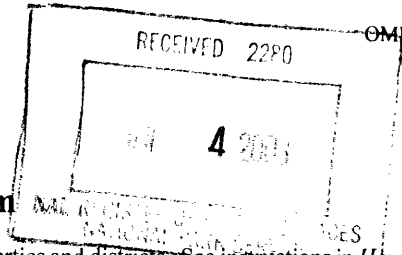


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Cueva del Indio

other names/site number LP-6 Cueva del Indio

**2. Location**

street & number Approximately 1.2 km north of the SR 198 not for publication

city or town Las Piedras City, Quebrada Arenas Ward  vicinity

state Puerto Rico code PR county Las Piedras code 085 zip code 00771

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Enid Torregrosa de la Rosa, MSHP  
Signature of certifying official

July 22, 2003  
Date

**Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office**  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): -----

Signature of Keeper Erica K. Martin Sabat Date of Action 9/4/03

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing Prehistoric Rock art of Puerto Rico

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: religion Sub: ceremonial site

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: recreation & culture Sub: outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** N/A

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation N/A
- roof N/A
- walls N/A
- other N/A

**Narrative Description** (See continuation sheets.)

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

---

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

Archaeology

Social history

Religion

Communications

Art

Period of Significance 600 - 1500 A.D.

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation Ostionoid culture

Architect/Builder N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (See Continuation Sheets.)

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, Division of Archaeology Patrimony and the Council for Terrestrial Archaeological Council

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### 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>20</u>	<u>196055</u>	<u>2014260</u>

Verbal Boundary Description (See continuation sheets)

Boundary Description (See continuation sheet)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michele H. Hayward, Ph.D., Michael A. Cinquino, Ph.D., Mark A. Steinback, M.A.

organization Panamerican Consultants, Inc. date September 30, 2000

street & number 2390 Clinton Street telephone 716-821-1650

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14227

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Cueva del Indio  
Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

*Physical Location.* The Cueva del Indio prehistoric petroglyph boulder complex is located in a passive park maintained by the local government in Barrio Quebrada Arenas, Municipality of Las Piedras. Access to the park and petroglyphs is via a paved municipal road about three quarters of a mile (1.2 kilometers) north of Puerto Rico Highway 198. The PR 198 turnoff is marked by the new Alcaldía or Municipal Office; the municipal road divides, with the right fork becoming an unpaved road ending within the park confines (Figure 1).

*Environmental Setting.* The Cueva del Indio petroglyphs are situated in the eastern central mountain region of Puerto Rico. Hilly, mountainous terrain with rock outcrops and large boulder groupings are characteristic of the surrounding area.

*Rock Art Location.* The site is located within an approximately 7-acre park. This park comprises a mostly open area to the north of the unpaved road (Figures 2 and 3), and heavy, vegetation growth to the south (Figure 4). Near the eastend of the road is a clearly marked entrance to the passive recreation portion of the park (Figure 5), which contains cleared open spaces, picnic tables, a children's play area (Figure 6), and to the right or southwest of the entrance the main petroglyph grouping (Figure 7). Although called "The Cave of the Indian," the site more properly consists of a number of large boulders accumulated around a deep depression. Open and enclosed spaces form an interconnecting network of cavities, crawl spaces, variously inclined rock faces and different entrances. The southeast corner ground-level entrance (Figure 8) provides access to a mostly enclosed space where images have been carved onto four rock faces (Figure 9). The floor of the cavity measures 9-x-3 meters (30-x-10 feet), which connects to another lower partially enclosed space via a 7-x-2 meter (23-x-7 foot) passageway and vertical drop. One petroglyph can be found in this area.

*Petroglyph Documentation.* Although Cueva del Indio remains fairly well known to the local population and wider professional community, the formal study of the petroglyphs has been minimal. Meléndez Maíz (1996) includes the petroglyphs in her catalog of sites for the municipality of Las Piedras, but does not go beyond her earlier documentation effort in Hayward, Meléndez and Ramos (1992a).

