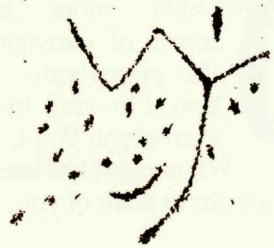


Other colors are evident elsewhere. Bullets and shotgun blasts destroy petroglyphs. Carved graffiti is abundant and early attempts to remove it have left numerous scars. Ironically, some early modifications are now considered historic. J.D. Howard, an early explorer of the lava beds, is said to have painted here, and Japanese characters dating back to the World War II internment camp at Newell are inscribed into nearby rocks.

Researchers are investigating ways of protecting the rock art from wind erosion and vandalism, but for now they remain vulnerable to the intentions of visitors. These petroglyphs represent non-renewable, irreplaceable glimpses into the minds and spirits of those who have gone before. They also remain a part of the ongoing culture of the Modoc people. Please respect them as such, honor them for their cultural value, and leave them undisturbed. Walk lightly above the bed of Kamookumpts, for the old story contains a prophecy:

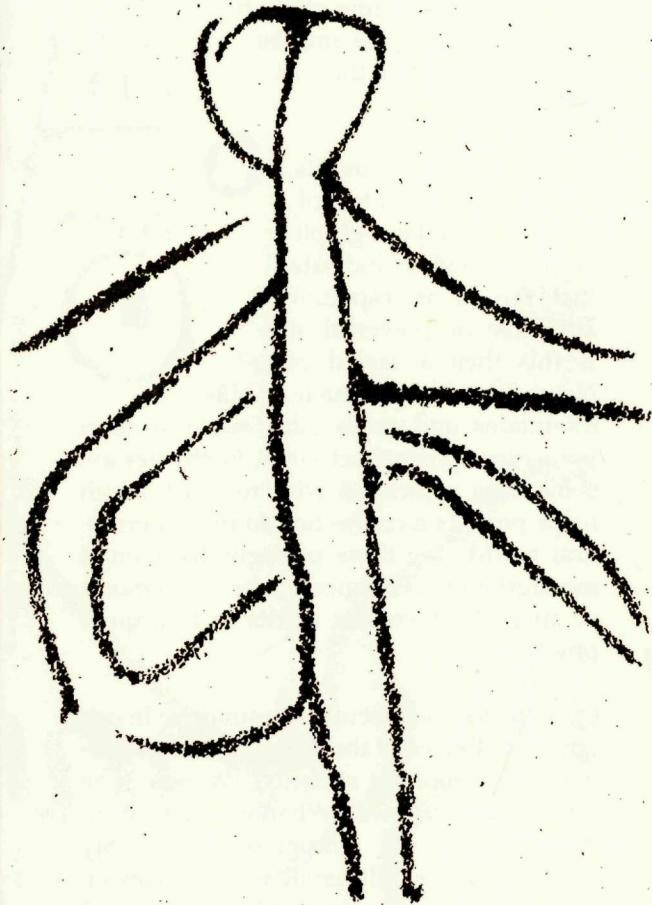
*Someday Kamookumpts will surely wake up and look out over the world he made. He may be angry at how things have changed and bring the water back to cover Tule Lake again, changing the world to be like it was when he first made it.*



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## PETROGLYPH POINT

### An interpretive walk



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## PETROGLYPH POINT INTERPRETIVE STOPS

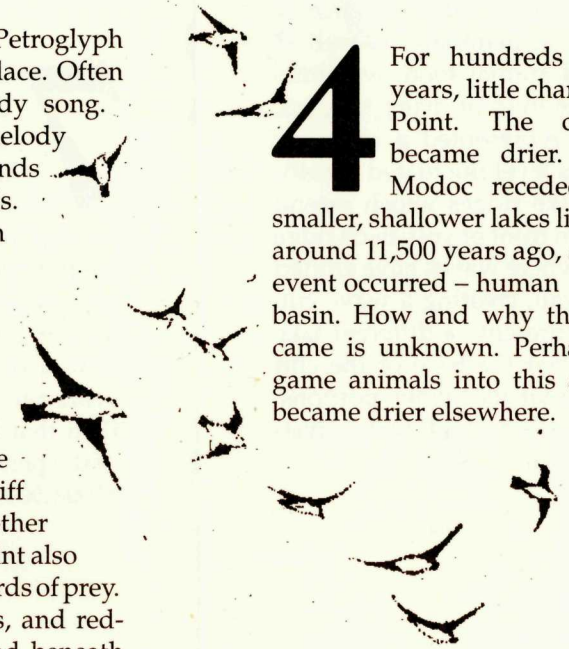
**1** One day Kamookumpts was resting on the east shore of Tule Lake. Looking around, he realized that there was nothing anywhere except the lake. He decided to make land. He dug some mud from the lake bottom and made a hill. He used the mud from the hill to create land and mountains. He also created rivers, streams, plants, and animals. Creating everything was tiring work, so Kamookumpts dug a hole in which to sleep under Tule Lake. He left the hill he had made to mark the spot. As the mud dried the hill became rock and is still visible today.

