

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 31 1984

DATE ENTERED

DEC 15 1984

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Grapevine Canyon Petroglyphs (AZ: F:14:98 (ASM)) Nevada inter-  
AND/OR COMMON super-  
CRNV-05-2502 (BLM) 26CK12 and 26CK57 (UNLV), AZ:F:14:98 (ASM), Steward (227)**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

☒ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Laughlin, Nevada

☒ VICINITY OF Nev.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

01

STATE

Nevada

CODE

32

COUNTY

Clark

CODE

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

N/A DISTRICT  
N/A BUILDING(S)  
N/A STRUCTURE  
☒ SITE  
N/A OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC  
N/A PRIVATE  
N/A BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

N/A IN PROCESS  
N/A BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

N/A OCCUPIED  
☒ UNOCCUPIED  
N/A WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
N/A YES: RESTRICTED  
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
N/A NO

## PRESENT USE

N/A AGRICULTURE N/A MUSEUM  
N/A COMMERCIAL ☒ PARK  
N/A EDUCATIONAL N/A PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
N/A ENTERTAINMENT N/A RELIGIOUS  
N/A GOVERNMENT N/A SCIENTIFIC  
N/A INDUSTRIAL N/A TRANSPORTATION  
N/A MILITARY N/A OTHER**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, Lake Mead National Recreation Area

STREET &amp; NUMBER

601 Nevada Highway

CITY, TOWN

Boulder City

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Nevada 89005

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clark County Court House

STREET &amp; NUMBER

200 East Carson

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

Nevada

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

See Continuation Sheet

DATE

☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

X EXCELLENT  
N/A GOOD  
N/A FAIR  
N/A DETERIORATED  
N/A RUINS  
N/A UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

X UNALTERED  
N/A ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE  
N/A MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grapevine Canyon, the location of over 700 examples of rock art and 3 rock-shelters, drains part of the east slope of the Newberry Mountains, Clark County, Nevada. The Canyon widens below a permanent spring and, at the mouth, opens into a broad alluvial valley, at an elevation of 2,480 feet, with a creosote-bursage community as sparse vegetation.

Over 700 rock carvings decorate the dike of fine-grained granite porphyry at the mouth of Grapevine Canyon. These petroglyphs extend over 100 meters up the canyon and are seen on both sides of the canyon walls. Design elements can be seen all the way up the rocky cliffs and are known to extend below the present ground surface. Petroglyphs have been pecked through the patina of hydrous iron and manganese oxides. Some elements have been retouched; others are superimposed over previously existing designs.

A variety of geometric and naturalistic designs occur on the horizontal and vertical faces of these large granite boulders. Design elements include rectangular gridirons, meanders, mazes, diamonds, sun disks, Great Basin curvilinears and rectilinears, spoked wheels, concentric circles, and mountain sheep. According to Steward (1929:148), Grapevine Canyon had the greatest representation of the rectilinear style of petroglyphs of all sites known to Steward to that time.

At least three caves in the Canyon exhibit evidence of extended prehistoric occupation and are located among boulders on both sides of the canyon between the mouth and the spring. These small rockshelters have fire-blackened ceilings, defined areas of midden, and associated sherd scatters. Another cave, also inhabited prehistorically, is about 200 yards east of the mouth of the canyon within a granite outcrop in the alluvial valley. This shelter was designated Grapevine Cave and has been excavated by Maxon (1970). In addition, three sherd scatters of unrecorded types have been noted by various recorders. These were near at least two possible shelter depressions.

The Grapevine Canyon Petroglyph Site has been recorded in several field and literature surveys. Steward, in his synthesis of knowledge of petroglyphs in the western states (1929) and in the United States as a whole (1936), may have been the first anthropologist to publish a description of the site. From Steward's accounts, it seems that a Professor Blackwelder (Stanford University) carried out the first archeological research at the site, including excavations along the base of the carved cliffs to expose petroglyphs that had been buried under alluvial deposits.

