

# California

# FORESTRY

# Note



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## RECENT ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN CALIFORNIA'S DEMONSTRATION STATE FORESTS

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The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) has sponsored numerous research projects during the past four years designed to identify and evaluate the archeological and historical resources on California's state forests. These resources include the remains of prehistoric Indian villages and campsites, housepits, bedrock milling stations, hunting camps, ceremonial sites, historic railroad grades, trestles, shake camps, mining camps, and early logging camps. These studies were conducted by several archeologists from California state universities who worked under a contract with CDF. CDF field personnel including staff archeologists, foresters, forestry aids, and fire-fighters also assisted the university archeologists during the fieldwork.

California's Forest Practice Rules and the California Environmental Quality Act require that significant archeological and historical sites be identified and protected from damage during certain projects including commercial timber sales. Many, but not all of the recent studies described in this report were conducted to assist CDF achieve compliance with these mandates. The multiple uses of the state forests include much more than just logging. Some of these archeological research projects were sponsored for the development of cultural resource interpretive programs and to foster scientific research, two major objectives of the state forest system.

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Mountain Home Demonstration State Forest  
Tulare County

Located high in the southern Sierra Nevada near the town of Springville, Mountain Home is a beautiful, 4500-acre forest of sierra redwoods within the upper watershed of the Tule River. Despite its relatively high elevation (5100-7600 feet), the forest held great appeal for native peoples. Its rich and varied plant life ensured plentiful food. Family bands of Yaudanchi Yokuts regularly ventured into the forest during the centuries prior to the American takeover of California. For most of the year, the Yaudanchi lived at foothill settlements along lower streams but moved into higher country during the summer to harvest acorns, pine nuts, manzanita berries, and to hunt deer and bear. This migration must have been a welcome escape from the terribly hot San Joaquin Valley summers. The Indians returned to the lower villages with the onset of winter. Snowfall is quite heavy on this forest. Seventeen-foot drifts are not uncommon. This obviously was a major limitation on human occupation.

Since the Yaudanchi Yokuts left no written records and seasonal activities within the mountains went largely unrecorded by early ethnographers, the only source of information about the forest's early visitors lies in the archeological record. It is for this reason that the state carefully manages these sites and provides funding for scientific investigations.

Twenty-two prehistoric archeological sites have been identified, recorded, and evaluated on this forest as a result of several extensive archeological surveys which began in 1982 (Wallace, Wallace and Meeker 1989). The sites not only provided excellent record of Yaudanchi occupation but also of a much older culture. The earliest occupation of the forest is now believed to have occurred over 8000 years ago.

The sites were of three types. Major Base Camps contained numerous artifacts including pot sherds, obsidian projectile points, pestles, handstones, hammerstones, drills, knives, pendants, beads, and dark midden soil. Bedrock mortars and large rock basins (known locally as "Indian Bathtubs") are nearby. All ten major base camps were found to occur on flat ground, open to the warming effects of the sun, and near a spring or stream. Black oaks and sugar pine trees, providers of two important foodstuffs, were also usually close at hand.



*Figure 1. These curious rock basins were found at all ten major base camps at Mountain Home Forest as the Yaudanchi Yokuts sought them out for their favorite summer camp locations. Probably created by glaciers, these rock basins have intrigued scientists and forest visitors for over a century.*

