



Name of Property: First Peoples Buffalo Jump
City, State: Cascade County, Montana
Period of Significance: 4,000 BCE-1700 CE (6,000-300 BP)
NHL Criteria: Criterion 6
NHL Theme: I. Peopling Places
 5. Ethnic homelands
 V. Developing the American Economy
 1. Extraction and production
 2. Distribution and consumption
 8. Economic theory
 VI. Expanding Science and Technology
 1. Experimentation and invention
 2. Technological application

Previous Recognition: 1974 National Register of Historic Places

National Historic Context: I. Cultural Development: Indigenous American Populations
 B. Post-Archaic and Precontact Developments
 10. Plains Hunters and Gatherers
 C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets
 1. Prehistoric Architecture/Shelter/Housing
 3. Prehistoric Social and Political Organizations
 4. Prehistoric Science/Intellectual Developments
 7. Prehistoric Diet/Health
 8. Prehistoric Economics/Trade
 10. Prehistoric Religion, Ideology, and Ceremonialism
 19. Prehistoric Cultural Change

NHL Significance:

- First Peoples Buffalo Jump is one of the oldest, largest, and best preserved bison mass-



procurement cliff jump localities in North America. Its monumental record of stone surface architecture, deeply stratified bison bone deposits, multiple tipi ring concentrations, and extensive evidence of ceremonialism indicate that, for approximately 5,700 years, First Peoples Buffalo Jump held the paramount position in the Northern Plains “bison culture.”

- First Peoples Buffalo Jump holds the potential for not only defining the evolving sophistication of mass-procurement strategies of hunter-gatherer societies in the Northern Plains in particular, but may also provide meaningful insights regarding cultural development of Precontact hunter-gatherer societies in the western United States as a whole.

Integrity:

- Some damage to First Peoples Buffalo Jump occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a result of limited quarrying and bison bone mining activities. However, a recent archeological inventory determined that the site’s 42 contributing elements (e.g., bison bone beds, drive lines, trip walls, tipi rings, pictographs, and petroglyphs), as a whole, retain high integrity, and consequently hold potential for addressing nationally significant research questions.

Owner of Property: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Acreage of Property: 1,906 acres

Origins of Nomination: In 2010, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks requested that First Peoples Buffalo Jump be considered for NHL nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- First Peoples Buffalo Jump is protected and interpreted by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Every year thousands of people visit the site; many of these visitors have expressed their enthusiasm for what they have learned, and indicated a desire to learn more about the Plains Indian “bison culture.”
- Designation will notably increase public awareness of the First Peoples Buffalo Jump.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Allan moved, Dr. Mills seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 2/4/15):

M. Jeff Hagener, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (owner)
Bill Salina, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, Great Falls, Montana
Mark F. Baumler, Ph.D., Montana State Historic Preservation Officer, Montana Historical Society

The Honorable Jesse O'Hara, Montana House of Representatives, District 18, Helena, Montana
Ellen Sievert, Great Falls-Cascade County Historic Preservation Officer, Historic Preservation
Advisory Commission

Dr. Edrienne L. Kittredge, Folk Arts and Market Development Specialist, Montana Arts
Council, Helena, Montana

Richard Hopkins, First Peoples Buffalo Jump, Park Manager, Cascade County, Montana

Patrick J. Rennie, Archeologist, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Division of
Trust Land Management, State of Montana

Teresa S. Moyer, Ph.D., Archeologist, NPS Archeology Program, National Park Service, U.S.
Department of the Interior, Washington, DC

Advisory Board Recommendation: