Petroglyphs of the Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology

Poppy Pulitzer, Andrew Doty and Kira Topik
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Introduction

The remarkable amount of Petroglyphs on the Firestone Center property is both an intriguing mystery and an unparalleled research opportunity for the students of the Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology. The majority of these treasures are scattered on the top ridgeline of the property, with clusters of rocks interlaced through the banana forest and bamboo forests. As of now, May 2007, 43 petroglyphs have been identified on the Firestone Center, with undoubtedly more hidden under the thick vegetation of regenerating jungle. The beautiful and unexplained Petroglyphs inspired us to conduct further research and hopefully aid in the process of solving the puzzle of these magnificent rocks.

The lack of research and available information surrounding Petroglyphs prompted us to create a basic guide to the Petroglyphs located on the property. Costa Rica has very limited history on the ancient indigenous peoples because most had already died of western diseases even before the Spanish conquistadores arrived. The art they left behind is now one of the only clues into the history of the Pre-Columbian peoples of Costa Rica. The importance of preserving the Petroglyphs on the Firestone Center cannot be reiterated more. The Firestone Center is a section of land with an uncommonly large amount of rock art and hopefully, with more research and independent studies dedicated to the Petroglyphs, we can piece together more of Costa Rica's vague Pre-Columbian history.

For each known rock and the new rocks we found during our research, we completed a standardized archaeological form from the book, Introduction to Rock Art Research by David S. Whitley. We examined each rock closely, noting the differences, similarities, obscurities, and anomalies. Photographs were taken of each rock in daylight. The photographs are close-ups of the engravings, and photos taken further away in order to view the rock in full. Unfortunately photographs of these Petroglyphs do not do them justice and it is very difficult to properly see the engravings and motif. Our original plan was to photograph all of the rocks at night with a cross-light, which we accomplished for a few, but we ran into an unfortunate situation during our night excursion and were
unable to complete our goal, leaving us with only a few night shots. Nonetheless, viewing the petroglyphs at night was extremely rewarding and provided us with a much more vivid view. Each rock was subjected to motif analysis as well, although sources containing information about the common motifs were limited.

This book is a catalog of the current Petroglyphs on the property, and is comprised of an essay regarding the common motifs, a standardized archaeological form for each rock, and photographs of each rock. This book is a compilation of our research which was comprised of field work involving incessant hiking. Our hope is that this book will provide the future students of the Firestone Center with a comprehensive guide to the Petroglyphs, an accessible and easily understandable catalog of each rock, and a valuable resource for further research.

Besos y Abrazos,

Kira Topik, Andrew Doty, and Poppy Pulitzer
Site 1: Ichthus
Site: 1
Ichthus

Site Location

Ichthnus is located about 4/3's of the way up the main access road on the east side. As this subtle petroglyph is positioned directly on the road, the grass and shrubbery around the rock are constantly maintained, making the motif clearly visible. It sits on a small ledge that declines to the east side of the road. Around the road and petroglyph lies regenerating secondary forest, with many small palms and banana trees directly to the south and north.

Site Type

Isolated; Rock 1 is one of the most isolated petroglyphs on the Firestone property and noticeably at a much lower elevation than the majority of other known petroglyphs. The area does not retain much integrity, and it is highly possible this rock has changed locations dramatically as a result of its' small size rock and the current location just off the side of the recently created access road.

Orientation

This site is situated on the east side of the main access road. The main panel faces to the southwest, while the secondary panel faces to the north.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

2

One panel faces west, and one faces north. Both panels are on the flat-faced sides, which is unusual compared to other Petroglyphs located on the FCRE. The abnormality of this site is even more apparent because the rock possesses a level, upward facing panel that is larger in size than those containing the engravings. The upward panel is a smooth plane that seems common in appearance to many of the main panels containing motifs on other recorded petroglyph sites.

Panel Size

Panel 1: 12 in x 15.5 in
Panel 2: 7.5 in x 15 in

Number of Motifs

1- 'Parallel'/Meander Lines
One set of lines that are at some points parallel, but often vary in width and curvature are engraved in the rock. The lines fit neither a parallel line nor a meander motif. There are two lines that extend onto two panels in continuous lines from one face to the other. The motif is both unusual and lacks the detail and elaboration that has been seen in other sites.

**Condition**

The engravings are clearly visible as there is no moss or lichen coverage. Lines are, however, very vague and superficial. The rock is weathered but condition is generally of good quality.

**Comments**

This petroglyph is both extremely isolated and containing a most unusual and frankly random motif in comparison to the other petroglyphs. The size of the rock is also quite small, comparatively. The area should be excavated and searched thoroughly for more rock art.
Site 2: La Puerta
Site: 2
La Puerta

Site Location

Rock 2 is located about five paces below the Yoga Studio, erected on the flat ridgeline area looking out over the ocean and associated valley. La Puerta has a direct and clear ocean view and is placed on a slight incline just before the land levels out to the flat clearing where the Yoga studio is located. This is the southernmost site and also is the rock closest to the ocean on the Firestone center property.

Site Type

Fairly isolated; La Puerta lies on the outskirts of the dense zone. This site serves as an entrance to the flat area where the Yoga Studio and ponds of the Firestone Center sit.

Orientation

The main panel face sits perpendicular with the ground with an eastern bearing. This is also the southernmost rock on the Firestone Center property.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1
Panel facing east, very flat and perpendicular with the ground

Panel Size

19 in x 12 in (to break)

Number of Motifs

3
1 spiral
1 dot
Meanders

High possibility of more original motifs seeing as this rock has been broken; in all likelihood nearly half of the rock has split off. One meander appears to have been the tail end to a more elaborate design, perhaps a spiral.
Condition

Remaining motifs and rock are in good condition. Engravings are clearly visible and have depth. There is very little moss and lichen coverage, plants surrounding have been cleared. The largest problem with the condition of the rock is that it has been clearly split. The motif remaining, however, is in good condition.

Comments

Since presumably half of the rock is missing, excavation is suggested in the area. Paul Paulstich stated that there is a high possibility that this served as an entrance rock to an indigenous town due to its extreme proximity to the flat area of the Firestone Center.
Site 3: Curly, of the Three Stooges
Site: 3
Curly, of the Three Stooges rocks

Site Location

Site 3 sits directly below an obtrusive 6-trunked tree. Curly is located on the northern side of the extension to the access road, past the Yoga Studio and before the ponds and their associated trail circuit. This site is in a fairly flat area, especially considering most of the terrain of the Firestone center. However, because it is directly to the side of the access road there is a high possibility that before construction the area would have had a more dramatic incline.

Site Type

This site lies on the outskirts of the dense zone. Also, site 3 has two sister petroglyphs in very close proximity, all of which form a small oblong triangle. The three rocks may have a significant relationship because of their close vicinity to each other and notable distance from the rest of the petroglyphs.

Orientation

While the motif panel is facing directly upward, the rock itself is located on the northeastern side of the extension of the access road, in the southern top corner of the Firestone Center property.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1
A small corner piece has been severed from the main rock, but does not contain any engravings.

Panel Size

72 in. x 32 in.

Number of Motifs

6

Circles
Zig-zags
Concentrics
Dots
Continuous meanders
Spirals- very large and prominent

Zig zag motifs are plentiful in Site 3, which is notably rare amongst the petroglyphs of this property. Curly also has detailed and intricate motifs with an abundance of engravings that completely cover the area of the upward facing panel.

**Condition**

Several negative conditions exist on or near this magnificent rock; onion peeling is present and has damaged much of the surface already and there is an abundance of moss which obstructs proper viewing of the engravings and motifs. A small corner of the rock has also cracked off which contains motif. The largest detrimental factor is the 6-trunked tree that shadows the petroglyph and could cause further problems as the tree grows and continues to encroach upon the rock. There is a high possibility that the roots of the tree have caused the corner to break off, and may cause more cracks and splits as the roots grow in size and strength.

**Comments**

Several recommendations for this Petroglyph: cleaning and clearing of the surrounding flora, preferably with a machete. This rock may be much more vivid at night when the shadow of the tree does not obstruct the view. Additionally, of the three stooges, this site has the largest panel size.
Site 4: Larry, of the Three Stooges
Site: 4
Larry, of the Three Stooges rocks.

Site Location

Rock 4 is seven paces to the northeast (below) of site 3 and the extension of the access road past the Yoga Studio. This site sits on a very slight incline in a shallow depression of the characteristically flat area of the top (southern zone) of the Firestone Center Property. Larry sits in regenerating pasture-land in a grassy and thickly brushed area, without large trees directly surrounding. This is the smallest of the three Stooges.

Site Type

This site lies on the outskirts of the dense petroglyph zone. It also has two sister petroglyphs in close proximity that form a small oblong triangle. The three rocks may have a relevant relationship because of their close vicinity to each other and notable distance from the rest of the petroglyphs of the Firestone Center.

Orientation

The rock itself lies to the northeast of the extension of the main access road and of rock 4, Curly. The motif panel is very flat and faces upwards, as it is almost level with the ground.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

Rock 4 is a low lying rock with a large percentage of the rock lying underground. There is a possibility that more panels are still buried.

Panel Size

39 in. x 24 in.

Number of Motifs

4
Spiral
Meanders
Dots
Circle (with connecting line)
The most striking motif of this petroglyph is the large and impressive central spiral. The equal spacing and sheer size of the spiral is aesthetically beautiful. The precision of the spiral is stunning, and the engravings are deep and clearly defined.

**Condition**

This small petroglyph has been lucky with nature and has been well preserved. There is minimal onion peeling along the sides of the rock, not affecting the motif panel. Moss and lichen are barely present, creating an easily visible motif, and the engravings have depth and clarity as well.

