

Middle Fork Heritage Times

This special edition of the Middle Fork Heritage Times is dedicated to preserving the history of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The Heritage Staff on the Salmon-Challis and Payette National Forests invite you to help us preserve the archaeological and Native American traditional sites of the area. The articles in this newsletter will provide insight into the history of the area and describe things you can do to help protect these important sites for future generations of wilderness adventurers.



Effects of the 2007 Fires on Heritage Resources

The Central Idaho Heritage Team welcomes any comments, concerns or information you may have concerning the archaeological resources of the Middle Fork area. If you would like to get involved in archaeological projects, the Forest Service's Passport in Time (PIT) program provides volunteers a chance to work with archaeologists in the inventory, excavation, and preservation of archaeological resources. Contact one of the Heritage Specialists listed below for information on upcoming opportunities in the area.

Salmon-Challis National Forest

- Salmon Office: Tim Canaday
(208) 756-5100
- North Fork Office: Cammie Sayer
(208) 865-2700
- Challis Office: John Rose
(208) 879-4121

Payette National Forest

- McCall Office: Larry Kingsbury
(208) 634-0700

Passport in Time (PIT) Clearing House

(800) 281-9176

The 2007 fire season turned out to be one of the largest on record burning over 200,000 acres within the Salmon-Challis National Forest alone. While fire can have countless beneficial effects to the overall health of the forest, archaeological sites with standing wooden structures are prone to devastating fire effects. Fire can also affect archaeological sites that do not contain wooden structures. Intense heat can scorch rock art sites and can even fracture artifacts made of stone.

Longtime floaters of the Middle Fork River will notice a change as they negotiate Powerhouse Rapids. About halfway through the rapids on the east bank was once a historic structure – the Powerhouse Mill - that never failed to spark the imagination.

The Powerhouse Mill site was a favorite stopping point for many floaters. The site consisted of a one-stamp mill attached to an adjustable waterwheel that could be lowered into the river to provide the power necessary to process gold ore. The mill and several cabins were built prior to 1930 and supported operations at the White Goat Mine located on top of the mountain on the opposite side of the river. Gold ore was removed from the mine and transported down the mountain via a precarious route to the



Powerhouse Mill—Before the 2007 fires

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Preserving Native American Traditional Sites

The Middle Fork River was home to the Mountain Sheepstealer people for thousands of years and their descendants would like you to respect the area. During the late 19th century, the Mountain Sheepstealer people were removed from the Middle Fork River to the Shoshone-Bannock, Shoshone-Paiute and Nez Perce Reservations. Each Tribe wants the sites along the Middle Fork to be protected.

The special camping procedures that have been adopted are part of river-use etiquette to help preserve sites; however, some detrimental activities and cultural concerns are relatively

unknown to most people. For instance, pictographs or "Indian Picture Writing" as it is sometimes called, has a very important sacred meaning to American Indians. It is believed that these rock pictures were painted by religious shamans. Traditional American Indians believe you should not visit these sites except with the proper ceremonies and you should certainly not deface or disturb the pictographs.

Many other sites contain the remains of American Indian ancestors. Pithouses, talus slopes, and rock shelters may all contain human burials and should not be disturbed. These

areas are sacred to American Indians just as our cemeteries are sacred to us.

There are other places where large stone circles, alignments, or stacks can be found that may be the remains of ceremonial lodges or sacred sites. Isolated terraces along the river and higher elevation ridge tops may have been used for sacred ceremonies and should be avoided whenever possible.

Please help us preserve American Indian traditional and religious sites by being respectful of these areas. You may visit these sites, but act as you would in a church, synagogue, or other place of worship.

Centennial Interview with Ted Anderson

The Salmon-Challis National Forest celebrated its centennial in 2007. In light of that fact, the Middle Fork Heritage Times editorial board asked Ted Anderson to provide a historical perspective on floating the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Ted was gracious enough to recount his career on the Middle Fork which began in 1945 while working with his father in the family's guide business. Later, in 1973, Ted took the oars as the first Forest Service River Manager employed on the Middle Fork.

