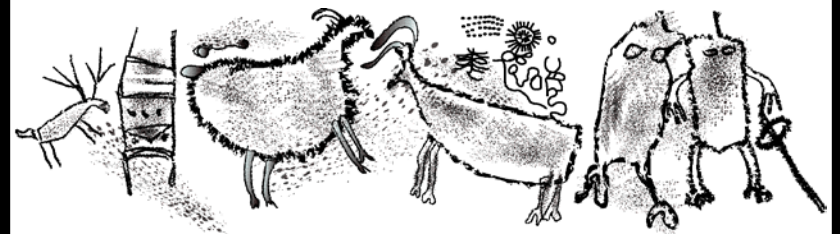
Zoomorph: figure resembles an animal body.





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





















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List of UTM₂ Datum NAD27

PAIUTE ROCKS		SHAMAN KNOB		SHAMAN HILL	
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NOTES



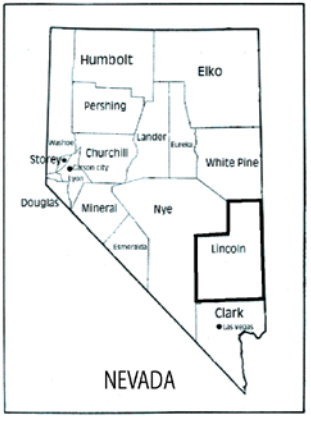
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Lincoln County

Mt. Irish Rock Art & Archeological District



318
NEVADA

Pioche

Panaca

319
NEVADA

Caliente

2.4 Miles to
barbed wire gate
from junction.

GATE

Hiko

317
NEVADA

Elgin

Rachel

375
NEVADA

Alamo

93

Nellis Airforce Base

Union Pacific
Railroad



Revised 4/21/06