At the time of their study the park had not been developed and the surrounding boulders were still covered or encircled with vegetation. Hence, the only petroglyphs recorded were those of the cave-like complex.

Hayward et al.'s (1992a) reproduction methods for the Cueva del Indio site, as well as two other rock art locations, involved a multi-step process. First, the rock surfaces were cleared of vegetation and cleaned with water and brush. Second, the images were identified before their actual documentation. Third, tracings at a scale of 1:1 of the petroglyphs were made onto medium weight polyethylene sheets, cut to cover the entire area of the carved rock surface, thus maintaining the physical relationships among the individual images. Fourth, a series of photographic prints in color and black and white and color slides were taken once the petroglyphs had been outlined or painted in with a mixture of water and white flour. Fifth, cloth rubbings of representative images were made, if appropriate. Sixth, additional data on the individual petroglyphs were obtained in the field, such as

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Cueva del Indio  
Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

their dimensions, compass orientations and depths. Lastly, the polyethylene sheets with the image outlines were recopied onto vellum sheets at the same scale and filled in with a black permanent marker.

The researchers' (1992a: 25, 34) cleaning and duplication procedures were modified due to the condition of the rock surfaces containing images. Damp, loose, grainy and moldy surfaces necessitated removal of dirt and mold with water or a mixture of water and light soap. Reproduction by means of cloth rubbings would not be effective and was not undertaken. For purposes of description and analysis the boulders were assigned a letter designation—A through D for the ground level series and E for the lower chamber rock. Boulders A and B form the entrance to the upper chamber as seen in Figure 8. Boulder C occupies the other end as viewed in Figure 9, and along with boulder D, to the left background of the same figure, complete the ground level cavity. The inner sides of boulders A and D form the passageway to the lower chamber with boulder E. For each of the boulders the petroglyphs were numbered sequentially as they were identified. Hayward et al. distinguished 64 petroglyphs, many of them consisting of interconnected individual images. Unfortunately, only the photographic reproduction of the identified petroglyphs of boulder A could be completed. The remaining images were photographed as groupings per each boulder surface.

While the present investigation was not designed to undertake a re-documentation effort, several of the petroglyphs visible under natural sunlight and non-outlined or enhanced conditions were taken to illustrate their nature. Figure 10 represents an encircled facial design with large pits for eyes and a mouth, located on the upper portion of boulder A at the entrance to the main petroglyphic complex (see Figure 8). Another similar facial design can be found on boulder B (Figure 11), which makes use of the uneven and projecting surface of the rock to enhance the visual effect. Intertwining facial images have been executed on boulder C (Figure 12), with an elaborate sun-like motif carved into boulder D (Figure 13). Rays emanating from an encircled face and pitted eyes and mouth can be discerned. Figure 14 portrays a facial image with ears just below the scale from boulder A.

Between May and July 2003 PRSHPO personnel, Miguel Bonini and José E. Marull, documented photographically some of the site's petroglyphs with the aid of artificial light. They also photographed some of the petroglyphs that had been highlighted, by persons unknown, with ash between the 2000 and 2003 visits. Figures 15-21 provide additional views of the petroglyphs within the Cueva del Indio site.

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Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

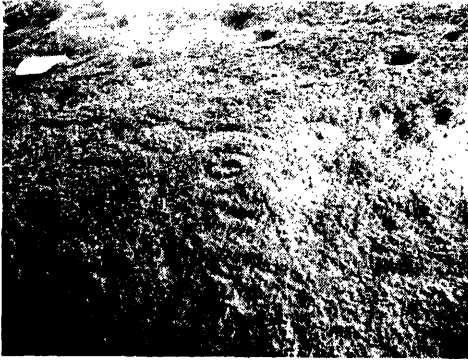


Figure 15 - View of facial design on Boulder A facing northwest.



Figure 16 - Facial design on Boulder A facing approximately northwest.