**Comments**

The rock is low to the ground and appears to be mostly buried. The levelness of the rock and the fact that the size of the surface area of the rock is much smaller than the other two of the Three Stooges suggests that there may be much more underground. Further excavation and clearing is recommended.
Site 5: Moe, of the Three Stooges
Site: 5
Moe, one of the Three Stooges rocks

Site Location

Rock 5 is set below the extension of the access road to the northeast of its two other sister petroglyphs (Rocks 3 and 4). This site lies about ten paces southwest from site 4. Moe is set among several other smaller rocks that do not contain motifs in a small pile upon a flat regenerating pasture-land. The land near Rock 4 indents slightly, creating a small, shallow depression in the land.

Site Type

This site lies on the outskirts of the dense petroglyph zone. Rock 5 has two sister petroglyphs in very close proximity, all of which form a small oblong triangle. The three rocks may have a significant relationship because of their close vicinity to each other and notable distance from the rest of the petroglyphs.

Orientation

Moe sits to the northeast of the extension of the main access road. Additionally, he is located to the southwest of the other member of the Three Stooges, sites 3 and 4. The main panel faces upwards, sloping to the south.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

Panel Size

43 in. x 50 in.

Number of Motifs

2

Spiral
Meanders

Only two motifs have been clearly determined. Other indistinguishable motifs are present but unidentifiable because of deterioration. The spiral motif on this petroglyph is very large and striking.
**Condition**

Rock 5 has extensive onion peeling affecting the engravings as well as severe weathering and deterioration. The grooves of the large spiral have been subjected to erosion and deterioration. The texture of the surface of the rock is unusually gritty and bleached in color. The erosion occurring on this petroglyph has had severe effects and the condition of the rock is poor.

**Comments**

The gritty and bleached texture possibly could have resulted from oxidized minerals. The site also could benefit from clearing of plants and brush surrounding in addition to clearing off leaves on the surface of the rock. The area is littered with large, flat paneled rocks and further excavation and searching is recommended.
Site: 6
El Borde

Site Location

Rock 6 is located on a steep ridgeline fifteen paces east from the lower pond circuit trail. Overlooking a small gulley of secondary forest and regenerating pasture-land, El borde overhangs a small ledge, with the panel fairly perpendicular to the ledge. To the southeast are two Guanacaste trees. In the grassy area above the ledge is a patch of sapling Cercropia trees.

Site Type

This rock is fairly isolated and lies just on the outskirts of the dense zone. Rock 6 sits on the far fringes of the pond circuit petroglyph collection, yet retains a significant distance from most of the aforementioned sites. Rock 7 is the closest petroglyph to site 7 and is parallel to the northeast across the lower pond circuit trail.

Orientation

The main panel nearly perpendicular with the ground and faces the east.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

The rock overhangs a small ledge and the motif is completely side facing, without the slightest slant in the upward direction. The panel faces directly east and acts as a continuation of the natural ledge because of its placement on the small overhang.

Panel Size

21.5 in x 42 in

Number of Motifs

4

Spirals
Meanders
Dots
Circles
The design is intricate and beautiful, utilizing four of the most common motifs in an interesting continuous motif.

**Condition**

The motif is clearly visible and in good condition, the engravings are deep and lucid, retaining the intricacy and delicacy of the motif well. There is light, unobtrusive moss around the rock. Onion peeling is present but has yet to do any major damage to the motif.

**Comments**

Although this rock has precarious placement it is a beautiful motif and the engravings are in good condition. The design is interesting and intricate. The placement is somewhat isolated and further excavation is suggested, although from superficial investigation of the surrounding area it does not seem like many engraved other large crystalline metamorphic rocks exist.
Sie 7: La Mirada
Site: 7
La Mirada

Site Location

Rock 7 is located six paces from the beginning of the lower bamboo forest on the upper pond circuit trail. It is four paces to the west of the trail, La Mirada lies parallel with Rock 6 and sits in a flat, grassy area in sight of the Duck Pond.

Site Type

This site is located on the outskirts of the dense petroglyph zone. Rock 7 borders the dense upper pond circuit petroglyph zone, and, if included, is the first, with the lowest elevation of that zone. The vegetation of grassy regenerating forest creates and illusion of isolation.

Orientation

Panel is completely upward facing and on the southwestern side of the lower pond circuit trail.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

The 1 panel with a motif is extremely low and flush with the ground. The rock could have more panels if excavated further, because the rock seems to have a large portion buried.

Panel Size

20 in x 29 in

Number of Motifs

5

Spiral
Meanders
Connected Parallel Lines
Concentrics
Dot
Despite the small size of the rock and the faint lines the rock has an abundance of different motifs, and incorporating common motifs such as a spiral and dots, and also posses the infrequent motifs such as concentrics and parallel lines.

**Condition**

The rock is in fair condition. The engravings are faint and suffer from severe weathering and deterioration. Onion peeling is present around the edges. The majority of the rock seems to be underground, and further excavation is suggested.

**Comments**

When viewing this rock in plain daylight, the engravings appear to be very superficial and lacking intricacies. However, when viewing this La Mirada in darkness, motifs are very visible and quite impressive. The central concentric pattern is also shares the appearance of an open human eye. The rock is on the immediate outskirts of the dense petroglyph zone and there is large quantity of large rocks with flat panels in the area that need to be cleared and searched for engravings.
Site 8: Corona Rock
Site: 8
Corona Rock

Location

The illusive Corona Rock may be found thirty paces east of the Creek pond in a grassy clearing that borders the pond’s edge. To the Northwest lie the beginnings of the lower bamboo forest while to the southeast one may reach the Pond Circuit trail that connects the Hooch trail and the extension of the Access Road. Corona sits amongst a grouping of three other large rocks on a clear incline that stretches towards the western side of the property. This petroglyph also lies about six paces east of a large royal palm.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One very large panel face (top, not flattest or largest)

Panel Size

75 in x 59 in

Motifs

2

Circle (1)
Meander

*There may be two circles; one has been overcome by onion peeling and differentiation between motif and natural rock curvature is indiscernible momentarily.

Condition

While two motifs on this petroglyph are easily visible and appear to have been well preserved, the entire rock has been severely affected by onion peeling, as one may see weathered rock layers strewn around the site. There may have been more extensive engravings on this petroglyph at one time.
**Orientation**

Main motif faces upward

**Comments**

It is curious to note that considering the large size and relative flatness of the eastern and western panels, only the ‘top’ panel, which is more like a ridge, has been engraved.
Site 9: Grover Rock
Site: 9
Grover Rock

Location

Rock 9 is oriented less than two paces southeast of the upper pond circuit trail. From this point the Duck Pond lies to the south. This area is completely cleared of all non-bamboo flora. The land in this area inclines towards the west, in the direction of sites 12 and 13.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

Panel Size

18 in x 38 in

Motifs

2

Circle (1)
Possible Spirals

*Difficult to discern actual motif due to poor condition

Condition

This petroglyph has been severely weathered, making visibility difficult. Motif grooves are not deep and it is difficult to find complete motifs as a result of the damage.

Orientation

Main panel faces upwards on the northeastern side of the trail.

Comments

Weak sauce.
Site: 10
Sleeping Rock

Location

This site is located just six paces west of the upper pond circuit trail (up the manmade ridge). This area has been cleared of most non-bamboo flora and inclines towards the west, or the upper bamboo forest area and eventually Hacienda Baru. To the southeast lie the main access road, pond circuit and duck pond. About eleven paces northwest of site 9.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

Motifs

2

Dots

Lines

Condition

The engravings on this petroglyph are very superficial and thus difficult to detect. There is some moss coverage and a considerable amount of onion peeling; both of which have deteriorated the engravings' condition.

Orientation

Panel faces east.

Comments

Status: questionable
Site 11: Roca Estampada
Site: 11
Roca Estampada

Location

Rock 11 sits in two pieces on the southwestern side of the upper pond circuit trail, about two paces off the main pathway. Just seven paces northwest from site 10, Rock 11 is at the base of a large bamboo cluster. The land in this area inclines steadily towards the west, in the direction of petroglyphs 12 and 13, extending towards the upper bamboo forest and ultimately Hacienda Baru.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

2

Two panel faces; one a broken piece that sits to the northwest of the main panel.

Panel Size

Main Panel: 30 in x 24 in
Broken Panel: 27 in x 8 in

Motifs

4

Spirals
Dots
Meanders
Parallel Lines
Patterns/Geometrics

Intricate, patterned. Designed, covered in its entirety.

Condition

One piece of the rock has been broken off and sits to the northwest of the main rock panel. All panels are covered almost completely in moss, which appears to aid visibility.
Onion peeling is traceable and accompanied by small chips and cracks in the panel surfaces; most likely the beginnings of further onion peeling.

**Orientation**

Motif panel faces upwards

**Comments**

Epiphany: moss grows in bamboo forest (less sunlight and general level of biodiversity...or life). Therefore the majority of the rocks in the upper and lower bamboo petroglyph zones are covered in moss, and those in the banana zone do not have much.
Site 12: El Rey
Site: 12
El Rey

Location

This site may be found in the large bamboo clearing that lies to the southwest of the hooch trail and to the northwest from both the duck pond and the upper pond circuit trail. The cleared area around El Rey is slightly inclined towards the west, or towards the Hooch trail. This site is set among a collection of other, smaller rocks. Site 12 is also a sister site, sitting about one step east of Site 13, La Reina.

Site Type

This is a sister site, located in the dense zone. The sister site appears at first glance to have been connected at one point to this site, number 12. However, one may clearly see that these two rocks are, and have been for some time, separate entities.

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

2

The main panel face is oriented upwards and curves down onto the eastern side of the rock, extending engravings over from the main panel. The two panels have connecting grooves, but there are two physical planes with engravings. The motifs also differ visually on the two panels.

Motifs

5
Spirals
Parallel Zig-Zags
Dots
Meanders
Geometrics

The parallel zig-zags are most the most noticeable motif on the side facing panel and are large, striking parallel lines without sharp angles. This rock retains all of the seen motifs on the Firestone property (except the chevron, seen on rock 2).

Condition

Good condition. There is moss coverage, but the engravings are fortunately very deep and clear so the motif is easily visible. Onion peeling is minimal.
Orientation

Rock 12 is below Rock 13 to the northeast.

Comments

Rocks 12 and 13 are undeniably paired with purpose. At a first glance, it seems that a very large rock had split in half, creating almost equal rectangular shapes. At a closer look, however, it is evident that the designs do not connect, nor were connecting at one time. The motifs differ in design and placement. Rocks 13 and 12 are two of the most visually stunning petroglyphs on the Firestone property as well as two of the largest rocks retaining motifs. The two rocks retain a mysterious illusion as a result of their precarious placement. The two rocks are irrefutably linked, although not connected physically.
Site 13: La Reina
Site: 13
La Reina

Location

Rock 13 may be found in the large bamboo clearing that lies to the southwest of the heocho trail and to the northwest from both the duck pond and the upper pond circuit trail. The upper pond circuit trail is to the northeast below the rock. It sits on a slight incline, not quite reaching the top ridgeline of the property. Site 13 is also a sister site, sitting about one step west of Site 12, El Rey. The bamboo forest surrounding Rocks 12 and 13 has been cleared to cultivate the large clusters of mature bamboo. The duck pond is visible southeast of the rock.

Site Type

In the dense petroglyph zone; it is sister to Rock 12, which is less than a foot away, the two matching in size.

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

The large motif panel is flat, and smooth, facing upward.

Motifs

5
Geometrics
Meanders
Dos
Lines
Circles

Rock 13 has interesting and rare geometric shapes which reside upon a large portion of the rock. Along one edge of the panel there are consecutive geometrics that look similar to a type of lettering, based upon the similarity in size and spacing. La Reina is not as aesthetically striking as its sister rock, El Rey, but does have interesting and clear engravings.

Condition
Good condition. This site has substantial moss coverage but the engravings are deep, and clearly visible. The geometric shapes have been weathered and slightly deteriorated, making them unidentifiable to the exact motif or shape.

Orientation

Rock 13 is to the southwest of its sister rock, Rock 12, with its panel facing upwards.

Comments

Rocks 13 and 12 are undeniably paired with intent. At a first glance, it seems that a very large rock had split in half, creating almost equal rectangular shapes. At a closer look, however, the designs do not connect, nor were connecting at one time. The motifs differ in design and placement. Rocks 13 and 12 are two of the most visually stunning Petroglyphs on the Firestone property, as well as two of the largest rocks retaining motifs. The mystery of these petroglyphs lies in their proximity and similarities in size and design. The two rocks are irrefutably linked and create one spectacular site, even though they are not connected physically.
Site 14: Siovhan’s Rock
Site: 14
Siobhan's Rock

Location

On the northern side of the hooch trail that connects the Upper and Lower Bamboo forests. Rock 15 is twenty-two paces to the southwest when following the trail. The Hooch lies to the southwest from this site. The surrounding area is cleared, flat land leading to dense bamboo areas.

Site Type

Dense zone; closest to sites 15 and 16

Artifacts

None yet discovered; further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One panel; faces/slopes towards the southeast.

Panel Size

39 in x 17 in

Motifs

5
Spirals
Meanders
Dots
Zig-Zags
Parallel Meanders

Condition

Panel extends partially beneath ground. The visible portion of the rock's panel is about one third covered with moss, yet still preserved fairly well. Trace onion peeling is evident.

Orientation

Slopes towards the southeast
Comments

Likely to have more motifs buried underground- excavation is suggested
Site 15: Roca Romy
Site: 15
Roca Romy

Location

This petroglyph lies fifteen paces from the (topmost) entrance to the hooch trail that unites the Upper and Lower Bamboo forests on the northeast side. From this site the Hooch lies to the southeast. The surrounding area is cleared, flat land leading to dense bamboo areas.

Site Type

Dense Zone. Very close to sites 14 and 16.

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

Panel Size

26 in x 28 in

Motifs

3

Spirals
Meanders
Dots

Condition

While the engravings are deep and visible, they are covered by a layer of moss that extends over most of the panel face. Onion peeling is obvious, but does not greatly hinder motif visibility. Lower tip of panel lies beneath ground.

Orientation

Panel slopes facing the northeast

Comments

Further excavation is suggested to unearth complete panel face.
Site 16: Jack's Fish
Site: 15
Roca Romy

**Location**

This petroglyph lies fifteen paces from the (topmost) entrance to the hooch trail that unites the Upper and Lower Bamboo forests on the northeast side. From this site the Hooch lies to the southeast. The surrounding area is cleared, flat land leading to dense bamboo areas.

**Site Type**

Dense Zone. Very close to sites 14 and 16.

**Artifacts**

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

**Panels**

1

Panel Size

26 in x 28 in

**Motifs**

3

Spirals
Meanders
Dots

**Condition**

While the engravings are deep and visible, they are covered by a layer of moss that extends over most of the panel face. Onion peeling is obvious, but does not greatly hinder motif visibility. Lower tip of panel lies beneath ground.

**Orientation**

Panel slopes facing the northeast

**Comments**

Further excavation is suggested to unearth complete panel face.
Site 17: Cloven Rock
Site: 17
Cloven Rock

Location

Rock 17 lies just four paces west of the hooch trail; twenty-one paces south of site 16. From this site the Hooch lays twenty paces southeast. The surrounding area is a flat, riparian corridor zone leading west and southwest towards Hacienda Baru.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered; further excavation is required

Panels

1
Panel Size

56 in x 16 in

Motifs

3

Spiral
Meanders
Double-dotted meanders

Condition

Panel covered in moss, evident weathering makes engravings almost indiscernible. The top quarter of this rock has been severed and pushed backward so that it now sits partially upon and partially behind the main rock at the base of a young tree.

Orientation

Panel face tilted slightly upwards, facing the northeast
Site 18: Roca Araña
Site: 18
La Araña

Site Location

Rock 18 is located twenty-five paces from Hacienda Barú in the outskirts of the bamboo forest, west of the Hooch trail and site 17. There is an abundance of undergrowth, ferns and bushes. There is a young tree growing and seemingly obstructing the southeastern side of this rock. The area is heavily shaded and is on the top ridgeline of the Firestone property.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone. Also, this is a sister site, lying southwest by about two paces from site 19, Zancudo.

Orientation

One motif panel faces east and the other slopes slightly southwest, but faces upward.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

2

Panel Size

Panel 1: 48 in x 46 in
Panel 2: 13 in x 17 in

Number of Motifs

6
Circles
Spirals
Meanders
Dots
Tick Marks
Geometric shapes

Rock is very detailed with an abundance of motifs. The petroglyph has two panels, one facing completely side and one sloping down, but upward facing. The geometric shapes are rare among the Petroglyphs of the Firestone center and resemble a type of lettering.
**Condition**

Good condition. The lines are deep and clearly visible. It is moss covered like many of the Petroglyphs in the bamboo forest because of the damp, shady and cooler climate. There is a tree growing very close, and could have damaging effects.

**Comments**

Rock 18 sits directly next to 19, which is broken into two parts. There is a tree growing in the middle of the three rocks. The rocks do not look like they were connected, but are extremely close to each other, and can be considered one site. The rock is intricate, beautiful, and detailed-- we give it two thumbs up!
Site: 19
Zancudo

Site Location

Rock 19 is located twenty-five paces from east of Hacienda Baru, in the outskirts of the bamboo forest, west of the Hooch trail and site 17. There is an abundance of undergrowth, ferns, and bushes. The area is heavily shaded and is on the top ridgeline of the Firestone property. It is thirty-one paces from the Hooch trail, past site 17. It is in the same location as rock 18.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone. Also, this is a sister site, lying northeast by about two paces from site 18. La Araña.

Orientation

One motif panel is facing upward, one motif panel facing to the northwest, and the third motif panel facing to the southwest.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

3

There are three distinct panels, because rock is split into three pieces. Most likely the rock was originally one panel. A tree has forced its way between the three pieces, probably contributing to the splitting of the petroglyph.

Panel Size

Panel 1: 19 in x 39 in
Panel 2: 11.5 in x 14 in
Panel 3: 43 in x 18 in

Number of Motifs

6
Circles
Spirals
Meanders
Dots
Parallel Lines
U-Shape

The U-shape is a type of meander, but is distinctly a U and has no other continuing lines. The engravings are detailed and intricate. The rock has a variety of different designs.

Condition

The rock is in poor condition because it is split into four pieces with a tree growing in the middle. The moss is thick and covers all the motif panels. There is also creeping plants and vines present and onion peeling.

Comments

Rock 18 sits directly next to 19, which is broken into two parts. There is a tree growing in the middle of the three rocks. The rocks do not look like they were connected, but are extremely close to each other, and can be considered one site. The motifs are intricate, beautiful, and detailed and we give it two thumbs up! Excavation at the base of 19 and, if possible, removal of the tree are recommended.
Site 20: Aesop Rock
Site: 20
Aesop Rock

Site Location

Rock 20 is located seven paces southwest of the Hooch trail extension that leads to sites 18 and 19, and a further ten paces southwest to the Hacienda Baru border. The rock is on the top ridgeline of the property in the bamboo buffer between Hacienda Baru and the large clearing to the north of the Hooch trail. It sits in a flat area with bamboo surrounding.

Site Type

Aesop Rock is located in the dense petroglyph zone.

Orientation

The singular panel is facing upward, slightly slanting towards the east.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

The panel is small in size, and faces mostly upward. The lower section of the panel faces northeast, away from Hacienda Baru.

Panel Size

29 in x 25 in

Number of Motifs

3

Circles
Dots
Meander

The motifs are extremely unclear. The etchings are very shallow; preventing a clear or vivid motif.
**Condition**

The engravings are vague and faint. There is sufficient moss coverage. The rock is in fine condition, but the grooves are unclear and proficient viewing is needed in order to decipher a petroglyph.

