

AN EARLY ARCHAIC PERIOD WINDUST PHASE DARTPOINT FOUND IN THE
FRANK CHURCH-RIVER OF NO RETURN WILDERNESS
USDA Payette National Forest, Idaho

by
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The WINDUST PHASE, is a cultural unit used by archaeologists in the Pacific Northwest. Windust Phase people were hunters-gatherers and probably fishermen. Their social organization was probably that of the band level, living in small groups. Windust Phase dartpoints consist of two types: one that is shorter called the Windust dartpoint and one that is larger and lanceolate (Aikens 1993:95). The Windust Phase "type site" is in southeastern Washington, at Windust Caves (45FR46), (Rice:1965).

Payette National Forest (PNF) archaeologists have identified a few early Archaic Period archaeological sites within the Frank Church-River Of No Return (FC-RONR) Wilderness. Early Archaic Period Indians were in the wilderness occupying the valleys as well as the higher forested elevations. PNF archaeologists found a surface lithic scatter PY-848/10VY583, at 8400 feet above sea level with the following described and illustrated dartpoint.

Windust Phase Dartpoint (N=1)

Description: The illustrated dartpoint is to scale. Blade is short with excurvate edges and shoulders. The stem is square with a slightly convex base. The lateral basal edges have been ground smooth, probably to facilitate hafting to a forshaft. It is plano-convex in cross-section. Flint knapping technique is random. The lithic material consists of a two-toned, sagebrush green colored, opaque cryptocrystalline silicate.

Measurements: Length 47.3 mm; Width 24.1 mm; Thickness 6.8 mm;

Stem Thickness 6.0 mm; Weight 7.80 gms.

Comparisons:

Leonhardy and Rice 1970: Fig 2. d

Aikens 1993: Fig 3.3

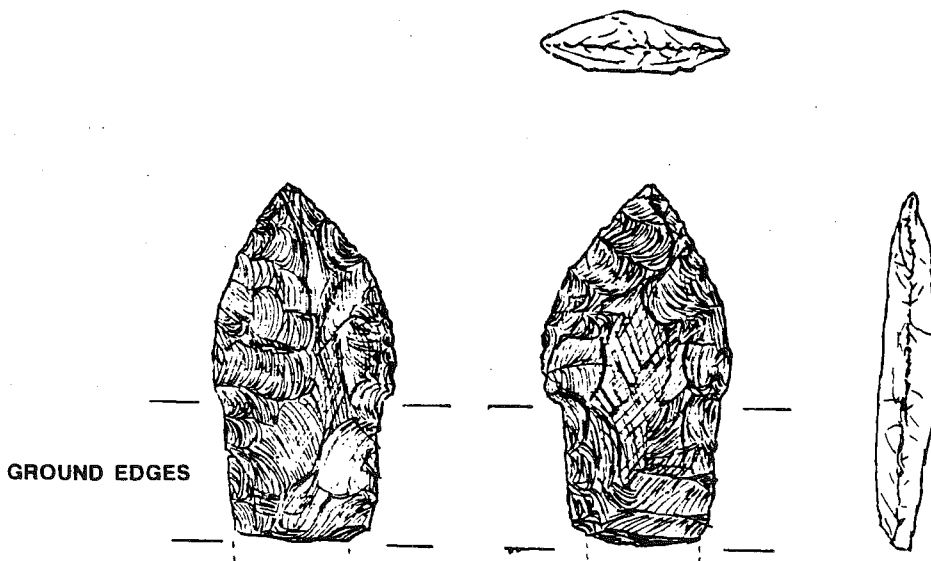


ILLUSTRATION BY JILL FRYE

Upon examining this dartpoint and comparing it to similar dartpoints in the archaeological literature, the illustrated dartpoint looks like the "classic" Windust Phase dartpoint. Windust Phase dartpoints range in age from 8,000 to 10,000 years before present (Aikens 1993:95). This artifact represents one of the oldest pieces of evidence for the presence of prehistoric humans in the area of what we today call the Frank Church-River Of No Return Wilderness.

REFERENCES CITED

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- Rice, Harvey S.
1965 The Cultural Sequence at Windust Cave. "MS, Master's Thesis,"
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YOUR ROLE IN PROTECTING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Wilderness Archaeologists are currently working to preserve, protect and understand the prehistory of ancient peoples who once lived within the area of the Frank Church-River Of No Return Wilderness. As the prehistoric archaeology is discovered and understood, they will share it with the public through educational brochures and monographs. You can help in this effort by leaving artifacts where you find them, and by informing Forest Service Archaeologists of your discovery.

If you find artifacts and sites on the Payette National Forest, telephone:
Larry Kingsbury - Forest Archaeologist at 208-634-0750.

Take pride in our American Heritage. When you leave, take only your wilderness experience and photographs with you.