Figure 17 - Boulder B facing approximately southwest



Figure 18 - Facial design on Boulder B facing approximately southeast



Figure 19 - Three facial designs on Boulder A.



Figure 20 - Other facial designs on Boulder A



Figure 21 - Highlighted figure on Boulder A.

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Cueva del Indio  
Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

*Previous Investigations.* Hayward et al. (1992a: 25-26, 34-35, 81) also undertook a limited inspection of nearby boulders, an examination of a field adjacent to the boulder complex on the east side, and a subsurface investigation in and around the main petroglyphic grouping. No additional petroglyphs were noted, but the heavy vegetation covering the boulders at the time obviously precluded an adequate examination. Shovel testing and surface inspection of the adjacent east field yielded only historic material (e.g., glass, whiteware). Four shovel tests dug near the main complex produced two historic ceramics, with the two tests of the main chamber producing no materials. The one shovel test in the lower chamber yielded a moderate quantity of prehistoric material consisting of 70 body sherds, one rim fragment, and one lithic fragment. Fifty-six of the body sherds were less than 2 centimeters (3/4 inch); all sherds were poorly made, thick and possessed a tendency to crumble. The rim suggested manufacture in the Esperanza style (A.D. 1200-1500).

*Cultural Affiliation.* Direct dating of Puerto Rican petroglyphs or pictographs has not been developed. Indirect methods rely on comparative associations, as in the presence of materials at the site; a nearby habitation site, or a rock art site similar in style. The material recovered at Cueva del Indio indicates a Late Ceramic Period, third phase execution date of A.D. 1200 to 1500.

*Current and Past Impacts.* Current and past impacts to Cueva del Indio involve weathering of the boulder surface and human recreational use. The geologist Pujols Soto (1992) undertook an evaluation of the main petroglyph boulder complex in connection with the Hayward et al. (1992a) documentation project. He concluded that although the boulder complex was composed of hard materials, the natural elements have and continue to have a negative effect on the status of the petroglyphs. Pujols Soto observed:

“Esta roca está constituida por un grupo de bolos granodioríticos que varían en tamaño 5 a 12 metros de diámetro, son sumamente duros y tiene un grado de descomposición intermedio. Existen planos de fracturas visibles en muchos bolos, las paredes tienen aproximadamente 1 pulgada ó menos de descomposición, que amenaza con desaparecer algún número de petroglifos. Tienen gran cantidad de xenolitos, los cuales forman parte de los dibujos, algunos de ellos tienen mayor grado de descomposición que la roca granodiorítica en la cual se encuentran. En el lugar se observa mayor descomposición de la roca aunque no se pudo determinar si existe flujo de agua abundante (no se observó), necesariamente debía haberlo hace tiempo, puesto que la ‘cueva’ no es otra cosa que la transportación del material descompuesto (suelo) entre los fragmentos de rocas y a través del sistema de grietas. La vegetación incrementó la descomposición en el área, casi toda el área está cubierta, llevándose a cabo un número impresionante de reacciones químicas y biológicas en ellos. El material transportado dejó huecos de dimensiones enormes e irregulares, los cuales le permitió a los indios considerar el área como una caverna. El tipo de roca utilizado en los petroglifos es muy similar en su color gris-claro, en su relativa extrema dureza, su textura de apariencia granular y su notoria visibilidad, además del diámetro que varía desde 2 a 15 metros. La mayoría de los signos o dibujos están en las rocas ígneas (intrusivas) granodioríticas, la superficie es algo aspera pero bastante homogénea. Los xenolitos (inclusiones) se pueden encontrar en la mayoría de los bolos y forman parte de los petroglifos. El grado de descomposición puede incrementarse con la vegetación sobre los bolos y el medio ambiente contaminado. Las expectativas de conservación de estos dibujos puede elevarse a los mil ó más años. Factores como la actividad humana y desastres naturales serían los únicos en destruir los petroglifos en



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Cueva del Indio  
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poco tiempo (1992:4-6)."

