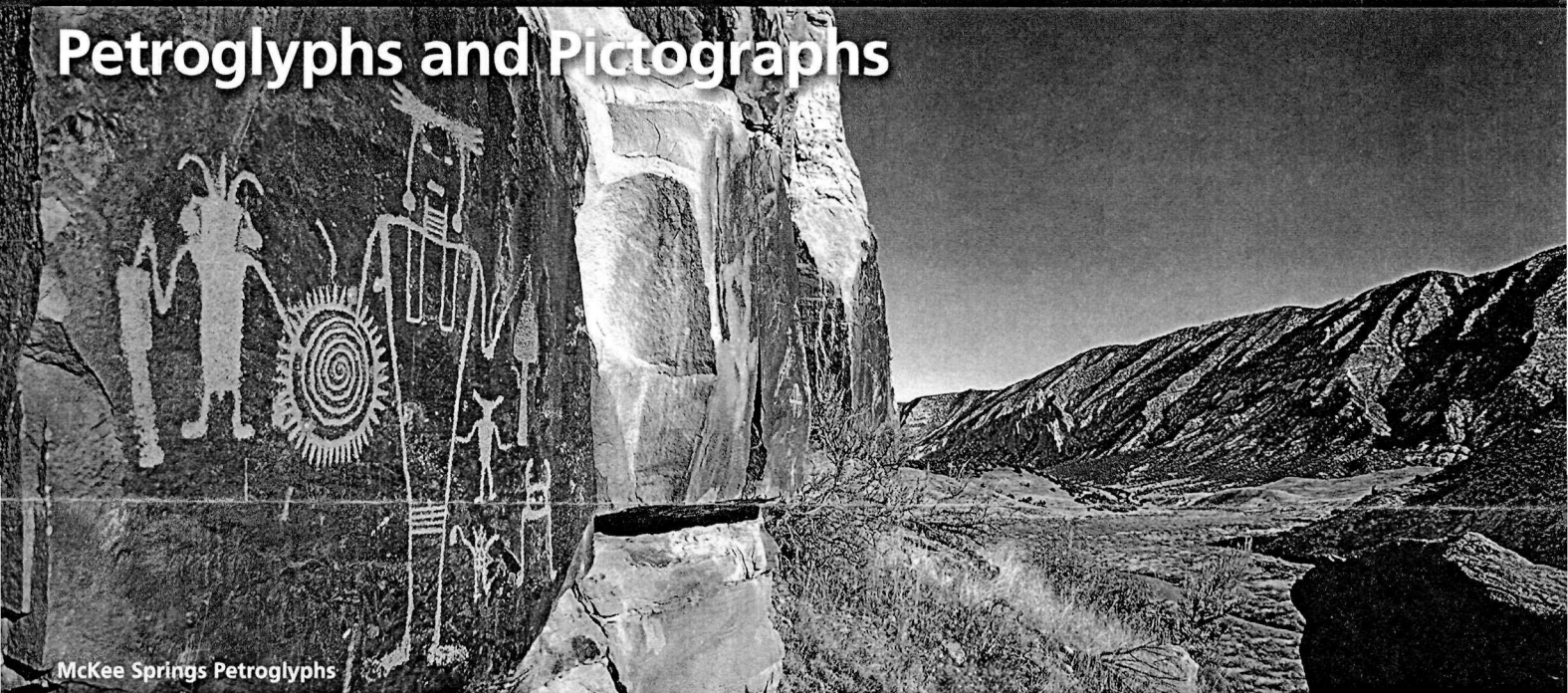




Petroglyphs and Pictographs



McKee Springs Petroglyphs

Since time immemorial, people have called this place home. While some cultural groups left little evidence of their presence, others made lasting marks on the landscape. Petroglyphs (etchings) and pictographs (paintings) created on the rocks centuries ago offer an intriguing connection to the people and cultures of the past.

The Fremont Culture

The petroglyphs and pictographs found within Dinosaur National Monument are most often associated with the Fremont.

The Fremont culture – a term describing several loosely connected tribes – were first studied by archeologists along the Fremont River in south-central Utah. The Fremont began living throughout most of present-day Utah and parts of Colorado, Nevada, and Idaho circa 300 AD, making them contemporaries with the Ancestral Pueblo peoples living further south in the Four Corners region.