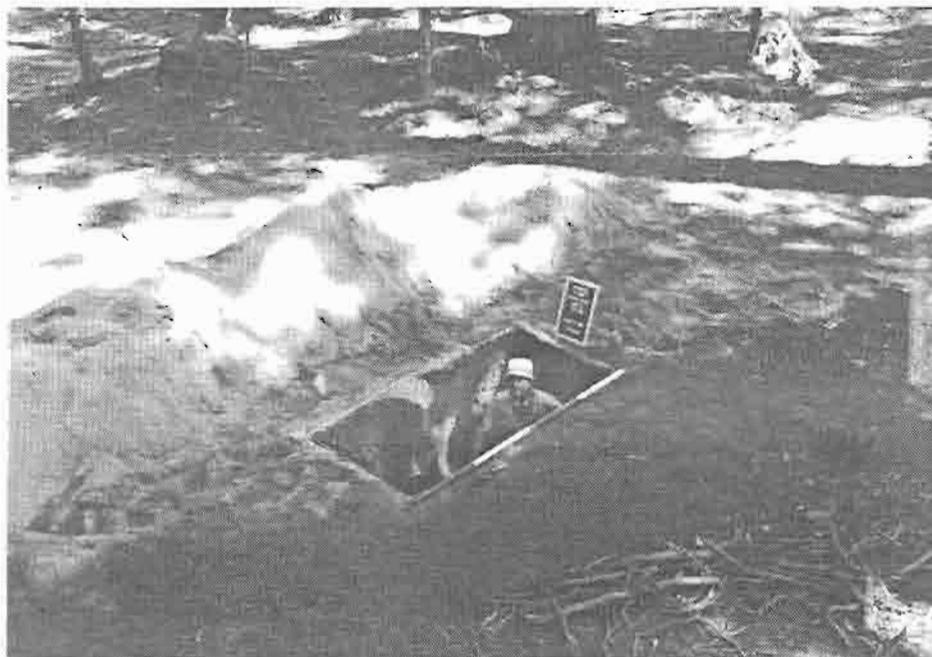
Three Temporary Camps were found as well. These appeared to be transient camps with few artifacts, and an absence of midden or bedrock mortars. It seems that small groups of hunters may have rested overnight or a few days within selected forest openings. Nine Bedrock Milling Sites were also recorded on the forest. These are places where granite outcroppings are marked with mortar holes used to pulverize and mill acorns, pine nuts, seeds, berries and other plant foods. These sites contained few artifacts and little or no occupational refuse.

Two of the major base camps (Methuselah and Sunset Point) were recently test-excavated (Wallace 1988 and Dillon 1991a). This work was intended to explore the function, antiquity, and cultural affiliation of these campsites and to reconstruct the lifeways of the people who lived there during the ancient past. Research also focused on the origin, antiquity, and cultural significance of the distinctive rock basins found at these sites.

The "Indian Bathtubs" or rock basins were apparently formed by either glacial or solution-pit erosion although these remarkable features were undoubtedly used by the prehistoric forest visitors who sought-out their locations for favorite campsites. They may have been used as holding bins to store acorns or pine nuts, or served as useful leaching-pits to process acorn meal, or perhaps as fire-pits used to burn pitch off sugar pine cones. Archeological excavations at the Methuselah site revealed the presence of a dark black ash and charcoal lens within the cultural deposit directly adjacent to three rock basins. Unmistakable evidence of intensive burning, this lens appears to have been formed through the Indian's use of the rock basins.

The Sunset Point site was developed by CDF into a small recreation area in 1971. It has been a popular attraction and trails with interpretive signs were developed to lead the public through this area (Dulitz 1991). CDF was concerned that this unsupervised public use of an important archeological site would cause significant damage to the cultural resource. The trail crossed a black midden deposit and exposed artifacts to illegal and unwanted surface collections. It was also feared that the site would be looted by vandals equipped with shovels and screens.

Since the Sunset Point archeological site is one of the best cultural deposits left on the forest, CDF changed its management policy to reduce the public use of this area and attempted to develop Methuselah as an alternative interpretive site. Methuselah proved to be ill-suited for this purpose since unlike Sunset Point, public access is restricted to group campers. The day-use visitor is unable to visit Methuselah. Because of this, forest manager David Dulitz recommended that CDF initiate an archeological study of the Sunset Point site to mitigate the adverse effects caused by increased visitor use and to provide sufficient information to render an accurate interpretation.