Other archeologists, either independently or as part of organized surveys, have recorded the caves and petroglyphs at the Grapevine Canyon Petroglyph Site (Schroeder and Baldwin 1946, 1948; Tuthill 1949; Moen 1968; Brooks 1973; and Todd, Wilson, Patterson, and Mair 1977). Teague (National Park Service) had provided thorough information on the site as the most recent records of the site. As a result of his 1982 survey, a detailed description of the petroglyphs, notes on the caves, an accurate sketch map, and an evaluation of site condition has been made.

Two hundred yards east of the petroglyphs is the already excavated Grapevine Cave. From James Maxon's excavations of this cave in 1970, we can infer something about the chronological framework of the petroglyphs. Based on the ceramic typology and on ethnographic accounts, he was able to determine that the cave had been used intermittently for quite a long time (A.D. 900-A.D. 1150). Although the Amacava

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
X PREHISTORIC	X ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	N/A COMMUNITY PLANNING	N/A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X RELIGION Native Amer.
N/A 1400-1499	N/A ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	N/A CONSERVATION	N/A LAW	N/A SCIENCE
N/A 1500-1599	N/A AGRICULTURE	N/A ECONOMICS	N/A LITERATURE	N/A SCULPTURE
N/A 1600-1699	N/A ARCHITECTURE	N/A EDUCATION	N/A MILITARY	N/A SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
N/A 1700-1799	X ART	N/A ENGINEERING	N/A MUSIC	N/A THEATER
N/A 1800-1899	N/A COMMERCE	N/A EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	N/A PHILOSOPHY	N/A TRANSPORTATION
N/A 1900-	N/A COMMUNICATIONS	N/A INDUSTRY	N/A POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	N/A OTHER (SPECIFY)
		N/A INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

N/A

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

N/A

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Grapevine Canyon Petroglyphs occur

and encounter the creosote-bursage community. Various subsistence alternatives provided by this elevational difference and the general topographic features of the area may have contributed to the frequent use of this area. Water sources within the canyon were an important attraction to desert travelers.

The number and variety of rock art elements demonstrate that Grapevine Canyon Petroglyphs were an important locus prehistorically. displays 43 panels of petroglyphs, with 538 elements represented, while 30 panels, with 218 elements, Although a variety of both naturalistic and geometric designs are represented, rectilinear designs are most common. "On the basis of the complexity and frequency of these (rectilinear) symbols, it (Grapevine Canyon) must be regarded as the center and possibly the point of origin of the style" (Steward 1929:148).

The number and nature of the elements also suggest that the site was visited frequently, reflecting repeated, long-term interest in the locality. The over 750 elements, placed on many visible faces of the boulders, support this interpretation as do the many carvings that are superimposed over earlier, less distinct designs. In addition, a number of elements have been retouched to "update" their message, after desert varnish obscured the earlier designs.

The Grapevine Canyon Petroglyphs represent one example in which petroglyphs have been dated geologically. The base of some cliffs displaying the petroglyphs are buried with a deposit of over 22 feet of soil. Past excavations have revealed that the petroglyphs extend to a depth of 20 feet below present ground surface. Steward inferred that a gradual, rather than torrential, accumulation of the alluvial deposits was responsible for the burial, because a mixture of sand and fine gravels was stratified into thin, even beds (1929). Therefore, dates of some petroglyphs can be roughly correlated with the age of the deposit. In addition, many of the granite surfaces have exfoliated since the time of incised designs. Patination and superposition of design elements also indicate relative antiquity to some panels of rock art.