The lifestyle of the Fremont varied, reflecting the diverse environments they inhabited. In general, they lived in small groups and did not build large permanent homes. Rock alcoves provided occasional shelter or places for storage, while pithouse villages were built in open areas.

The Fremont practiced land and wildlife management by harvesting plants, hunting wild game, and cultivating corn, beans, and squash, sometimes using irrigation and controlled fires. Many sites were used seasonally as people moved according to climate and availability of resources.

Making Their Mark

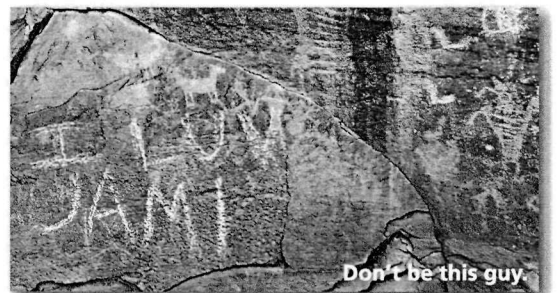
While the Fremont lifestyle left a fairly light trace on the landscape, an impressive array of petroglyphs and pictographs have survived for centuries. The style and content of designs vary throughout the region. Human figures typically have trapezoidal bodies, which may or may not include arms, legs, hands and feet. Elaborate decorations suggest headdresses, earrings, necklaces, shields or other objects. Animal figures include bighorn sheep, birds, snakes, and lizards. Abstract or geometric designs are common, including circles, spirals, and various combinations of lines.

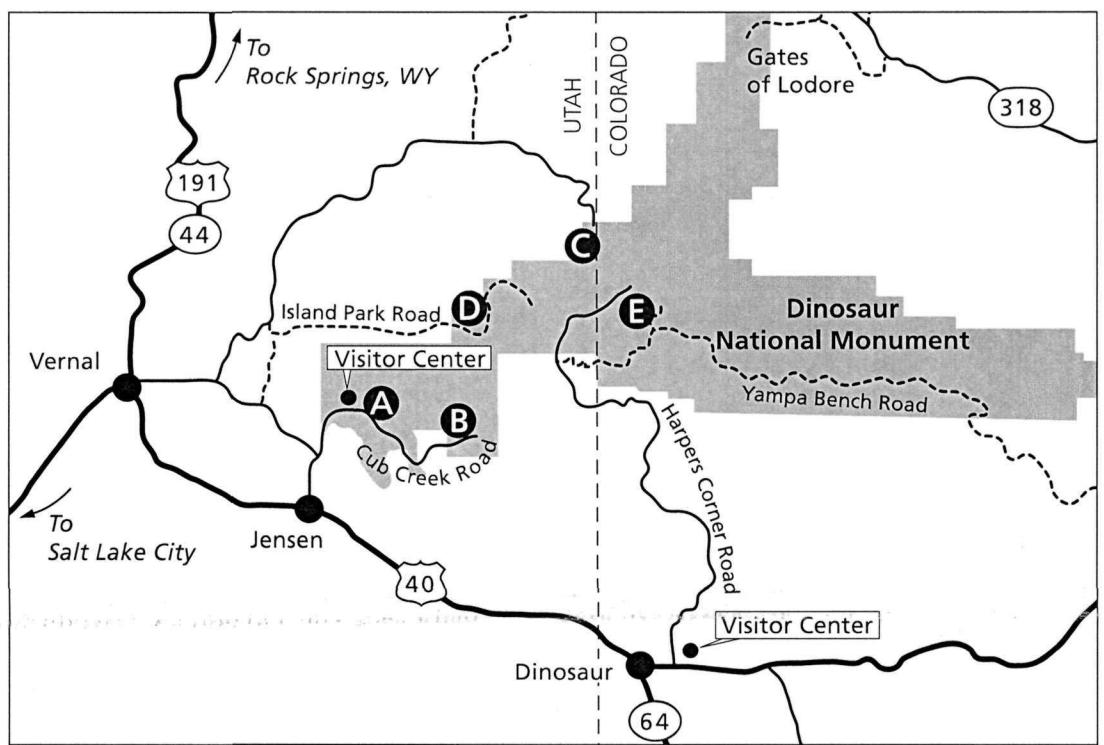
Why did the Fremont choose to create these specific designs and figures? We can speak with modern Native American groups – including the Ute and other descendants of the Fremont peoples – about what they might mean.