*[This site] is composed of a group of granodiorite boulders that vary in size from 5 to 12 meters [17 to 40 feet] in diameter, they are very hard and have an intermediate rate of decomposition. Fracture planes are present, visible in many of the boulders, the walls have approximately 1 inch or less of weathered material on the surface, which threatens to eliminate a certain number of the petroglyphs. A great quantity of xenoliths are present, which form part of the designs, some of them have a higher rate of decomposition than the granodiorite rocks in which they are found. Weathering of the rock is definitely evident, even though it is difficult to determine if water flow has been sufficient to cause it (it was not observed), which nonetheless has probably been the case, since the "cave" has been formed from the transportation of decomposed material (soil) deposited in-between the rocks by means of crevices. The vegetation has increased the rate of weathering in the area, almost all the [boulders] are covered, facilitating a considerable amount of chemical and biological reactions in them. The transported material has left very large and irregular spaces [among the boulders], which certainly explains why the natives could have considered the area a cave. The type of rocks utilized for the petroglyphs are very similar in their clear-gray color, in their relatively high degree of hardness, their granular texture, their impressive massiveness, which in addition to their diameters varies [in size] from 2 to 15 meters [7 to 50 feet]. The majority of the images or designs are found on igneous granodiorite rocks (intrusive)[to the area, which possess] rough but relatively homogeneous surfaces. The xenoliths (inclusions) can be found in the majority of the boulders and form parte of the petroglyphs. The rate of weathering can increase due to the presence of vegetation covering the boulders and surrounding pollutants. One can expect under present conditions that these designs could last one thousand or more years. Factors such as human activity and natural disasters would be the only ones to destroy the petroglyphs in a short time. Translation by M. Hayward.*

Human activities have and will continue to affect the Cueva del Indio petroglyphs. The municipality by the early 1990s had begun to consider plans for a recreational area, which by the time of this investigation had produced concrete results. A passive park area has been constructed and cleared of vegetation; negotiations are underway to purchase approximately 7 cuerdas (7 acres) of land (see Figure 3) for the park; a caretaker has been retained during the week, and a cooperative agreement with the local forest service has resulted in a survey of the area's flora and the planting of new trees.

The municipality is clearly aware of the historic value of the petroglyphs, which serves to reinforce its goal to provide local recreational facilities. A goal made more necessary by the increasing population as evidenced by the growth in adjacent and surrounding housing developments. Promotion and protection of Cueva del Indio will only be enhanced and supported by its listing on the National Register.

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**Cueva del Indio  
Las Piedras, Puerto Rico**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

A Multiple Property Documentation Form with the historic context entitled, *Prehistoric Ceramic Period Petroglyphs and Pictographs of Puerto Rico*, accompanies this individual nomination form. The context discusses the characteristics of island rock art such as their location, dating and interpretation and integrates this class of archaeological phenomenon into a wider prehistoric cultural context. Research issues concerning, and criteria for National Register inclusion are set forth.

A listing of petroglyph and pictograph sites is also included, with the Cueva del Indio site representing one such site with the following characteristics as discussed in the multiple property nomination. Cueva del Indio is located in the eastern mountain interior, possesses more than 64 individual and composite images of mostly anthropomorphic design. Hayward et al. (1992b) documented but did not analyze the images.

*Criteria or Reasons for National Register Inclusion.* Given the above background information on the nature and limited analysis or interpretation of the petroglyph complex, these images can be expected to aid our understanding of Puerto Rican prehistory in the following areas:

- religious system - the images apparently do not represent late prehistoric god-like images, and may thus define a more local place of worship.
- stylistic boundary - some of the images are unique to this location and thus may help in the definition of stylistic boundaries.
- geographical representation - the images are found in a cave-like setting; foothills of the interior mountain range.
- socio/political system - images are found in the central mountainous interior, near El Yunque and other mountain peaks with possible religious or socio-political significance; the range of the petroglyphs may relate to the local socio-political system.
- Stylistic components of high number 64 plus; mural-like character with intertwining elements; emphasis on anthropomorphic images.
- Practical consideration: the municipality of Las Piedras has developed a recreation area around the petroglyph complex; need for generation of protection measures from human use and natural erosion factors in concert with the local government.

