

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
 Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

Rock Art in the Southern Black Hills Thematic ^{Resources} ~~Nomination~~

and/or common

2. Location

street & number

Southern Black Hills

☒ not for publication

city, town

vicinity of

congressional district

Second

state South Dakota

code 46

county

Custer
 Fall River
 Pennington

code 047

103

3. Classification

Category

☐ district

☐ building(s)

☐ structure

☐ site

☐ object

☒ thematic group

Ownership

☐ public

☐ private

☒ both

Public Acquisition

☒ in process

☒ being considered

Status

☐ occupied

☒ unoccupied

☐ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted

☐ yes: unrestricted

☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture

☐ commercial

☐ educational

☐ entertainment

☐ government

☐ industrial

☐ military

☐ museum

☐ park

☐ private residence

☐ religious

☐ scientific

☐ transportation

☒ other: none

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Custer County, Fall River County, Pennington County Courthouses

street & number 420 Mt. Rushmore Rd., Courthouse, Courthouse

city, town Custer, Hot Springs, Rapid City

state South Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Southern Black Hills Rock Art Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date Summer 1980

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Archaeological Research Center

city, town Ft. Meade

state South Dakota

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Geographical Area

The Black Hills are a small, isolated mountain group surrounded by the plains of South Dakota and eastern Wyoming. The higher, central hills are surrounded by a continuous ring of Lakota sandstone, commonly called the Hogback Ridge. Numerous aboriginal rock art sites occur [redacted] of the southern Black Hills. For our purposes, the southern Black Hills extends about 50 miles east-west and about 50 miles north-south, [redacted]

The southern Black Hills Hogback is characterized by deeply dissected canyons below high, flat or sloped ridges. Sheer, vertical exposures of red and yellow sandstone, ranging in height from 10 to 100 feet, form the canyon walls. Sparse stands of ponderosa pine, western cedar, and juniper are found along the slopes and ridgetops, with mixed short grasses, small cacti, and flowering forbs abundant throughout the area. Fruit-bearing shrubs, willow, and cottonwood line the larger drainages.

The larger canyons are drained by small, permanent streams fed by intermittent streams in the smaller canyons. The entire area drains into the Cheyenne River, which forms the southern boundary of the area. Elevations range from 3100 to 4900 feet, in places increasing several hundred feet in less than a mile.

The southern Black Hills area has long been attractive to human settlement. The area has more moisture and less extreme temperatures than the surrounding prairie and supports large populations of bison, deer, elk, pronghorn, and smaller game. Many edible and medicinal plants grow in open areas, and stone suitable for tools is abundant throughout the area. Since protohistoric times (post 1750) the area has held religious significance for Lakota (Sioux) and Cheyenne people.

Survey Methodology

A 1980 rock art survey, supported by a state Historic Preservation grant, was conducted by archaeologists Linea Sundstrom of South Dakota State University and Cherie Haury of the University of Kansas. They recorded 70 petroglyph and pictograph sites in the southern Black Hills area. Of these, 55 were determined by the surveyors to meet National Register criteria. Survey methods included relocating recorded sites, interviewing local landowners and rock art enthusiasts, and examination of some likely areas. The adjacent sites in Wyoming's [redacted] were recently placed on the National Register.

The only previous investigation aimed specifically at identifying Black Hills rock art was an informal study conducted in 1941 by W. H. Over of the University of South Dakota. Working primarily from the accounts of local informants and from photographs, Over recorded six rock art sites in the southern Black Hills.

Existing Information

This nomination deals exclusively with a rock art thematic area. It includes all pre-historic paintings, carvings, and tool-sharpening grooves appearing on rock outcrops in the survey area.

