



Name of Property: Hell Gap Paleoindian Site
City, State: Guernsey (vicinity), Wyoming
Period of Significance: 13,000-8,500 years ago (11,000-6,500 BCE)
NHL Criteria: 6
NHL Theme: I. Peopling Places
V. Developing the American Economy
VI. Expanding Science and Technology
VII. Transforming the Environment
Previous Recognition: N/A
National Historic Context: I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations
C. Prehistory Archeology: Topical Facets
1. Prehistoric Architecture/Shelter/Housing
2. Prehistoric Technology

NHL Significance:

- Hell Gap is an exceptional site in the history of American archeology. To date, no other excavated Paleoindian site in North America contains a record that includes all of the cultural complexes known on the Plains spanning from between 13,000 and 8,500 years ago (between 11,000 and 6,500 BCE) (only the Clovis complex has not yet been found *in situ*).
- Hell Gap is unique among Plains Paleoindian sites containing substantial residential occupations because it contains evidence of repeated occupations by nine Paleoindian cultural complexes in well-stratified deposits.
- Extensive research potential still exists at the site to answer questions concerning



Paleoindian land use, subsistence, organization of technology, and the changing environment during the terminal Pleistocene/early Holocene periods in North America.

- The Hell Gap site still contains more unexcavated than excavated Paleoindian deposits as indicated by testing and current excavation. Materials recovered in the 1960s still await further analysis, and the recent excavations need to be tied into the earlier work done at the site. Since its discovery and initial investigation, Hell Gap has been associated with cutting edge research in the field of Paleoindian archeology.

Integrity:

- Although Hell Gap has been subject to impacts from erosion and taphonomic processes that affect all archeological sites to varying degrees, these impacts have been minor and the site retains very strong integrity of materials and design as evidenced by the geologic and cultural stratigraphy. Integrity of association remains strong at Hell Gap.
- Hell Gap maintains its integrity of setting although the immediate vicinity has been subject to minor historic and modern development. Certain concessions are unavoidable given that the site is the subject of long-term archeological investigation. The site strongly conveys the feeling of a protected valley at the Plains/Rocky Mountain boundary.

Owner of Property: Wyoming Archaeological Foundation

Acreage of Property: 23.3 acres

Origins of Nomination: The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office identified Hell Gap as a potential National Historic Landmark among prehistoric sites in Wyoming. This nomination was undertaken as part of a larger effort by the State Historic Preservation Office to more extensively develop prehistoric and historic context documents in Wyoming and list more prehistoric sites on the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation of the site would increase public awareness of and interest in the Hell Gap Paleoindian site.

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

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Public Comments Favoring Designation:

Advisory Board Recommendation: