



## **Rocks**

### **Rock Piles, Rock Features, Cairns**

It's human nature to memorialize the location we have buried our loved ones. Clearly many cultures have different ways of marking graves. Everything from an Egyptian tomb to a significant rock, or a rock out of place. Modern day cemeteries still use a rock to identify where someone is buried.

Archaeologists gather information from old maps, oral history, physical features, GPR or other kinds of remote sensing. Since GPR cannot reach under the rocks to get a reading and removing the rocks to excavate is usually not recommended or allowed. Archaeologists are limited on how to identify what is

under the rocks. Some rock features are simply piles of rock where someone cleared a field, or someone made a pile for reasons not understood by us. Trained HHRD dogs bring another layer of information archaeologists can use to help determine if rock features contain burials.

(Above, Rhea alerts at a rock in an area thought to be a pioneer cemetery.)

~ Adela ~



Rhea alerting on a pioneer grave in the Sierras. Early pioneers and emigrants traveling to California and Oregon only had a short amount of time and energy to bury their dead. Many people were buried in a shallow depression and then covered with rocks to protect them from scavengers.



Left -Kayle alerting on a rock feature in Oregon corroborating oral history and written documents saying it was a grave.

Right - Shiloh alerting in the desert in a Native cemetery. There were no markers, only rocks.



Left- On the border of a historic cemetery rocks were placed but no headstone was found. The colored flags show each dog that alerted in that location.

Right - Many accounts of oral history talk about Chinese or slave cemeteries being located outside of traditional cemeteries. Any time we search historic cemeteries we make sure to include areas outside of the established boundaries or thought to be the cemetery boundaries. The picture on the right is thought to be a Chinese burial because of oral history.



Right - We were asked by the land owner in the Sierra foothills to check several piles of rocks in a pasture. The land owners did not want to disturb them if they were burials. All the dogs ignored them, clearly no human remains scent was detected.

Right - Jasper alerts at rocks, each flag shows that other dogs on this project also alerted at that location. We searched several acres of mixed vegetation with many areas containing rocks, and the dogs alerted at only one location. Because this area is a known Native American prehistoric site, the archaeologist chose to leave it undisturbed and to make sure trails did not go near it. As much as we would have love to have the confirmation, we agree it was best to protect it's location and not disturb it.



I am often asked what happens to our dogs when they retire. This is Rhea my retired HHRD working dog who had her 14th birthday on September 6. She got to come to training on her birthday and get treated like the queen she is.

The first picture in this newsletter is Rhea when she was in her prime. Her retired life style includes going on group walks Monday - Friday and making sure Jett (10 months old puppy apprentice) knows she is still in-charge.

~ Adela ~

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**(650) 503-HHRD (-4473)**

**[www.HHRDD.org](http://www.HHRDD.org)**

We are happy to talk to you about your project and how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials. Email or call us.

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