

“Archaeology along the Fort Pearce Wash”

By

Samira Hall

Bighorn Archaeology Consultants

Presented to Dixie Archaeology Society

May 8, 2013

The sites that Samira discussed are located in the lower South end of the Fort Pearce wash. Bighorn Archaeology Consultants performed the field work for all of the sites discussed.

The study was conducted as part of a land swap involving the BLM and a private landowner. The purpose of the study was to identify the cultural affiliation of the people associated with the site, the chronology of the sites and the environment of the sites. All of the sites discussed are on private land.

Samira discussed six sites.

Site 1: Ankylosaurus Shelter

This site was dated to the Late Archaic / Early Basket Maker period.

It consisted of 3 hearths and unfinished storage pits. The artifacts discovered were some lithic stones, grind stones and a mono and some animal bones. There was a tool production area but no ceramics.

It was assumed that this was a warm weather site and a transitory site.

Site 2: Roadrunner Site

This site dates to the Late Archaic period.

It consisted of a pit house containing a central hearth, burned matates and post holes. The tools found included “bifaces” and 8 projectile points, but no ceramics. There was evidence of food processing.

It was assumed that this was a moderate duration camp site.

Site 3: Falling Lizard Site

This site was dated to the 700 – 900 AD time period.

This was an intensely used, year round site. All of the activity was done in the shelter. There were hearths, with evidence of food processing as well as farming. There were beads from California and stone tools from Central Utah. Also found were projectile

points, metates and monos and a variety of bones. The organic materials found were reeds, pitch and seeds (squash and corn). The ceramics were “Virgin Series” black and white pottery.

Site 4: Seeing Stars Shelter

This was a Basket Maker III / Anasazi site.

The artifacts were tools in all stages of production along with shaped matates. There were some ceramics. Rabbit bones were also found.

Site 5: Flying Bat Shelter

This site dates from the Early Archaic to the Late Prehistoric time period.

Stone tools were found along with Virgin Anasazi and Southern Paiute ceramics. Deer and Rabbit bones were also found.

There is rock art associated with this site.

Site 6: the Pant less Shelter

This is a Pueblo II to Late Prehistoric site.

This site was little used. There was no evidence of either tool or food processing.

Samira then showed slides of the various artifacts found; points from spear points to bird points, ceramics, beads from late archaic to early basket maker.

She then discussed the Fort Pearce wash in general.

- It was a desert community with a riparian environment (there was water in the wash).
- It was a transient area.
- People used the area for hunting and to gather agave and yucca.
- It was a tool manufacturing area (expedient tools vs. “formal”). Some obsidian tools from outside the area were found.
- Ceramics were plain to pattern designs.
- The oldest artifacts dated to 2800 BC to 750 BC.
- The Falling Lizzard site had year round use.

Samira then discussed the oldest site excavated by Bighorn Archaeology...

Site 7: the Southern Parkway Site

The site was dated to 10,000 years old!

It was found during the construction of a 20 foot deep trench for a geology excavation. The site consisted of 3 hearths. The site was dated using charcoal from the hearths.

Two Paleo Indian points were found. DNA from residue on the points indicated that the material was from a deer-like creature. St. George area was a “swamp” 10,000 years ago.

This site is close to the Fort Pearce Wash area and indicates that this area has been populated for over 10,000 years. St. George does have a very long history!

xxxxxxx

John Mangels