

Puaxant Tuvip
Puha Paths: Southern Paiute
Pilgrimages on the Arizona Strip

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Puha and Topography

- Southern Paiute people believe that at Creation they and the entire world was made sentient and given a purpose by the Creator. Puha is the term used to describe the power (or energy) placed in all elements of the world that permits them have a human-like self that speaks, has emotions, and can selectively use its Puha.
- Normally Puha moves from the highest mountain tops where it, much like snow, occurs because the mountains call down moisture from the sky. Like water, Puha flows down hill, but it concentrates; and where that occurs, other elements of the world are attracted.
- Volcanoes are a special variety of mountains because they represent a re-birth of the earth. The creation of a volcanic mountain or lava flow thus constitutes a special event when Puha moves up into this world. So volcanoes and all they produce are viewed as having strong concentrations of special kinds of Puha.

Puha, Place, Trail, and Landscape

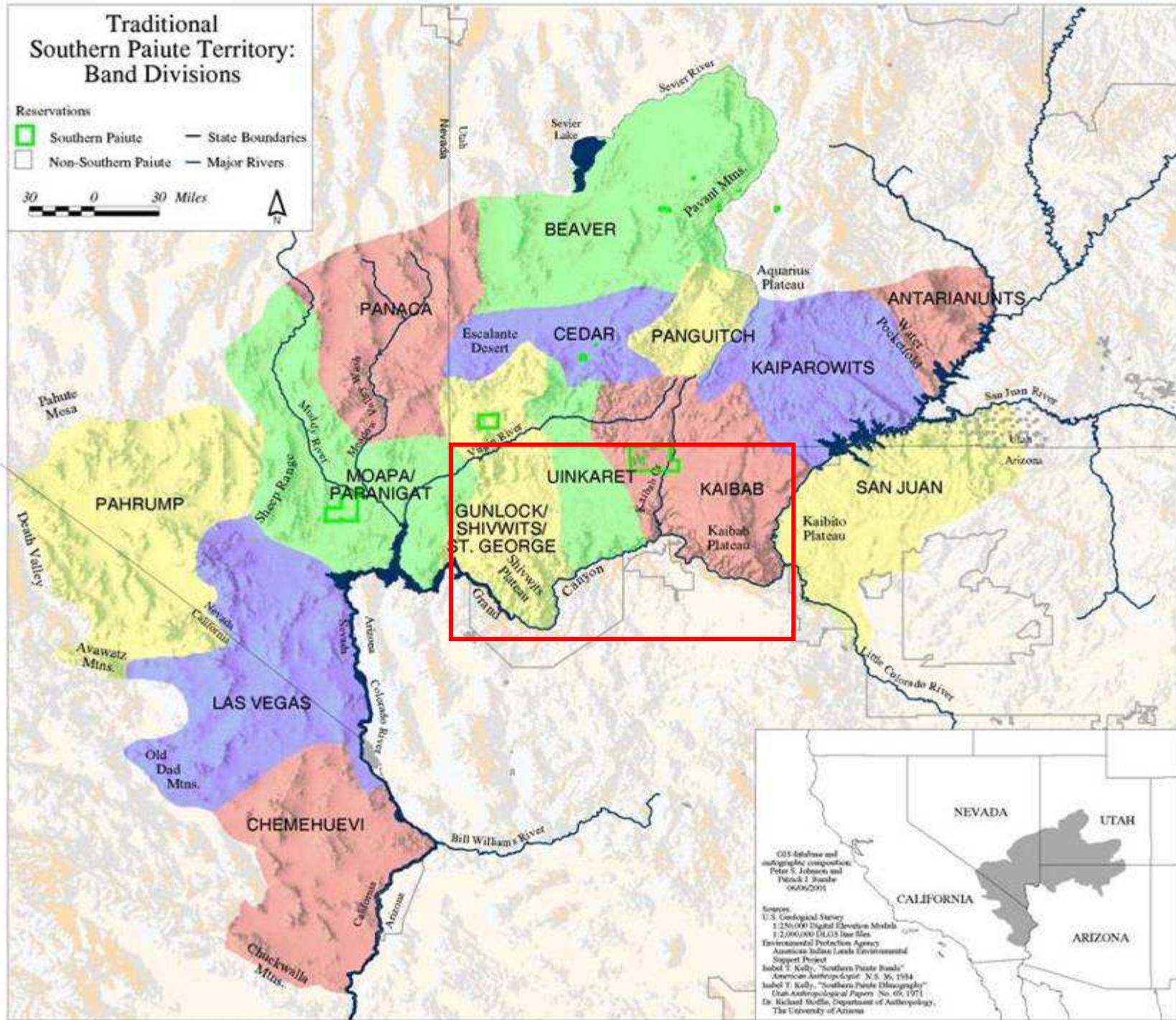
- This paper is about the coming together of the most powerful Puha in the world. The area is northern Arizona.
- It is about a major volcanic mountain, Mt. Trumbull, and an associated fault line of volcanoes that crosses the Grand Canyon and Colorado River.
- It is about Indian people interacting with active magma flows and the topographic residuals of past volcanic activity.
- It is about the Puha paths chosen and taken by pilgrims to ceremonial destination in this dramatic topographic landscape composed of volcanoes, canyons, and a river.