**Comments**

The rock is a popular area for the peccaries, which have been unearthing the ground directly surrounding the petroglyph, digging, in search for food. The petroglyph is one a vague motif similar to many of the upper bamboo forest petroglyphs.
Site 21: Doty Rock
Site: 21
Doty Rock

Site Location

Site 21 is located in the grassy bamboo clearing to the north of the Hooch trail, with the hooch and banana trail near to the southeast. The hooch is visible from this grassy, flat clearing that lies between the dense bamboo forest and the Hacienda Baru ridgeline. Rock AJ is two paces east from the bamboo buffer that separates this clearing from Hacienda Baru.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone.

Orientation

One upward motif panel slopes to the northeast, and the second motif panel also faces upward, sloping to the southwest.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been complete.

Number of Panels

2

There are two panels as the continuous motifs cover two faces of the rock, one facing northeast and one facing southwest. The engravings carry on over the ridge dividing the two natural faces of the rock.

Panel Size

48 in x 41 in

Number of Motifs

6
Meanders
Circles
Concentrics
Spirals
Parallel Lines
Dots
Almost all of the common motifs of the firestone center present themselves on Rock AJ. The pattern and design of the rock is intricate and detailed. There is a nice style to this rock with the concentrics and circles connecting and spiraling into dots and meanders.

**Condition**

Good condition. Rock is slightly weathered and onion peeling is present affecting the engravings. There is minimal moss and perhaps, termite damage on some outer layers of rock that appear to be becoming the victim of onion peeling.

**Comments**

Rock AJ was discovered May 10, 2007. It was completely covered by creeping vines and other plants, as well as dirt. There is a high possibility of more in the area, connecting two dense petroglyph zones of the lower and upper bamboo zones.
Site 22: Andrew’s Rock
Site: 22
Andrew Rock

Site Location

Rock 22 is located in the top northwestern corner of the property. The rock is nine paces into the bamboo buffer zone that borders Hacienda Baru from the grassy clearing that lies next to the Hooch trail. Hacienda Baru is due west. The rock is on a slight decline, sloping towards east. It is in the top ridgeline area of the Firestone property.

Site Type

This petroglyph is located in the dense zone.

Orientation

The motif panel faces northwest.

Associated Artifacts

No artifacts found, sufficient excavation of the area has not been conducted.

Number of Panels

1

The panel slopes, congruent to the land decline, towards the northwest.

Panel Size

22 in x 36 in

Number of Motifs

2

Spiral
Circle

Both motifs are extremely unclear, and there is a possibility these engravings were created naturally. The circle and spiral are ridiculously unclear and practically undecipherable.

Condition

The rock is in poor condition. The engravings are barely visible. Onion peeling has taken a significant toll and the rock is chipped away in several sections.
Comments

This rock is a debatable petroglyph. The engravings could have easily been created by natural factors such as vines or roots. Imagination is required, but also it makes many other rocks on the Firestone center questionable petroglyphs.
Site: 23
Rock Sachs

Site Location

Rock 23 is located in the bamboo buffer zone that follows the Hacienda Baru border/ridgeline. The rock is in the very top, northwestern corner of the property, twenty-eight paces northwest from Rock 22. It is on the top ridgeline area of the Firestone center only eighteen paces from Hacienda Baru, to the west.

Site Type

This petroglyph sits in the dense zone. The closest known petroglyph to this site is Rock Andrew, site 22.

Orientation

The motif panel faces northeast.

Associated Artifacts

No artifacts found, but sufficient excavation of the area has not been conducted.

Number of Panels

1
The panel is facing the northeast mimicking the slight decline of the hill, declining northeast.

Panel Size

26 in x 38 in

Number of Motifs

1

Dots

The motif is difficult to view and appears only to have dot like motifs present which is both uncommon for a petroglyph, and dots are also easily naturally created by

Condition

The rock is in poor condition. The rock is severely weathered and very bad onion peeling is present. The engravings, or dots, are extremely vague and shallow. Moss has also thickly covered the majority of the rock face.
Comments

The rock is likely not a petroglyph even though it has been mapped and discovered as such. The dots seem too vague and sloppy to be legitimate.
Site 24: Papaya Rock
Site: 24
Papaya Rock

Location

This petroglyph sits at the end of a trail leading from the bamboo curing structure to the young bamboo forest. From the structure, one must enter the trailhead, take the first right when the trail splits in two, and follow it to the end. Facing north, this site is almost directly south of rock 25 by twelve paces. This rock lies in a fairly flat, cleared area, breaking an incline. A young tree is growing next to, almost leaning upon the southeast panel. The rock sits basically on the bamboo trail.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

2

Two panel faces. One is very flat and flopped in a northerly direction; also very large. The other is the south to southeast ‘top’ faces that level off and appear to hold the overhanging motifs from the main panel. Very intricate.

Panel Size

39 in x 52 in

Motifs

6

Spirals
Circle
Meanders
Zig-zags
Dots
Figure Eight

Condition
The engravings on this rock are very visible in any light and well preserved. Some moss coverage is evident, but does not appear to be a hindrance. Onion peeling is detectable on the edges of the main-panel’s face; this is also the section with the most dense moss coverage. A large crack, starting middle of northern side going up to the southeastern side, cuts through some engravings and may present future problems in regards to preservation of this site.

**Orientation**

Main panel slopes downward towards the north. Other panel artwork hangs off panel one’s face to the top facing south and southeast, respectively.

**Comments**

High probability of more petroglyphs in this area. Discovered May 3, 2007
Site 25: Mango Rock
Site: 25
Mango Rock.

Location

Site 25 lies in the middle of the dense, young bamboo forest. This petroglyph may be located by either venturing off-trail from the Corona Rock or site 24. Set in the middle of a slight incline, this site lies almost flush with the ground between two clumps of bamboo.

To reach this site from the Corona Rock one must head in a westerly direction into the bamboo forest, climb a slight incline, and, after locating an unmistakable royal palm, proceed northwest by about thirteen paces to the marked site. From rock 24, one must simply head twelve paces north.

Site Type

Dense Zone.

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One very flat panel face

Panel Size

26 in x 10 in

Motifs

5

Meanders
Dots
Concentrics
Figure Eight
Circles

Condition
Motif engravings are fairly well preserved but lack the incision depth that is evident in many other sites. Trace owl peeling at panel edges is apparent.

**Orientation**

Panel face is flat, sloping naturally with the land towards the north. Engravings are oriented upwards.

**Comments**

Look for more rocks in this area. Discovered May 3, 2007
Site 26: Rocas Las Gemelas, Una
Site: 26  
Rocas Las Gemelas: Una  

Location  
A mere thirty-six paces (by trail) from the first large bamboo cluster around the hooch, which is visible from this point, this site lies in the midst of a break on the Banana Trail. The main banana trail upon which sites 28 and 27 are situated, breaks beside this petroglyph, leaving it in the middle of a trail tongue. The light trail goes through the riparian zone that lies parallel with the banana trees and ultimately descends towards Hacienda Baru.

Site Type  
Dense zone

Artifacts  
None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels  

1  
One panel, slopes downwards towards the East. Eastern tip is still partially beneath ground. Engravings do not appear to carry on to this point.

Panel Size  
51 in x 36 in

Motifs  

3  
Dots (tipping straight lines)  
Meanders  
Circles (1)

Condition  
More than two-thirds covered with moss. Onion peeling and weathering are evident on the entire panel face, which hinders and obscures the intricacies of the engravings. Eastern tip has yet to be unearthed.

Orientation
This site is positioned on the southwest side of the main trail. Panel face slopes upwards in an easterly direction: faces upwards on its' slope.

Comments

Visibility is severely limited during daylight; night viewing and further excavation are suggested.
Site 27: Rocas Las Gemelas, Dos
Site: 27
Name: Rocos Las Gemelas: Dos

**Location**

Site 27 is positioned two paces northeast of site 26 and orientated in the same direction upon the banana trail that stretches between the Hooch and the Banana Plantation. This site lies about thirty-eight paces down trail from the first bamboo cluster close to the Hooch. Surrounding terrain aspects include a flat, grassy plane that serves as a break in the hilt between the aforementioned Hooch and Banana Plantation.

**Site Type**

Dense Zone. Area dense with petroglyphs, about two paces from 26. One may easily see at least four other known Petroglyphs from rock 27.

**Artifacts**

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

**Panels**

1

**Panel Size**

43 in x 20 in

**Motifs**

3

Circles (3; all united with straight lines)
Dots
Meanders

**Condition**

Circles are clearly visible, but other motifs are very difficult to decipher. In addition to natural deterioration, Extensive onion peeling is evident, especially on the southern and western edges, and obscure motif visibility.
Orientation

Sits on the northeastern side of the banana trail. Panel face is sloped upwards, towards the west. Panel face lies perpendicularly with the ground; all evident motifs are on the topmost panel.
Site 28: Roca Rana
Site: 28
Roca Rana

Location

Rock 28 lies along the western (Hacienda Baru) side of the Banana Trail. Directly behind 28 lies a small riparian zone, serving as a corridor to Hacienda Baru. Directly east, or parallel, from this site, lie the outskirts of the dense area of the banana plantation. This site serves as a landmark for many of the petroglyphs located within the plantation. Additionally, 28 is about twenty-five paces east of sites 26 and 27 when following the trail. The land is relatively flat, serving as the base of the trail incline that leads towards the Hooch.

It is worthwhile to note that this area may have been severely altered from its natural condition due to extreme proximity to the banana trees.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One very large, flat-faced panel

Panel Size

51 in x 73 in

Motifs

8

Circles
Meanders
Dots
Connecting straight lines
Spirals
Concentrics
Conjoined meanders
Note: All visible motifs appear to be connected by continuous lines.

**Condition**

Broken into three pieces; the northern-most piece, also the largest, is the only piece that appears to have any evidence of engravings. The panel face is mostly coated in moss, which appears to actually enhance visibility of the engravings. Some onion peeling is visible on the northern most side of the northern piece but does not appear to have a direct effect on the motif visibility. The most extensive onion peeling is evident on the west-most piece where no engravings have been noted. Natural deterioration is evident.