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Prehistoric Rock Art in the Southern Black Hills

Existing Information (continued)

The southern Black Hills area was chosen for study for several reasons. It has long been known to have one of the largest and most diverse concentrations of rock art on the Northern Plains. In spite of this, little systematic study of the sites had taken place, and no adequate records existed of the sites. With the southern Black Hills area slated for rapid development, many archaeologists and local residents expressed their concern that the sites would be placed under considerable stress by mineral exploration and mining, road building, housing and highway construction, and especially, by an influx in population. It was feared that the aboriginal carvings and paintings would be destroyed by vandalism and construction before they could be adequately recorded or protected.

Description of Resource Group

Southern Black Hills rock art is very diverse. Both painted and carved styles occur, and ~~seven~~ distinct styles and substyles were identified, each represented by between three and 15 sites. In addition, many stylistically unique sites were recorded, some demonstrating gradual stylistic progression. Many of the definable styles indicate a direct relationship with Northwestern Plains rock art as far away as central Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, and southern Alberta.

The sites range in age from Late Middle Prehistoric (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500) to Protohistoric (post 1750), based on subject matter, relative weathering and patination, and superimposition. Pecked Realistic style sites depicting hunting of large game using drive-lines, corrals, and spear-throwers probably pre-date the introduction of the bow on the Great Plains, about A.D. 500. Some incised petroglyphs show ~~guns, horses, wagons, and other objects not found on the Northern Plains before 1750.~~ The placement of abstract and other styles between these two chronological end points is based on ~~many~~ instances of superimposition of one style over another. Some painted designs contain symbols known to have been used by Lakota (Sioux) and Cheyenne groups inhabiting the area since c. 1750. Numerous sites contain abraded grooves resulting from aboriginal tool sharpening, probably of bone and wood tools, which do not generally preserve well enough to occur in buried archaeological deposits.

Sites range in size and complexity from single panels of tool grooves to multi-component sites extending a half-mile or more along sandstone escarpments and containing hundreds of designs. The function of rock art sites, other than tool

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Prehistoric Rock Art in the Southern Black Hills

Description of Resource Group (continued)

groove sites, must remain purely speculative at present, although some possibilities can be considered. A few relatively recent, secluded sites may have been used by aboriginal vision seekers. Some panels depicting speared game may have been made to ensure, by magic, a successful hunt. Others may have marked springs, game trails, or other resources. Some almost certainly illustrate events or myths important to their creators. Panels in inhabitable rockshelters may have been simply for decoration. Whatever their function, the sites will eventually reveal much more about the material cultures, values, perception, and lifeways of aboriginal groups.

See attached maps for distribution of rock art sites within the survey area.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A

Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Significant in the areas of art and archaeology, the rock art of the Southern Black Hills offers an excellent opportunity to study the art from local and regional perspectives: The southern Black Hills contain a diversity of artistic styles unmatched in the West; local styles allow the tracing of stylistic development over time within a limited geographical range, in contrast to the styles found in other areas of the Northwest Plains, which allows for the outlining of the broad geographical distribution of specific traits; finally, unlike buried archaeological remains, the rock art panels can be studied immediately ^{and} as a unit to reveal patterns of cultural development and population movement in the area. As artifacts of aboriginal cultures in both prehistoric and post-contact times, southern Black Hills rock art sites are an important contribution to the prehistory of the area. They contain information about aboriginal groups from Archaic times forward. The later panels record the impact of historic trade items such as guns and horses on native population.

Data collected during the 1980 southern Black Hills rock art survey indicate that the petroglyphs may span a period from at least the Late Archaic (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500) to Protohistoric (post-1700). Since the oldest of the styles depicts pre-bow hunting practices, it probably is older than A.D. 500, when the bow came into use in the area. Some of the carvings of this style are much more weathered and patinated than others, indicating that it probably persisted over a long period. The most recent carvings are incised rather than pecked. They show trade items, such as guns and horses, not present in the area before 1700 to 1800. Stylistically similar carvings not depicting such trade items are assumed to be slightly older, probably beginning around A.D. 1600. Similar incised carvings in Montana and Alberta have been assigned dates ranging from 1600 to 1900. (Keyser 1977). Superimposition indicates that the other styles fall somewhere in between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1600. Few, in any, other rock art concentrations in the West encompass such a wide time span. A relative chronology of Black Hills rock art, based on superimposition and relative weathering, may be applicable to other sites in the West with stylistically related rock art. The relative chronological sequence of southern Black Hills rock art is summarized in the following chart. (see attached)