Traditional Southern Paiute Territory: Band Divisions

Reservations

- Southern Paiute
- Non-Southern Paiute
- State Boundaries
- Major Rivers

30 0 30 Miles

GIS database and cartographic composition:
Peter S. Johnson and
Patrick J. Bourke
06/06/2001

Sources:
U.S. Geological Survey
1:250,000 Digital Elevation Model
1:2,000,000 DLG3 base file
Environmental Protection Agency
American Indian Lands Environmental
Support Project
Isabel T. Kelly, "Southern Paiute Bands"
American Anthropologist, N.S. 36, 1934
Isabel T. Kelly, "Southern Paiute Dialects"
Cath. Anthropological Papers, No. 69, 1971
Dr. Richard Stollie, Department of Anthropology,
The University of Arizona



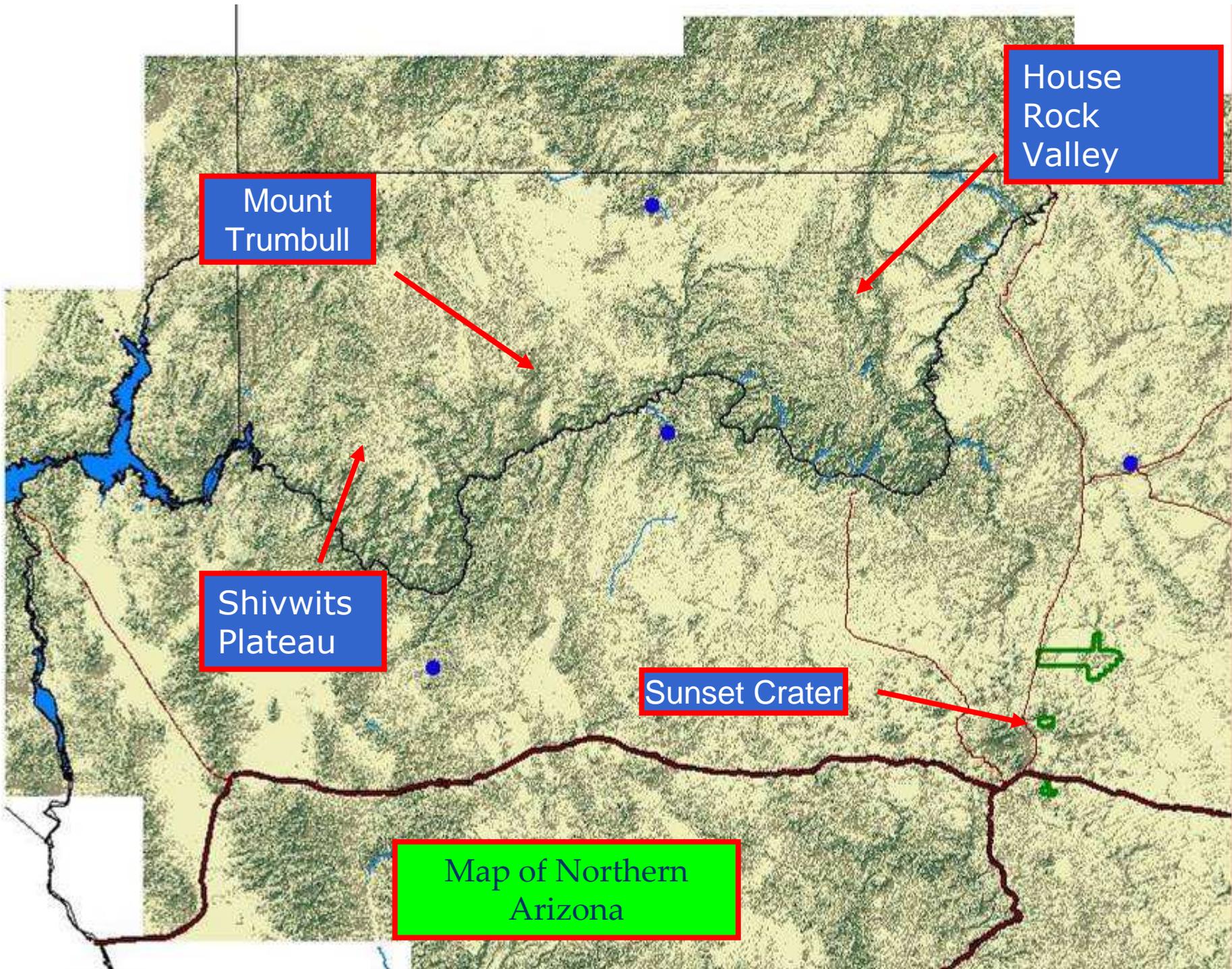
House
Rock
Valley

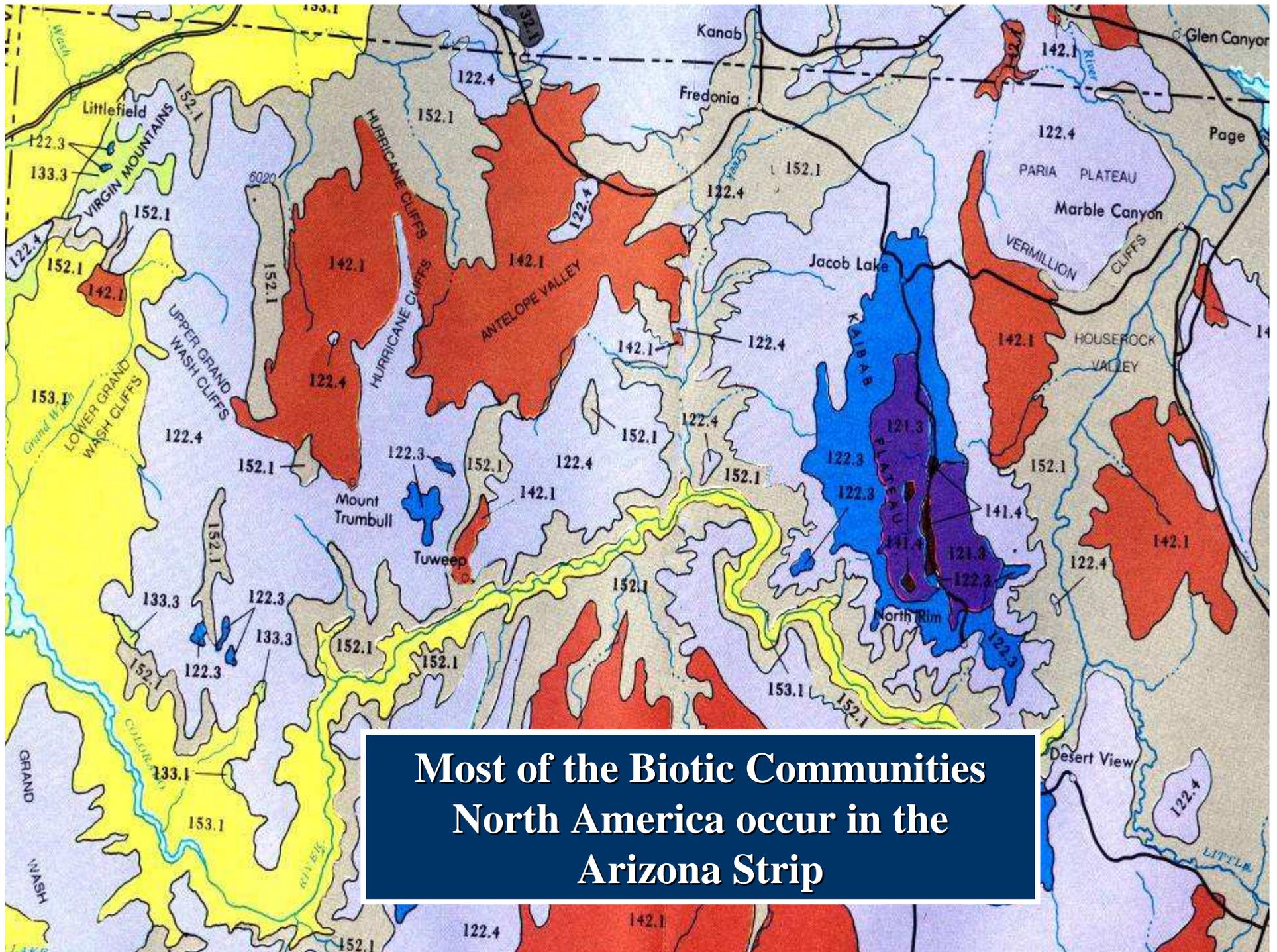
Mount
Trumbull

Shivwits
Plateau

Sunset Crater

Map of Northern
Arizona





Places of Cultural Significance

- **History**

- Places associated where people lived
- Places associated with Creation and Mythic time

- **Natural Resources**

- Gathering Areas
- Hunting Areas
- Springs
- Minerals
- Sources of wind – The Earth breathing

- **Ceremony/ Sacredness**

- Burials
- Vision Questing
- Places of Regional, World, and Local Balancing Ceremonies

2003 10 26

Modeling Southern Paiute Landscapes



2003 10 29

Basic Concepts & Elements of Southern Paiute Cultural Landscapes

- Southern Paiute epistemology
 - *Puha*: how this energy force defines, influences, and connects natural resources, people, and places.
- Elements of the universe
 - The basic components from which the world is composed
 - All alive and sentient
 - Include:
 - Air
 - Earth
 - Minerals
 - Water
 - Animals
 - Plants
 - People
 - Beings
- Making and using tools by working with Puha
