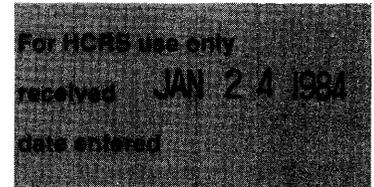


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 NA

and/or common Petroforms of South Dakota ^{TR} Thematic Nomination

2. Location

7 sites (4 counties)

street & number See continuation sheet ___ not for publication

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district _____

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	<u>NA</u> occupied	<u>X</u> agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	<u>X</u> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
<u>X</u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	<u>NA</u> in process	<u>X</u> yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership: See continuation sheet

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See continuation sheet

street & number _____

city, town _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date 1982 ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records University of South Dakota Archaeology Laboratory

city, town Vermillion state South Dakota

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered (slightly)	moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"Petroforms of South Dakota" is a thematic nomination made up of eight representative and unaltered prehistoric archaeology sites. These sites are located in four countries of eastern South Dakota. All sites are configurations of cobble-sized stones located on the surface of the ground. The stones are patterned and outline recognizable zoomorphic and geometric figures in follow-the-dot fashion.

In South Dakota the majority of petroforms are simple circles of stones (usually described as tipi rings: see Malouf 1961), membership in this nomination however, is limited to more complex petroforms. The following criteria was applied to sites listed in this nomination. The petroforms are in their original condition and betray little or no alteration or reconstruction. The petroforms are either clearly zoomorphic in configuration or form a geometric design which is apparently unrelated to residential or other utilitarian needs. In addition the configuration of the petroforms suggest a non-random, preconceived design whose execution required a certain amount of individual or corporate time and labor.

The nomination therefore includes only a small selection (7) of the 31 petroforms surveyed by the 1982 East River Petroform Survey. These eight (described in detail below) appear authentic, unaltered, and representative of prehistoric Native American activities in landscape modification and art.

All eight petroforms are clearly prehistoric although their dates of construction are not known. Each petroform is located on or near outcrops of Pierre glacial till, and is made up of glacial erratic cobbles. These cobbles are deeply embedded in sod so that the general slope and extent of the configuration is often observed due to poor surface visibility. Several of the petroforms nominated here are multi-component sites; that is, a large primary configuration (like a petroform snake) is surrounded by smaller secondary petroforms (usually mosaics and cairns). In such cases the secondary petroforms are considered an intrinsic part of the site and related to the primary petroform on the basis of proximity and mode of construction. All petroforms are located on privately owned grazing land.

Although native Sioux informants have claimed responsibility for the creation of certain (especially) zoomorphic petroforms; the identity of the aboriginal artisans is far from clear. The shapes and sizes of the snake and turtle petroforms is reminiscent of Woodland earthwork figures in neighboring Iowa (Mallam 1976). These same figures play an important role in Mandan mythology (Bowers 1973). As yet exact dating and cultural affiliation of these figures is unknown. Further there is no reason to assume all petroforms are the same age.

With two exceptions the nominated petroforms have been described by previous surveyers. Early South Dakotan antiquarians were often drawn to these exotic figures because of the drama inherent in their scale, setting, and enigmatic subject matter. Hence Helmick (1897), Lewis (n.d.), Todd (1912), Robinson (1914), and W.H. Over (see Sigstad and Sigstad 1973) surveyed and described a variety of complex petroforms located throughout eastern South Dakota. A majority of these sites are destroyed (Abbott, Ranney and Whitten 1982). The eight petroforms nominated here represents the last remaining unaltered complex petroforms in eastern South Dakota.

The nomination is based upon eight weeks of surface survey conducted by the Institute

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of Rural Anthropology (P.O. Box 1, Vermillion, S.D. 57069) with funding provided by the South Dakota Historical Preservation Center. Field surveyers J. Abbott and W. Ranney under the supervision of R. Whitten (University of South Dakota) conducted a series of site visits and area surveys in order to relocate each previously identified petroform, and examine nearby areas for instances of unreported petroforms. No subsurface testing was carried out. Subsurface testing is recommended in future study of all petroforms in order to ascertain exact dates and cultural associations, however such site disturbance is not necessary for immediate examination and appreciation of these surface features.

The attached inventory forms describe the petroforms included in the nomination.

TABLE 1

Petroforms Categories and Definitions

- I. Petroform: man-made arrangements, patterns and constructions of stones. In South Dakota, petroforms are most often identified as surface features.
 - A. Two dimensional petroforms:
 1. Effigies: Petroforms which take the shape, in outline, of apparently anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures.
 2. Alignments: A line of stones. Alignments are rarely (if ever) perfectly straight and may form geometric structures such as "surrounds."
 3. Rings: Petroforms which describe a hollow circle.
 4. Mosaics: Scatters of stones roughly describing circles and ovals. These shapes are filled in with stones suggesting more of a floor of stones than a ring.
 - B. Three dimensional petroforms:
 1. Cairns: A cairn is mosaic with stones heaped upon the surface.
 2. Petroform with depression: Any of the above categories can exhibit depressions with in them. These pits have several different origins; among them: previous excavations or aboriginal fire pits.

NOTE: To these categories should be added the various petroforms typical of historical remains, but outside the scope of this survey.

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

Specific dates	NA	Builder/Architect	NA
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Petroforms are examples of landscape modification. Little is known of the origins or reasons for the existence of these complex petroforms, yet they certainly played some ceremonial or religious function, and are presently regarded as a sculptural art form. The petroforms are primarily significant in the category of archaeology and prehistory and this group includes all the known sites in South Dakota which retain their integrity. They are significant primarily in the category of prehistory, and, to a lesser degree, in the categories of landscape, religion and sculpture.

Usually petroforms are considered to be vaguely ceremonial in nature (Wedel 1961). Recently it has become clear that many geometric figures are related to prehistoric astronomy and the placement of stones and lines is in terms of astral events. Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures are not only rare examples of Plains representative art, but the choice of subjects appear to be integrated with Plains, especially Mandan, mythology (Bowers 1973).

From the work of previous surveyers it is clear that many more of these complex petroforms existed even fifty years ago than are apparent today. And given the intensity of recent archaeological survey in South Dakota, it is clear that few pristine complex petroforms remain to be discovered. The eight sites nominated here make up the body of the remaining sites worthy of nomination to the register on the basis of their rarity, complexity, and potential for understanding the cultural heritage of region.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 1 acre each; total of 9 acres.

Quadrangle name See attached Continuation Sheet

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached Continuation Sheets

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard G. Whitten

organization USD Archaeology Laboratory

date 9/13/83

street & number University of South Dakota

telephone (605)677-5401

city or town Vermillion

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

title SHPO - South Dakota

date 11/6/84

For HCERS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
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received

date entered

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Petroforms of South Dakota Thematic Resources
State SOUTH DAKOTA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 1. Archeological Site 39HD22
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 2. Archeological Site 39HU66
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 3. Archeological Site 39HU189
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 4. Archeological Site 39HU201
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 5. Archeological Site 39JE10
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 6. Archeological Site 39JE11
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 7. Archeological Site 39TU5
Substantive Review *for* Keeper Yvonne P. Stewart 2/23/84
Attest _____
- 8. _____
Keeper _____
Attest _____
- 9. _____
Keeper _____
Attest _____
- 10. _____
Keeper _____
Attest _____