*Modoc creation story*

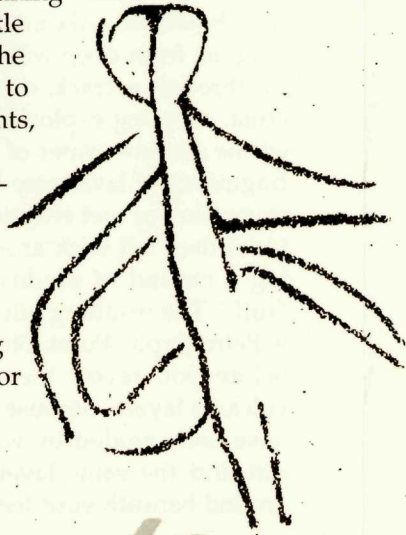
**2** Today we call this hill Petroglyph Point. It is a peaceful place. Often the wind sings a steady song. Perhaps today this melody is joined by the sounds of farmers working nearby fields. More often, the air is filled with the flutter of wings or the cry of hawks. Petroglyph Point is home to many birds. The high bluff provides protected nesting and roosting sites close to abundant feeding grounds. Look above you on the cliff face. The many mud nests are built by cliff swallows, but offer shelter to other small birds as well. Petroglyph Point also hosts several kinds of raptors, or birds of prey. Watch for prairie falcons, kestrels, and red-tailed hawks. Examine the ground beneath the cliff for clumps of bone, fur and feathers – evidence that owls also frequent this haunt.

**3** This site looked different several hundred thousand years ago. It was a wetter time when ancient Lake Modoc covered the Klamath-Tulelake Basin. All was not peaceful, however. About 270,000 years ago magma, from deep within the earth, welled up through a crack, or fault, in the earth's crust, erupting explosively when it contacted the shallow water of Lake Modoc. Small fragments of lava were blown upward in a succession of wet eruption clouds. This material then fell back around the vent, creating a mound of muddy layers of volcanic "tuff." The resulting hill of soft, volcanic tuff is Petroglyphs Point. Stripes in the cliff face before you reveal the ancient, compacted volcanic layers. Because portions of the cliff have been eroded by wind and water, you can find the same layers continued in the ground beneath your feet.

**4** For hundreds of thousands of years, little changed at Petroglyph Point. The climate gradually became drier. Eventually Lake Modoc receded leaving behind smaller, shallower lakes like Tule Lake. Then, around 11,500 years ago, a new and exciting event occurred – human beings entered the basin. How and why the first immigrants came is unknown. Perhaps they followed game animals into this area as conditions became drier elsewhere.



Maybe they were fleeing enemies. No one is certain. We do know that these pioneers survived by hunting the mammoth, deer, waterfowl and fish abundant in this area. This approach to making a living changed little through the ages. The Modocs, successors to those first immigrants, also harvested fish, shellfish, and waterfowl from the shallow waters of the lakes. Plants, too, were gathered in season, including the seeds of wocus or waterlily, found on the lakes.



**5** Tule Lake, providing a source of construction materials, as well as plant and animal food, was integral to the lives of many Modocs. The lake represented a changing resource because its level fluctuated greatly. Look at the shelf-like ridges which extend along the cliff face in front of you. Each ridge represents a place where waves have eroded a portion of the wall, creating a wave cut. Thus each ridge represents a different lake level. Notice also that the base of the cliff is lighter in color than its higher portions. Successive inundations by high water created this mineral deposit.