 - Especially important here is the cycle of use including ritual deposition
- Place
 - A discrete locus of Puha within the larger mosaic of a cultural landscape.
- Cultural Landscape
 - The incorporation of places and networks of connectivity which forms a larger land mosaic.
 - Paths to Puha are the pilgrimage trails who's location and associated activities respond to topographic places on the way to ceremony destinations.

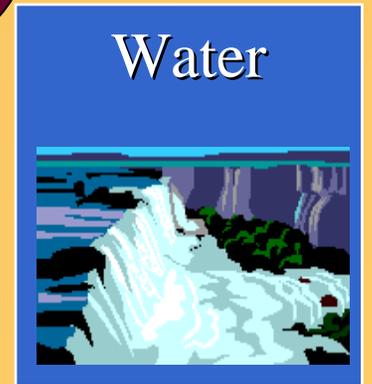
Elements of the Universe

- The elements of the universe include types of air, water, rocks, minerals, topographic features, plants, and animals.
 - Each element and its various types have different personalities, intensities of power, and networked relationships with people and other elements
- The elements of the universe each have a personality, much like humans who vary in disposition and strength.
 - Elements are attracted to people and other elements. They can negotiate relationships, sharing power in some relationships and denying it in others

Making and Using Tools

- Numic people begin the life cycle of tools by talking to the natural resources from which the tool is to be made (See next slide).
- Numic people often make new tools and return them to the land as an offering of thanks.
 - A tool may be a perfectly made object that is never used but is instead returned to the quarry that has always provided the people with tool stone.
 - A tool can be an old friend filled with partnerships and experiences, so when it can no longer serve, it is ritually retired to a special space.
 - Offerings also may be songs, attractive stones, medicine plants, animal parts, and other objects that are given to a cave or Puha place in ceremonial thanks for the knowledge of how to use resources in curing or for a wish granted.

