

Honoring the Summer Solstice

(a tribute to Native Americans)

By: Ray Urbaniak

For 13 years now I have carefully and respectfully observed and recorded the amazing observation and recording skills of the Virgin River branch of Ancestral Puebloans in SW Utah and the Arizona Strip. These Native peoples occupied this area from about 1200 BCE to about 1250 CE. These ancient people were highly skilled astronomers, and were particularly skilled when it came to the movements of the Sun. Per my observations, the Early Basketmaker cultures primarily from 1200 BCE until approx. 750 CE used concentric circles to record the equinoxes. The later peoples appear to have concentrated more on the Solstices using spirals(coiled serpents), straight serpents and horizon markers(a viewing point from which to observe the sunrise or sunset at an obvious point on the horizon), to witness or to record the events on petroglyphs and pictographs.. I have recorded well over 50 such markers to date.

I have even enjoyed viewing a Summer Solstice Sunrise horizon marker from my home in Hurricane, UT for the past dozen years. I don't know if there was ever a Native observation site here at one time or not.



I thought that after all these years I might get used to observing these Solstice markers, but the power of observing something that was so

passionately recorded then sat abandoned and forgotten for more than 800 years before being viewed again still leaves me in awe. It feels like time traveling!

One evening during the Summer Solstice stand still period I went to a site where I had recently found and recorded a simple yet sophisticated Solstices and Equinoxes pointer glyph.

This pointer is a corn plant lying down, which must indicate the Fall Harvest since it points to the Equinox position, and that is the only time a corn plant should be laying down.

Equinox pointer

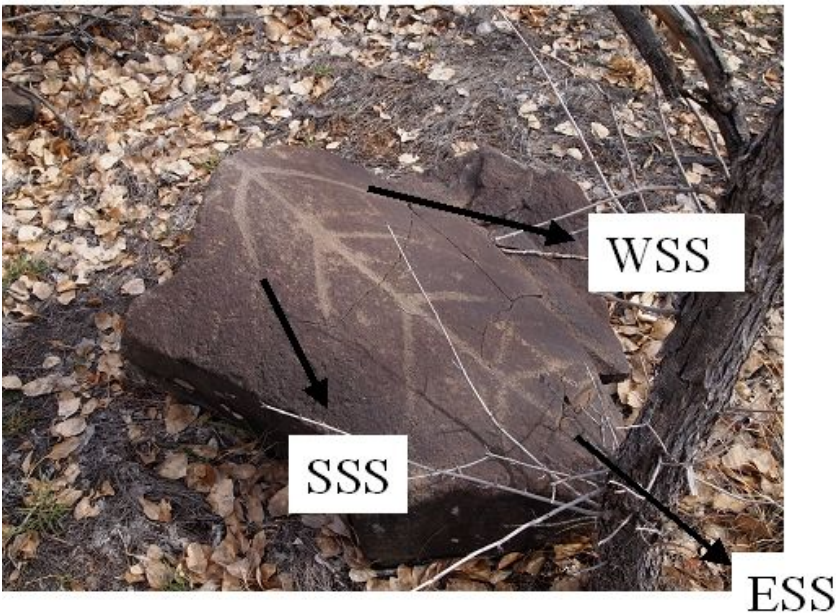


Photo below taken on the Spring Equinox



The Winter Solstice Position has not as yet been observed and photographed.