Maxon's excavations of yield a relative date for cave occupation, based on earliest ceramics of the region (AD 900) but the cultural deposits were stratigraphically higher than those masking nearby rock art.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12 Acres

UTM REFERENCES

A [REDACTED]  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B [REDACTED]  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C [REDACTED]

D [REDACTED]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

[REDACTED]

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A		N/A	

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A		N/A	

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

edited by Roger E. Kelly, NPS Regional Archeologist  
San Francisco

NAME / TITLE

Deni Seymour and Kay Simpson, temporary Archeologists

ORGANIZATION

Western Archeological and Conservation Center NPS

DATE

Sept. 1982

December 1983

STREET & NUMBER

PO Box 41058

TELEPHONE

(602) 629-6501 Kelly

CITY OR TOWN

Tucson,

STATE

Arizona

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ☒

NO ☐

NONE ☐

Ronald M. Loner  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ☐ National ☒ State ☐ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Edmund C. Beaman

TITLE

Chaco Historic Area, National Park Service

DATE

Oct. 12, 1984

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Yvonne S. Stewart

DATE

12/15/84

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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National Park Service Survey, G. Baldwin and A. Schroeder, 1946, 1948

Depository: Lake Mead National Recreation Area, National Park Service, Boulder City, NV  
(Federal)

Survey of the Lower Colorado, C. Tuthill, 1949

Depository: Museum of Man, San Diego, California (County)

Unpublished report on research at Grapevine Canyon, E. Blackwelder

Depository: On file (?) at Stanford University. (Local)

Petroglyph Survey, R. Todd, D. Wilson, C. Patterson, J. Mair, 1977-78

Depository: Arizona State Museum (?) (State)

Grapevine Cave, J. Maxon, 1970

Depository: National Park Service (Federal)

LAME 82B Survey, G. Teague and P. Stearns, 1982

Depository: Western Archeological and Conservation Center, National Park  
Service, Tucson, Arizona (Federal)

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(ancestral Mohave) and later historic Mohave had inhabited this particular cave, early Shoshonean speakers and the Paiute also utilized this area. Due to the stratigraphic position of cave deposits, relative to some of the petroglyphs that are buried by alluvial deposits, Maxon believes that the petroglyphs are of an even older date than is [REDACTED]. The site area has attracted some relic collectors. Tuthill (1949) reported some removal of petroglyphs from the site. However, some granite surfaces with designs have exfoliated and may appear to be vandalism. Other archeologists have reported pothunting in one or more of the caves. Teague's visit to the site in 1982 verified minimal damage to the site has occurred.

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Further excavations at the cave sites could provide more precise chronological data on the occupants of the caves and the creators of the petroglyphs. By systematically recording the carved designs found in Grapevine Canyon, comparisons could be made with elements recorded at other petroglyph sites. The clarity and number of petroglyphs at this site should be helpful in determining cultural affiliations through stylistic analyses. The nature of the petroglyphs should also enhance the value of the carvings for symbolic and astronomic interpretation. On a broad scale, a survey of the area surrounding the site would provide information on the density and duration of use of the area, on the spectrum of specialized activity sites, and on the variety and distribution of other shelters, open sites, and petroglyphs. Additional investigations should demonstrate the role played by Grapevine Canyon Petroglyphs in the religious and trading systems and the aboriginal social organization of the surrounding area.

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Blackwelder, Eliot

n.d. Unpublished report on research at Grapevine Canyon. On file (?)  
at Stanford University.

Grant, Campbell

1967 Rock Art of the American Indian. Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

Heizer, Robert F., and Martin Baumhoff

1962 Prehistoric Rock Art of Nevada and Eastern California. University  
of California Press.

Maxon, James C.

1970 Grapevine Canyon. Report on file at the National Park Service,  
Western Archeological and Conservation Center, Tucson, Arizona.

McClellan, Carole, David A. Phillips, Jr., and Mike Belshaw

1980 The Archaeology of Lake Mead National Recreation Area: An  
Assessment. Western Archeological Center Publications in  
Anthropology, No. 9. Tucson, Arizona.

Steward, Julian

1929 Petroglyphs of California and Adjacent States, University of  
California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology.  
Vol. 24, pp 148-150; plates 73a-d through 78a-d. 1965 reprint  
edition, Kraus Reprint Corporation.

1937 Petroglyphs of the United States. Smithsonian Institution Annual  
Report for 1936, pp 405-425.

Teague, George A.

1982 Archives, LAME 82B, Field Notes on file at the Western  
Archeological and Conservation Center, National Park Service,  
Tucson, Arizona.