Bow and Arrow Partnership



Places

- The concept of power argues that the fundamental meaning of a place derives from the Puha(s) it exhibits.
 - Humans are attracted to these powerful places and incorporate them into their culture.
- Power is dispersed in a network of relationships among the elements of the universe
 - Relationships that most resemble spider webs. At various points in this web, Puha is concentrated producing powerful places, which are then recognized and commemorated by humans
- Puha places tend to attract other powerful elements
- When interpreting a pecking panel, Indian people tend to look first at the rock on which the painting and peckings occur, and then look around for medicine plants.
 - The basic assumption is that the place had to be powerful before the rock paintings or peckings were made there. This powerful place would attract Puha plants.

Cultural Landscapes

- Cultural landscapes are spatially larger cultural phenomena than places.
- Cultural landscapes are composed of various types of places that are connected in various physical and spiritual ways.
- The concept of cultural landscape derives from the notion that people's historical memory is anchored on the land, that it is transferred over generations, and that their cognition of the land is shared among them today.
 - There are places that have a central purpose or role in the lives of Paiute people and have certain characteristics and are connected in predictable ways with other types of places to form landscapes illustrating a **culturally-based logic** of place and landscape.
- Places in the landscape are connected by carefully selected and functionally specific trails, some of which can be termed “Puha Paths”.

Cultural Landscapes

- Puha Places are interconnected and linked together by Puha Paths to make a **functionally holistic Southern Paiute Landscape**
 - The four types of landscapes are:
 1. Holy Landscapes
 2. Storyscapes
 3. Regional Landscapes
 4. Ecoscapes
 5. Landmarks (places)

Source: Stoffle, Halmo, Austin 1997

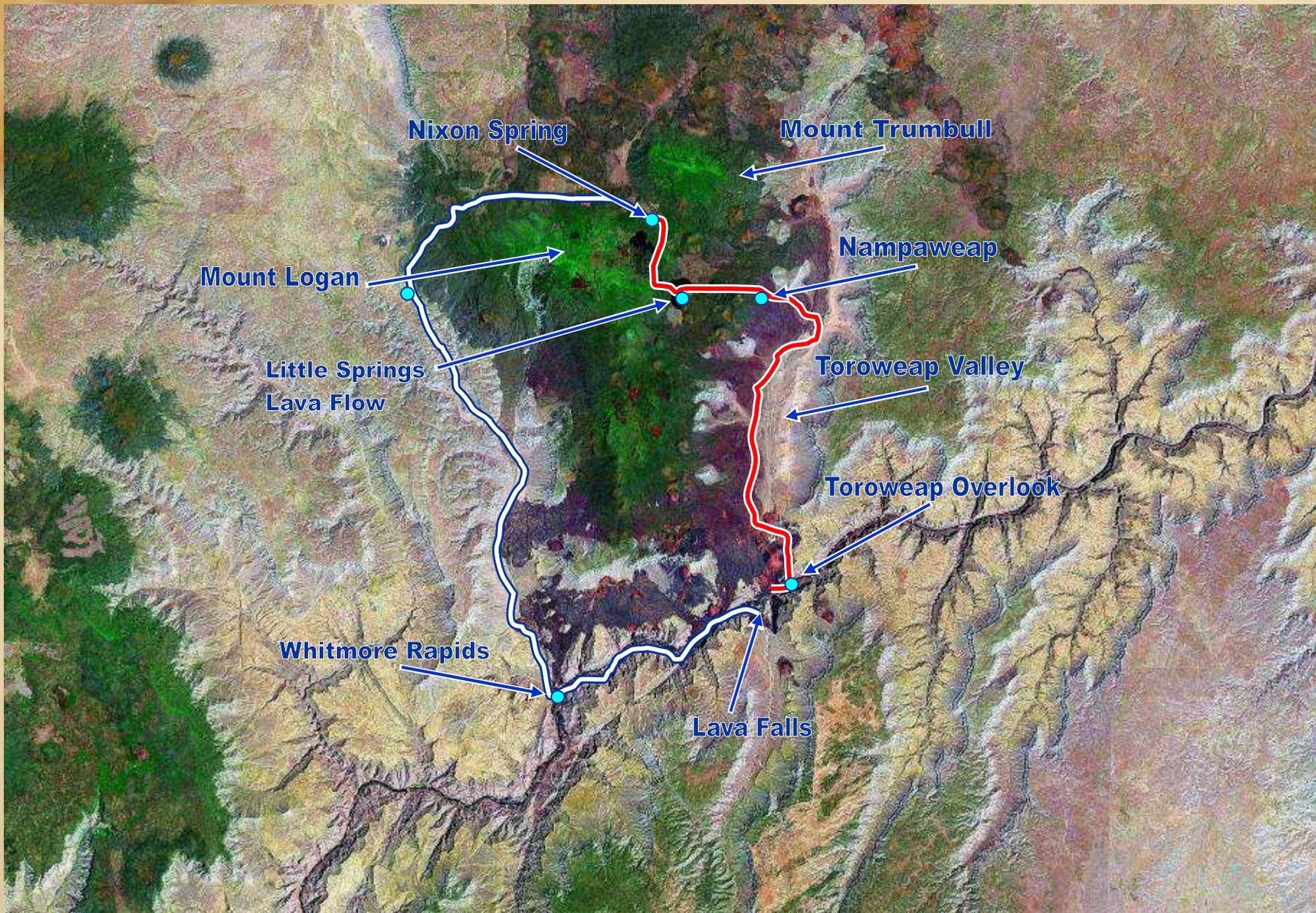
Pilgrimage Trails (Puha Paths)

- Ceremonies are conducted at places with high concentrations of Puha and it is dangerous for people who are not religious specialists to visit and stay for long periods at ceremonial places.
- Pilgrimages to ceremonial destination places is not random and not focused on efficiencies of movement. Instead, pilgrims follow traditionally established Puha Paths. The journey is a part of the ceremony.
- Southern Paiutes come from oasis-based irrigated agricultural villages located away from ceremonial places. North of Mount Trumbull such villages existed in Kanab Creek, the Virgin River near present day Zion National Park, and the Santa Clara River.
- Pilgrims traveling to the volcano called Mount Trumbull would have used the major multipurpose trails leading to this portion of the Arizona Strip. Many of the trails have been given Anglo names because Euro-Americans traveled these trails during the exploration and expansion periods.

Puha Paths in the Mount Trumbull Ceremonial Cultural Landscape

- Mount Trumbull is a key volcanic central place related to two Puha paths in a single integrated ceremonial landscape.
- The first Puha Path involves a pilgrimage from Mount Trumbull to Toroweap Overlook (and Vulcan's Throne) at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.
- The second Puha Path involves a pilgrimage from Mount Trumbull to Whitmore Rapids at the bottom of the Grand Canyon and from there up river to Lava Falls and Vulcan's Anvil.
- Both Puha Paths begin on the flank of Mount Trumbull at a ceremonial base camp called Nixon Spring. One Puha path, and perhaps both, involve purification and then acquiring Puha, and Puha-pah (water) next to a recent lava flow at a place called Little Spring.
- The two Puha Paths are interactive. They end at places where past lava flows from the Mt. Trumbull volcanoes have repeatedly filled the Grand Canyon from top to bottom forming a massive lakes on the Colorado River. Evidence of these former lava flows exist at Vulcan's Anvil and Lava Falls on the river, and at Vulcan's Throne and other volcanoes on the rim.

Mt. Trumbull Ceremonial Landscape and Two Puha Paths





**Nixon Spring-
Uinkaret
Pueblo**



**Little
Springs
Lava Flow**

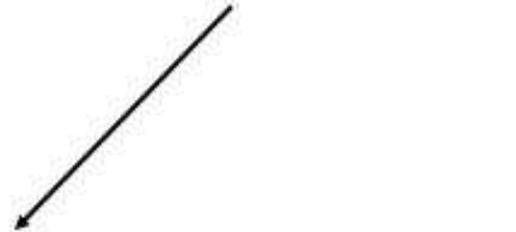


Nampaweap



Toroweap Overlook

Toroweap Valley



**Puha Path to
Toroweap**



Little Springs Lava Flow

Little Springs has evidence that Indian people interacted with the magma flow, as they have with near by volcanoes for ceremonial purposes. Ceremonies were conducted during two distinct periods – when the magma was active and afterwards when it was cool. During its active period (estimated to be near 1200AD) the magma flowed for years. Where it bubbled up it formed walls called Hornitos. Religious specialists interacted with the magma to make sherd and corn rocks, which were then incorporate into nearby ceremonial structures and performances.



Indian people at a hornito wall

Sherd Rocks

Indian people placed pottery and corn along the hornito walls in order to catch the bubbles of magma. When the magma engulfed the pottery the molten boulder was knocked off the wall and subsequently a sherd rock was formed. Indian people believe that the sherd rocks were used to bring special Puha to ceremony.



From Magma Flow to Lava Puha Area

- Early Archaeology Survey Results (Source: Desert Archaeology- Elson (PI) and Samples; NAU Ort and Duffield) document the following
 - Possible 1050 AD for an eruption date.
 - 150 masonry structures on top of the cooled lava flow.
 - 10 trail heads on lava flow.
 - Sherd Rocks and maybe corn rocks produced at site when it was an active magma flow.
- Paiute interviews document an ongoing use of the area for ceremony with the knowledge that it had flowed at one time.
- Little Spring is at the northern end of the lava flow.
- Place seen as similar in ceremonial function and spiritually connected with Sunset Crater which erupted for 200 years beginning around 1050 AD.

Namapweap



Nampaweap is a site in a small basalt canyon on the Puha Path. Accompanying the Tumpituxwinap [*storied rocks*] at this site are a spring and a rock shelter. The storied rocks contain information about where they are placed, which is as important as what they say. A nearby spring has water with special kinds of Puha. The basalt stone from which the canyon walls are formed have volcanic Puha and are variously marked with Ocean Woman's net, mountain sheep – the helper of rain makers, and medicine men strings – like Quipus.