**Orientation**

Panel face has a negligible incline towards the north. Engravings face upwards. Rock situated on the western side of the banana trail.

**Comments**

This petroglyph is awesome.
Site 29: Genesis Rock
Site: 29  
Genesis Rock

Location

This site lies about four paces southwest of both Rock 28 and the Banana trail that enters the densest area of the Banana Plantation. Rock 29 is situated on the outskirts of what appears to be the beginning of a riparian zone leading to the border and connection with the Hacienda Baru reserve. Bamboo clusters are still visible from this area. This petroglyph is located on fairly flat terrain in the midst of a small group of rocks.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One panel face, very flat and low to the ground

Panel Measurements

28 inches length x 20 inches width

Motifs

3

Circles  
Parallel lines  
Geometrics

Condition

Evident motifs have fairly deep grooves and are plainly visible in the light of day. Minimal onion peeling. Some natural deterioration is evident by a multi-tonal face.
Orientation

Panel faces upwards, and is fairly flat. Slight incline descends to the south, in the same direction as another known petroglyph. South of the trail in the direction of Hacienda Baru.

Comments

Suggested digging on side panels. Look around this area for more petroglyphs.
Site 30: Plata Rock
Site: 30
Plata Rock

Location

Site 30 lies twenty feet west, Hacienda Baru side of the portion of banana trail that extends between the Banana Plantation and the Hooch. Seven paces south of rock 29, rock 30 is a member of a small rock cluster. Surrounding terrain is fairly flat and appears to be amidst the beginning of a riparian zone that extends towards Hacienda Baru.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One fairly flat panel face; about one foot off the ground; faint.

Panel Size

20 in x 26 in

Motifs

3

Spiral (1)
Circle (1)
Meanders (2)

Condition

Weathered. Appears to have edges of its' southeastern side broken off; possibly the result of onion peeling. Onion peeling is evident on panel face, some motif lines appear to correspond with the lines of damage. Engravings are faint.

Orientation

Motif panel is generally upward facing, with a slight diagonal decline west.
Comments

Excavation is suggested and may yield broken rock pieces. There is a high possibility of more petroglyphs being in this area. This rock is extremely damaged and may appear questionable. The patterns are simplistic.
Site 31: Dar La Luz
Site 31
Dar La Luz

Site Location

Rock 31 is located on a slight incline near on the western, Hacienda Baru-side, of the edge of the Banana Plantation. Dar la Luz is on the west side of the Banana Trail. The flat ridgeline of the Firestone center begins to fluctuate in steepness near this site as the rock sits just below a steep decline leading to the Hacienda Baru property. The rock is in a brush-filled clearing, not surrounded by large trees. Rock 32 (hidden rock) is very near; the closest petroglyph to Rock 31.

Site Type

Dar la Luz is located in the dense petroglyph zone amongst the extensive collection of banana plantation sites.

Orientation

Motif panel is facing purely upward in the southwestern region of the dense Banana Plantation Zone.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

One panel is visible but much of the rock remains uncovered. The rock is flat and flush with the ground so there is a possibility of another panel, also Rock 32 (hidden rock) was excavated in the immediate area suggesting continued motif or perhaps more petroglyphs in the area.

Panel Size

34 in x 25 in

Number of Motifs

4

- Circles
- Spiral
- Meanders
- Dots
The rock is dense in circles and, because of the weathered indistinct quality of the engravings it gives the surface a bumpy texture. The 7 circles range in size and clarity, but are the focal motif of the flat, small rock.

**Condition**

The rock is in mediocre condition. It seems as if natural factors have taken a toll of the quality of the engravings which are unclear visually. The vague grooves are weathered, but the rock is clean of moss and only has minimal onion peeling.

**Comments**

The close proximity to Rock 32 (hidden rock) and the reality that a majority of the rock is buried leads to suggested excavation in the immediate area, especially around the base of this rock.
Site 32: Hidden Rock
Site: 32
Hidden Rock

Site Location

Rock 32 is located on the Hacienda Baru side edge of the Banana Plantation; it is the furthest west of that specific zone's concentration of petroglyphs. It sits on a slight incline to the southwest, but is located on the flat ridgeline of the Firestone property, where the Banana Plantation and Banana trail are located. Directly below, to the south, a steep incline begins from the top ridgeline, ultimately descending towards Hacienda Baru.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs: the banana forest collection.

Orientation

Rock 32 is southwest of the banana trail. The panel face is completely perpendicular with the ground, facing the southwest, toward Hacienda Baru.

Associated Artifacts

No artifacts found, excavation has been conducted in the surrounding area.

Number of Panels

1
The panel has been completely cracked, and recently the two halves were reunited to create a representation of the original panel. The piece that was replaced was completely unearthed and sitting a few feet from its other part.

Panel Size

30 in x 42 in

Number of Motifs

4
Dots
Circles - 7
Meanders
Spiral
This rock is dense in circles and has an impressive motif. The engravings that were originally surfacing were only a minimal part of the entire panel, and the recently unearthed rock is in wonderful condition with clear, deep engravings. The motif is intricate and extensive, the meanders and circles connecting. When the upper portion of the rock was replaced recently, two circles were completed along the crack, on of the many obvious signs that the two were once together.

**Condition**

The rock is in good condition because of the majority of it was recently excavated, and the engravings and motifs had been underground keeping the rock well preserved. Now that the rock is completely exposed however it may suffer from weathering.

**Comments**

Finding and reconnecting this petroglyph was extremely exciting, however there are some issues regarding whether it is best for the petroglyph to remain buried or be exposed. The current condition of the rock will likely suffer from exposure to natural elements.
Site 33: Pony Rock
Site: 33
Pony Rock

Site Location

Rock 33 is located in the middle of the Banana Plantation, directly on the northeastern side of the banana path. This is part of the upper ridgeline area of the Firestone property. The circular rock is one of the most impressive petroglyphs of the Firestone Center.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs; the banana forest collection.

Orientation

The rock is on the northeast side of the path, essentially sitting directly on the trail. One panel faces purely upward and one panel is on the northern side of the rock.

Associated Artifacts

Pottery shards have been discovered. Two types were uncovered, one with an etched pattern that connected several pieces around what may be presumed to be the rim of a bowl or cup, and one without a pattern. The pottery pieces were found superficially buried around the base of the rock.

Number of Panels

2

One panel faces directly up, and motif extends on the curved rock sloping slightly to the south. The second panel is on the north side of the rock and was recently unearthed, yet still lies partly underground. The motifs are not continuous on the two panels, and have very different designs.

Panel Size

Panel 1: 25 in x 38 in
Panel 2: 25 in x 40 in

Number of Motifs

Upward Facing Panel: 5
Circles- 8
Spiral- very large
Lines
Parallel Tick Lines- with dots on the end
Dots

The main, upward facing panel is an unusual and beautiful petroglyph. The spiral is remarkably large, and the tick marks surround the spiral in a sun-like motif. There are also 8 circles on the top panel. The motif has beautiful intricacy and very aesthetically pleasing and interesting. The common motifs are compiled in an interesting and different design than the other petroglyphs.

Side Panel (north facing): 3
Parallel zig-zag lines
Circles - 2
Dot
Concentrics

This motif is a chevron design. The circle sits on the angled points of the parallel zig-zags. This is the only chevron design found thus far on the Firestone Center property. Another interesting aspect to the motif is that it appears that there is a concentric design connected to the chevron. Concentric patterns have rarely been seen on the petroglyphs.

Condition

Very good condition. The motif is clearly visible. The rock was recently, unearthing the side panel. It is believed that while this panel was based below ground it was very well preserved, as the engravings that have been buried are in excellent condition and clearly visible. The top panel where the motif was originally exposed has some weathering but the engravings are still clear. There is not moss or lichen present.

Comments

This is one of the most beautiful and interesting petroglyphs found at the Firestone Center, with a rare and intricate motif. The rock is very circular, smooth, and low to the ground. Pottery has also been unearthed at this site; further excavation of the surrounding area is suggested. Further formal excavation is suggested, at least to the extent of uncovering panel two. Also to be noted, the entire northern side panel was recently excavated without any of the motif originally exposed, which insinuates that many other rocks may have buried motifs.
Site 34: Spur Rock
Site: 34
Spur Rock

Site Location

Rock 34 is located nine paces off the banana trail in a northerly direction. It sits in a flat area along the ridgeline in the upper Firestone property, where the Banana Plantation is located. It is twelve paces from Rock 33 (Pony rock) in a northeasterly bearing, surrounded by mature banana trees.

Site Type

Spur Rock is located where the dense petroglyph zone extends into the banana plantation.

Orientation

This petroglyph is flat, erect and perpendicular with the ground. The main panel face is oriented towards the north.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

There is one panel with a small amount of motif towards the bottom. In the recent discovery and excavation of this petroglyph, the bottom area was unearthed and a small amount of motif was discovered, however, a large part of the panel, a majority of what is exposed, does not have any engravings or signs of former motifs.

Panel Size

37 in x 19 in

Number of Motifs

5

Tick Marks
Spiral- uncertain
Concentrics
Dot
Meander

On the bottom half of the panel there are a variety of different motifs. The tick marks are especially interesting because of the proximity to Rock 33 (pony rock) which also has
vivid tick marks. The spiral is in poor condition and could possibly have been a concentric pattern. The engravings are vague, leaving the motif difficult to identify.

**Condition**

Site 34 is in poor condition. The rock is severely weathered and engravings are unclear and deteriorated. There is moss and lichen present. Onion peeling has damaged many parts of the panel, allowing one to believe that originally this rock could have been more extensively detailed. Parts of the rock have also been chipped off naturally.

