



**Native American Monitor Training
for the Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council
Tuolumne, California
facilitated by
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AGG Associates
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Tuesday, January 28th
PowerPoint Presentations 5 and 6

What is Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management?

- Archeology is the study of past cultures and their physical remains.
- Archaeology is also the scientific study of peoples of the past.
- It also deals with ancient cultures and their relationship with their environment.



What is Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management?

- One purpose of archaeology is to understand how humans in the past lived and to preserve this history for present and future learning.
- Cultural resource management is a rather new term dating to perhaps the last few decades and was coined to identify compliance or contract archaeology.
- Studies contracted to allow public agencies and private developers comply with historic preservation law (federal and state).



How Do Archaeologists Work?

- Work done on a dig site can be at times be painstakingly slow.
- Soils have to be analyzed a small amount at a time to find any remnants of an older culture.
- The deposit (midden) or soil with potential artifactual remains is usually filtered (sifted) through screens (1/8")



How Do Archaeologists Work?

- Sometimes we use wet screening that tends to identify smaller constituents.
- These methods allow us to identify flaked stone, bone, seeds, plant parts, ground stone, shell, and other assorted remains of prehistoric Native people.
- These finds are frequently radiocarbon dated to determine their age.



How Do Archaeologists Work?

- Often “digs” are initiated when a tiny artifact is found, suggesting that there may be additional artifacts in a particular area.
- On digs, archaeologists usually excavate material in a one or two meter square in 10 centimeter levels.
- Digging must be done carefully to not destroy buried features or smaller artifacts.



How Do You Know Where to Dig?

- Archaeologists first perform surveys to find sites.
- They walk the ground looking for traces of past human activity.
- We also use heavy machinery to excavate below the ground to locate buried sites and features.



What tells us people lived here?

- Soil is a different color.
- It often is unnaturally dark.
- This is called a midden



What tells us people lived here?

- The soil is blackened from the cooking fires and from organic debris from human occupations over centuries or millennia.
- It typically contains fire broken rocks, animal bone, flakes stone artifacts including dart or arrow points, scrapers, drills, knives.
- The deposit also includes stone chips (debitage), shell, beads (stone, bone, shell, or glass), pottery, charcoal, milling tools (handstones and milling slabs, pestles and mortars) and soapstone (steatite).



What kinds of archeological sites can we find?



- Open air camp sites.
- Villages where Native people lived.
- Places where Native people had their homes – sometimes marked by rock rings and rock enclosures.