These peckings are strongly associated with volcanic activity, ceremonial activity and Pilgrimage. In New Mexico, contemporary Indian people linked the peckings of Petroglyph National Monument with local volancos and spirit trails. And they form a communication nexus which gives access to the spirit world “that can be used by living people to help their prayers and medicine.” (Evans, Stoffle, and Pinel 1993; 17)

Toroweap Overlook Destination Where Volcanoes Filled the Canyon

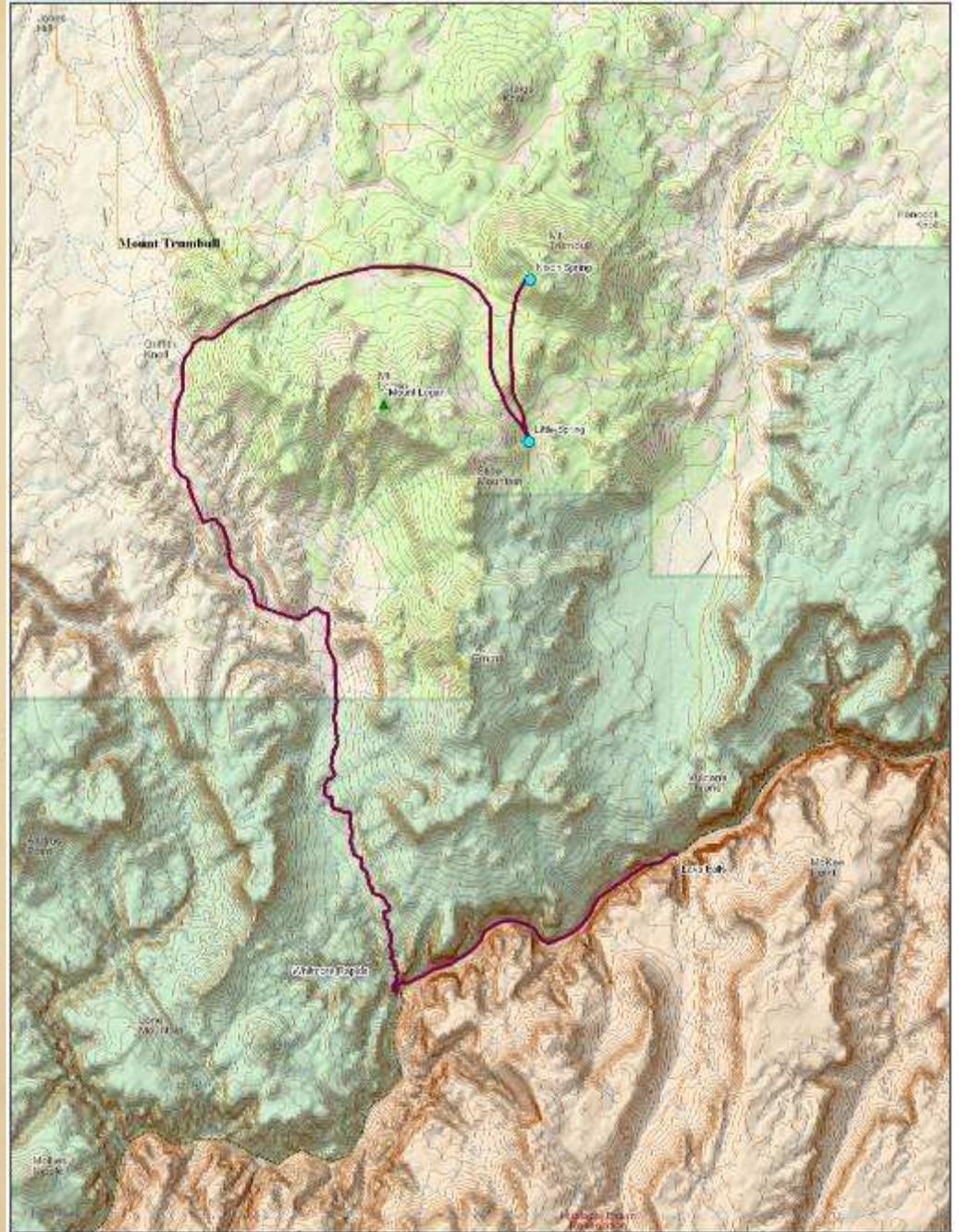


Puha Path To Lava Falls

Vulcan Throne Volcano



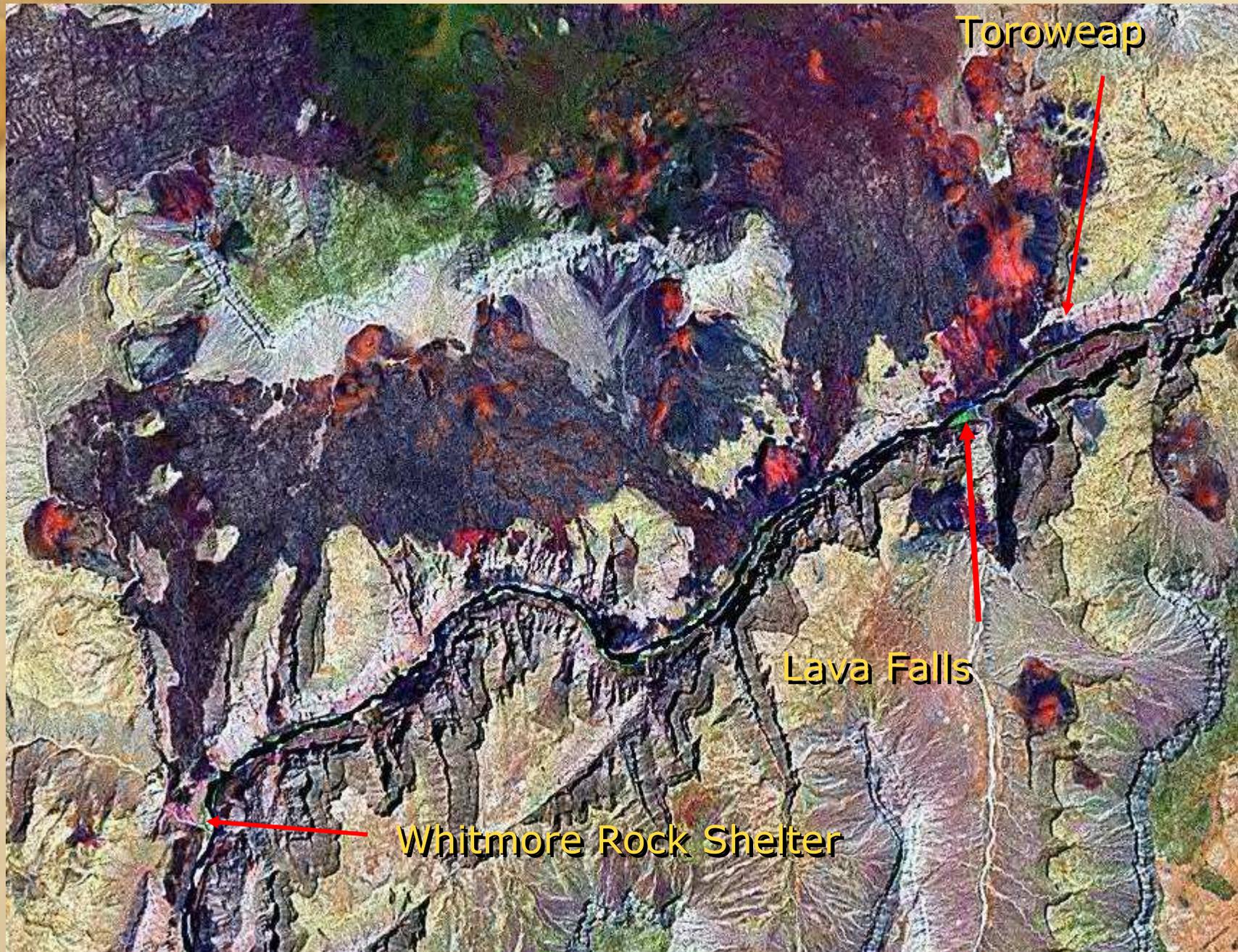
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Lava Flows Along Puha Path to Lava Falls