Ted Anderson witnessed big changes on the river as float boating became more popular and the river more accessible. Increased river traffic had an effect on the river, bringing more litter, impacts to archaeological sites, and spreading invasive weeds. Ironically as more people came to the river for its solitude and wilderness characteristics, their numbers began to reduce those very qualities. Ted worked hard implementing policies that reduced use-related impacts, while preserving the river and the river-running experience. Some of those policies, such as requiring the use of porta-potties and fire pans, initially met with much resis-

tance, but are now recognized for their undeniable benefits.

The story that follows is a brief history of river management on the Middle Fork, as told by Ted Anderson.



The Early Years: No Permits, No Problems

In the mid 1940s, the local economy along the Middle Fork was changing from subsistence homesteading to one based on outdoor recreation. The Great Depression and World War II had ended and across America there was renewed interest in enjoying outdoor pursuits. During this time, the Anderson family ran a land-based

guide business from their ranch on upper Camas Creek. One day, Ted's father, Andy, was on horseback at the mouth of Loon Creek when a river outfitter pulled in with a raft loaded with clients. A guest's young son wanted to ride a horse, so Andy offered his horse to the boy and hitched a ride on the raft while the boy rode the horse down to the Tappan Ranch. By the time Andy came ashore at the ranch he had decided to buy a raft and make river running part of his business.

In 1945, the Andersons guided their first trip down the Middle Fork and averaged three to four trips per year after that. Their trips usually started from the Tappan Ranch, the Flying B, or Thomas Creek as the road to Boundary Creek had not been built yet. The Andersons advertised their business at the local lodges, and occasionally guided outdoor writers who published their hunting and fishing stories in magazines like *Field and Stream*, giving the Andersons welcome publicity.

During the 1940s and '50s, the people

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Archaeological Sites of the Middle Fork River

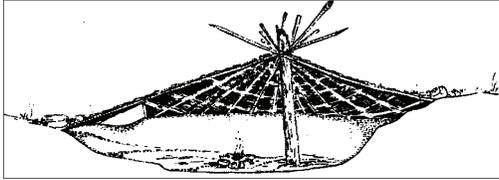
There are four major prehistoric archaeological site types recognized in the Middle Fork Canyon: pithouse villages, rockshelters, open camps, and pictographs.

Pithouse villages are found on the larger terraces and consist of groups of small circular depressions that were once covered by tipi-like structures made of willow branches and brush, reed mats, pine bark, or skins. Rattlesnake Cave is an example of a rockshelter. It consists of a large overhanging rock face in the steep canyon. It may have had a structure of branches that leaned against the wall for protection from the elements. Open camps are found on many terraces. It is not known what kind of shelters were used on these sites, but they may have been small tipi-like

features made of brush or skins.

Pictograph sites are not overly abundant in the canyon, however, they may be found on sheer rock faces and

American Indians consider all of these sites sacred and request that they be visited using great care and respect. Please help us protect an irreplaceable legacy.



This pithouse reconstruction from northern Washington may be like those on the Middle Fork River (after David Chance et al.).

For more information see the river guide books, the Middle Fork Ranger District, or a Heritage Team member.

rockshelters. It is not completely clear what the pictographs mean, however, they may record a shaman's visions, hunting magic, or reminders of past events.

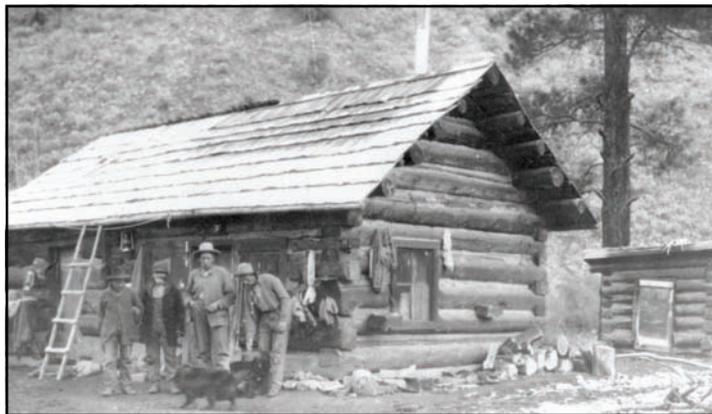


Archaeological Sites Connect You to the Past

Archaeological sites are special places that connect us to the past. In most cases archaeological sites are the physical remains left behind by people who lived their lives engaged in day to day activities. You will see many of these places along the Middle Fork River. There are the pit house depressions and rock art sites left by Native Americans, and the log cabin homesteads built by 19th and 20th century settlers. The Native American people and later historic settlers who lived here were concerned about raising their children, gathering food and preparing meals, discussing the past and preparing for the future, just as we are today.

