

Valmont Butte New Rock Feature – April 2012

In early April 2012, a rock feature was discovered by the tribe-approved Native American monitor on the city's Valmont Butte property, just north of the fence line near the northwestern corner of the Valmont Cemetery. (See location below.) The feature was suspected to be a recently placed feature that was not previously located on the site, and the project archeologist reviewed the feature to determine if it was historic.



The photographs below (taken on April 5, 2012) show the rock feature and its location near the Cemetery fence corner.



Rock feature, looking east. Photo taken 4/5/2012.



Close-up view of rock feature, showing area with smaller rocks forming a cross-shape. Note vertical stick at the upper edge of the feature. View looking east. Photo taken 4/5/2012.

Below is an excerpt from the archeologist's documentation of the feature:

The rock feature measures 39 inches E-W x 34 inches N-S. It consists of approximately 81 unshaped cobbles (2-9 inches in length) surrounding an opening with 9 smaller rocks (approximately 1-2 inches in length) that form a cross. A small upright stick is located on the eastern edge of the feature. The rocks are not embedded within the underlying soil (which would suggest they have been in place for a long period of time) but are lying on the top of the surface of the ground. Some of the rocks exhibit mud and soil on the surfaces, suggesting recent placement from a buried or half-buried context. Some of the rocks also show a dark area where the rocks were recently buried and a visible lighter area where the rocks were originally exposed to the surface. These rocks were

obviously removed from a partially buried context and very recently placed within the feature in positions that are different from their original location in the ground.

A photograph of the same fence corner taken in 2010 (below) shows several rocks north of the fence line that are no longer visible in the more recent photo above. These rocks may have been utilized to create part of the rock feature.

Additionally, the edge of the rock feature, had it been there, should have appeared in the 2010 photo below, just to the left of the arrows.



Photograph taken on 1/20/2010 (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pis&PIcrd=57606&PIpi=25040394&PIMode=cemetery>) of the Valmont Cemetery fence corner in the vicinity of the rock feature. The arrows show several rocks adjacent to the fence line that are no longer there as of 4/5/2012 (as can be seen in the first photo in this document).

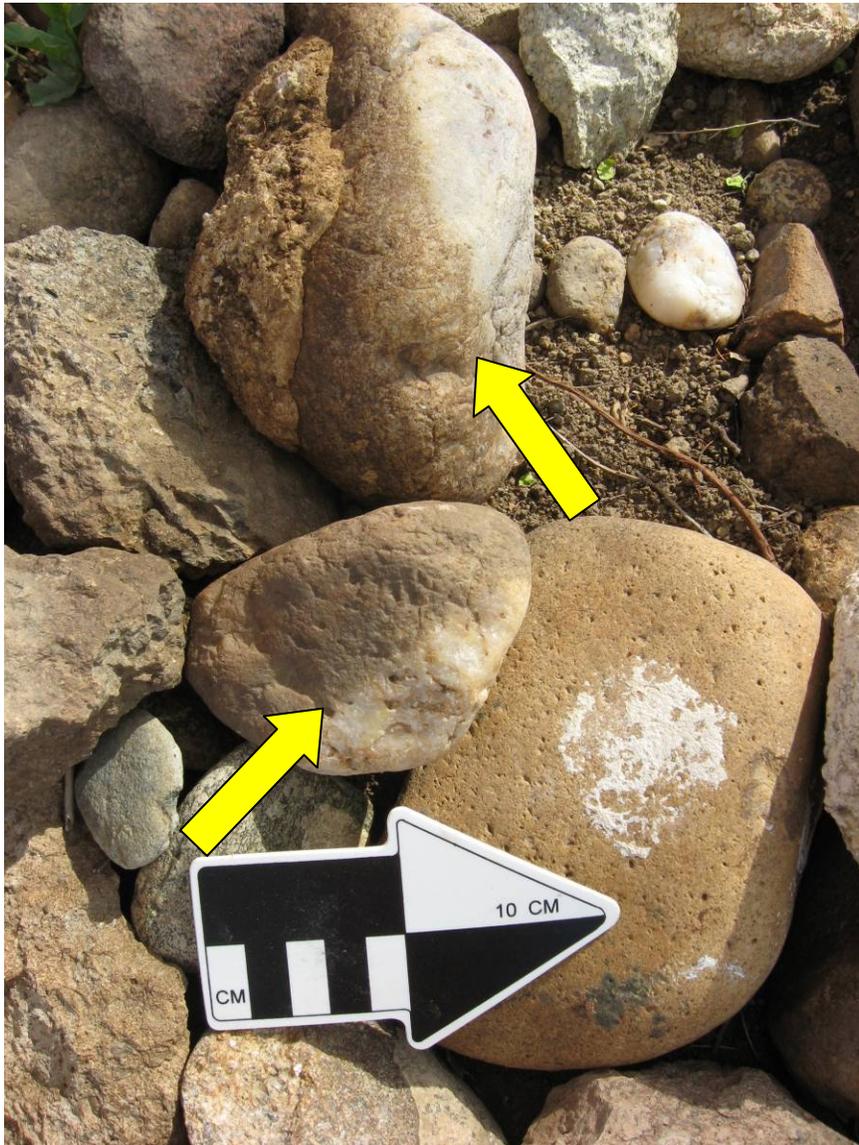
The photos below show evidence of the recent removal from other locations of rocks included in the new rock feature.