The southern Black Hills contain a wide range of rock art types, including painted, pecked, incised, relief-carved, abraded, and grooved panels, with most sites containing two or more types. These can be considered either in relationship to one another by site or by type at multiple locations.

Prehistorically, the Black Hills were an oasis on the plains. Their abundant water, useable plants, game, and sheltered climate attracted many diverse cultural groups. This rock art is a reflection of this cultural attraction, in contrast to rock art of more typical Plains areas.

While some sites may have served utilitarian functions, it is evident from the careful workmanship and imaginative design of many of the panels that they were primarily expressions of creativity, the steep-sided canyons serving as a kind of aboriginal art

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Prehistoric Rock Art in the Southern Black Hills

gallery. As with all forms of art, southern Black Hills rock art displays gradual stylistic change over time, which may reveal much about the perception and artistic values of its creators.

Whether any of the Black Hills rock art styles is a rudimentary form of picture-writing remains to be established. Whether landmarks, messages to groups to follow, records of important events or myths, or markers of springs or game trails, the petroglyphs and pictographs were important both aboriginally and archaeologically as the only permanent record intentionally left behind by now-extinct groups.

The artworks of any culture reflect its philosophies and values. This is true of southern Black Hills rock art and may in fact be our sole link with the belief systems of some of the earlier groups about whom we have no ethnographic data. Possible "shaman poles" shown in early hunting scenes are an example of what may be a religious ceremony.

In summary, southern Black Hills rock art sites are expected to yield several categories of data: (1) information about aboriginal technologies related to rock art; for example, what types of paints and applicators were in use; (2) stylistic data indicating the probable distribution of particular traits and cultural groups, artistic development over time within localized groups, and cultural placement of the southern Black Hills within the larger Plains area during various periods; (3) a chronological sequence of rock art styles, applicable to Black Hills and Plains rock art in general; (4) information about the material culture and behavior of prehistoric inhabitants of the southern Black Hills, including hunting practices, weapons and other utensils, animal and plant resources, and religious artifacts and practices; (5) information concerning the artistic values, psychology, and belief systems of the aboriginal inhabitants of the area; (6) general data on the types and styles of rock art present in the area; and (7) information about abraded grooves and their relationship to aboriginal tool technologies.

Two groups of sites excluded from the nomination, which logically belong in it, are sites owned by individuals who denied survey personnel access to their property, and thereby did not allow for the recording of their sites. There may exist unreported sites, as well. These sites will be added to the group as they become available for nomination. All other southern Black Hills rock art sites have been included in this nomination.

9. Major Bibliographical References UTM NOT VERIFIED

Alex, Robert, South Dakota State Archaeologist, personal interview, Ft. Meade, SD, September 16, 1980.

Chevance, Nicholas. Cultural Resources Survey in the Driftwood Canyon and Long Mountain Regions, Fall River County, South Dakota. Contract Investigations Series 10, South Dakota Archaeological Research Center, 1979.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

see continuation sheets and individual site cards

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A

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 Zone Easting Northing

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

see attached USGS maps.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	South Dakota	code	46	county	Fall River	code	047
					Custer		033
state		code		county	Pennington	code	103

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linea Sundstrom, Archaeologist; Technical Assistance: Steve Ruple, Archaeologist
Historical Preservation Center

organization Archaeological Laboratory-SDSU

date 7 November 1980

street & number 014 West Hall

HPC:
telephone (605) 688-4321 (605) 677-5314

city or town Brookings

state South Dakota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James R. Fickman

title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

date December 11, 1981

For HCRS use only: See continuation sheets for justification.