*Figure 2. Archaeologist standing in excavation at Sunset Point. The cultural deposit exceed 170 centimeters. Radio carbon dated artifacts are over 8,000 year old making this one of the oldest high-elevation archaeology sites in the Sierra.*

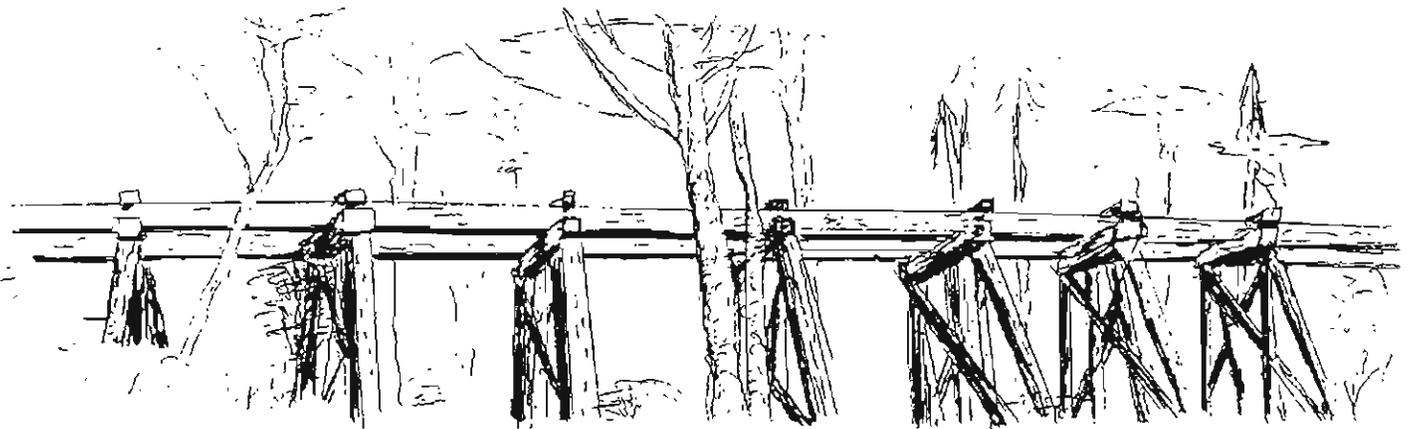
The study was conducted during the summer of 1991. Six units measuring one by two meters were excavated at the site. Three of these test units were placed within the midden area near rock basins and bedrock mortars. They were relatively shallow but produced distinctive cultural materials quite similar to those recovered at Methuselah. The other three units were placed in yellow soil near the picnic area and yielded some interesting and unexpected results. Here, the cultural deposit was nearly two meters deep and contained evidence of an earlier human occupation of the site. A large sample of charcoal found in a cultural context near the base of one unit produced a radiocarbon date of 8130 years before the present. It is clear that there are at least two distinct periods of human occupation of the forest - one early and one quite late - and that these cultures had different subsistence strategies as evidenced by a noticeable differences in the types of artifacts they left behind. Sunset Point is now one of the oldest known archeological sites ever discovered this high in the Sierra Nevada.



*Figure 3. Sunset Point archaeological excavations in progress.*

Jackson Demonstration State Forest  
Mendocino County

Situated in the coast redwood forests between Fort Bragg and Willits, Jackson is the largest and most productive state forest usually conducting three large timber sales per year. The forest has a rich logging history and contains numerous historical sites, artifacts, and features which date from 1850 to the 1950's. There are also seventeen prehistoric archeological sites on this forest which were discovered during an earlier survey (Levulett and Bingham 1978). Forest practice rules required CDF to inventory and evaluate these resources prior to the commencement of logging activity, and to develop a management plan designed to protect significant cultural resources from inadvertent damage. While CDF has had experience in assessing the significance of prehistoric archeological resources, the management of the abundant historic remains on this forest was more difficult. The problem was in determining which historic sites, if any, were significant as defined by state regulation. Many of the surviving sites were obviously related to the 1930-1950 logging period and clearly lack the attributes which characterize a significant historic site. Mixed-in with them, however, were logging camps, features and artifacts related to the earliest logging period (1860-1910) which are significant due to their uniqueness, scarcity and research values. In order to resolve this management problem, a comprehensive inventory for historic resources on the forest was initiated in 1990. A total of 145 sites were identified ranging from railroad logging camps, splash dam remains, trestles, tin can dumps, a wooden schoolhouse, inclines, steam donkey parts, and numerous artifacts such as bottles, segments of cable, and unidentified metal items (Gary 1991).