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**Major Bibliographical References**

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- 1991 Propuesta para nominar una series de yacimientos de arte rupestre al registro nacional de lugares históricos. Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Hayward, Michele H., Marisol J. Meléndez Maíz, and Marlene Ramos Vélez

- 1992a *Informe Preliminar. 1. Documentación de tres Sitios de Arte Rupestre: Piedra Escrita, Jayuyua; Cueva del Indio, Las Piedras; Quebrada Maracuta, Carolina.* Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. San Juan, Puerto Rico.

- 1992b Resultados preliminares de proyecto de arte rupestre. Municipios de Jayuya, Las Piedras y Carolina. Paper presented at the X° Simposio Internacional, Asociación de Literaturas Indígenas Latinoamericanas (LAILA/AILA). San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Meléndez Maíz, Marisol J.

- 1996 *Inventario de recursos culturales del Municipio de Las Piedras.* Prepared for Consejo para la Protección del Patrimonio Arquelógico Terrestre de Puerto Rico. San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Pujols Soto, Cesar E.

- 1992 *Informe Petroglifos: Las Piedras, Carolina y Jayuya, Instituto de Cultura.* Oficina Ingeniería de Suelos, Autoridad de Carreteras y Transportación, San Juan. MS on file at Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

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**Verbal boundary description**

The Cueva del Indio prehistoric petroglyph boulder complex is located in a passive park maintained by the local government in Barrio Quebrada Arenas, municipality of Las Piedras (see Figure 1). Access to the park and petroglyphs is via a paved municipal road about three quarters of a mile (1.2 kilometers) north of Puerto Rico Highway 198. The new Alcaldía or Municipal Office marks the PR 198 turnoff; the municipal road divides, with the right fork becoming an unpaved road ending within the park confines (see Figure 2). The main petroglyph complex lies to the south of the unpaved road (see Figure 3) within the recreation portion of the park. Petroglyphs have been carved into the surfaces of five very large boulders, which along with several others forms a cave-like grouping. Two other boulders nearby also contain petroglyphs.

**Verbal boundary justification**

The Cueva del Indio site encompasses exclusively an area 10 X 15 meters or 150 square meters were four boulders with the main petroglyph concentration is located, excluding the other area that serves as part of the park.

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Las Piedras, Puerto RicoSection number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 9**Figure Captions Cueva del Indio**

Figures 1 – 14 taken by Michael A. Cinquino in June 2000. Original negatives on file at the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Figures 15-21 (digital photos) taken by José E. Marull and Miguel Bonini, PRSHPO, June 2003.

**Figure 1** - Entrance to Cueva del Indio Petroglyph Municipal Park. Facing southeast.

**Figure 2** - Cueva del Indio Park limits and the location of the main petroglyph boulder complex.

**Figure 3** – Relatively open, grassy area of the Cueva del Indio Park north of the internal unpaved park road. Facing northeast.

**Figure 4** - Heavy vegetation area of the unpaved road with the Cueva del Indio Park. Facing southwest.

**Figure 5** - Entrance to the passive recreation area of the Cueva del Indio Park. Main petroglyph boulder complex to the right. Facing southwest.

**Figure 6** - Picnic tables and children's playground within the passive recreation area of the Cueva del Indio Park. Facing northeast towards the entrance.

**Figure 7** – Southwest ground level entrance to the Cueva del Indio petroglyph boulder complex.

**Figure 8** – Close-up of southwest ground level entrance to the Cueva del Indio petroglyph complex with boulder A to the left and B to the right. Facing northeast.

