“I’m pretty sure that thing I just tripped over ain’t natural.”:

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Abstract

Hunting strategies in high altitude environments often included the systematic construction of blinds and drive walls to funnel game animals (moose deer [Odocoileus hemionus], elk [Cervus canadensis], and bighorn sheep [Ovis canadensis]) towards predetermined kill locations. These systems are positioned to take advantage of natural landscape attributes.

To date many of these systems have been recorded in Colorado and Wyoming (see Burnett and Frison). During the 2014 field season new hunting structures were identified in three valleys of the Greybull River watershed. Structures resembling the Pickett Creek valley animal trap (i.e., open grates and slatted (3070-3200) m elevation) consist of stone walls, blinds, and a raised platform. A simple enclosure was formed on an uncut rock face (~2300 m elevation) above the Wood River valley and a second shallow structure was documented near Jack Creek (~2500 m elevation). A problematic site for these structures is suggested by lichen bridging among the individual, dry-laid, stones. As with other such systems, no artifacts are associated with these structures.

The discovery of these structures extends the use of game procurement systems to the portion of the Absaroka Mountains and simultaneously broadens the knowledge base associated with prehistoric use of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Additionally, the data gathered from these structures has the potential to expose predictable topographic signatures with value for understanding high elevation prehistoric hunting strategies in mountainous environments. This topographic signature can be analyzed with a GIS. Future investigations of high potential areas are facilitated through the use of a GIS and the best-fit least-cost trail mapping application.

WALL 3

Figure 22. Wall 3 looking west. This wall structures served as a natural funnel for directing wall.

Figure 23. Wall 4 looking west. Probable wall structures serves as a natural funnel for directing wall.

Figure 24. Wall 4 from the base of the conglomerate outcrop (far right side).

Figure 25. Wall 5 looking north, viewed from the lower saddle.

Figure 26. Wall 5 looking north, viewed from the lower saddle.

Figure 27. Wall 5 looking south.

JACK CREEK STRUCTURE (48PA2795)

Figure 8. Digital Elevation Model showing the location of the Wood River and Jack Creek (48PA2795).

Figure 9. View looking north from the saddle below wall 4. Red line indicates Wall 4 low wall was constructed on the western edge potentially serving as a blind.

The Jack Creek structure (JC042) is a semi-circular enclosure overlooking the Jack Creek Valley. The structure is quite substantial, and construction would have involved hauling significant quantities of stone from a conglomerate outcrop (far right side).

G precautions are welcomed.

The interpretations of the structural stones exhibit regular angular cut marks.

A preliminary examination of the surrounding slopes revealed no indications of either driveline features or hunting blinds and the downslope timbered area has not been surveyed for perishable structural features. A number of nearby lithic scatters along the Wood River and Joj o Creek (e.g., 48PA48) are potential candidates for processing/camp sites that could have been associated with this feature.

While structurally, the site conforms with some known bighorn sheep trapping facilities, its location makes inferences of its use difficult. The eastern wall, composed partially of rock outcrop in higher and wooded land served as a prime spot into the rock-walled ambientation. However, a number of wall stone installations situated on a slopping bed of conglomerate mixed with dark, stratified tuff, and tuff breccia suggest a rather informal less-than-permanent structure. The outcrop (far right side) was used unclear.

PICKETT CREEK STRUCTURES (48PA2820)

Figure 15. Structure incorporates a talus slope in the background.

Figure 16. Wooden elements from this structure exhibit regular angular cut marks.

Figure 17. Digital Elevation Model of North Fork Wood River valley and a second isolated structure was documented near Jack Creek (~2500 m elevation). A problematic site for these structures is suggested by lichen bridging among the individual, dry-laid, stones. As with other such systems, no artifacts are associated with these structures.

The discovery of these structures extends the use of game procurement systems to the portion of the Absaroka Mountains and simultaneously broadens the knowledge base associated with prehistoric use of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Additionally, the data gathered from these structures has the potential to expose predictable topographic signatures with value for understanding high elevation prehistoric hunting strategies in mountainous environments. This topographic signature can be analyzed with a GIS. Future investigations of high potential areas are facilitated through the use of a GIS and the best-fit least-cost trail mapping application.
Hunting Structures in the Absaroka Mountains of Northwestern Wyoming

Abstract: Hunting structures identified in the Pickett Creek area are shown in the locations of the walls and the locations of the hunters.

**Location and Description:**
The structures are identified in the Greybull River watershed, as shown in the locations of the walls and the locations of the hunters. They are located in the north fork of Pickett Creek, as shown in the locations of the walls and the locations of the hunters.

**Methods:**
1. **Prehistoric Dating:** The structures are not yet definitively associated with prehistoric or historic Native Americans. However, there are qualitative data suggesting that hunters, without the aid of horses and guns, may have constructed these walls. First, the placement and orientation of the walls are not consistent with any mapped methods. A few known locations can be reliably said to have been constructed by early peoples, or earlier, instead they are well suited to dividing the trend of animals to a predetermined point on the landscape. Structures like these do not resemble those constructed by residents or in some instances by people, especially those who lived in the early years of the century. Second, cabin features may be identified in the locations of the walls and the locations of the hunters. However, these walls may be associated with prehistoric or historic Native Americans. In their present condition they can hardly be said to have functioned as pens or corrals. Instead they are well suited to intercepting game by placing themselves behind the animals to the south and east. From these upper vantage points the hunters could have remained observing game animals in the trees or above the treeline but below the primary and secondary ridge of the northern slope, hunters could have

**Future Analytical Goals:**
Future analytical goals include adding additional attributes and a process of removing "background noise" through area calculations. These walls are not yet definitively associated with prehistoric or historic Native Americans. However, there are qualitative data suggesting

**Investigation Method:**
Using SwitchBack and ArcGIS...

**SwitchBack**
SwitchBack trails can be used to identify potential corridors of movement for both game animals and humans. Additionally, the SwitchBack model allows researchers to investigate the head-on corridors that link hunting sites and residential camps. These corridors may enhance general landscape patterns with respect to processing and transporting game resources from a harvest point, to secondary hunting locations, and ultimately to the point of consumption.

**ArcGIS Models**
The ArcGIS models used in the landscape analysis will be used to identify areas with high potential for...