



**Name of Property:** 48GO305  
**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. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets  
1. Prehistoric Architecture/Shelter/Housing  
2. Prehistoric Technology

**NHL Significance:**

- 48GO305, commonly referenced in archeological literature as “Hell Gap Paleoindian Site,” 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*).
- 48GO305 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 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, 48GO305 has been associated with cutting edge research in the field of Paleoindian archeology.

**Integrity:**

- Although 48GO305 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 48GO305.
- The site 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 48GO305 (Hell Gap Paleoindian Site) 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 48GO305.

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

**Landmarks Committee Comments (Fall 2015):** In response to committee concerns, the nomination presented under the historic name “Hell Gap Paleoindian Site,” passed with the provision that it be referenced under its site number (48GO305) as a temporary solution until the NPS regional office had an opportunity to further consult with tribes regarding its name. Committee member Doug Harris was concerned with the usage of the concepts of “hell” and “devil” for the historic name as these are concepts foreign to indigenous belief. He questioned the type of consultation process that took place to determine the site’s historic name. The regional office consulted with local tribes, but they will once again engage in tribal consultation to determine if any associated tribes take offense with the name “Hell Gap” and whether they might propose a more appropriate indigenous name for the site prior to the nomination’s

submission to the National Park System Advisory Board.

**Landmarks Committee Recommendation (Fall 2015):** Designation. Dr. Stevens moved, Dr. Young seconded; 1 abstention; 11 yeas.

**Landmarks Committee Comments (Fall 2016):** Mr. Harris restated his original concern with using “hell” as part of the site name. He observed that such a name should not be retained for “administrative convenience.”

Ms. Hopkins explained that additional consultation was conducted with 26 tribes with historic ties to the land. Consultation determined that tribes had no particular concern regarding the name. The Northern Arapaho provided a traditional name which translates as “Buffalo Crossing,” but that none of the twenty-five other tribes offered a comparable alternative name for this site. She noted that the name “Hell Gap” was attributed to the region by surveyors on topographic maps for the locality and that it is a time-honored archeological convention when naming sites to attribute to them the name that appears on topographic maps for the locality. She contended that not all the tribes would concede to assigning the name employed by another tribe to the site as its historic name, and that to do so would contradict the results of the supplemental consultation process. Finally, Ms. Hopkins noted that an administrative history of the consultation process and a discussion of “infernal naming” conventions in the West were added to the documentation to meet the requirements established at the conclusion of the fall 2015 discussion of this property.

Dr. Mills noted her satisfaction with the additional tribal consultation that was undertaken to address Mr. Harris’ concerns with the Western naming convention employed for the site name. Dr. Mills proposed that the site be nominated under the Smithsonian trinomial as its historic name and that Hell Gap Paleoindian Site and the Arapaho name with its English language translation be provided in the other names section of the form.

**Landmarks Committee Recommendation (Fall 2016):** Designation. Dr. Mills moved, Dr. Allan seconded; 2 abstentions; 8 yeas.

**Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 12/1/15):**

Mr. Dave Vlcek, President, Wyoming Archeological Foundation, Inc., Cody, Wyoming (owner waiver received)

Mr. Carl Rupp, Chairman, Goshen County Commission, Torrington, Wyoming (HEO waiver received)

Milward Simpson, Director, Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources, Cheyenne, Wyoming  
Emerson Bull Chief, Crow Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Crow Agency, Montana  
Carolyn M. Buff, Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Wyoming Archeological Society, Inc., Casper, Wyoming

Michael T. Bies, President, Wyoming Association of Professional Archeologists, Worland, Wyoming

Judyth Reed, President, Wyoming Archeological Foundation, Cody, Wyoming

Jeff Altschul, PhD, RPA, President, Society for American Archaeology, Washington, DC

The Honorable Matthew H. Mead, Governor, State of Wyoming

**Public Comments Favoring Designation (Fall 2016) (received as of 9/29/16):**

Steven Vance, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Emerson Bull Chief, Crow Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Montana

Yufna Soldier Wolf, NATHPO Director, Northern Arapaho Tribe, St. Stephens, Wyoming

Mr. Russell Eagle Bear, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Rosebud, South Dakota

**Advisory Board Recommendation:**