

DATA SHEET

Form 10-306
(Oct. 1972)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nevada
COUNTY: Churchill
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE MAR 15 1976

1. NAME

COMMON: Humboldt Cave
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: See attached #1 S of Lovelock off US 495			
CITY OR TOWN: Lovelock - vic.		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: One at large	
STATE: Nevada	CODE 32	COUNTY: Churchill	CODE 001

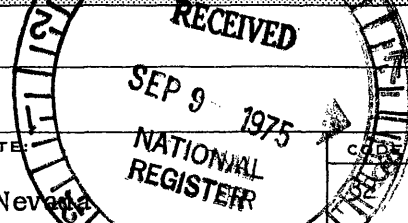
3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both BLM managed rangeland	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. AGENCY

Bureau of Land Management and Southern Pacific Land Co. - San Francisco, CA		STATE: Nevada
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)	STREET AND NUMBER: Highway 40 East	COUNTY: Churchill
CITY OR TOWN: Winnemucca	STATE: Nevada	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Churchill County Courthouse (Assessor)		
STREET AND NUMBER: 10 West Williams Avenue		
CITY OR TOWN: Fallon	STATE: Nevada	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Nevada Historical Sites by Brooke P. Mordy & Donald McCaughey		STATE: Nevada COUNTY: Churchill ENTRY NUMBER: MAR 15 1976 DATE:
DATE OF SURVEY: 1968	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: One copy at BLM, Nevada State Office		
STREET AND NUMBER: 300 Booth Street		
CITY OR TOWN: Reno	STATE: Nevada	
CODE: 32		

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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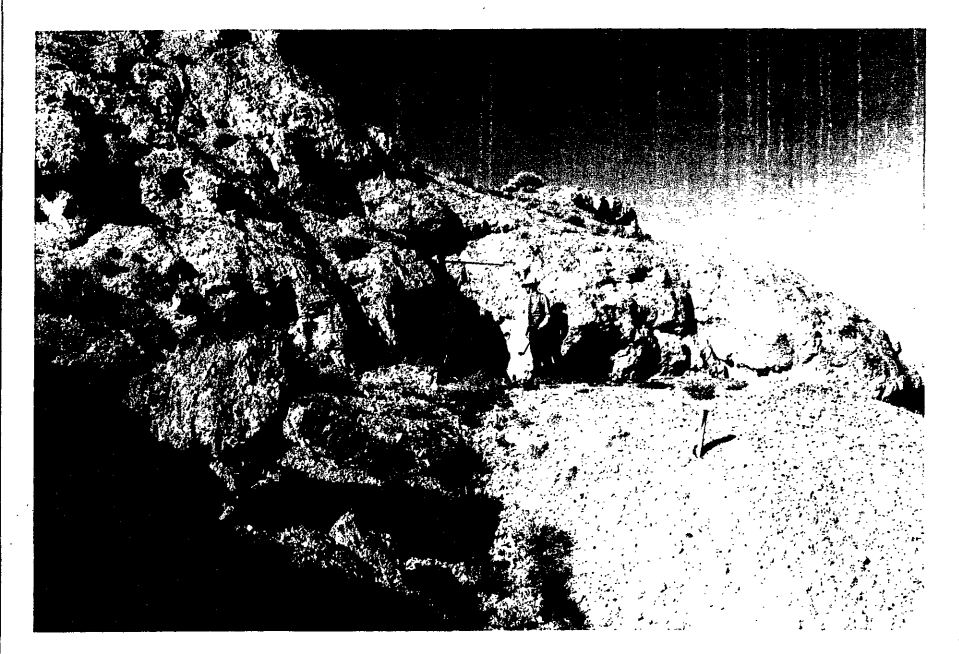
7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Humboldt Cave lies 4,280 feet above sea level near the southern end of the West Humboldt Mountain Range in Churchill County, Nevada. The cave is today about 6 miles and 220 feet above the bed of a large brackish water sink known as the Humboldt Sink.

The cave opening is approximately 8' tall and 6' wide. (see photo below). The cave itself is between 30 to 40 feet deep and averages 8' wide.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Humboldt Sink area was one of the first areas west of the Rockies inhabited by man. Human habitation covering a span of approximately 11,000 years has been established by study of cultural materials recovered from the caves and rock shelters on the border of Humboldt Sink.

The "Humboldt Culture" prevailed from about 9,000 B.C. to 5000 B.C., the "Leonard Culture" from 5000 B.C. to 2000 B.C. and the "Lovelock Culture" from 2000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.

The Humboldt Cave was first excavated by scientists from the University of California in 1936. Rich cultural deposits showed that it was in use during late "Lovelock Culture" period, from about 1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D. The people who lived here were in touch with others in California and in the southwest, because articles that came from these distant places, such as beads, baskets, and pipes, were found in the cave.