**6** The lake and its features must have held great attraction for a people whose very existence depended on it. Petroglyph Point, an island throughout much of the history of the lake, became an important site for petroglyph carving. Over 5000 symbols are carved on the cliff face, as well as on nearby boulders and in cave shelters, making this one of the largest rock art concentrations in North America.

Artists were required to approach the cliff by canoe. They then used incising, rough pecking, simple abrasion, and drilling and connecting small pits to create the images. Geometric patterns predominate. Zoomorphic, or animal-like images are few, unlike adjacent Great Basin rock art. The pictographs and petroglyphs of this region became an expression of the distinct cultural identity of the artists.

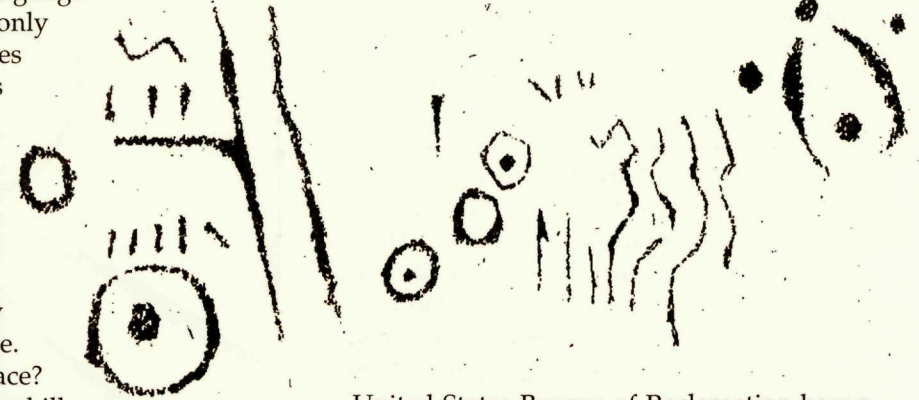
**7** Dating petroglyphs is difficult. Researchers use climatic reconstruction to create a history of lake level fluctuation and to determine when each wave cut was produced. A petroglyph cannot be created until the wave cut in which it is carved is formed. Evidence suggests that the carved portion of the cliff face at Petroglyph Point was not exposed until a dry period between 6400 and 5700 years ago. If so, no petroglyph can be older than that. Wave cut analysis suggests many of the petroglyph may date to a period from 4500-2500 years ago.

**8** One of the first questions that comes to mind when viewing the petroglyph is "What do they mean?" This question is almost impossible to answer. Most researchers agree that the petroglyphs are truly rock art and do not represent a written language. Maybe understanding can only come by viewing the images as symbols rather than as representations.

The numerous motifs super-imposed on top of one another at Petroglyph Point seemed to indicate that this is an especially attractive or powerful site. Is this then a sacred place? Natural land marks such as hills, mountains and caves often serve as focal points for spiritual activities. Such sites are sometimes associated with rock art which helps provide a connection to the supernatural world. Are these petroglyphs, then, a manifestation of religious belief, ceremony, or attempts to contact spirits or to acquire power?

Or is the rock art secular or mundane in origin, or reflective of the hunting and gathering activities of the ancients? We cannot be certain of the answer. Whatever their original meaning, the petroglyphs invariably mean something different to each viewer. Have you found petroglyphs which hold personal significance for you?

**9** Look behind you, beyond the farm buildings, to view Tule Lake. During the Modoc Indian War of 1872-1873, much of the carved cliff face at Petroglyph Point was under water. Shortly after the turn of the century, the



United States Bureau of Reclamation began altering the lakes. Eventually, the lakes were reduced to sumps. Tule Lake, which once filled this entire basin, is now one-sixth of its former size. Waters that once fed the lakes are now diverted for irrigation of the farmland created by the receding waters. These changes could destroy the petroglyphs. The exposed lake bottom sediments contain fragments of sand, gravel and volcanic glass. Driven by the wind, these particles pelt the cliff face, scouring away the rock art.

**10** Other more immediate forms of damage threaten the petroglyphs. This section of the cliff, like much of Petroglyph Point, is marred by vandalism. White paint has been applied to the petroglyphs in front of you.

It is illegal to remove, excavate or vandalize any archeological or cultural resources on public lands.