

Crystal Wash

2 Crystal Wash Rock Art Site - Entrance

The entrance and gate to Crystal Wash Rock Art Site is 3.7 miles from the intersection of State Route 375, State Route 318 and U.S. Route 93 (the "Y"). Traveling east on U.S. Route 93, towards Caliente, it's on the left (north) side of the road just past the 54 mile road marker. Traveling west on U.S. Route 93, the entrance is 38.2 miles from Caliente, on the right (north) side. There is a BLM marker just to the left of the barbwire gate. Go through the gate and continue about 50 yards to the register.

Vehicle access rating: 3. Improved / graded dirt road (there is a somewhat steep gully when you first turn off of the main highway)

Useful GPS Coordinates

Entrance and gate coordinates: Entrance and gate coordinates: N 37° 32.969, W115° 10.403, elevation 4077 feet

Register coordinates: N 37° 33.038, W115° 10.418, elevation 4049 feet

Marker 1 coordinates: N 37° 33.185, W 115° 10.309, elevation 4062 feet (follow the wash for about a half mile)

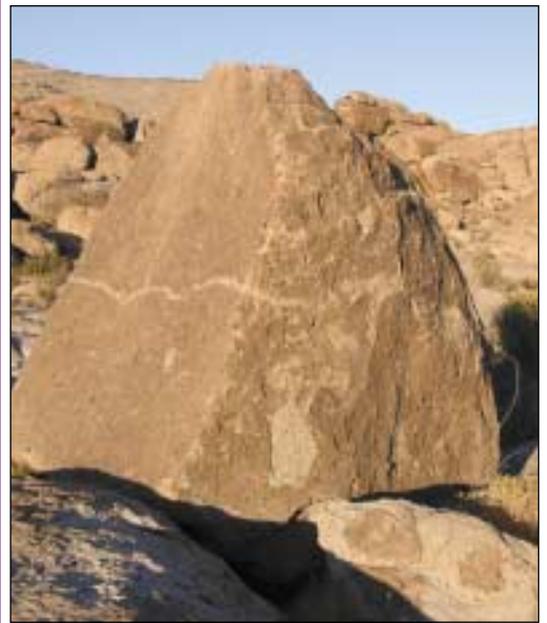
About the site

Welcome to the Crystal Wash Rock Art Site entrance. Stretching out before you along the wash is the Crystal Wash Entrance Site. Generally speaking, the panels are sporadically placed and there is very little representational imagery at this site. There is, however, one notable exception (see marker #4). There are also two boulders that are heavily covered with petroglyphs and contrast with the mostly cryptic images found at this site. The placement of these petroglyphs suggests a possible travel route, with the rock art providing information along the way. This would have been a public site since the rock art is easily accessible. There is also nothing to suggest this was a habitation site, however, the occasional lithic flake found in the wash indicate that some stone tools were made here.



Panels

Marker #1 There are several boulders at this location. There is a thin horizontal line across the face of the uppermost boulder. This is a good example of one of the many non-representational motifs found at this site.



Marker #1

Marker #2 Most of the petroglyphs at this site tend to be directly associated with the wash, however, this panel is somewhat more set in from the wash than many of the other panels. These non-representational motifs are typical of the Great Basin Curvilinear Abstract Style.



Marker #3 The small motif depicted on the right is an image that may or may not be an anthropomorph. The small projections extending from this shape could possibly be arms

Marker #3

and legs. There is only one other figure at this site that may be an anthropomorph, and it can be found at marker #4.

Marker #4 This boulder, located near the division of the wash, is heavily embellished. Underneath the front side is a panel consisting of three very faint, wavy lines. They are waterworn due to the periodic flooding of the wash. On the opposite side is a motif known as a "wearing blanket" that may be an anthropomorph dressed in a woven cloth. This image is similar to others of this type, and is characterized by the "woven" pattern in the body of the figure. Some, like this one here, appear to have fringe at the bottom of the blanket. These figures are generally known as "patterned" anthropomorphs and are depicted with a variety of dots, bars and other designs arranged in a well-ordered manner. Since the Pahrnagats have no known weaving tradition other than baskets, it's possible that this motif represents the presence of Southwestern Puebloan cultures that lived in the area at the same time as the Pahrnagats (AD 500-1250).



Marker #4

To proceed to Marker #5 and #6, go back to Marker #1. If you're facing the direction of the parking area, turn left at this marker. If you are facing away from the parking area, turn right and follow the trail to Marker #5.

Marker #5 The roof of this small shelter has been painted with red ochre, a frequently used pigment made from iron oxide. Although no discernable imagery seems to have been created in the application of this pigment, it's placement was likely deliberate and is therefore not a natural occurrence. This shelter could have been meaningful to the individuals who used it and may have had ritual significance.



Marker #6

Marker #6 This is a small habitation or campsite that would have accommodated a family-sized group of people. Sites of this type were often found near travel routes and could have functioned as stopovers for travelers on their way to another destination. Note the representational imagery in the form of "zoomorphs" (mountain sheep and other quadrupeds), and anthropomorphs. One figure is a type called an "elongated anthropomorph," but there are also other kinds of anthropomorphs at this site. The grinding slick at this site indicates that the food processing took place here (found in the area to the right of these panels). Grinding slicks were created when food (i.e., seeds, pine nuts) were ground on a flat stone surface with a mano, or a hand-held stone, and over time this activity would produce a smooth surface. Portable grinding stones or "metates," were also used. Besides plants, certain kinds of insects like grasshoppers and crickets, were dried and ground into meal. Minerals like hematite were also ground for use in pigments. These were then mixed with an organic binding agent such as water, plant juice, saliva, or urine to create paint.

To exit the site, follow the trail markers out to the wash and parking area.