Additional specific data can be extracted from the following two professional papers:

1. The Archaeology of Humboldt Cave, Churchill County, Nevada, Huser, R. F. and Kruger, A. D., Uni. of Cal., Publication in American Archaeology and Ethnology. Vol. 47, Uni. of Cal. Press, Berkeley 1956.
2. Report of the University of California Archaeology Survey, No. 33, Paper 42, Huser, R. F. "Recent Cave Exploration in the Lower Humboldt Valley, Nevada," with addendum, Uni. of Cal., Archaeological Survey, Uni. of Cal. Berkeley 1956.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nevada Historical Sites by Brooke D. Mordy and Donald L. McCaughey
Churchill County - page 9 and 10

Biological and Cultural Evidence
From Prehistoric Human Coprolites By Robert F. Heizer and Lewis K. Napson

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	39	53	01	118	43	29						
NE	39	53	01	118	43	10						
SE	39	52	47	118	43	10						
SW	39	52	47	118	43	29						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 40 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Roger L. Mertens *no longer w/BLM* Area Manager DATE: 10-9-73

BUSINESS ADDRESS: Bureau of Land Management

STREET AND NUMBER: Highway 40 East PHONE: 702-623-3676

CITY OR TOWN: Winnemucca STATE: Nevada CODE: 32

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:
 Yes
 No
 None
Eric Lundhite
 State Liaison Officer Signature

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is National State

Robert B. Rettig SEP 5 1975
 Federal Representative Signature Date
 Deputy Assistant Secretary
 Title

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert B. Rettig
 Acting
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 3/15/76

ATTEST:
Robert B. Rettig
 Acting Keeper of The National Register
 Date: 3-14-76

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

011/352550/4/11/5 600
011/352550/4/11/5 600
011/352550/4/11/5 600

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

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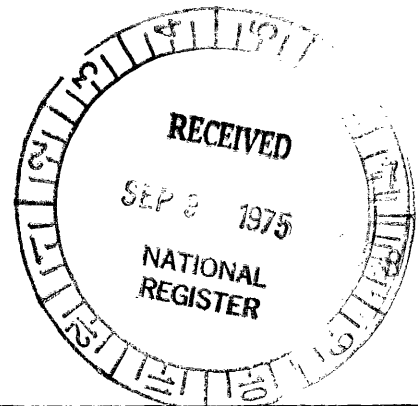
(Number all entries)

7. Description

Formed by the vertical faulting of a breccia cliff during the Tertiary, Humboldt Cave was once flooded by Pleistocene Lake Lahontan. The lake laid a tufa seal over the inside of the cave, preserving the walls from weathering. A gravel talus slope extends from the front of the cave. Prior to excavation in 1936 by the University of California, Berkeley, the undisturbed cultural layers of the cave were covered by three to six feet of bat guano.

The cave is surrounded by the high desert scrub typical of the Great Basin. Sagebrush and shadscale are the principle vegetation types in the area. Until recently, the brackish water of Humboldt Sink supported a certain amount of marshy vegetation and its associated wildlife. The presence of water in this part of Nevada has long made the Sink and its environs a camping place for Indian tribes.

The Humboldt Cave property lies on private land in a region of public/private checkerboard land ownership. The U. S. Bureau of Land Management has recognized the superlative value of Humboldt Cave. In cognizance that the BLM land management policies directly and intimately affect the contiguous privately owned lands, this agency is nominating Humboldt Cave to the National Register to assure that Federal plans and programs contribute to the preservation and enhancement of non-Federally owned sites, structures, and objects of historical, architectural, or archeological significance.



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8. Significance

Humboldt Cave is being nominated to the National Register primarily because of the valuable archeological material recovered from it.

Humboldt Cave is one of a number of prehistorically occupied dry caves in the Humboldt Sink area. Archeological resources in the region are important not only because of their age (up to 11,000 years old), but also because of the perfectly preserved perishable artifacts to be found in the dry caves.

Humboldt Cave, which was first excavated in 1936 by University of California archaeologists, richly illustrates the late "Lovelock Culture" (0 -- A.D. 900). The people who occupied the cave were economically dependent on the gradually receding Humboldt Lake. Its marshy environment provided the inhabitants with fish, waterfowl, seeds, tules, and other water plants. Grass and bark-lined caches found in the cave deposits containing duck decoys, a bird-skin robe, waterfowl remains, and rush mats, show the importance of the lake environment. The surrounding desert ecosystem was also exploited, as can be seen from Apocynum fibre bags, deer or antelope skin pouches, fur robes, and animal bones discovered in the cave fill. Trade or cultural contact with both the Southwest and California west of the Sierras is apparent from certain artifact assemblages of Humboldt Cave.

The well preserved cultural remains of the prehistoric peoples who once occupied Humboldt Cave and the surrounding region serve to illustrate "the amazingly efficient human utilization of the meager and forbidding environment" of western Nevada (Heizer and Krieger; 1956,p.7). The cave deserves to be included on the National Historic Register because of the important scientific and cultural data retrieved from it.



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9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Heizer, R.F. Recent Cave Explorations in the Lower Humboldt Valley, Nevada. Reports of the University of California Archaeological Survey; no. 33, paper 42. University of California, Berkeley; 1956. pp.50-51.
2. Heizer, R.F. and A.D. Krieger The Archaeology of Humboldt Cave, Churchill County, Nevada. The University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 47, no. 1. University of California, Berkeley. pp. 1-16, 42-89.

