



# Track Rock Petroglyphs

Blue Ridge Ranger District • Chattahoochee National Forest • Georgia



## Blue Ridge Ranger District Office

2042 Highway 515 West  
Blairsville, GA 30512  
706-745-6928  
www.fs.usda.gov/conf

### Have You Heard of ARPA?

ARPA stands for the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and that's exactly what it does. ARPA is the law of the land and applies to all federal public lands, including the national forests.

Under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, information about the specific location of archaeological sites within the forest is exempt from public disclosure in order to protect fragile cultural resources (36 CFR296.18). It's against the law to dig up, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any archaeological resource located on public lands. Severe criminal penalties exist for people who buy, sell, trade, transport or receive archaeological resources taken from public lands. If someone wants to conduct research, they must get a written permit from the USDA Forest Service after it has consulted with other agencies and Tribes. Careful guidelines and restrictions must be in place before the research begins.

You have an important role to play in the preservation of these archaeological sites. If you see or know of illegal activity, please contact one of our local offices.

### Introduction

Tucked away in the gap between Thunderstruck Mountain and Buzzard Roost Ridge, history is written in stone. Track Rock Gap is the location of a series of rock carvings, or petroglyphs, made by Native Americans in Union County, Georgia on soapstone boulders. There are over a hundred carvings of a wide range of figures. It's one of the most significant rock art sites in the Southeastern United States and the only such site located on public land in Georgia. Although it's one of the best known rock art sites in the region, it was never completely recorded or studied before the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests sponsored research there in 2009.

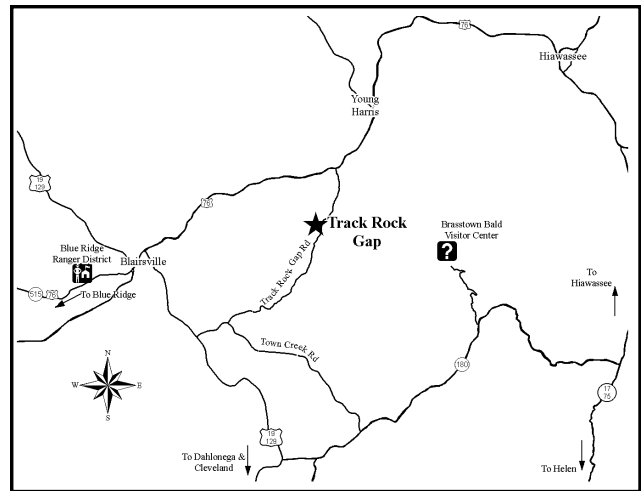
### Visiting Track Rock

Track Rock Gap is open to public visitation and no fee is charged. We have several suggestions to enhance your visit. Intensity of natural lighting can influence how much you are able to see. Bright mid-day sun makes it hard to see most of the figures, and the best times to visit are early or late in the day, when the light is at a low angle. Please be respectful of other visitors and the people who made these carvings. Previous visitors removed pieces of the boulders, thus depriving future visitors of the chance to see what they thought was so special.

### Directions

You can reach Track Rock Gap by taking US 129 to Blairsville, then US 76 east about 5 miles. At signs for Track Rock Gap Road, turn right for about 2 miles to the gap. Their location in the gap makes stopping beside the boulders very dangerous. Drive on through the gap, noting the Track Rocks on the right, and look for the small parking lot on your right. Park there and take the trail back to the gap, safely from traffic.