**Comments**

This rock was excavated on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of May, 2007. Rock 33 (pony rock) is the closest petroglyph and they both share the uncommon tick mark motif. The rock is vague and in poor condition, but the engravings are undeniably legitimate. Further excavation is suggested.
Site 35: Roca Espiral Delicada
Rock 35
Espiral Delicada

Site Location

Rock 35 is located in the lower, northern area of the Banana plantation. East of the banana trail, it sits in a dense area of the forest with large and mature banana trees. This site is nearest to Rock 37 and 36, but lays parallel from Site 28. It is also almost at the northeastern base of a large Guanacaste tree. This is a very flat area on the ridgeline of the Firestone property.

Site Type

This petroglyph is located in the dense zone. There is an especially high level of petroglyphs in this specific area (the banana plantation).

Orientation

The small panel is facing east. Espiral Delicada also lies east of the banana trail.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1
The rock has a usable, flat panel, but the only area with any motif is a small section of a top corner. The panel as a whole therefore has not been utilized.

Panel Size

8.5 in x 25 in

Number of Motifs

1
Spiral

The motif is one spiral in the top corner of the small, easterly facing rock. The spiral is small and lacks the precision and intricacies of many of the other spiral motifs present on the petroglyphs of the Firestone center property. There is only one revolution evident in this spiral.
**Condition**

Good condition. The rock seems fairly untouched by the elements and only a small amount of onion peeling is affecting the panel, luckily not in the area of the spiral.

**Comments**

The rock is difficult to find because it’s relatively small size and the density of the banana trees surrounding it. The rock is also unusual because there is only a spiral and no sign of any other motif or engraving. The motif is small and ultimately unimpressive; however, it does manage to maintain uniqueness.
Site 36: Roca Verde
Site: 36  
Roca Verde

Location

Huddled away in the heart of a large banana patch, Roca Verde lays in the dense banana field, southeast of the banana trail. This site is about seven paces south of site 37. The terrain of this area is a noticeable incline that extends to the west/southwest towards the banana trail, where it flattens briefly, and then slopes down to Hacienda Baru.

Site Type

Dense zone.

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

Panel Size

20 in × 14 in

Motifs

5

Dots  
Straight Lines  
Circles  
Parallel Lines  
Geometrics

Note: All visible motifs appear to be connected by continuous lines.

Condition

This petroglyph appears to have been well preserved throughout the years. There is no moss or lichen coverage, and clear onion peeling is minimal. Engravings are very deep, clear lines. Some small chips in the rock panel have been noted and could be the first signs of onion peeling.

Orientation
Panel faces towards the northeast; rock is perpendicular with the ground.

**Comments**

Motif does not cover a large portion of the rock panel. The motif resembles a music note, and also has a similarity to the style of the Petroglyph sitting outside Turística Baru.
Site 37: Roca Hombro Quebrado
Site: 37  
Hombro Quebrado

Site Location

Rock 37 is located forty paces to the north of the Banana Trail, in the lower area of the Banana Plantation. This lower, northern, section of the Banana Plantation is dense with a number of newly discovered small-sized petroglyphs. The rock sits on a slight incline, at the edge and directly below a steep incline begins. It sits thirteen paces from the Roca Verde, Site 36.

Site Type

Located in the dense petroglyph zone; also located amongst the extensive collection of the banana plantation petroglyphs, which are generally large in number and small in size.

Orientation

Motif panel is facing directly east.

Associated Artifacts

Cylindrical rock found while excavating. The small cylinder fits in the space of the engravings remarkably well, but whether it is an artifact, used as a tool, or simply a natural rock is undecided. Further excavation is suggested.

Number of Panels

1

One panel is split into two pieces because of natural forces, but was indisputably originally one rock. The pieces lie directly next to each other.

Panel Size

14 in x 30 in

Number of Motifs

3

Circles
Spiral
Meander

The tree motifs of this rock are all connected, the engravings continuous from the two or three circles up to the spiral and the meandering lines.
Condition

The petroglyph is in good condition with exception of the broken panel, which remains close. The continuous motifs of both pieces are still easily traceable. Lines are clear and deep, the motifs clearly and beautifully visible. There is onion peeling present and a small amount of moss.

Comments

Hombro Roto is a new discovery in the northern (lower) area of the Banana plantation and is located among many other newly discovered petroglyphs. The area probably has many more to be found. The cylindrical rock found at the base of the rock that was superficially buried is a mysterious and exciting find; it seems highly possible that the tool was used in the making of the engravings because of the extraordinarily tight fit of the widths. The cylinder also has two small nooks on the top of the cylinder. Excavation of this area is highly suggested as well as continued search for petroglyphs in this section of the Banana plantation.
Site 38: Boulder Rock
Site: 38
Boulder Rock

Site Location

Boulder Rock is two paces from the edge of the banana plantation and eight paces west from rock 39. The large boulder is located on the trail at the southern end of the Banana Trail with the sound of the ocean clear and crisp. It sits on the flat, cleared ridgeline of the Firestone property.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs; the banana forest collection. The closest other petroglyph is Rock 39, which is also in the southwest region.

Orientation

The motif panel is sloped to the south.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock. Excavation is suggested because pottery shards have been found in the surrounding area.

Number of Panels

1

There is one panel, but it the engravings extend across the arced face of the boulder.

Panel Size

46 in x 38 in

Number of Motifs

3

Meanders
Circle
Lines

The motif is not especially intricate but has some clear straight and curvilinear lines, as well as lines that may have created other geometric shapes, unfortunately unidentifiable.
Condition

Extensive and damaging onion peeling has obstructed some of the engravings. Moss is also present. The engravings are shallow and vague and motif is not clear.

Comments

Digging and excavating is strongly suggested in this area for artifacts and signs of indigenous peoples. The motif also could benefit from the moss being cleared off of panel, and watch out for the leaf cutter ant highway at the base of the rock!
Site 39: El Lector de Dios
Site: 39
El Lector de Dios

Site Location

Rock 39 is located twelve feet southeast of the Banana plantation, on the eastern side of the banana trail. It sits in a flat area on the top southeastern corner of the Firestone property, which is the ridge line. The rock sits in a grassy area immediately before the banana plantation.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs; the banana forest collection. The closest other petroglyph is Rock 40, which is also in the southwest region.

Orientation

Motif panel is facing completely upward.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1
Panel is flat and smooth, a perfect canvas for engravings. The rock is flush with the ground and a large portion of it buried.

Panel Size

29 in x 40 in

Number of Motifs

2
There are clear meanders and dots, but also unclear lines that form unidentifiable motifs. Its grooves are shallow and therefore difficult to correctly identify types of motifs. It doesn't have any circles which is unusual.

Condition

Extensive onion peeling has, and continues to damage the motif panel and engravings. The rock is also weathered and the engravings are unclear because of the shallowness of the grooves.
Comments

The motif is unclear, and perhaps was originally much more extensive. Further excavation is suggested because a majority of the rock is buried. It is highly probable that more unknown petroglyphs exist in this area.
Site 40: Big Guy
Site Location

Rock 6 is located in the secondary regenerating forest immediately to the south before the banana plantation begins. The trees surrounding Rock 6 are small saplings and thick grass and forest floor coverage. Massive Rock 6 is located on the southern top ridgeline of the Firestone center where many other petroglyphs have been discovered. The rock is hidden about eight paces from the banana trail.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs; the banana forest collection. The closest other petroglyph is Rock 39, which is also in the southwest region.

Orientation

The motif panel is on a diagonal sloping in a northern direction.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

A large section of the panel has cracked off on the eastern corner, and although it is a large section it doesn’t appear to have any motif. The panel is extremely large, one of the biggest on the property with an extensive motif, although difficult to see.

Panel Size

32 in x 77 in

Number of Motifs

6

Zig-zags
Parallel Zig-zags
Circles
Meanders
Spiral
Lines (coming from circles, continuous)
The four circles on the rock large in diameter. Most engravings seem continuous, with a variety of different motifs. The rock is also remarkable in size, with the motif extending the complete distance of the large face.

**Condition**

Good condition with the exception that a corner is broken off and sits beside the main panel. This broken piece does not appear to have any engravings present. The engravings are fairly shallow, and the designs are difficult to decipher during the day. There is minimal onion peeling and minimal moss.

**Comments**

One of the largest Petroglyphs on the property and viewing at night with light would be suggested because motif is extensive and detailed, but shallow and difficult to see during daylight in the shady area where the rock is located.
Site 41: Kira's Rock
Site: 41
Kira’s Rock

Location

Kira’s rock lies about ten paces below the ridgeline of the southeastern side of the large, grassy bamboo clearing, where the upper loop trail ends. This specific petroglyph lies slanted upon a small cluster of rocks, with a young tree growing to the south, behind it. The surrounding land is steeply inclined northwest towards the bamboo clearing; or descending to the southeast into a lower riparian zone.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One flat-faced panel.

Panel Size

33 in x 20 in

Motifs

4

Circles
Meanders
Dots
Spirals

Note: All visible motifs appear to be connected by continuous lines.

Condition

When discovered this petroglyph was completely covered with moss, dirt, and grass; all of which have been removed, yet most likely aided in preservation. With exception of trace onion peeling in the “top”, or southern, corner, other noticeable types of damage are
not present. Engravings are easily visible; though lack stylistic depth that can be noted in other sites such as L and M.

**Orientation**

Panel face slopes down slightly towards the northeast.

**Comments**

This petroglyph is awesome and can be viewed from standing on the grassy clearing, where the three large boulders are located and looking down. Discovered April 27, 2007.
**Condition**

Extensive and damaging onion peeling has obstructed some of the engravings. Moss is also present. The engravings are shallow and vague and motif is not clear.

**Comments**

Digging and excavating is strongly suggested in this area for artifacts and signs of indigenous peoples. The motif also could benefit from the moss being cleared off of panel, and watch out for the leaf cutter ant highway at the base of the rock!
Site 39: El Lector de Dios
Site: 39
El Lector de Dios

Site Location

Rock 39 is located twelve feet southeast of the Banana plantation, on the eastern side of the banana trail. It sits in a flat area on the top southeastern corner of the Firestone property, which is the ridge line. The rock sits in a grassy area immediately before the banana plantation.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs; the banana forest collection. The closest other petroglyph is Rock 40, which is also in the southwest region.