People rarely “disappear.” Culture is a living part of how we relate to each other and our environment. As people adapt to changes in their environment, their culture changes. By 1300 AD, the Fremont had become something new.

Protecting the Past

Petroglyphs and pictographs are fragile, irreplaceable records of the past that many still hold sacred. Touching them can leave skin oils behind and tracings or rubbings can ruin the designs. Federal law protects all artifacts, including these sites. Do your part to respect and protect the past and report any vandalism you find.





A) Swelter Shelter

(Cub Creek Road, Sign #1)

Drive one mile east from the Quarry Visitor Center to find both petroglyphs (patterns chipped or carved into the rock) and pictographs (patterns painted on the rock) at Swelter Shelter. A very short and mostly level trail leads to the small alcove where both types of rock art are located. Based on archeological evidence, this shelter was used, but not extensively occupied, by the Fremont people, and may have been reserved for special purposes and activities. Swelter Shelter has been occupied by older cultures dating to as early as 7000 BC. The natural rock alcove faces directly south, catching the sun from the early morning until late afternoon. The sandstone “shelter” traps and reflects heat, producing the sweltering conditions that inspired its name by archeologists in 1965.

B) Cub Creek

(Signs #13 and 14)

Petroglyph panels here feature a variety of typical Fremont designs, but are distinguished by several large lizard figures not common at other sites. Sandstone cliffs darkened with desert varnish, a naturally formed stain of iron and manganese oxides, provided an ideal canvas for carving petroglyphs. Stop 13 is right along the road, stop 14 requires a short hike up a steep hill. These stops are located on the unpaved section of Cub Creek Road - easily driven by 2-wheel drive vehicles, even when wet.

C) Deluge Shelter on the Jones Hole Trail

Pictographs and petroglyphs are found in Deluge Shelter, located along the Jones Hole Creek Trail. This site is approximately two miles from the trailhead. Pictographs are produced by painting with mineral paints. Fremont pictographs are usually painted in blue, red, or white pigments. The pictographs in Dinosaur National Monument are painted in red pigments consisting of iron oxide.

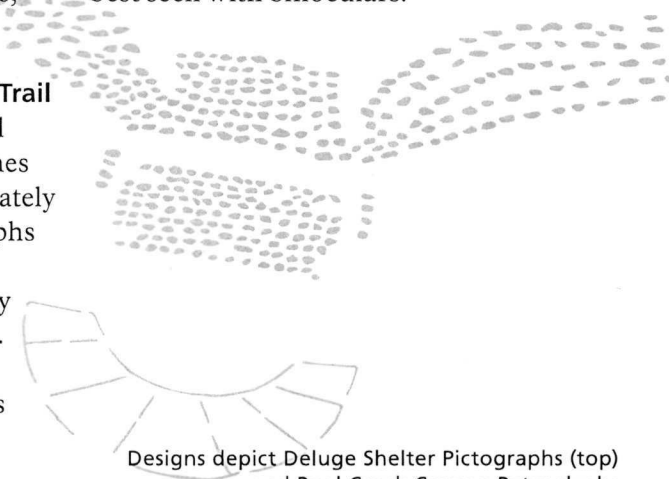
Note: The unpaved Island Park and Echo Park roads can become slick, rutted, and impassable when wet. All-wheel drive, high clearance vehicles are recommended for the Echo Park Road. Check weather and road conditions before visiting.

D) McKee Springs on Island Park Road

McKee Springs, near Rainbow Park, displays some of the finest large human-like designs in Dinosaur, and many other figures. Some petroglyphs show traces of pigment, possibly indicating that many designs originally included painted areas. A large human figure holding a shield (pictured on the front of this brochure) displays many diagnostic features of the Classic Vernal Style of Fremont rock art.

E) Pool Creek on Echo Park Road and Echo Park Campground

Pool Creek (on the unpaved road to Echo Park) includes a panel of dot-pattern designs pecked or drilled high above the creek. Many rock art sites in Dinosaur National Monument may look inaccessible now, but could easily have been reached by climbing to the desired location. In the case of the Pool Creek petroglyphs, geologists found evidence of massive erosion in the canyon, causing the canyon level to drop substantially since the petroglyphs were completed. At the end of the road, near campsite #10, a panel of dark desert varnish contains several figures best seen with binoculars.



Designs depict Deluge Shelter Pictographs (top) and Pool Creek Canyon Petroglyphs