From Hiawasse, go west on US 76, through the town of Young Harris, and about 5 miles to the turn-off south on Track Rock Gap Road.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service - Southern Region  
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest  
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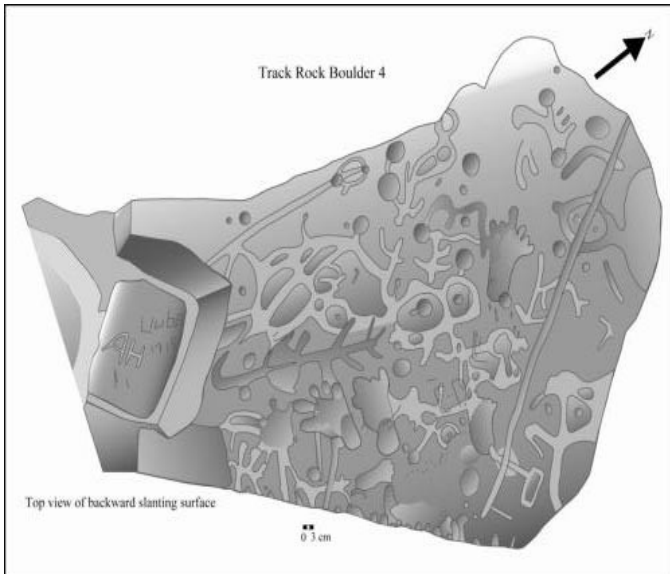
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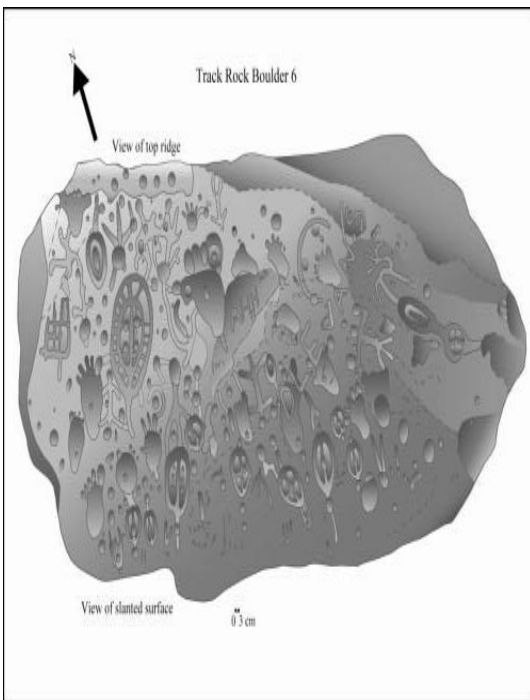
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## Track Rock Boulder 4

The southwestern third or so of the boulder has been destroyed by vandals and it is not known what once occurred on the destroyed section. A total of 39 cupules have been traced on Boulder 4. Five foot-like motifs have been traced. Two of the feet resemble normal human feet with five toes, a third foot is sideways with its toes barely visible, a fourth foot has some of its toes truncated by a later curvilinear motif, and the fifth foot is human-like but has six toes. A maze of curvilinear lines covers most of the boulder. Near the center of the maze are two oval motifs, each with a cupule at its center. A second pair of oval motifs, each with a cupule within, occurs near the east-central edge of the boulder. A third pair of oval motifs with cupules occurs on both sides of a straight incised line that runs diagonally down the eastern side of the boulder. This straight-lined motif has previously been identified as an atlatl spear thrower, but is now interpreted as a map. A second straight-lined motif occurs near the center of the current southern edge of the boulder. This motif can be construed as representing an atlatl spear thrower too, even though it could represent other forms. The

straight southeastern edge of the boulder is chipped on its upward-facing side. By knocking off various flakes from this side, somebody was able to create a serrated, or scalloped, edge. Similar scalloped edges at several rock art sites have been noted in the Columbia Plateau area of northwestern America. Informants said that such scalloped edges could have been used for rubbing a stick against and so generate a rasping sound as an aid to induce visions of a spirit helper.



## Track Rock Boulder 6

A total of 153 cupules were traced on Boulder 6. Fourteen vulva-shapes were recorded, 11 are football-shaped and three are circular. Of the fourteen vulva-shapes, two resemble cross-in-ring motifs. Each of these cross-in-ring designs contain a tiny cupule within the central groove, slightly below the intersection point of the cross lines. An elaborately carved vulva-form, on the central western portion of the boulder, has striations and a row of cupules along its periphery. Another vulva-form, lower down and closer to the southeastern side of the boulder, has striations outside its right-hand edge. Short vertical lines emanate from the bottoms of at least eight vulva shapes. Eighteen foot-like motifs have been traced. The feet vary in proportion and size; a particularly big foot with massive toes near the upper center of the boulder resembles that of a giant being. One track, near the upper central portion of the boulder, resembles the front track of a bear. Four of the six tracks that were traced are bird-like, while the other two are unidentifiable. Of all the footprints and tracks recorded, only one bird track points downwards, the rest point upwards, away from ground surface. Overall then, with the exception of the single downward pointing bird track, the feet and tracks create the impression of humans and animals walking to the apex of the rock, beginning at ground level. Remnants of curvilinear lines can be seen scattered across the boulder. A grid-like design occurs near the northwestern corner, while an inverted U-shape can be seen closer to the southeastern side. Four human-like figures can be seen on the boulder, two of which are upside-down. A figure on the eastern slope of the boulder has arms that terminate in

cupules. Two cup-in-ring designs can be seen on the boulder too, both occurring west of the center.

**To learn more about the petroglyphs visit our website  
at [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/conf/trackrock](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/conf/trackrock)**