

**American Indian Archaeological Overview  
For the  
Payette National Forest, Idaho  
By  
Lawrence A. Kingsbury  
11-04-2003**

Prehistoric archaeological evidence indicates that American Indian occupation within the area of the Payette National Forest (NF) dates to at least 12,000 years ago (Haynes 1987:90). The first American Indians in the area to hunt Pleistocene mega-fauna were the Paleo-Indians. This Paleo-Indian Period is segmented into three sequent traditions. The earliest is called "Llano Tradition" (Clovis) (Sellards 1952), next comes the Folsom Tradition, which overlaps with the later "Plano Tradition" (Jennings 1968:109).

The Llano tradition is also referred to as the Clovis Tradition. Clovis fluted projectile points, and other associated artifacts are rare finds in Idaho (Huntley 1980, 1985). A Clovis projectile point fragment of chert has been found in Adams County (Stoddard 1996:4), and a nearly complete obsidian Clovis point was found in Valley County (Peterson 1987). Such artifacts have not been found in dateable context in Idaho. However, other sites in New Mexico and Arizona show that Clovis fluted points were in widespread use between about 11,500 and 10,600 years before present (B.P.) (Haynes 1980). The Gault, Texas Clovis site is dated at 12,900 to 13,200 year ago (Poole 2001:24). Today, with accelerator mass spectrometry carbon dating, the presence of Clovis Paleo-Indians is dated to around 13,000 to 13,500 years ago (Fagan 2001:29).

The Folsom Tradition has a smaller fluted projectile point. Folsom points have not been found on the Payette NF. However, they have been found in the upper Snake and Salmon River drainages (Butler 1978:59). The Folsom complex spans 700 years between 10,950 to 10,250 B.P. (Haynes, Beukens, Jull, and Davis 1992:96).

The Plano Tradition is also referred to as the "Western Stemmed Point Tradition" (WSPT). The WSPT has been described to contain several archaeological complexes that are distinguished by large stemmed, shouldered, and lanceolate projectile points. These kinds of artifacts have been found throughout the Payette NF. Some of the WSPT projectile points include the Cody Complex (Eden), Haskett, Windust and Cascade. Alan L. Bryan suggests that the Western Stemmed Point Tradition began in the Great Basin at the end of the Pleistocene as a technological adaptation to the hunting of herbivores, including bighorn sheep, bison, camelids, and horses.

"This projectile point tradition developed at least as early as the Fluted Point Tradition" (Bryan 1980:102).

Bryan goes on to say that bilaterally shouldered points with square parallel sided stems are the dominant form early in the Windust Phase (Bryan 1980:102), and date to at least 10,000 years B.P. On the Plains, this form continues as the "Scottsbluff type" and continued as Alberta type points dated to about 9,800 years B.P. (Bryan 1980:102). One Alberta point base has been found in Washington County adjacent to the Payette NF (Stoddard 1996:4).

A projectile point form with elongated stems, which expands to the greatest width toward the point tip is known as Haskett in southern Idaho. A Haskett point base of obsidian was found in Idaho County (Stoddard 1996:5). Haskett points in Idaho have been dated to 10,000 +/- 300 years B.P. (WSU 1396), (Sargeant 1973:63). With climatic change and extinction of mega-fauna, Paleo-Indians transitioned into the Archaic Period around 10,000 years ago.

The Archaic Period has been described as a foraging pattern of existence, which coexisted with the Folsom and Plano Traditions (Jennings 1968:128). Archaic Period artifacts are widely dispersed on the Payette NF. Archaic Indians established more regular campsites throughout the Payette NF. Archaic Period Indians used a greater variety of tools than preceding Paleo-Indians (Jennings 1968:128), and the projectile point styles were also more numerous, providing additional time markers.

One Archaic Period time marker is the Windust Phase. The earliest radiometric dates associated with Windust Phase is about 10,600 years B.P. Cascade points appear before 8,000 B. P. and persisted until about 5,000 years B.P. (Bryan 1980:103). Another projectile point style that is a sub-phase of the Cascade Phase is the Northern Side-notched dart point that dates between 6,500 to 3,500 years B.P. Later in the Archaic Period, the Tucannon Phase appears around 4,500 to 2,500 years B.P. (Leonhardy and Rice 1970:13). The Harder Phase dates between 2,500 to 700 years B.P. Elko series dart points are present during this time frame.

