



## Event Hilite

### **The 8000 B.C. Deerhunter**

By [Barbarella](#) | Published Wednesday, March 19, 2008

“Only one other fluted point has ever been found in San Diego,” says George Kline, graduate student in archaeology at San Diego State University. Kline describes a fluted point as an arrowhead with a “channel scar going longitudinally from base to tip,” indicating the groove into which a shaft would fit.

The “Lost Valley Fluted Point” was discovered by Kline’s wife Victoria and grad student Tad Schwinneson in 2002 in an area near the northwest edge of Anza-Borrego State Park. “Tad was down in the unit [a two-meter-square hole], and my wife was just outside with a screen to sift with,” says Kline. Excavation units are dug to bedrock, which, in this area, is between one and two meters deep. “[Tad] shoveled a shovel full of dirt into the screen, and my wife screamed, ‘Stop!’ There are certain things you don’t expect to see, and this is one of them.”

The point had been nestled in the soil just over a meter below the surface. “Most fluted points in California have been found on the surface,” explains Kline. “When they’re found on the surface, you have no idea how long they’ve been sitting on the surface or where they were before they popped out.”

Archaeologist and fluted-point specialist Michael F. Rondeau confirms the point’s authenticity and estimates it to be between 8000 and 12,000 years old.

On Tuesday, March 25, Kline will host a research update on the “Lost Valley Fluted Point” for the San Diego County Archaeological Society. The Lost Valley Campground, for which the point is named, is located an hour’s off-road drive northeast of Warner Springs. The campground belongs to the Orange County division of the Boy Scouts, which allows San Diego State University to conduct field studies in exchange for providing grad-student volunteers to assist Boy Scouts in earning a merit badge in archaeology. “There are only a handful of places in the United States that offer that. It’s one of those rare merit badges that are hard to get,” says Kline.

Most points discovered above ground have been altered by erosion. “There was such mineral incrustation on this point — it’s got a lot of crud stuck to it — that we couldn’t even tell what kind of stone it was,” Kline explains. “After it was out of the ground for a day or two, I noticed a tiny chip off the base of the point that I think happened after it came out of the ground, and it was a very shiny black. It was made out of obsidian, [which means] we can learn more from it.”

Kline can use “obsidian hydration” dating to determine the age of the point, a process that measures the water content on the surface of the volcanic glass against that of its interior. “I thought I could get a date from the one little chip that broke off, but when I tried, it was too small,” says Kline. “Since this thing is so rare, I have been hesitant to cut into it.”

The fluted point has undergone a “protein-residue analysis,” which tests for blood proteins. If an archaeologist wanted to test for mammoth blood on an artifact found in North America, a test could be done for proteins that matched those of elephants (in the family Elephantidae). The Lost Valley point tested positive for Cervidae, the family including deer, elk, and moose.

Kline has also put the point through a geochemical analysis to determine where the stone originated — the Lost Valley point’s origin is 300 miles away at Mammoth Lakes, California, near Yosemite National Park. “Casa Diablo is the area around Mammoth Lake where there are several obsidian flows, and this particular one is from Lookout Mountain,” says Kline.

— *Barbarella*

**Lost Valley Fluted Point: Research Update 2008**

**Tuesday, March 25**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Los Peñasquitos Ranch Adobe**

**12122 Canyonside Park Drive**

**Rancho Peñasquitos**

**Cost: Free**

**Info: 858-538-8066 or [www.sandiegoarchaeologicalsociety.com](http://www.sandiegoarchaeologicalsociety.com)**