The sites along the Middle Fork have no signs explaining who lived here, when they lived here, and what they did. These uninterpreted sites are

your direct link to history. There are no entrance fees, tour guides, gift shops, or crowds. There is nothing but you, the site, the land and your imagination.



The Sater Cabin

Uninterpreted sites offer you a unique and authentic wilderness experience. Look around and imagine living here, raising a family, and making a living on this land. Generation after genera-

tion of Native American families lived here successfully for 10,000 years. Their descendants return here today. During the late 1800s and early 1900s families moved to the Middle Fork and built homesteads along the river. Some were successful and became private land, others moved on and made their homes elsewhere. Descendants of many Middle Fork pioneer families still live in the region.

Archaeological sites are fragile and irreplaceable. *Please feel free to pick up any item you find, but when you are done, put it back where you found it.* All artifacts are protected by law. Please leave things as you found them. Protect the past for the future and out of respect for those who came before us and for those who follow.



Ted Anderson Interview (cont.)

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on the river and their gear were different than today. Most visitors came to the Middle Fork to hunt and fish. While they were there, they ate simple meals consisting mostly of canned goods cooked over an open fire. Outfitters carried their guests in durable military surplus rafts, as there were no recreational raft manufacturers at that time. Fewer than a thousand people ventured down the river each year.

The Road to Dagger Falls Brings More People.

In 1959 the Idaho Department of Fish and Game pushed the road into Dagger Falls so they could build a fish ladder. The new ladder made it easier



for fish to swim upstream, and the road made it easier for boaters to launch and float downstream. Around this time outdoor gear improved and rafts became less expensive and more responsive. Increased access, improved gear, and a surge in the number of people seeking outdoor recreation during the 1960s greatly increased the number of boaters on the Middle Fork.

During this time private trips needed no permit. The river was open to everyone who showed up, and parties sometimes reached 60 people in size.

Campsites were claimed on a first-come, first served basis, and as can be expected, conflicts arose over the best spots. This was especially true immediately above Big Creek where a campsite “bottleneck” formed due to the lack of campsites in the Impassible Canyon.

Increased use created the need for trash disposal and outhouses along the river. The Forest Service built garbage pits at the most popular campsites hoping to reduce litter.

However, the pits soon overflowed and attracted bears. Later, when the pits were closed, it took a Forest Service crew two years to haul out all the trash. The Forest Service also built outhouses, but these quickly filled and the river crews spent much of their summers digging new outhouse pits. It soon became apparent that suitable ground for outhouses was in short supply. Most places were either too rocky or steep, and the dry climate kept the waste from decomposing, making it impossible to reuse old pits. One back-country employee thought that blasting overfull pits with dynamite would solve the problem, and it did, for

the few short seconds between the blast and when the stuff fell back to the ground.

Despite these problems, the Middle Fork’s outstanding qualities were recognized in 1968 when it was among the first rivers protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. That year 1600 people floated the river. Recreational pressure was eroding the very qualities that made the river wild and scenic. By 1970 auto and truck traffic sometimes backed up 1½ miles



from the boat launch at Boundary Creek. The number of people, waste disposal problems, competition for campsites, and traffic were creating problems for the river and the boaters. People who cared about the river knew that something needed to be done.

Management Plan and Today

In 1973, the Forest Service published “The Middle Fork Management Plan” which set new rules for the river. The plan was controversial, but most thought it would reduce resource damage and user conflicts if given a chance. The plan also created a new job with the title “River Manager”. Knowing that a plan is only as good as the people who implement it, the Forest Service hired Ted Anderson as the first River Manager.

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Ted Anderson Interview (cont.)

