

Long-ago Inhabitants

Great Basin Paleoarchaic People



For more than 12,000 years, humans have lived in this changing Great Basin landscape. This wild land was home to people who used their skills and knowledge to craft tools, hunt animals, gather wild edibles, and raise families.

Archaeologists refer to these earliest inhabitants as Paleoarchaic (13,000-9,000 years before present). How do researchers know they were here? By the artifacts they left behind. Though weathering has scattered and eroded these fragments, they still offer a glimpse of these long-ago people.

Here in the Milford Wind Corridor area, archaeologists found small, open sites with scattered stone flakes and projectile points. No housing structures have been found, suggesting that these were temporary campsites.



A Far Different Landscape

When you look out over this dry, sparse land, it might be hard to imagine how those early people survived here. But this region has changed greatly in 12,000 years. Summer temperatures were cooler and wetter. Large and productive marshes were widespread, providing abundant wildlife, water, and edible plants. Also, the Beaver River once meandered within a few miles west of the wind farm facility. Since settlement in the mid-1800s, the river has been diverted upstream for irrigation and no longer regularly flows here.

Left, archaeologists look for evidence of long-ago inhabitants in the Milford Wind Corridor area. Most Paleoarchaic sites are small, often very weathered and hard to find.

Clues About the Past

Imagine someone 10,000 years from now trying to piece together the story of your life from scattered items—a kitchen knife, broken pieces of dinner plates and bowls. No easy task! Very few artifacts remain from the Paleoarchaic people who lived in and traveled through this area. Archaeologists have found stone tools, projectile points, and stone flakes. These artifacts help researchers understand how these early people lived.



Remove No Artifacts!

Whether 100 or 1000 years old, artifacts capture the stories of the people who once lived here. When an artifact is moved or taken, part of that irreplaceable story goes with it.

Left, paleoarchaic projectile point of the Lake Mohave style. Its small size and steep angles suggest that it was reworked (sharpened) frequently. Remnants from Paleoarchaic sites around the Great Basin suggest that these early people hunted many different animals, including bighorn sheep, fish, rabbits, and waterfowl.