Nixon Spring - Uinkaret Pueblo



Whitmore Rapids



Warm Mineral Spring

Places on the
Puha Path to
Lava Falls



Paint rock shelter



Yellow paint wall



Lava Falls



Water Baby peckings

Lava Falls Cave

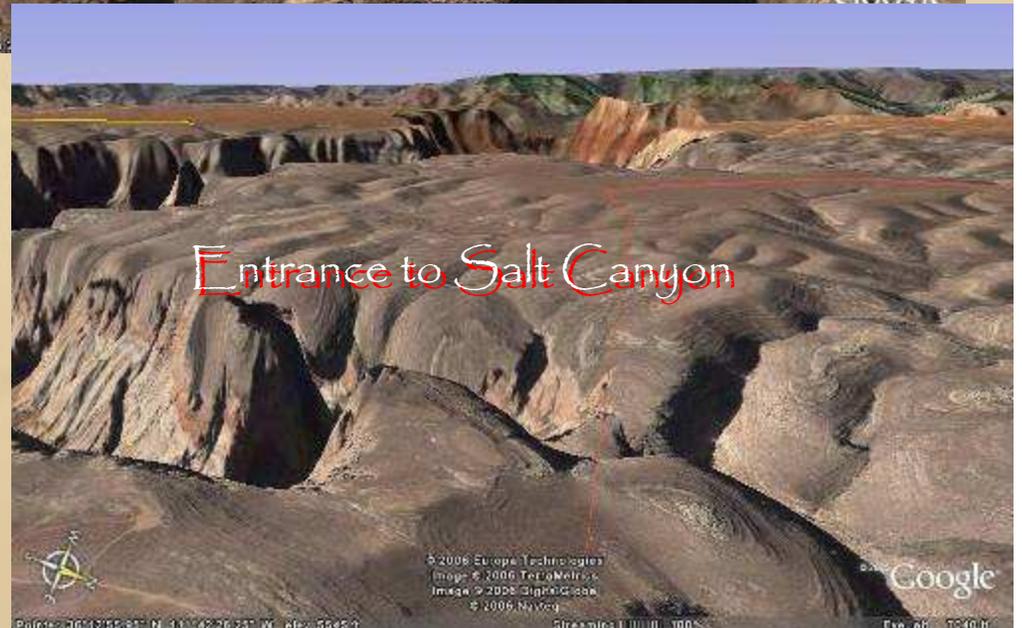


Vulcan's Anvil



Puha Paths As Common Phenomenon

- Globally, pilgrimage trails are widely documented human activity.
- The Paiute Puha Paths are similar to the Hopi Salt Trail in that they involve sequentially visiting shrines and performing ceremonial activities en route to the Grand Canyon area.
- The Hopi Salt Trail is a well known and accepted pilgrimage in both the ethnographic and archaeological literature.