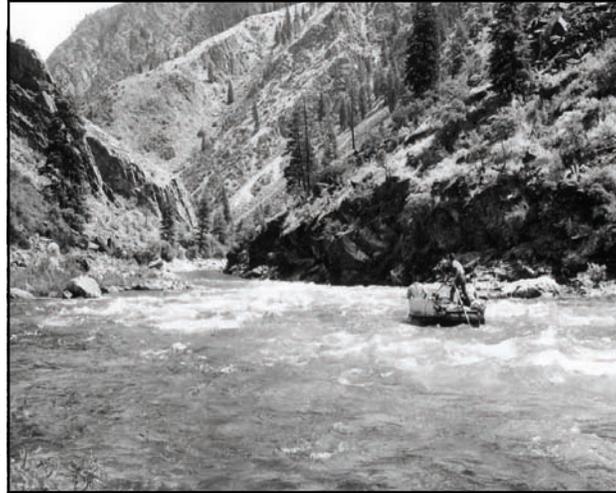
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One of the first tasks was to survey, designate, and clean up campsites. Each campsite had numerous campfire rings, because parties wanted their campfires in different spots. The campfire rings were litter magnets. People threw trash in them and left behind charred cans and bottles. At first campers were required to make their fires on a fireproof cloth and dump the ashes into the river. Unfortunately the trash still made its way into the campfires and now it wound up in the river. Eventually the Forest required fire pans and asked boaters to carry their unburned material out. When the fire pan rule first started, it was hard to find a suitable fire pan, so some groups used the metal beds from their kids' Red Rider wagons.

out. They tried several systems before successfully installing the facility you will use at the end of your trip.

After becoming a Wild and Scenic River, the Middle Fork attracted political dignitaries. Ted served as boatman for Jimmy Carter's security team when

Each night someone would get mad and walk away, but there was no place to go, and they had to come back and rejoin the debate. The group reached agreement by trip's end, a feat that Ted believes would not have happened in any other setting.



The biggest changes Ted sees on the river today are an increased number of blowouts caused by wildfires along the river. He also notes that there are fewer people per raft than in the past and more boats per group. The increased popularity of rafting has brought a more experienced group of river employees to the Forest Service.

Ted Anderson served as the Middle Fork River Manager for 20 years and made seven to nine trips down the river each of those

The human waste problem along the Middle Fork was solved by getting rid of the outhouses and using porta-potties. Since the waste and the river flow downhill, the North Fork Ranger District had to solve the problem of what to do with the waste at the take

he floated the river. Later he helped when President George H.W. Bush floated from Indian Creek to Loon Creek. Ted also helped with a trip hosting representatives from environmental and industry groups, who would get down to business discussing tough issues around the campfire.

years. Somehow he still had time to help create the American River Management Society, which brings together river managers from all over the world. When asked which was his favorite trip, Ted answered that it was a maintenance trip that he floated by himself.

Join Us in Preserving the Past

The Middle Fork River users set the standard for low impact use. However, it is possible to hone those skills to provide extra protection for Middle Fork archaeological and historical sites.

The first step is learning to recognize archaeological materials and features. Information in this newsletter will help, as will other materials made available by the Salmon-Challis and Payette National Forests (see page 1 for names and phone numbers).

The next step is placing your camp in an appropriate place. For instance, do not set up your tent or kitchen on the upper terraces where pithouses may be located; instead try to stay on the

lower sandy beaches. Some areas will be closed to camping and the checkers at Boundary Creek can tell you where those camps are located. When you set up your tent or kitchen please do not make level platforms or dig rain trenches around the edge of the area. Disturbance of the site destroys the information archaeologists rely on to tell the site's story.

Be sure to use porta-potties and fire pans and dispose of gray water appropriately. Human waste, food waste, gray water, and charcoal can contaminate archaeological sites by contaminating the wood and charcoal in archaeological deposits. This will cause false radiocarbon dates. In addition, these materials can provide false readings when artifacts are

analyzed for protein residues such as deer, sheep, and fish blood. Please pack out your food waste and sprinkle gray water away from camp.

Please photograph, draw, and handle any artifacts you find on the ground surface, and then *place them back where you found them*. Their location on the site, in relation to other artifacts and features, tells us much about their age and use. A stone point can tell archaeologists the site's age, tribe it was made by, and the kind of activities taking place on the site. However, once removed from the site, artifacts lose much of their meaning. If you find something of special significance please let the river patrol or the Heritage Team know where you found it.



