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## AOA BUSINESS

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### MINUTES OF THE AOA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING Wednesday, November 3, 1999 UO Museum of Natural History, Eugene

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The AOA Executive Board Meeting was held in the conference room at the UO Museum of Natural History at 5:00<sup>PM</sup>, November 3, 1999. In attendance were John Fagan, Pam Endzweig, Stephenie Kramer, and Bob Musil. Bob Musil once again kept the minutes.

The meeting began with a report from Treasurer Stephenie Kramer, who stated that the organization had \$2900.00 in the bank, along with \$737.77 in Oregon Archaeology Week funds. Stephenie also reported that she has designed a new order form for the AOA Occasional Papers to distribute at meetings. A promotional sale for Volume 6 was proposed, and the Board agreed that a sale at the Fall Meeting would be a good idea. A price of \$15.00 was decided on.

Stephenie also reported that she had looked into the possibility of a obtaining a credit card machine so that AOA could sell the Occasional Papers to persons who wanted to use plastic to pay for their order. Based on her presentation to the Board, it was decided that the costs of opening and maintaining such an account would be too

high, and it was decided not to pursue this avenue of payment for now.

Stephenie also suggested that AOA obtain a banner to use at the book table at conferences, and Bob said he would look into the design and construction of some sort of banner before the next NW Conference.

The question of funding for the next AOA volume was discussed, and it appears at this time that there will be enough money in the treasury to have Volume 7 published when it is ready. John said he would contact the editors and report on their progress at the Fall Meeting. It was also suggested that the process of beginning Volume 8 should be started, due to the long lead time needed to produce a final product. Pam stated that she has had a very good response to her CAHO volumes on obsidian studies, and suggested that a thematic volume about obsidian research in Oregon might be well received by prospective authors.

The Board then went over the agenda for the Fall Meeting, which will be (and was) held at the High Desert Museum. John agreed to put together the agenda, based on the ideas discussed by the Board, and have it ready for the Meeting.

At that point the discussion once again focused on ideas for recruiting new members by reaching more archaeologists in the state about the benefits of being a member of AOA. Although AOA now has over 100 members, it was agreed that the ongoing membership drive should continue. John suggested forming a membership committee at the Fall Meeting of which he and Bob agreed to be members.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15<sup>PM</sup>.

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## CURRENT RESEARCH: OBSIDIAN STUDIES IN OREGON

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### OREGON OBSIDIAN SOURCE INVENTORY AND GEOCHEMICAL SURVEY: A PROGRESS REPORT

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During the last 20 years, obsidian trace element provenience (sourcing) and hydration dating investigations in Oregon archaeological projects have made the transition from the exotic to the everyday. Many modern Oregon research programs in regions in which obsidian artifacts are found now routinely include provenience (usually trace element analysis) and obsidian hydration dating studies.

Well over 20,000 obsidian artifacts from several hundred Oregon archaeological sites have now been analyzed using trace element methods, most commonly nondestructive X-ray fluorescence analysis. More than 6,500 of these analyses, the largest number undertaken as part of any single archaeological project in the United States, were recently completed in 1995 as part of the PGT-PG&E Pipeline Expansion Project in central Oregon (Skinner 1995). The remainder have been primarily associated with a multitude of scattered U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, CRM, and academic projects.

The results of these trace element investigations, admittedly biased towards sources located in western and central Oregon because of the greater number of investigations in those regions, indicate that approximately 80 percent of the characterized artifacts

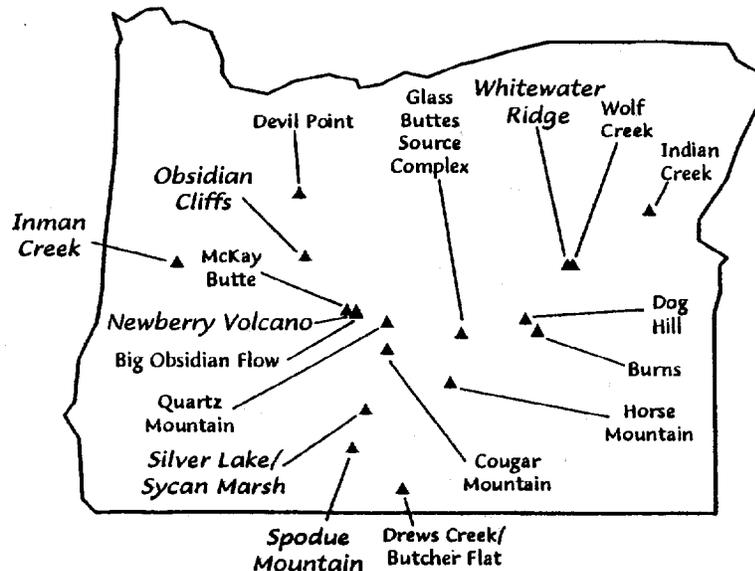


Figure 1. The most archaeologically significant of the many Oregon obsidian sources. Italicized names indicate sources that have been correlated with more than 1,000 artifacts.