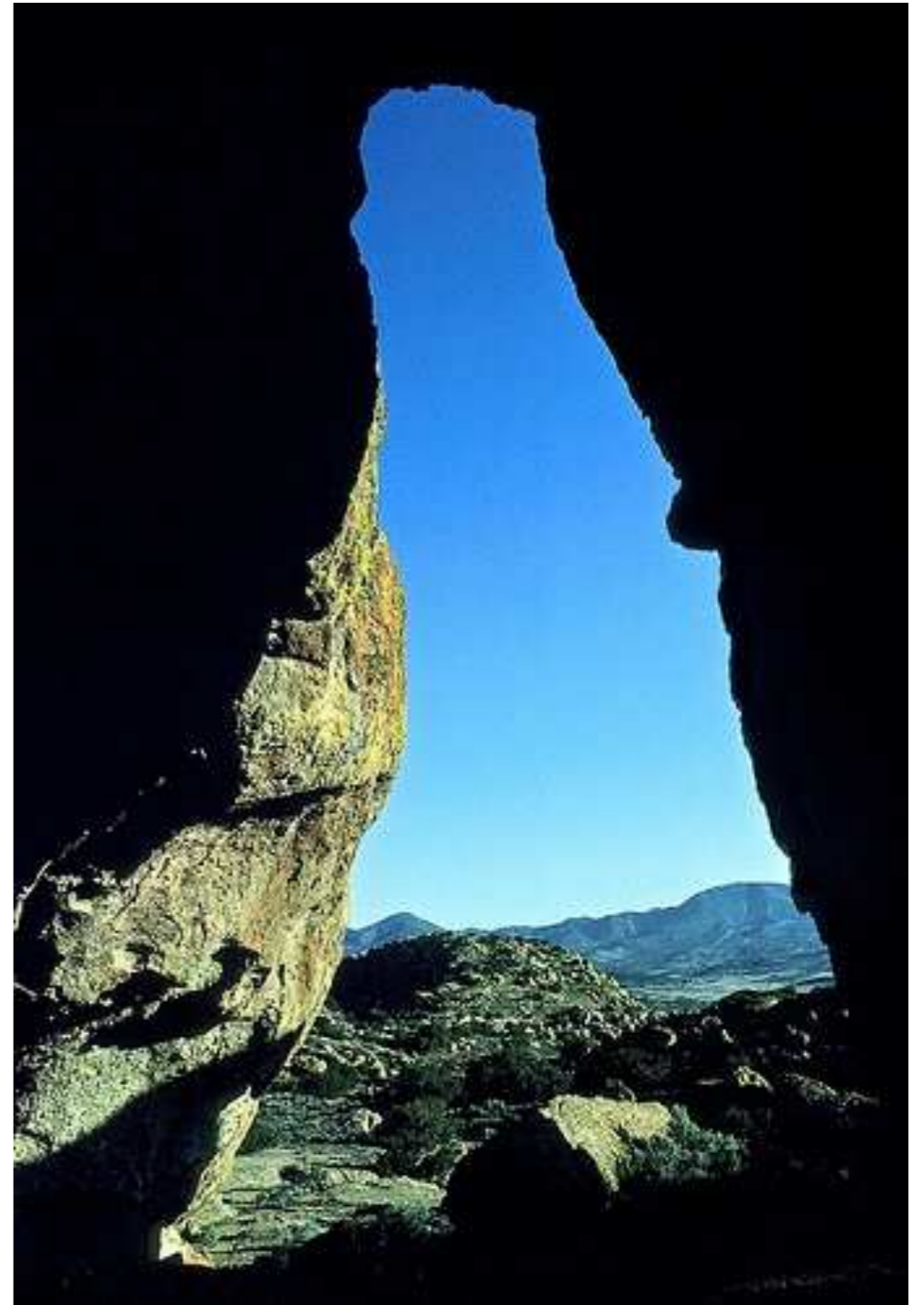
What kinds of archeological sites can we find?



- Places where Native people processed, prepared and/or ate their food.
- Places where game animals were hunted and field butchered.
- Where Native people conducted religious ceremonies (sweat houses, communal house, menstrual huts).
- Where Native people buried their dead (isolated burials or communal cemeteries).

Archaeological Site Types

- Caves and rockshelters
- Contain midden and perishables
- Often find caches of artifacts.



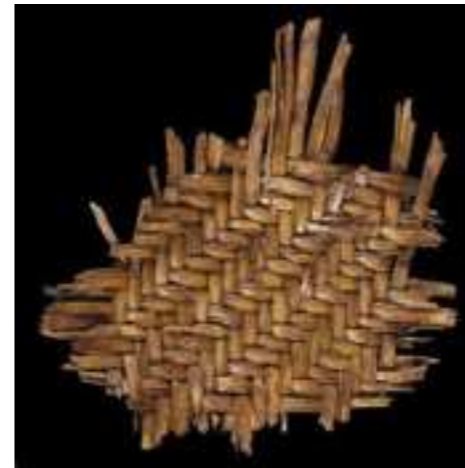
Archaeological Site Types

- Included in these caches may be a collection of arrows or darts (foreshafts and mainshafts), quids (chewed up sweet fibrous material like from yucca or agave), and basketry.
- Stone tools – dart and arrow flaked stone points.
- The points are sometimes still hafted to their foreshafts with mastic or animal sinew.