Elko series corner-notched dartpoints have been found in buried radiometric context by Payette NF archaeologists at the Lake Creek Site 10IH2561, a tributary to the Salmon River. From this site were small Elko corner-notched dart points determined to date as follows: 2,090 +/- 70 (WSU 4968); 2,540 +/- 100 (WSU 4969); and 2,925 +/- 100 (WSU 4970), (Kingsbury et.al 1997:30). It is assumed that this style of projectile point along with other styles of projectile points including the Humboldt and Pinto Series were being continuously used before and after the above dates during the Archaic Period.

The Harder Phase is a period of technological change in which the use of the atlatl and dart begins to decline in favor of the bow and arrow. At the Lake Creek site a Middle Columbia Basal Notched (MCBN) arrowpoint was found in radiometric context and dates to 1,265 +/-100 years B.P. (WSU 4971). This date suggests that the use of the bow and arrow was established in the area of the PNF between 585 to 785 A.D. This now provides the earliest date for the appearance and use of the bow and arrow on the PNF.

Later period arrowpoints were found and dated in archaeological context at the Indian Creek site on the South Fork of the Salmon River (Kingsbury et al. 1994:6), and they included the Rose Spring Corner-notch and the Desert Side-notch. The radiocarbon dates were in association with three Desert Side-notch arrowpoints ranged from 1520 to 1680 A.D. The Rose Spring Corner-notch arrowpoints were found beneath the Desert Side-notch points and appear to be older.

The southern boundary of Plateau cultural influence and the northern extent of Great Basin cultural influence has long been the subject of academic debate. When coupled with archaeological excavation results at rockshelter 10VY1580 (Winfrey et al. 1993), and at Indian Creek 10VY492 (Kingsbury et al. 1994), both sites on the South Fork of the Salmon River, a clearer pattern emerges.

From the information now available, it appears that Plateau cultural influence was dominant south of the Salmon River where it intermingled with Northern Shoshone culture for about 700 years. The presence of Desert Side-notch arrowpoints and pottery defines the edges of the northern expansion for the Uto-Aztecan speaking Northern Shoshone moving into the area occupied by the Nez Perce. Desert Side-notch arrowpoints and pottery have been found along the South Fork of the Salmon River (Kingsbury et al. 1994), and along the Middle Fork of the Salmon River (Stoddard 1996).

Archaeological evidence supports a long presence of both Plateau and Great Basin cultures throughout the area of the Payette NF. The following table presents a time line chronology for the various archaeological manifestations thus far identified on the Payette NF. This time line sequence is subject to change.

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**PREHISTORIC TIME LINE CHRONOLOGY  
PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST, IDAHO**

THE FOLLOWING IS BASED UPON THE CHANGE IN PROJECTILE POINT STYLES AND  
RADIOMETRIC DATING THROUGH TIME

RELATIVE AGE BEFORE PRESENT (BP)	PHASE/TRADITION PROJECTILE POINT STYLES
10,600 – 11,500 years BP	Llano Tradition Clovis
11,000 – 8,000 years BP	Plano/Western Stemmed Point Tradition Alberta – Eden (Cody Complex) Haskett
10,600 - 8,000 years BP	Windust
9,000 - 5,000	Cascade (Cold Springs sub-phase)
6,500 - 3,500	Northern Side-Notch
7,845 - 2,250	Humboldt Series
5,700 - 2,650	Pinto Series
8,400 - 650 years BP	Elko Series Side, Corner, Eared Notch
4,500 – 2,500 years BP	Tucannon
2,500 – 700 years BP	Harder
1,500 – 100 years BP	Wallula
1,500 – 500 years BP	Middle Columbia Basal Notch Rosegate
700 – 200 years BP	Desert Side-Notch (Sierra Type)
500 – 200 years BP	Cottonwood Triangular
200 - 100 years BP	Iron Arrow points