

MODERN ROCK ART

For thousands of years, people have left a record of their presence in an area by creating images on the stone walls of caves and canyons and on large rocks. These images are often referred to as rock art. There are two basic types of rock art that hikers are most likely to come across when hiking in Southern Arizona, petroglyphs and pictographs. Petroglyphs are images usually made by pecking or chipping away the outer patina covered surface of the rock to expose the lighter colored stone underneath. Pictographs are images that have been painted onto stone surfaces and are much more fragile than petroglyphs.

When people talk about the petroglyphs and pictographs found in the western United States, they are usually referring to the rock art created by native people prior to the arrival of Europeans to the area. The creation of rock art though is not the exclusive pastime of the ancients. Modern “artists” have also created rock art. Some examples of historic rock art that may be found by hikers in southern Arizona can be found in a separate article posted in the GVR Hiking Club’s Library web site titled Rock Art (<https://www.gvrhc.org/Library/RockArt.pdf>). This article is limited to the discussion of the “modern” rock art that hikers may come across while hiking in the Santa Rita Mountains. This “modern” rock art has been recently (probably since the early 1990s) chipped onto the surface of rock faces in several areas of the Santa Rita Mountains.

These “modern” petroglyphs are not condoned by the US Forest Service but all attempts to catch the perpetrator in the act have been fruitless. The area of the Santa Rita Mountains where the most extensive examples of these “modern” petroglyphs may be found is referred to as Belle’s Park and due to the vast number of these petroglyphs, this area is discussed in a separate article (<https://www.gvrhc.org/Library/BellesPark.pdf>). Belle’s Park is located about midway up a wash that flows between Josephine Saddle and the upper round-up parking area. A couple of modern petroglyphs are located on the trail between Agua Caliente Saddle and Santa Rita Peak (also known as Pete’s Mountain) and there are also several “modern” petroglyphs located in an area southeast of the Madera Mine and on the slope just west of the stream bed. Some of these petroglyphs are depicted in Figures 1 thru 5. The most recent examples of the “artist’s” handiwork may be found along the Carrie Nation Mine Trail. A hike into that area discovered deer track glyphs that had been recently chipped onto a huge rock located adjacent to the trail where the trail enters the wash for a short period and on a rock in the vicinity of the old boiler. An unusual glyph was the name Yulio that was inscribed on the rock in the wash. The “Yulio” marking was in the form of a pictograph instead of a

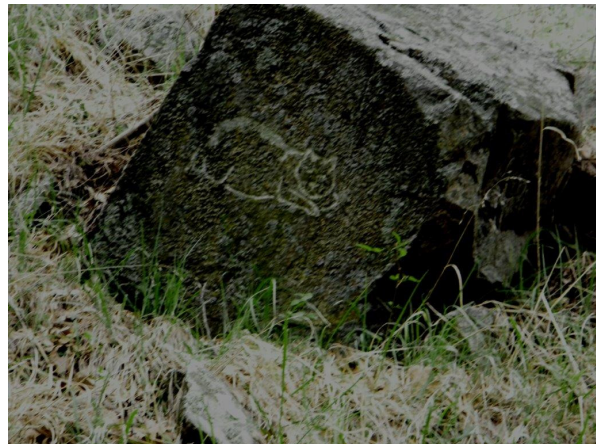


Figure 1. Petroglyph of a Cat

petroglyph and was no longer visible in April 2019. Figures 6 & 7 show glyphs from these two areas.



Figure 2. Deer Head Petroglyph



Figure 3. Bear Paw Petroglyph



Figure 4. Deer Track Petroglyph



Figure 5. Animal Tracks & Unique Symbol



Figure 6. Deer Tracks with Yulio Glyph



Figure 7. Deer Tracks by Boiler

Summary by T. Johnson. July 2018 and updated in April 2019.