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Talus Features of the Middle Columbia River: Typological and Locational Analyses

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Abstract

The form and function of talus features of the Columbia Plateau are the subject of archaeological investigations and cultural resource evaluation and protection programs. Depressions excavated in talus slopes, most often circular to oval in shape, are called talus pits. Pit features are also located in colluvium and alluvial fans, and at the base of cliff overhangs. Over 568 of these features have been documented for 48 sites within the project area of the Priest Rapids and Wanapum reservoirs. Pits may have been used for hunting blinds, storage (food and/or equipment), burial, and/or and spirit questing. The size of pits and the frequency of pits per site, combined with historic associations with human remains, suggest that most talus pit sites are cemeteries. Pits and pit sites are found in higher than expected frequencies on the west side of the Columbia River and on northeast and southeast facing slopes. The distribution of pits by river mile for the east and west sides of the river do not correspond to changes in the elevation of the river (rapids) or the amount of talus slopes or alluvial fans. The location of house features and house sites are compared to the distribution of talus pits by average distance and by river section. There is only partial correspondence of house sites and talus site locations. The number of houses and number of talus pit features, and reported location of ethnohistoric settlements, are not well correlated. Some talus pits and house features are found in the middle stretch of the project (Vantage-Rocky Coulee). However, overall, talus features, house features, and historic settlement locations concentrate on the upper (Colockum Creek-Cabinet Rapids) and lower (Priest Rapids) ends of the project area. This distributional pattern best fits the interpretation that sites with large number of pits are cemeteries associated with separate communities.

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(CRBG) forms a high plateau of stacked sheet-flows between the Cascade Range to the west and the Rocky Mountains to the east. It covers large areas of southeast Washington State, northeast Oregon and adjacent parts of western Idaho (Fig. 1). The voluminous tholeiitic basalt eruptions began about 16.6 Ma in and around Steens Mountain in east-central Oregon; (Swisher et al., 1990; Hooper et al., 2002a; Camp et al., 2003). More detailed paleomagnetic measurements and mapping, combined with increasingly accurate chemical analyses (Fig. 3) for both major- and trace- elements, have subsequently allowed further subdivision of the GRB formation into individual members and flows (Mangan et al., 1986; Reidel et al. 1989).

Analysis of the Talus and Calcaneus Bones from the Poole-Rose Ossuary: A Late Woodland Burial Site in Ontario, Canada. Yermakhanova, Olga A. 2005. MA. Kingship, Structures and Access Patterns on the Royal Plaza at the Ancient Maya City of Altun Ha, Belize: The Construction of a Maya GIS. Williamson, Christian. 2005. Solving a Locational Distribution Problem of Non-Toxic Solid Waste on the Island of Puerto Rico. Allen, Brian Taylor. 2004. MS. Hydroclimatic and Circulation Anomalies Associated with the North Atlantic Subtropical High. Cain, Ann-Marie. 2004. Talus features of the middle columbia river: typological and locational analyses. Jeremy Ripin. Geology. 2017. The form and function of talus pits in the Columbia Plateau are the subject of archaeological investigations and cultural resource evaluation and protection programs. Over 568 of these features have... Continue Reading. View PDF.