Orientation

Motif panel is facing completely upward.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1
Panel is flat and smooth, a perfect canvas for engravings. The rock is flush with the ground and a large portion of it buried.

Panel Size

29 in x 40 in

Number of Motifs

2
There are clear meanders and dots, but also unclear lines that form unidentifiable motifs. Its grooves are shallow and therefore difficult to correctly identify types of motifs. It doesn’t have any circles which is unusual.

Condition

Extensive onion peeling has, and continues to damage the motif panel and engravings. The rock is also weathered and the engravings are unclear because of the shallowness of the grooves.
**Comments**

The motif is unclear, and perhaps was originally much more extensive. Further excavation is suggested because a majority of the rock is buried. It is highly probable that more unknown petroglyphs exist in this area.
Site 40: Big Guy
Site: 40
Big Guy

Site Location

Rock 6 is located in the secondary regenerating forest immediately to the south before the banana plantation begins. The trees surrounding Rock 6 are small saplings and thick grass and forest floor coverage. Massive Rock 6 is located on the southern top ridgeline of the Firestone center where many other petroglyphs have been discovered. The rock is hidden about eight paces from the banana trail.

Site Type

This site is located in the dense petroglyph zone, also this is part of a high concentration of petroglyphs; the banana forest collection. The closest other petroglyph is Rock 39, which is also in the southwest region.

Orientation

The motif panel is on a diagonal sloping in a northern direction.

Associated Artifacts

None found yet. Sufficient excavation has not been completed around the rock.

Number of Panels

1

A large section of the panel has cracked off on the eastern corner, and although it is a large section it doesn’t appear to have any motif. The panel is extremely large, one of the biggest on the property with an extensive motif, although difficult to see.

Panel Size

32 in x 77 in

Number of Motifs

6
Zig-zags
Parallel Zig-zags
Circles
Meanders
Spiral
Lines (coming from circles, continuous)
The four circles on the rock large in diameter. Most engravings seem continuous, with a variety of different motifs. The rock is also remarkable in size, with the motif extending the complete distance of the large face.

**Condition**

Good condition with the exception that a corner is broken off and sits beside the main panel. This broken piece does not appear to have any engravings present. The engravings are fairly shallow, and the designs are difficult to decipher during the day. There is minimal onion peeling and minimal moss.

**Comments**

One of the largest Petroglyphs on the property and viewing at night with light would be suggested because motif is extensive and detailed, but shallow and difficult to see during daylight in the shady area where the rock is located.
Site 41: Kira’s Rock
Site: 41
Kira's Rock

Location

Kira's rock lies about ten paces below the ridgeline of the southeastern side of the large, grassy bamboo clearing, where the upper loop trail ends. This specific petroglyph lies slanted upon a small cluster of rocks, with a young tree growing to the south, behind it. The surrounding land is steeply inclined northwest towards the bamboo clearing; or descending to the southeast into a lower riparian zone.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One flat-faced panel.

Panel Size

33 in x 20 in

Motifs

4

Circles
Meanders
Dots
Spirals

Note: All visible motifs appear to be connected by continuous lines.

Condition

When discovered this petroglyph was completely covered with moss, dirt, and grass; all of which have been removed, yet most likely aided in preservation. With exception of trace onion peeling in the 'top', or southern, corner, other noticeable types of damage are
not present. Engravings are easily visible; though lack stylistic depth that can be noted in other sites such as L and M.

**Orientation**

Panel face slopes down slightly towards the northeast.

**Comments**

This petroglyph is awesome and can be viewed from standing on the grassy clearing, where the three large boulders are located and looking down. Discovered April 27, 2007.
Site 42: Storm God Rock
Site: 42
Storm God Rock

Location

Rock 42 lays less than a step off of the southeastern side of the Upper Loop Trail. Situated as the midway point of the final incline before reaching the large bamboo clearing, this site is in the midst of regenerating riparian zone that functions as a buffer to the large bamboo forests. While the clearing is accessible when venturing off-trail, only twelve paces in a southeastern direction to the upper ridgeline, the more round-about trail takes an active young lad just forty-one paces.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered; further excavation is required.

Panels

1

One large, rolling (sloping) panel face of notable size.

Panel Size

56 in x 51 in

Motifs

4

Dots
Circles (connected with lines)
Meanders
Lines (cur linear and long)

Condition

While the existence of this site’s engravings is easily established the motifs’ intricacies are difficult to see as a result of the rock’s weathered condition. The panel face is covered with a spattering of cracks, lichens and moss in addition to extensive onion peeling. Onion peeling is so extensive on some parts of the panel that it is nearly impossible to
clearly distinguish between a weathered motif and natural grooves. Towards the base a piece has been broken off, likely the result of arduous trail clearing.

**Orientation**

The panel faces slopes slightly in a northerly bearing.

**Comments**

It is highly probable that other unknown petroglyphs are located in this area. Viewing this rock at night was extremely impressive, grooves and engravings were much more distinguished with a cross-lamp and the motif appeared much more intricate.
Site 43: DOP Rock
Site: 43
BOP Rock

Location

Rock 43 lies about nine paces southeast from site 16. On the southeastern side of the hooch trail that stretches before and past the Hooch to the Banana Plantation area. Area is cleared and slightly grassy; located on a slight incline. From here, the Hooch is visible, and very close, in the southeast.

Site Type

Dense zone

Artifacts

None yet discovered. Further excavation is required.

Panels

1
Panel Size

17 in x 27 in

Motifs

5
Spirals
Meanders
Geometrics
Circles
Tick Marks

Condition

While this site is clearly weathered the engravings are deep, intricate and easily visible. A fair amount of moss covers the main panel faces. There is a noticeable amount of onion peeling and cracks in the rock.

Orientation

The main panel face is tilted upwards in a northwesterly position.

Comments
This rock was recently discovered in April 2007. The rock is part of the dense Petroglyph zone on the ridgeline of the property. It lies in an area containing many rocks that could likely be potential Petroglyphs.
Rock Art Motif Analysis:
Possible Meaning and Significance of FCRE Rock Art

Andrew Doty
Pitzer College in Costa Rica
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Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology
Introduction

The firestone center is located in southwestern Costa Rica. It is in the province of Puntarenas, the district of Savegre, the canton of Aguirre and most specifically the town of Barú (Ecological Easement Number 71-s-04). It is situated along the Barú River, two and a half kilometers from the ocean, and the small town of Dominical.

The property rests in a climate zone labeled, “bosque muy humidoso tropical” or, very moist tropical forest (Ecological Easement Number 71-S-04). The FCRE totals 58.93 hectares, consisting largely of secondary rainforest (34.67 ha) and abandoned growth and bamboo (11.65 ha). Though the primary growth on the property occurs largely in the few riparian zones, it is dense and lush where it does grow.

As one summits the hill on which the property rests, the attention begins to turn from the living natural beauty, to that which is not living, but still well preserved. Nearly two thirds of the way up the property on either the north loop trail or the access road, well preserved pre-Columbian petroglyphs begin to appear rather suddenly out of the foliage. They are mysterious and beautiful but leave no clear clues as to how they were put to stone or why. Only adding to the mystery is the fact that little is known about the history of the region or its people. While a historical analysis is not the focus of this paper, it will aid in the end result, which is to analyze the most common motifs of the rock art on the Firestone Center property.

History

This region of Costa Rica was settled as long as 10,000 years ago (Museo Nacional pre-Columbian exhibit). Some of the most likely settlers of the area were the indigenous Bribri, Ateos, Blancos and Valientes with Bribri being the largest and most
established group (Edibral, 15). Over time, the tribes in the area grew to an estimated 400,000 people before Columbus arrived in 1592. The tribes were complex societies that functioned extremely well without the helping hand of the Spaniards.

The tribes were likely organized in a “cacique” system, similar to that of a cast system where shamans were the most powerful people in the tribe, and poor peasants had the least power (Museo Nacional pre-Columbian exhibit). As shamans were the spiritual leaders of the tribes, one possible explanation for the rocks could be drawings inspired by shamanistic religious experiences. Especially for the Bribri, there were very extensive rituals surrounding the death of a tribe member.

When a Bribri tribe member dies, their body is left, buried, in the forest for a year to decompose and rest. After the year is over, the body is relocated, but before that can happen there is a big party in honor of the deceased. It is said that the spirit of the deceased will attend the party, and afterwards will make his or her journey to heaven, a very general concept to the Bribri:

Our conception of heaven is conceptualized by, “más por allá” or “more towards over there”. During the year while the body is in the forest, the fleshless spirit roams around, feeding itself with wild fruits and wild cacao while the people light a new funerary fire. The spirit then comes to the party, and after the spirit walks on its final journey (translated: Edibral, 115).

While it is very possible that only the Bribri practice this death ritual, or have this conception of the afterlife, it is still a plausible idea. The possible significance of the ritual is that perhaps some rock art images are representations of the spirits journey from its earthly life to, “más por allá”. That assumes, however, that it was the Bribri tribe who previously inhabited the FCRE property, and that the carvings dealt with death rituals. Unfortunately, there is no way to be sure.
By the time Columbus did arrive to Costa Rica, nearly all of the tribes that had inhabited this area had already died of European diseases. Columbus was making an extensive impact before he even arrived in this country. Due to the fact that many inhabitants had already died, and that the rest were enslaved or slaughtered, there was very little preservation of their language, culture or history. As such, it is very difficult to ascribe meanings to the rock art on the property of the FCRE, but on a larger scale, in Costa Rica as a whole.

While there are few hard facts about who put the carvings on the rocks, or what their significance may be, it is still possible to analyze the most common rock art motifs, and ascribe to them some meaning, or provide a better understanding of what they are.