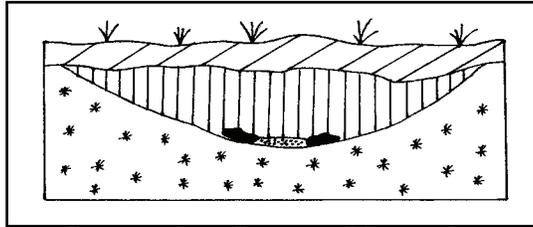
Pungo Creek Archaeological Excavations Provide Clues to the Past and Present

Our understanding of Native American history and the effects of float camps on archaeological sites took a major leap forward in 1999. Excavations at Pungo Creek documented the presence of ancient Native American houses and provided clues to understanding how float camps affect these important sites.

While not the first archaeological excavation on the Middle Fork River, this work cleared up some of the confusion about the mysterious depressions found on terraces along river. The depressions have been thought to be "house pits" (see story on page 3), prospect holes, elk wallows, or "tree throw", (i.e., blown-down trees leave depressions where roots once were). The Pungo excavations clearly showed that the depressions are the remains of American Indian houses. They also demonstrated that filled-in house pits are

present in areas where no surface depressions exist.

Two places were chosen for excavation at Pungo. One was in a surface depression that was readily visible and the other was in a kitchen area that had no visible depression. In the first case, the depression was verified as a house pit by the presence of a central fire pit and by a



Cross section of excavated house pit.

concentration of artifacts on the floor of the living surface. In the second case the same dish shaped depression and features were found below

obviously disturbed top soils.

The archaeologists also looked at soil layers and the position of artifacts to determine if floater use was impacting the house pits. Unlike the perfectly preserved house pit in the undisturbed area, the upper portion of the buried house in the kitchen area had a disturbed zone or layer of soil resulting in the destruction of the upper house layers. While the intact house had only 5 inches of disturbed soil and a single historic bullet, numerous non-Indian artifacts were found within the top 5-15 inches of the disturbed house. Many of these artifacts date to the 1950s-1980s. While the majority of disturbance certainly was not caused by present day floater use, the lack of vegetation and highly churned nature of the sandy soils suggests continued floater use on top of these features will eventually cause their destruction.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act

Under the 1979 Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) all materials of archaeological significance over 100 years old located on Federal Lands are protected by law. The law provides for misdemeanor, felony, and/or civil penalties for disturbing archaeological

sites or for the collection of archaeological materials.

Under ARPA, it is illegal to damage an archaeological site. A person who damages or excavates an archaeological site or collects artifacts without authorization, is subject to fines, loss of property, and prison time.

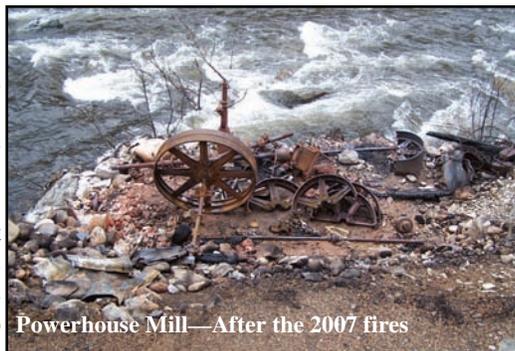
The surface collection of artifacts is also prohibited under ARPA. Please help preserve the Native American and historic sites of the Middle Fork River so that future boaters can enjoy them too.

Effects of the 2007 Fires on Heritage Resources (con't.)

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river by mule. A cable car system was then employed to bring the ore across the river for processing at the mill. Ore was processed at the site until the 1950's.

Sadly, the Powerhouse Mill and at least four other significant historic sites with standing structures were consumed by the 2007 fires that also closed the Middle Fork River and the main stem of the Salmon River to recreational use for up to 40 days last summer. These closures were necessary for health and safety reasons. While the wooden components of these sites are now gone, clues to the



Powerhouse Mill—After the 2007 fires

past remain. Archaeologists will be assessing the effects of the fires to these sites throughout the coming summer. You can help with this effort

by being extremely careful when visiting these sites. The banks of the river where the fire consumed vegetation may have become unstable and should be accessed with care. Machinery that was once supported by wooden frameworks may now be unstable. Artifacts, which can tell us so much about past lives and livelihood, should be observed in their natural context and then left for others to enjoy.