Puha Paths As Common Phenomenon

- **The Hopi Salt Trail traditionally involved sending representatives from every household or clan in the village.**
- **The Salt Trail involved intense preparation-ritual purification, and the construction of prayer sticks.**
- **Pilgrims stopped at places including rock art sites to leave offerings (Evans et al. 1993, Titviev 1937).**
- **This was similar to Southern Paiutes who were on pilgrimage to Toroweep or to Vulcan's Anvil (Evans et al. 1993, Titviev 1937, Stoffle et al. 2005).**

Ungtuvga (The Grand Canyon or Salt Canyon)

“To a Hopi, Ungtuvga is one of the holiest places in the world. The reason why it is so special to the Hopi is because the canyon symbolizes the origination of the human race, and it accepts the human spirit after death occurs. In the Canyon is a special place where Hopi mine *unga* (salt). This place is called Ungtuvga, the Salt Canyon. As part of the special initiation process, young Hopi men hike into the Canyon to fetch salt. They do this for two reasons. One is to purify the body they have acquired through the initiation process and the new clothing they have been given by their godfathers. The other reason is practical: to bring special salt for their aunts. This is an additional nutrient and for added strength during the year,”

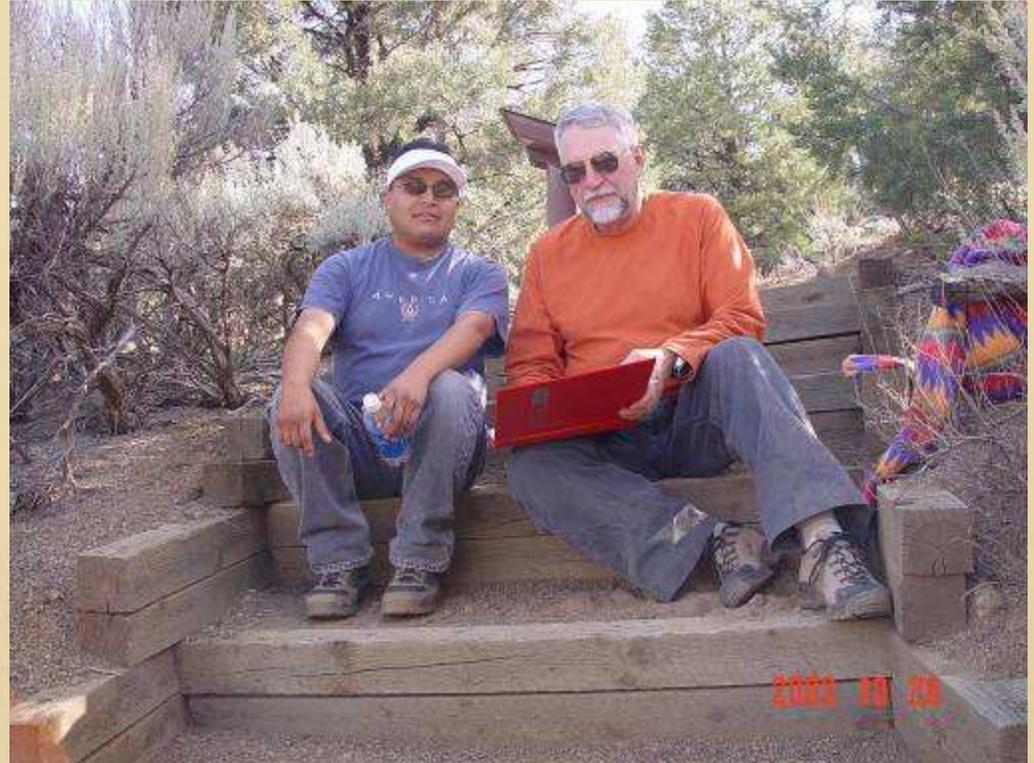
~Ferrell Secakuku

(<http://www.indigenousgeography.si.edu>)



Conclusions

- Our first cultural landscape paper (1997) was about the landscapes of the Colorado River and Grand Canyon, based on interviews beginning in 1994.
- This analysis is based on interviews from 2004 and it is only now after more than a dozen intervening cultural landscape studies that we have understood the story of Mt. Trumbull.
- In retrospect, we were told the story decades before by elders but neither truly understood its details nor its complexity.
- Like many topographically-based stories, it only unfolded on the ground and over time.



Dr. Rich Stoffle and Charley Bulletts in 2004
Charley Bulletts is the son of Danny Bulletts, who is son of Dan Bulletts. Dan first told Dr. Rich Stoffle the story of Mt. Trumbull in 1979.

Conclusions to Understanding Places and Puha Paths

- **Everything is sentient and has agency, and will talk to humans who are prepared to respect and properly use the knowledge.**
- **The story is the stone, not what is pecked or painted on the stone.**
- **The meaning of an object can best be understood by where it was placed.**
- **Most places can only be understood with reference to other related places.**

Some References

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