

## **MESA PRIETA PETROGLYPH PROJECT TERMINOLOGY PETROGLYPH RECORDING TERMINOLOGY**

### **FIELD LOCATIONAL TERMS**

Element – singular human made character deliberately applied on a rock

Feature – term used to describe any archaeological entity, includes structure, petroglyph, water dam, ceramic, lithic, trail, historic artifact, etc.

Locus – Singular boulder with rock image on one or more segments; Loci – plural

Locus letters – Designations that are given to each panel, boulder, or other recording unit that is separately photographed and mapped. A locus with rock images on two or more faces or a face that is too large to be captured as a single photograph is lettered sequentially using the same locus letter followed by a dash and number. i.e. A-1, A-2, A-3

Panel – combination of elements on a single rock face

Provenience – a field defined area usually assigned to a recording team, a map-able portion of an archaeological resource site. On Mesa Prieta, a provenience is about 20 acres and about 200 meters wide and 400 meters in elevation.

### **GENERAL TERMS**

Abrasion – a mark made by a stone being rubbed against the rock face, often to smoothness. Abrasions are seen on the high points of rock surface only.

AGL (Above Ground Level) – distance from the bottom of the elements to the surface of the ground. It is measured at the same location that the photograph is taken and the drawing is made.

Ancestral Pueblo Period – along the northern Rio Grande, a span of time from 600 to 1600 CE. Around 1300 CE, Ancestral Pueblo people moved into the Northern Rio Grande Valley from the 4-Corners region and formed pueblo settlements, many of which continue to be occupied today. This period ended with the entry of the Spanish in 1598.

Anthropomorph – a human-like figure

Archaeology – the scientific study of the origin, culture and development of human beings.

Archaic – Time period from about 7500 BCE to about 600 CE

Azimuth – compass direction

Basalt – Dark colored, hard igneous rock commonly found in New Mexico often deposited as lava flows or in vertical outcrops or dikes; a common rock image medium. Most of the rock images on Mesa Prieta are found on basalt.

BLM – Stands for Bureau of Land Management, a federal agency in charge of managing public lands.

Cultural Landscape – an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural, that provide evidence of human occupation and use. Rock images are a unique form of human expression in that they represent a total integration of these landscapes. The Pueblo conception of landscape is not limited to what the eye can see; it incorporates all that can be perceived including the thoughts and feelings of those who enter or have entered the landscape. The landscape is an area made up of a dynamic association of forms that includes surface features such as landforms, water sources and water management systems, artifacts, rock art images and structures. Cultural Landscape artifacts include ceramics, lithics, stone tools, etc. The Historic Cultural Landscape adds to the perspective of land use with the features that are remnants to that time period such as corrals,

horseshoes, stone, brush and wooden fences, etc.

Cupules – Circular depressions made into rock surface, may be very small to 4-5 centimeters across with varying depth. Cupules and the dust produced with their making are thought to be related to religious ceremonial activities. Cupules are found universally.

Desert Varnish – a dark, sometimes reflective coating or patina formed over time on rock surfaces through chemical processes involving many factors such as oxidation, mineral weathering, moisture, bacteria and wind-blown pollutants. (see patination)

Escarpment – A long, more or less continuous cliff or relatively steep slope facing in one general direction that separates two levels or gently sloping surfaces; produced by erosion or faulting.

Geography – The study of the earth and its features and of the distribution on the earth of life, including human life and the effects of human activity.

GIS (Geographic Information System) – a category of computer programs and applications that are used to organize, analyze and display geographic information

GPS – Global Positioning System device

- Datum – A reference system for determining Northing and Easting positions on a GPS. Use NAD 83
- UTM – Universal Transverse Mercator, position format used in a GPS based on a metric grid system consisting of 60 zones to cover the earth's surface. Units are in meters. Coordinates are measured as meters north and east from an imaginary corner where the west edge of the UTM zone meets the equator. Positions are described with a zone number, easting distance, and northing distance.
- WAAS (Wide Area Augmentation System) – two additional geostationary satellites with fixed positions over the equator. Under ideal (unobstructed) conditions, WAAS can significantly improve accuracy. In the mountain west, improvement is often not remarkable. WAAS is enabled or disabled according to the user's needs. MPPP works with it disabled.
- Waypoint – A location designated by a set of coordinates and stored in a GPS receiver.

Historic Period – A time space beginning with European contact in 1598 and extending to 50 years ago.

Iconography – Identification of an image with a known visual prototype

Incised – sharp edge or line made with very hard instrument, such as metal.

Mug Board – Identification board used in all field photographs with site, section, provenience, photo number and scale of the photograph.

Mythological Images – images made that are supernatural or not of this world thought to be used primarily in a ceremonial manner. Mythological images seen on Mesa Prieta are Awanyu (one and two horned serpents), star-beings, composite human-animal figures, cloud terraces and other supernatural images.

Patination – A film formed on the surface of many materials including rocks by complex chemical processes involving oxidation and various kinds of atmospheric deposition. (see Desert Varnish)

Pecking – marking a rock surface on or through its patination by hitting it with another rock, metal or other sharp object sometimes using a hammer stone. Pecking technique will hit low and high points on surface.

Pictograph – A painted visual element made on a rock in a natural landscape or cave

Prehistoric – Prior to the time of making written records or contact with European peoples. Some Native Americans and anthropologists object to this term because it ignores oral traditions and implies people did not have history prior to the introduction of writing.

Quadruped – any four legged animal

Repatination – After a patinated surface has been penetrated or otherwise scarred, the patination process starts anew on the scar.

Rio Grande Style – Pueblo rock images from the period 1200-1600 CE in the Rio Grande Valley

Rock Art/Rock Images – Images created upon rock surfaces in a natural setting in the form of petroglyphs and pictographs; a form of human expression with dynamic purpose and meaning that appears on rock surfaces in the landscape.

Scraped – mark made by a stone or stone falling against rock face. Scrapes will be on high points of rock surface only.

Scratched – mark made with sharp instrument, generally thin, shallow and sometimes very faint. Scratches often do not penetrate the patinated surface of the boulder.

Spalling and exfoliation – a splitting off of a thin sheet of rock from a rock matrix, often caused by moisture freezing and thawing within the rock or by being struck by a heavy object or rock. Spalls typically refer to larger (saucer or plate sized) flat fragments breaking away, while exfoliation is usually used to describe many smaller fragments coming off a surface not necessarily all at once.

Superimposition – the layering of one image or visual element on top of another

Topography – The configuration of a surface including its relief and the position of its natural and human made features.