**Figure 9** – Upper chamber enclosure of the Cueva del Indio petroglyph complex with boulder C, center far background and boulder D, left background. Facing northeast.

**Figure 10** - Enclosed facial image with pits for eyes and a mouth on upper portion of boulder A. Three-inch (7-cm) scale shown. Facing north.

**Figure 11** - Enclosed facial image with pits for eyes and a dash for a mouth, boulder B. Six-inch (14-cm) scale shown. Facing southeast.

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Cueva del Indio  
Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 10

Figure Caption Continued

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**Figure 12** - Intertwining facial image of boulder C. Six-inch (14-cm scale) shown. Facing northeast.

**Figure 13** – Elaborate sun-like facial image with encircled eyes and mouth, boulder D. Six-inch (14-cm) scale shown. Facing north.

**Figure 14** – Enclosed facial image with ears below scale, boulder A. Six-inch (14-cm) scale shown. Facing west.

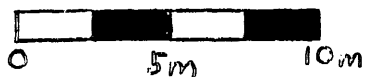
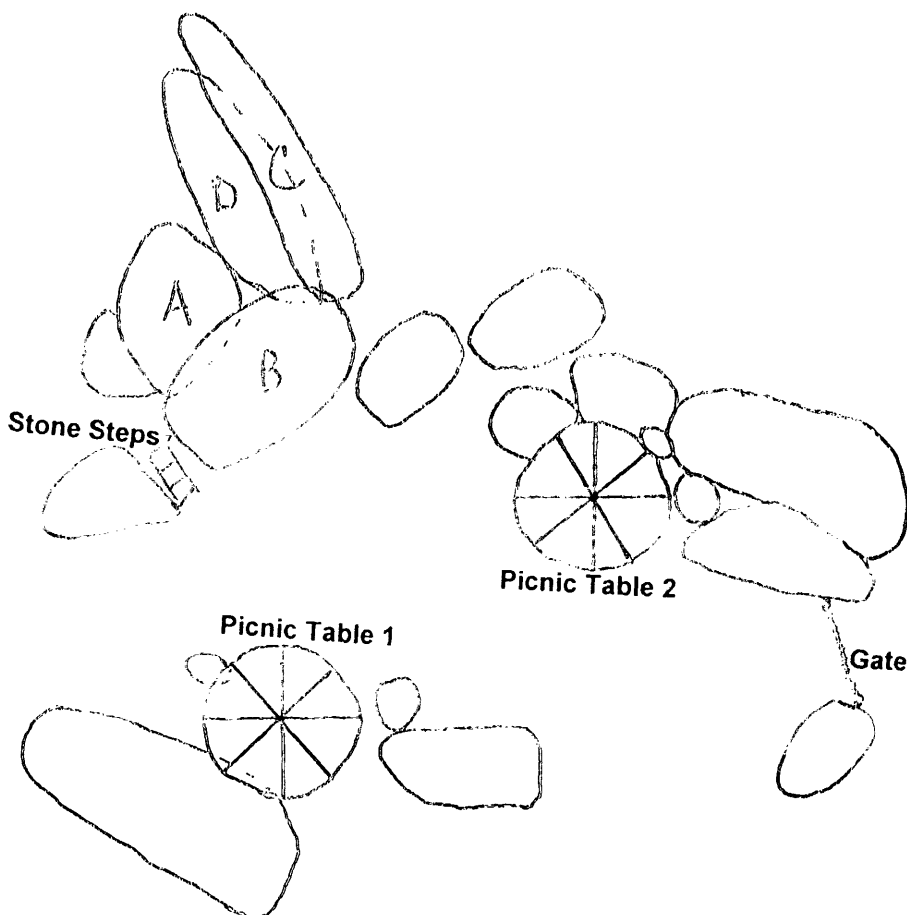
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Las Piedras, Puerto Rico