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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Feyhl, Kenneth J. Tool Groves: A Challenge. Archaeology in Montana, 21(1): 1-31, 1980

Haug, James K. Archaeological Reconnaissance in the Vicinity of Red and Craven Canyons, Fall River Canyons, Fall River County, South Dakota. South Dakota Archaeological Research Center, 1976.

Keyser, James D. Writing-on-Stone: Rock Art on the Northwestern Plains. Canadian Journal of Archaeology, No. 1, 1977, pp. 15-80.

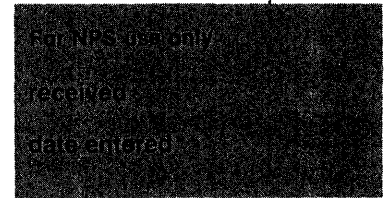
Mallory, Garrick. Picture Writing of the American Indians. Tenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1893.

Over, W.H. Indian Picture Writing in South Dakota. Archaeological Studies Circular 4. University of South Dakota Museum, 1941.

Wedel, Waldo R. Prehistoric Man on the Great Plains. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961, pp. 275-276.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name ROCK ART IN THE SOUTHERN BLACK HILLS THEMATIC RESOURCES

State South Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Site No. 39 Cu 91 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 2. Site No. 39 Cu 510 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 3. Site No. 39 Cu 511 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 4. Site No. 39 Cu 512 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 5. Site No. 39 Cu 513 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 6. Site No. 39 Cu 514 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 7. Site No. 39 Cu 515 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 8. Site No. 39 Cu 516 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 9. Site No. 39 FA 7 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |
| 10. Site No. 39 FA 94 | Substantive Review for Keeper | Jay J Bush 5/20/82 |
| | Attest | |

EXP. 12/31/84

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Rock Art in the Soothern Black Hills Thematic Resources
State South Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Site No. 39 FA 58

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

12. Site No. 39 FA 75

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

13. Site No. 39 FA 79

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

14. Site No. 39 FA 91

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

15. Site No. 39 FA 277

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

16. Site No. 39 FA 389

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

17. Site No. 39 FA 554

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

18. Site No. 39 FA 676

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

19. Site No. 39 FA 677

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

20. Site No. 39 FA 681

Substantive Review for Keeper
Attest

Joy 1 Bush 5/20/82

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EXP. 12/31/84

Continuation sheet

Item number

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Thematic Group

Name Rock Art in the Southern Black Hills Thematic Resources
State South Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
-21. Site No. 39 FA 684	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
22. Site No. 39 FA 685	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
23. Site No. 39 FA 687	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
24. Site No. 39 Pn 57	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
25. Site No. 39 Pn 108	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
-26. Site No. 39 Pn 438	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
27. Site No. 39 Pn 439	Substantive Review for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
28. Site No. 39 FA 73 DOE/OWNER OBJECTION	for Keeper Attest	<u>Determined Eligible A,C,D</u> <u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u>
29. Site No. 39 FA 86 DOE/OWNER OBJECTION	for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u> <u>Determined Eligible A,C,D</u>
30. Site No. 39 FA 89 DOE/OWNER OBJECTION	for Keeper Attest	<u>for J. Bush 5/20/82</u> <u>Determined eligible-A,C,D</u>

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Thematic Group

Name Rock Art in the Southern Black Hills Thematic Resources
State South Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

— 31. Site No. 39 FA 678

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

for Keeper

Attest

for J. Bush 5/20/82
Determined eligible - A.D

32.

Keeper

Attest

33.

Keeper

Attest

34.

Keeper

Attest

35.

Keeper

Attest

36.

Keeper

Attest

37.

Keeper

Attest

38.

Keeper

Attest

39.

Keeper

Attest

40.

Keeper

Attest