*Figure 4. This enormous wooden trestle was built in 1903 for the Caspar, South Fork and Eastern Railroad. It is 60 feet high and 150 feet long, and is the last full-sized trestle standing on the forest. Logs were hauled to the sawmill at Caspar Bay.*

One of these early historical sites called Misery Whip Camp was discovered during preparation for a timber harvesting plan in 1988. This early-period logging camp was potentially threatened by ground-disturbing activities associated with logging. An archeological data-recovery project was conducted in 1989 just prior to logging. After careful removal of duff, the site was found to contain eleven tent-pads for workers, a cooking and dining area, a workshop, and a scatter of artifacts which date the site to circa 1890-1900. Several two-person saws (misery whips), bottle fragments, leather shoe parts, penny pipes, and various metal tools and scraps were recovered during the site investigation. It was determined that this site was a camp associated with the operation of a splash dam used for moving logs down Caspar Creek to the Caspar Lumber Company sawmill located on the coast. This study, still in progress, will shed light on logging camp life and work during the early historic period in Mendocino County.

A prehistoric archeological site was also recently investigated on this forest. Known as Three Chop Village, this site is located on a major east-west trending ridge within a densely forested locality near a reliable spring. Test excavations of three of the 35 distinctive housepits were conducted during the summer of 1984. The purpose of the study was to assess the significance of this site, and provide a baseline of information used to evaluate the other sixteen prehistoric sites on the forest.



*Figure 5. One of three housepits excavated by archaeology team at Three Chop Village.*

Artifacts recovered included numerous projectile points, drills, and scrapers, as well as numerous pieces of Chinese porcelaneous stoneware and bottle glass, fragments of both having been worked by the Indians into tools. They were making arrow points out of the bottle glass and round disc beads from the Chinese porcelain. Three cultural components were identified: 1) AD 750 to 1215, 2) AD 1400 to 1850 and, 3) 1850 to 1855. Component 3 is recognized as the historic Mitom Pomo who had their homeland in Little Lake Valley (Willits area) and regularly made seasonal trips to the coast to procure coastal resources. They utilized a trail on the top of Three Chop Ridge and this camp served as convenient rest stop situated mid-way between the coast and the interior valley. The Chinese goods recovered from the site have been identified as coming from the brig Frolic which sank in a small cove near Caspar in 1850.