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Site Map  
Scale - 1:250



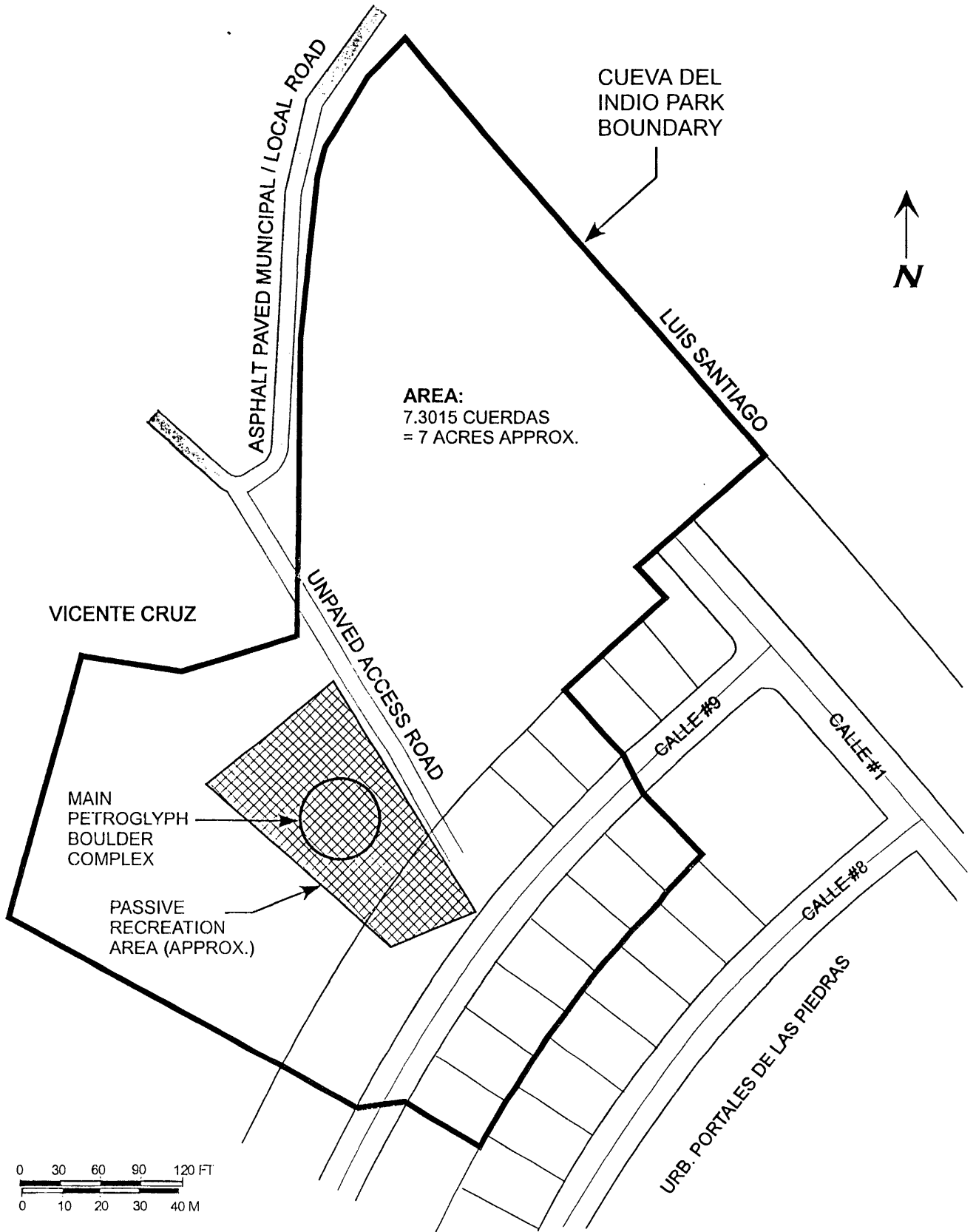


Figure 2. Cueva del Indio Park limits and the location of the main petroglyph boulder complex (Las Piedras Municipal Archives).