

Young & Hildebrandt

TUFA VILLAGE (NEVADA)

PLACING THE FORT SAGE DRIFT FENCE IN A LARGER ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

D. Craig Young and William Hildebrandt

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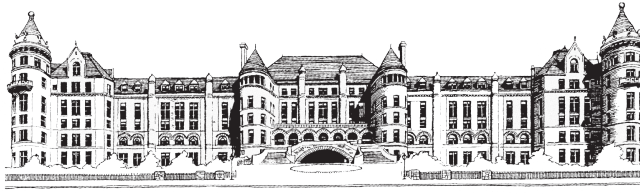
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The Fort Sage Drift Fence is an expansive prehistoric rock alignment used for intercept hunting beginning about 3700 years ago. Impressed by its sheer size and the energy necessary for its construction, archaeologists from the American Museum of Natural History hypothesized over three decades ago that it must have been constructed and used by specialized groups emanating from a centralized, village-like settlement; but what did that settlement system look like?

Tufa Village may help answer that question. Recently excavated in the course of a waterline installation project across public lands, the archaeological features and artifact assemblage of Tufa Village are contemporaneous with the onset of use of large-scale hunting facilities now well-documented in Nevada. The results provide a glimpse into a well-organized, Middle Archaic settlement and subsistence pattern, where broad-based provisioning at established villages supported the construction, maintenance, and successful use of logistically oriented hunting facilities, as well as long-distance toolstone acquisition and trade. Scientific and archaeological inquiry can often take time, and Tufa Village provides compelling support for several decades of on-going exploration and investigation into the prehistory of Middle Archaic settlement systems across the Great Basin.

D. CRAIG YOUNG and WILLIAM HILDEBRANDT are principal investigators at Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., in Carson City, Nevada, and Davis, California. The authors have worked extensively throughout the Great Basin and California, generating and publishing information from cultural resources management projects, large and small, in academic journals, monographs, and books. Their collaboration focuses on expanding public appreciation and scientific awareness of the region's fascinating archaeological record.

Tufa Village (Nevada): Placing the Fort Sage Drift Fence in a Larger Archaeological Context
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ON THE COVER: Tufa deposits above archaeological excavations at 26WA2460 at the southeastern margin of the Honey Lake Basin, western Nevada. Photo by Allen McCabe, design by Nicole Birney.