Photo of rock showing dirt on the surface, likely from being recently removed from a subsurface context. Photo taken 4/5/2012.

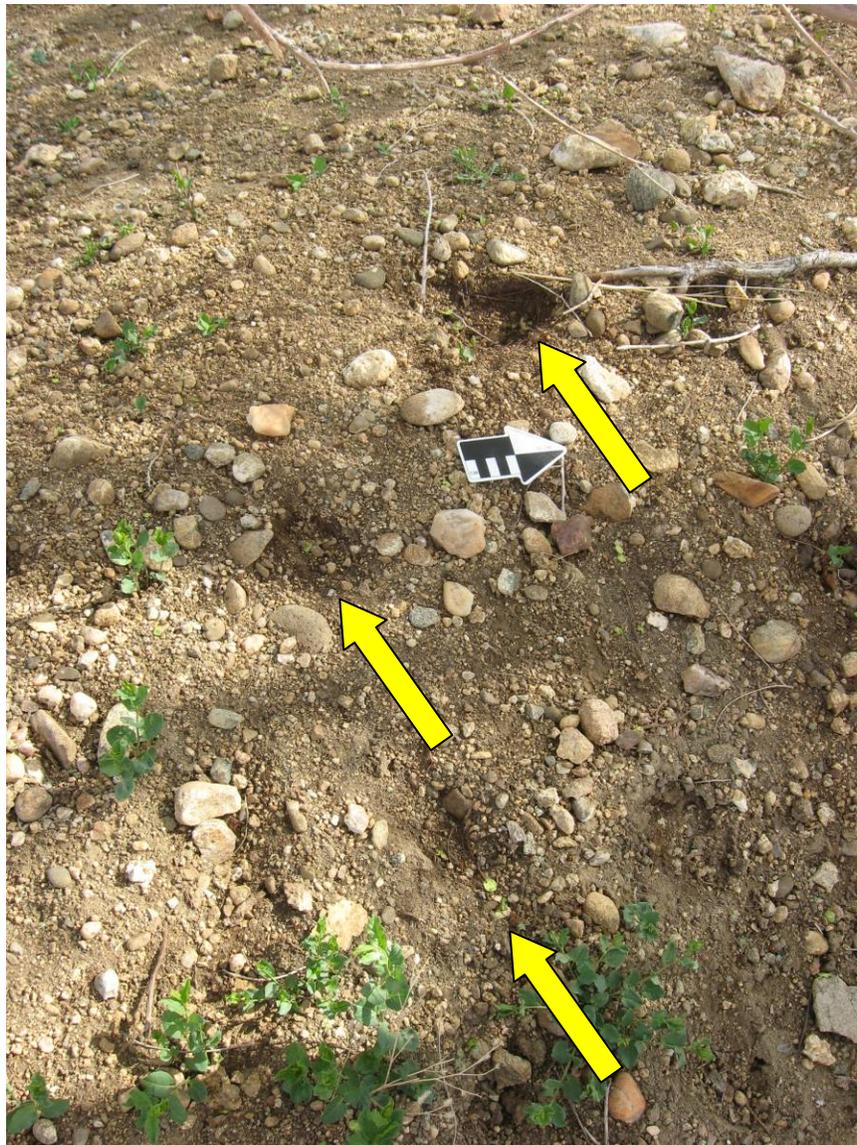


Second rock showing dirt on the surface, likely from being recently removed from a subsurface context. Photo taken 4/5/2012.

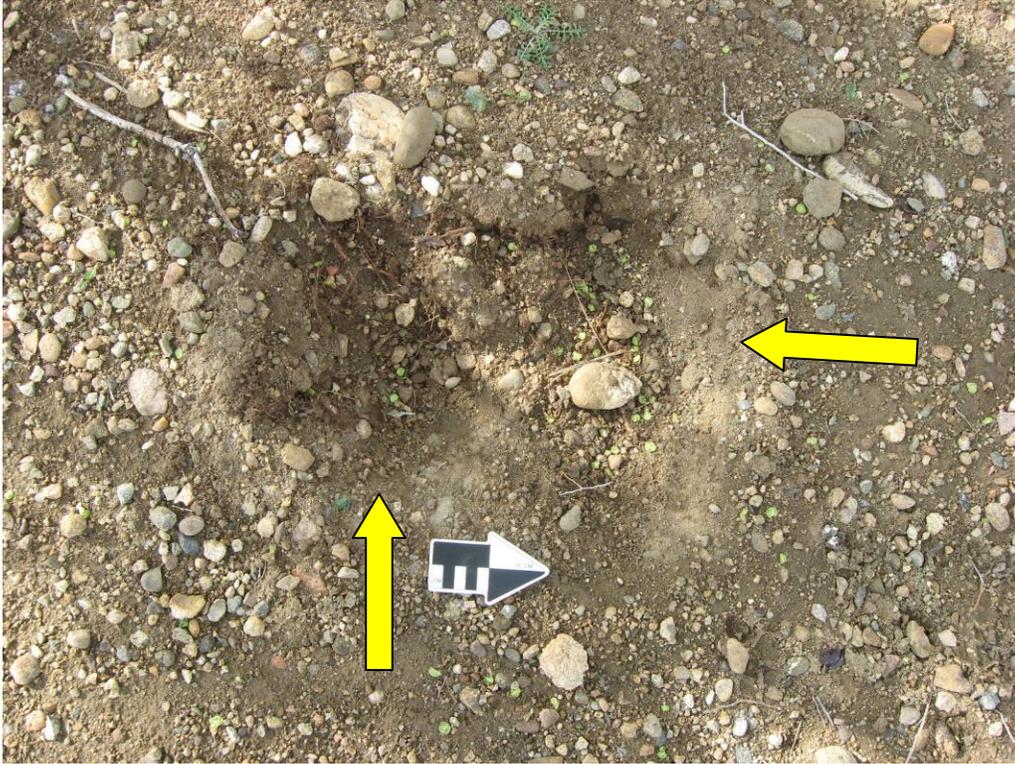


Yellow arrows point to dark and light areas on rocks showing where rocks were originally half-buried, and were recently removed from a buried context. Photo taken 4/5/2012.

The area adjacent to the rock feature was also examined and a number of voids in the soil (see below) were documented. These voids suggest very recent removal of rocks.



Areas in the vicinity of rock feature showing voids in the soil where it appears that rocks were likely removed very recently, probably to create the feature. Photo taken 4/5/2012.



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Conclusions by the archeologist:

There is no evidence that this feature is historic or prehistoric. All evidence indicates a very recent construction date, perhaps within the last several weeks. Since there is no evidence that this rock feature is historic or prehistoric, no further work is recommended as necessary from the standpoint of documenting the feature as a cultural resource.

The rock feature was dismantled on April 23, 2012 with the assistance of the archeologist and the Native American monitor. Below is a picture after the rocks were removed.