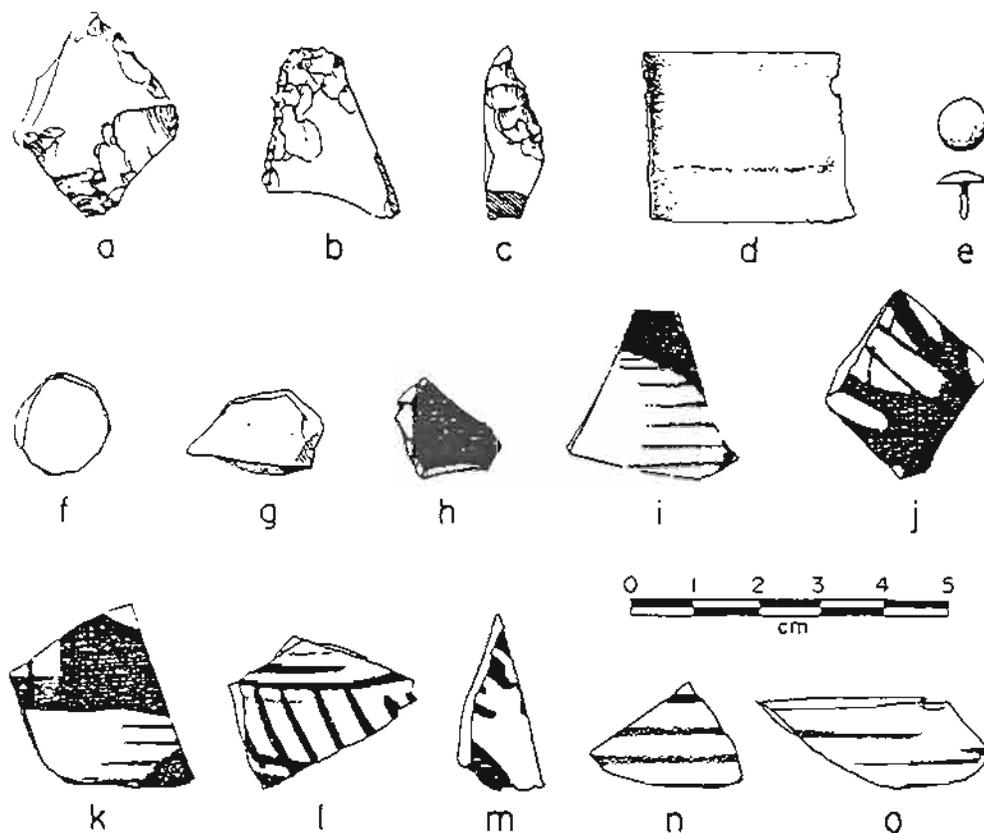


Figure 6. Artifacts from excavations at Three Chop Village. These were collected the Mitom Pomo from a shipwreck in 1850 near Caspar Bay.

A-C green bottle glass projectile point preforms

D sheet brass fragment

E brass tack

F-J modified Chinese ceramic shards

K-O unmodified Chinese ceramic shards.

**Latour Demonstration State Forest  
Shasta County**

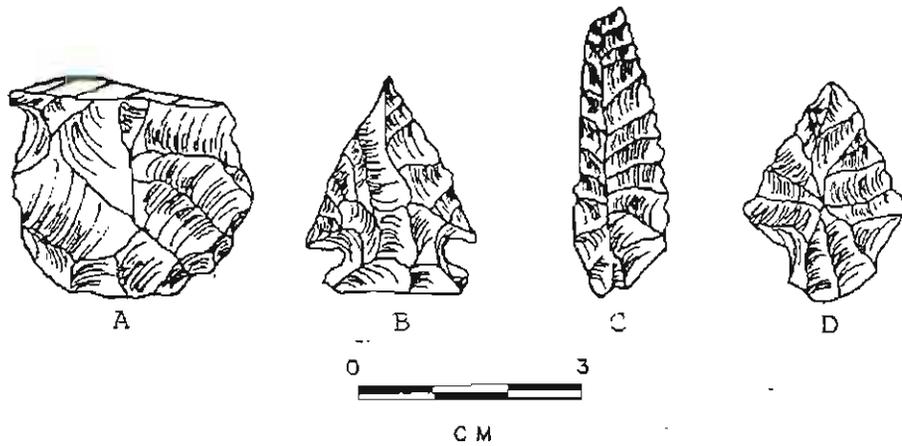
Located in the northeastern portion of Shasta County approximately forty miles east of Redding, this forest is well within the land traditionally claimed by the Central Yana. With the abundance of open meadows, springs, oak groves, and deer herds, one would expect the area to have been regularly visited by the Yana or their neighbors in prehistoric times. Strangely, however, very few archeological resources occur here.

Several archeological surveys conducted prior to logging operations have resulted in coverage of 1000 acres of the total 9033-acre forest, a total of 11%. As a result of these studies, one prehistoric site, one historic site, and few isolated prehistoric artifacts have been identified. Since the entire forest has not been intensively surveyed, and there is an extensive and thick layer of duff throughout, it is possible that there are isolated artifacts and sparse archeological deposits that have not yet been identified.