originated from a fairly restricted number of obsidian sources (Figure 1). The balance were correlated with sources from which fewer than 100 total artifacts have been identified or are from unknown sources. More than 1000 of the Oregon artifacts have also been tied to sources located in the Medicine Lake Highlands and Warner Mountains of northern California. A number of other geographically extensive and archaeologically significant eastern Oregon sources (Beatys Butte, for example) are inadequately represented in provenience investigations because of the low number of studies carried out in the eastern part of the state. Unfortunately, this body of information exists in no centralized and readily accessible location and access to the data is often awkward and difficult.

Despite the current interest in obsidian studies, our knowledge of the geographic distribution and geochemical composition of obsidian sources in Oregon is still far from complete. An initial attempt was made in the early 1980's to compile a listing of sources in Oregon (and the other western states) but the project was never completed (Sappington 1981a, 1981b). And, with well over 100 potential geochemically discrete sources of natural glass, Oregon is arguably the most obsidian-rich (and complex) geographic area in the world.

In 1995, on moving the former BioSystems Analysis Obsidian Studies Lab from Santa Cruz, California, to Corvallis, Oregon, we decided to begin a thorough inventory and trace element survey of Oregon sources. Using Richard Hughes' 1986 publication, *Diachronic Variability in Obsidian Procurement Patterns in Northeastern California and Southcentral Oregon*, Kathy Davis and Jay King of BioSystems Analysis had collected samples at numerous southern Oregon locations. These samples were combined with the author's personal collection (see Skinner 1983) from western and central Oregon. Armed with these assembled samples and fueled by a thorough search of the literature, we then began to systematically survey, sample, and geochemically characterize all the obsidian sources that we could locate in Oregon.

I'm pleased to report that we have now completed the trace element analysis of over 3,200 geologic specimens collected at several hundred different primary and secondary source locales in the state. To date, we have tentatively identified over 100 discrete geochemical source groups and are still adding new sources to the list at a steady rate. After 20 years of chasing down obsidian sources in Oregon, I'm beginning to have hope that a nearly complete inventory of the state is finally within sight.

In addition to the ongoing field work, we are now in the process of sifting through this considerable pile of data and distilling it into a user-friendly version consisting of source-by-source descriptions. These source reviews are gradually being posted and updated on the World Wide Web at the *International Association for Obsidian Studies* Obsidian Source Catalog website. This catalog is currently located at [www.obsidianlab.com/s\\_home.html](http://www.obsidianlab.com/s_home.html) but will soon be moving to [www.sourcecatalog.com](http://www.sourcecatalog.com). Links to the source catalog can be found at the *International Association for Obsidian Studies* website at [www.peak.org/obsidian/obsidian.html](http://www.peak.org/obsidian/obsidian.html) and at the *Northwest Research* website at [www.obsidianlab.com](http://www.obsidianlab.com). Details about the overall progress of the lab obsidian survey are also posted at our website.

### Still Plenty To Do

In spite of the substantial field and geochemical work completed so far, we still have a ways to go before a statewide survey of obsidian sources can be considered as complete. In particular, trace element studies of artifacts from the Fort Rock Basin and Harney-Malheur Basin have alerted us to the presence of numerous unknown toolstone sources (that is, those known only from analyzed artifacts) in those regions. Some of these unknown sources were clearly widely used during the prehistoric period and the location of their whereabouts is a high priority in the survey.

More extensive studies of many of the major and minor sources are still needed, particularly with regard to the delineation of source boundaries and prehistoric patterns of use. In hopes of stimulating this research, Northwest Research Obsidian Studies Laboratory is offering free geochemical analyses of obsidian source material originating from any new Oregon sources. For additional details about this offer and about our support of obsidian-related graduate research, please see the lab website.

*Acknowledgments.* The obsidian survey that I have described here would not have been possible without the active participation and assistance of the many Oregon archaeologists who contributed samples and source information. My thanks to all of you for helping us get this far along with the project.

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