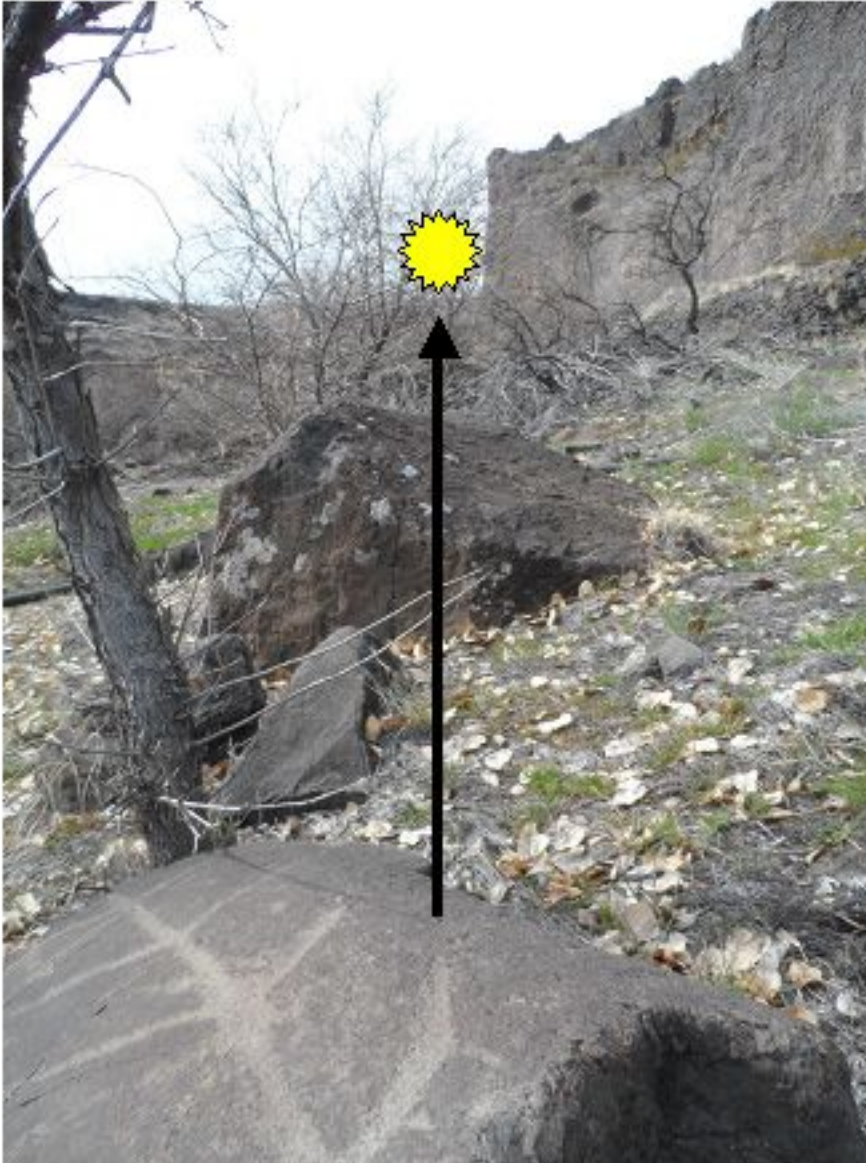
Sunset Pointers for the Winter Solstice, the Equinoxes, and the Summer Solstice



What I found particularly interesting about the marker is the bent tip of the corn that points to the Summer Solstice Sunset position and in this way receives the Sun's energy.

The glyph below has one toe, of the stylized corn plant, bird foot that bends and points to and receives the Sun's energy on the Summer Solstice Sunset.

Summer Solstice Sunset Pointer



This is reminiscent of the first Summer Solstice Sunrise marker I ever recorded which inspired my book (Anasazi of SW Utah, the Dance of Light & Shadow).

www.manataka.org/page1719.html

At that site, the Summer Solstice Sunrise marker records three (3) different shafts of light that interact with the panel over about an hours time, the second shaft of light comes up between the feet of the bird footed shaman figure and then moves to the left where the toes are bent to receive the sun light shaft energy.

Bird foot, bent toes

Bent toes receive light

Light shaft moves left



I go into the use of a bird foot in more detail in my article
<http://www.manataka.org/page2673.html>

Below is a photo of the pointer during the actual Summer Solstice Sunset on the horizon.



There is also a simple glyph of a Shaman on the rock who is apparently overseeing the sunsets.



It has been my goal to shed light on the sophisticated expertise of these generally neglected and marginalized Native People who respected and honored nature, and lived much more in harmony with nature than we ever have.