One of the known sites is called Shake Makers Camp. Located near South Cow Creek Meadows in a well-forested area, it contains the remains of approximately twenty two-foot long unsplit segments cut off a cull log. No evidence of historic structures or artifacts were found within the immediate area. Based on information provided by forest manager Dave McNamara, it was surmised that this site represented the remains of a small shake makers camp, circa 1890-1910, and contained the scattered logs/shakes of products which did not split properly. Another historic shake camp was reported at a different location on the forest, but the integrity of this area has been severely disturbed by past fire-fighting activities. No trace of it could be found.

Historic research has suggested that one or both of these shake camps may have been used by James Cochran LaTour, the person honored by this forest's name. In his early days in the mountains, LaTour and his partner James King were pioneer shake makers at a camp they made at a spring near Shingle Creek. In April 1872, Latour became owner of 320 acres of land at LaTour Meadows. He also was involved in a variety of ventures from freighting, cattle raising, shake making, to the operation of a trading post at "Old Hills Station", now called Deer Flat.

The shake making camp and interpretation described above demonstrate the difficulty of making an accurate assessment of the significance of a seemingly simple historical site. On the one hand, the absence of artifacts and apparent limited research value suggests the site is insignificant, and need not be protected during logging operations to comply with the existing regulations. However, this site may be directly linked to an important individual; one significant to the local history and the history of this forest. Furthermore, it may be the only one of its type which dates to this relatively early period.



*Figure 7. Obsidian artifacts from Latour Forest.  
A large biface fragment, probably the base of a knife.  
B-D projectile points.*

One small prehistoric site was discovered in the area surrounding Atkins Creek Campground, and three projectile points were found on an adjacent ridgetop. These points (arrowheads) were found by forestry aids planting trees after a wildfire. A few other projectile points, a metate, a hammerstone, a knife fragment, and a core have also been found during the timber sale surveys. An analysis of these scant remains has been conducted which enabled CDF to interpret the prehistoric occupation of the forest, or rather, the lack of it. It seems that prehistoric visitors were only using the forest during the Kingsley Complex (500 B.C. to A.D. 500). The forest is within Yana territory during ethnographic times, however, other groups could have come in which may have resulted in the low number of discovered sites. The archeological evidence suggests that this was no ones territory, in that no one group really used it exclusively (Hamusek 1991).

The artifacts would suggest task specific sites, with a heavy emphasis on hunting of large game, perhaps deer, elk, and antelope. The hunting items indicate the presence of men, but the presence of women cannot be ruled out since some seed grinding tools were also found. Moreover, the groundstone assemblage suggest the processing of hard-shelled seeds rather than nuts. The obsidian used to manufacture projectile points came from local sources.

**Soquel Demonstration State Forest  
Santa Cruz County**

This is a newly-acquired state forest near Loma Prieta, famous as the epicenter of the 1989 earthquake of the same name. Soquel Forest lies at the headwaters of Soquel Creek, which flows through the old town of Soquel so as to meet the Pacific Ocean approximately ten air miles to the south. Most of the land incorporated by the property is heavily forested in second growth redwood; some small stands of old growth redwood remain where these have escaped earlier logging activities. A very few natural or man-made clearings host oak and laurel trees, and very infrequently, chaparral and manzanita.

CDF awarded a contract to have the entire forest archeologically surveyed, in order to complete a comprehensive inventory and management plan. This will minimize the task of achieving compliance for future land management projects including logging activities. Begun during the summer of 1991, survey coverage has been completed for approximately 1500 acres or 50% of the total state forest. The entire area was surveyed to search for sites rather than just the subjectively-perceived "most likely" areas, so preconceived ideas would not skew the results. This proved to be a worthy method since significant prehistoric sites were found even though the forest is characterized by incredibly steep, rouged terrain. The survey results were surprising and unexpected. One historic and three prehistoric archeological sites were recently discovered.