Rock Location, Orientation and Age

The firestone property is rests on a large hill. The bottom of the hill is somewhat marshy, as it lies along the confluence of several small streams and the Barú River. The top of the hill is dominated by a strong ridgeline where the FCRE property meets Hacienda Barú. As one walks from bottom to top, it is noteworthy that regardless of which train one chooses to climb, no petroglyphs appear until one reaches the upper third of the property.

When mapped and plotted using a GPS system, it was shown that the majority of the petroglyphs are situated in a very large oval on the property. Using a compass, all of the rocks were charted to see which direction their panels faced in hopes of finding some regularities or patterns. However, the panel directions seem to face in all compass directions with no pattern-like or obvious repetitions.
While there were no similarities in panel direction, the rocks did have other things in common. They were almost never isolated, having a few to many other rocks near them. The rocks also often were situated on, or next to the ridgeline. When not near the ridgeline, they were mostly in relatively flat areas. Additionally, the rocks at the top of the property were situated next to what seem to be old graves or burial sites. While there were few similarities in panel direction, panel design and rock composition were very similar.

Rock composition obviously is the same for all of the rocks. All of the rock art is carved into igneous rock, a curious phenomenon as the FCRE property is not particularly close to the more volcanic regions in Costa Rica. A Pomona geologist offered the theory that long ago there was a huge geologic event that pushed the volcanic line away from the coast in a very sudden occurrence, leaving behind the igneous rocks that dot the property. It is thought that the most likely date for the rock carvings is somewhere between 300-500 A.D., very long after any vast seismic event that would have pushed the volcanoes (Norr, 6, 1980). This period in time was known as the Aguas Buenas period (Kiune, Blanco, 1993).

Another similarity that the rocks share is their basic panel designs. The most common designs include circles, meandering lines, spirals, dots, small abrupt lines or tic marks, and circles connected to or by lines. There were some more complex designs. However, more complex designs were limited to one or two rocks and saw very little repetition. The proximity of other rocks never mandated what would be on a given rock. That is, we could not predict what would be on the next rock given its proximity to the previous rock. While many rocks share similar simple designs, there was no clear pattern
as to which designs would fall on which rock. Repetition and use of designs was nearly random. Though it is difficult to try and assume what the designs mean, based on the research conducted, and the research of others there are plausible theories as to the meaning of each of the most common designs on the FCRE property.

Interpretation and Analysis of Designs

The Circle

The circle is a widely repeated design on nearly all of the rocks that were studied on the property of the FCRE. In western thought, circles are often used to represent infinity, timelessness or continuity. Circles are also used to highlight areas of importance, give significance to an item or mark points on a map. It is likely that for the indigenous people who carved the rocks it was an important symbol. The circle is drawn on more than twenty-four of the forty-two rocks that have been uncovered on the property.

Many researchers think that these carvings could function as a map of sorts. Be it an earthly map, or a map of a more spiritual world, the circle could likely be a design for
marking a site of some importance. One thought is that the carvings pertain to the burial sites next to which they often reside. However, were this the case, why would there be so many maps in an area that is relatively small? If the drawings pertain to the living, Victor J. Acuña suggests that circles could represent things such as eyes, ears and mouths. He also suggests that on a more spiritual plane, circles could represent unity and eternity.

Given the wide use and repetition of this design it is probable that the circle had a precise meaning. Whether it meant eternity, the collective eyes of the tribe or some point on a map, the circle clearly holds significance. Another design with wide use and repetition used almost as frequently as the circle is the spiral.

The Spiral

![Spiral Image]

The spiral is another one of the most commonly used and repeated designs on the rock art on the FCRE property. This design is repeated on more than twenty of the rocks on the property. Often the spiral will be repeated more than one time on a rock as well.

Following the idea of a map, the spiral could represent a path on which one must walk to arrive at the destination the artist had in mind. It also is possible that it represents the climbing of a mountain; as one circles in closer to the center, it is representational of
being closer to the top of a mountain or ridge. If the map were to be of a more cosmic nature, it is possible that the spirals could be representations of a galaxy or cluster of stars as well. Finally on the topic of maps, it could represent a spiritual journey or climb that the spirit of the deceased endures while on his or her journey to the afterlife.

If the carvings had a more direct relationship to the tribe and its surroundings, one theory suggests that spirals were used to represent masks, abstract eyes or more abstract representations of birds or bats (Acuña, V.J., 51. 1985). The representation of masks seems like a probable theory. The indigenous people who currently live closest to the Firestone Center are the Boruca people. The Boruca still carve masks today. It is possible that were they the original artists, they had representations of the masks on the rocks. The next most commonly repeated design is the meander.

**Meanders**

Being another one of the most common designs on the rock art at the Firestone Center, this design occurs on more than twenty-five of the rocks that have been studied. It is said that most of the designs seen on the rocks at the FCRE fall under the category of phosphenes. Phosphenes are often curved lines, circles, spirals and geometric shapes that are seen when hallucinatory drugs are taken. They can also be seen by putting pressure on one’s eyes with one’s fingers when the eyes are closed. It is possible that all of the rocks were carved in a hallucinatory state induced by a ritual drug. Thus, all of the drawings could be solely what is seen when hallucinating and nothing more. This seems
more plausible for the meander as it is such an abstract shape or design. The sizes of the different meanders vary greatly and there is no common design except that they are all curving lines.

If one applies the idea of the earthly or spiritual map, other meanings can be divined from the meander. It is possible that it represents a small creek or stream. It could also represent a smaller trail or a connection between two points on a map. On the more spiritual plain it could similarly represent connections between here and the afterlife, or perhaps a small section of the journey. Perhaps in the hallucinatory state the shaman was interpreting the journey of the spirit of a deceased member of the tribe.

Finally, since many of the rocks are carved on a ridge from which one can see the ocean, it is possible that the meander is a representation of waves seen from afar. Especially in the case of the meander seen above, it looks particularly wavy. However, this is fairly literal interpretation that may not be applicable. The third most common design that was found on the rocks was that of dots.

**Dots**

Though this photo only shows one dot, dots are not always solitary. Often dots are in clusters, or attached to the end of lines. Sometimes a line will start with a dot then
will connect to a circle. The myriad of ways in which dots are laid out suggests that there are many potential meanings.

For solitary dots, Acuña suggests that they could represent eyes, or perhaps drawings on a body. When the dots are together in clusters, he suggests that they represent a collection of things. They could represent a collection of huts in a village, or collections of graves or even several villages together. It is hard to determine a specific meaning for the dots. Were one to think cosmically, the dots could represent individual stars or constellations. Though it is uncertain, these seem like the most probable options.

**Lines and Tie Marks**

![Image of lines and Tie Marks]

Parallel lines and tie marks are the fourth most common designs on the rocks. These designs are repeated on more than thirteen of the rocks on the property. Their stark patterning makes them one of the more striking designs that is found on the rocks. While normally their repetition could render them plain or boring, their exactness and precision lends them a beauty that is different from the other designs. Additionally the straight lines offer a different interpretation than the other symbols.

Acuña again suggests that the lines could be a collection of things. If it is a collection of anything at all, it is possible that it functions more as a way to count what is
in the collection, than to represent the collection itself. The straight lines are so precise, that it seems probable they could refer to an exact action or way of planning. If one keeps the analysis in the earthly realm, it is possible that these lines refer to a farming pattern.

One possible representation is rows of a crop, or seasonal patterns in accord with the moon. The picture above has exactly 9 parallel lines, the number nine may have some significance in a calendar or lunar chart. It is interesting to note that the spaces between the first four lines are exactly equal, and the spaces between the following five lines are exactly equal as well. However, the distances between the two sets of lines are different. The specificity indicates that care was taken to preserve some habit or tradition for a very long time.

Tie marks posses many of the same qualities that parallel lines do. They are often parallel, close together and grouped in clusters. Because of this, the theory about collections of things can probably be applied here too. Furthermore, the possibility of a counting system is very plausible too. However, that is not all.

In her paper about petroglyphs in northwestern Costa Rica, Lynette Norr poses the idea that tie marks could represent feather plumes from a bird, or part of a shaman's costume. She goes onto say that they could be representations feathers on a traditional gourd rattle. Extrapolating from the idea of feathers, it is possible that the tie marks represent actual wings. As mentioned earlier, spirals can possibly be abstract representations of the bodies of birds. If this is indeed the case, accompanying tie marks could possibly be the abstract wings to the abstract bird.
Conclusion

While the petroglyphs remain a mystery, there are many small clues one can use to try and interpret their meanings. In this area in Costa Rica, the people who live here now are very knowledgeable about the land on which they live. Were this study to be continued, more extensive interviews with the people who live in Barú, Platanillo and Tinamastes would be very helpful. It is likely that their stories and legends could shed light on any possible meanings for the petroglyphs, or at least on who lived here in the past and carved them.

The people who lived here in the past seem to be the most likely key to what is still preserved on the Firestone Center property. Another helpful part in the process of uncovering the meanings of the petroglyphs is to know as much as possible about who carved them. An in-depth research project about indigenous people presently in the area, and those who actually inhabited it, and were not imported would add incredible depth to any analysis of the rock art.

As rocks continue to be discovered, motifs continue to be repeated and placement becomes clearer, these things too could become keys to analyzing the trove of art we have on the property. The rocks were carved intentionally and with great care. Whether they were carved in a hallucinatory state to preserve some other-worldly aspect of this life, or were carved to preserve something as crop cycles or mapping, they were clearly careful tasks. Each one is spaced differently and intricately, indicating that every rock has its own meaning. With time and work perhaps those meanings will be extracted. Until then this work and the work of others is just one step in the process of analyzing drawings and ideas from thousands of years ago.
Works Cited


Ecological Easement Number 71-S-04. Held by Pfizer College, Diane Firestone and CEDARENA.


Museo Nacional Pre-Columbian exhibit