

2017 LOVELAND STONE AGE FAIR

BIOGRAPHY

Spencer R. Pelton
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Spencer Pelton is a PhD candidate and research assistant at the University of Wyoming. He received his BS from Middle Tennessee State University and MA from Colorado State University. Spencer has worked as an archaeologist in Tennessee, North Carolina, California, Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming for several federal, private, and academic entities. He has also conducted ethnographic research on the Dukha reindeer herders of northern Mongolia and is currently analyzing data collected during this field project.



Spencer is a hunter-gatherer archaeologist with specializations in western North American prehistory, foraging theory, geoarchaeology, and geochronology. His dissertation tests several basic hypotheses about the use of clothing and housing in past foraging societies using test cases from the Folsom archaeological record and the Dukha Ethnoarchaeology Project. Spencer is also actively involved in several field projects in Wyoming including the Powars II Paleoindian site, the La Prele Clovis site, the Sisters Hill Hell Gap site, Alm rockshelter, and the Canyon Creek landscape archaeology project.

Title of Presentation:

A New Occupational Chronology for the Hell Gap site and Its Implications for North American Paleoindian Prehistory

Program Description: Locality 1 of the Hell Gap site has since the 1950's been important to archaeological understanding of the North American Paleoindian cultural sequence because it contains no less than eight stratified Paleoindian components. In a recent study, we assigned these components more accurate and precise age estimates that span most of the Plains Paleoindian cultural sequence between ca. 13,000 and 8,000 cal yr BP. Comparing our age estimates for Goshen, Folsom, Agate

Basin, Hell Gap, and other artifact styles to comparable artifacts from other North American regions, we noted several large-scale patterns regarding the emergence of stylistic projectile point variants between regions. This talk presents the Hell Gap chronology as the linchpin by which we may start to understand movements of projectile point types across the North American continent during the Paleoindian period. I conclude by discussing how recent findings from the nearby Powars II Clovis site may be combined with the Hell Gap chronology to provide one of the most thorough records of New World colonization in North America.