One of these sites appears to be a major discovery. It contains no fewer than seven separate bedrock features including numerous deep bedrock mortars and an associated cultural deposit of chipped-stone artifacts made from both chert and obsidian. Although it's age has yet to be determined, it functioned as a campsite where both hunting, tool manufacturing, food processing, and ceremonial rituals took place. This site has excellent research potential and is unquestionably significant. A large, pyramid-shaped sandstone boulder was found to contain over forty small, round, man-made pits called "cupules". Cupule boulders in densely forested areas in California are uncommon.

Pitted boulders are found throughout North America, however, and even have a world-wide distribution. They are thought by most researchers to be associated to magico/religious rituals rather than domestic utilitarian uses. The Pomo Indians in northwestern California used and made cupule boulders as part of female fertility rituals. Called "Baby Rocks", the small pits were carved into boulders perceived by the Indians as having great power. Powder was obtained when the cupules were manufactured and used to form a paint which was then applied to the women attempting to conceive. The couple would then dance around the boulder in a carefully prescribed, secret ritual to cure infertility. Fertility problems were usually blamed on the women. According to early ethnographers who witnessed Pomo Indians practicing these rituals, pregnancy was often achieved soon after the cupule ceremony was completed.



*Figure 8. Large sandstone boulder containing several bedrock mortars; round holes used to process acorns and other plant foods at Soquel Forest*

Further north within the drainages of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers, cupule boulders were called "Rain Rocks" because the Indians made and used them to bring about rainstorms which would in turn bring the salmon, their most important food.

The function and antiquity of the Soquel cupule boulder has yet to be studied but it will unquestionably add considerable significance to the research values for this site as well as its public/interpretive value.



*Figure 9. Large cupule boulder featuring over forty small round pits carved by prehistoric Indians*

Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest  
Lake County

This 3453-acre forest lies in the Northern Coast Range near the town of Cobb within the Clear Lake Basin. Elevations range from 2400 to 3640 feet, and most of the land incorporated by the property is heavily forested in second growth pine and old growth oak and laurel.

The forest is named after Henry C. Boggs, an important pioneer of Lake County who, together with his son, Lilburn H. Boggs, began or expanded many financial enterprises in the Clear Lake region. The Boggs family began logging portions of the forest more than 110 years ago, and at least two small sawmills were once located on what is now the State Forest. Archeological remains of both sawmill sites have been located as a result of previous archeological surveys conducted prior to CDF timber sales.

Because this earlier survey work was fragmentary and only portions of the forest had received archeological coverage, an extensive archeological reconnaissance was conducted during the summer of 1991. Its purpose was to complete the survey coverage over the entire forest, revisit all previously recorded sites, record the new discoveries, assess significance, and develop recommendations for their wise management.

Although many prehistoric sites and artifacts had been previously known largely due to keen observations by former forest manager Cliff Fago, the 1991 survey produced many exciting finds. Nine new prehistoric archeological sites were discovered, two of which contained architectural remains in the form of housepits (Dillon 1991b). Housepits had not been recorded on Boggs Mountain State Forest previously, and their discovery somewhat modifies our earlier impression that the forest zone was only used in desultory fashion by prehistoric peoples who were primarily interested in it as a resource extraction locale. Artifacts previously discovered seemed to indicate that the Indians practiced a great deal of hunting but only during brief visits without ever establishing major camps. Now it appears that at least temporary camps with part-time residents were featured at various places on the forest, and it is certain that logging activities over the past 110 years have obscured or obliterated other examples which may have existed earlier.

One of the previously recorded sites, upon re-examination, seems to have been a village or large camp, rare for this region at its elevation, and may have considerable time depth if this interpretation is correct. Unfortunately, this site is being damaged by careless visitors and may suffer irreversible damage before it can be scientifically studied.

Future archeological research on this forest and the other state forests will be more intensive than extensive, so as to provide a greater amount of information about the cultural development of prehistoric and historic California.



*Figure 10. View of one of the nine newly-discovered prehistoric archaeological sites at Boggs Mountain Forest. Remains of circular housepits have been discovered on two of the sites.*

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