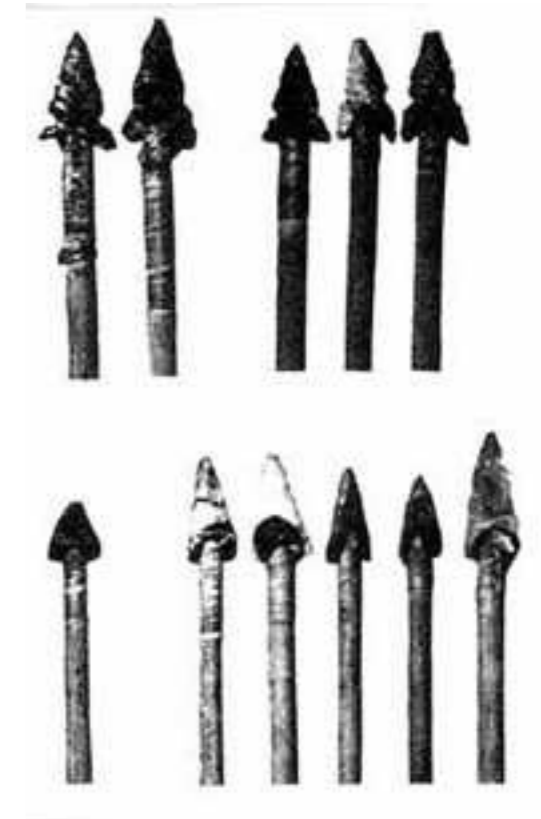
Perishables

- Basketry
- Cordage
- Rabbit skin blankets



Perishables

- Arrow and dart foreshafts and mainshafts
- Sandals
- Atlatls
- Waterfowl decoys



Artifacts and Ecofacts

- In sites in California and the Great Basin we often find mainly items that do not decompose readily.
- Stone, bone, shell, and pottery are the most frequent elements within an archaeological deposit.
- Floral and faunal remains are sometimes identified as “ecofacts”.



Groundstone

- Groundstone is a term archeologists use to identify artifacts used as milling equipment.
- The items are used to grind, pulverize, and crush seeds and nuts to produce flour.
- They are also used to hull acorns, pine nuts and to extract them from their cones.



Groundstone

- Milling tools can be portable and stationary
- Mano and metate (also known as a handstone and milling slab) are the portable tools used as one of two handed grinders.
- The mortar and pestle when portable look like a stone bowl and a long narrow rotary grinder.



Groundstone

- Bedrock milling features are also part of the late prehistoric addition to the milling technology.
- They are fascinating features on the landscape.
- It is interesting to note, that they must be formed and fashioned to allow use and require considerable time effort and energy to prepare and craft.
- Bedrock mortars are the rotary grinding holes and the bedrock milling slabs are known as “slicks”



Shell Beads and Ornaments

- Beads and ornaments are fashioned from shell, glass, bone, and stone (soapstone, magnesite and European glass).
- Shell beads in California and the Great Basin are most often fashioned from the purple olive shell (*Olivella biplicata* or *O. dama*), abalone (*Haliotis cracherodii* or *H. rufescens*) and clam (*Tivela* spp.)
- Olivella shell beads were a form of money for California Indians.



Shell Beads and Ornaments

- The greatest majority of these beads were manufactured on the Channel Islands.
- They took much time, effort, and attention to detail to fashion appropriately.
- The precise form, size of their aperture, and the part of the shell used are all keys to their age.
- We have elaborate typologies that help us classify shell beads as to type and age.
- They are especially sensitive and can be a wonderful means to date and archaeological deposit.



Flaked Stone

- Arrow and dart points
- Scrapers
- Drills



Flaked Stone

- Burins
- Knives
- Bifaces, roughouts, and preforms
- Reamers
- Flake waste



Flaked Stone

- Gravers, burins
- Knives
- Bifaces, roughouts, preforms



Flaked Stone



- Prismatic blades
- Scraper planes
- Choppers



Flaked Stone



- Unifaces (scrapers)
- Unmodified flakes (debitage)
- Core shatter
- Others (eccentrics, crescents, choppers)

