

Tepee Rings – Ya Ha Tinda

There are several tepee rings to be found on the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch.



Tepee Ring west of Scalp Creek

The most obvious ones were located west of Scalp Creek. Approximately 10 rings could be seen; 2-3 were complete rings with stone hearths in the centre. Others were partial tepee rings. Most of these tepee rings had a double stone ring which would perhaps indicate the natives used Bighorn flats as a winter camp. There is evidence that the bison migrated into this valley, perhaps more so during the winter. Grazing terraces can be seen on the steep grassy slopes along the ranch road from the east gate to the Bighorn for example. Several bison skulls have been found in various locations.

Unfortunately, during their brush cutting in 2010 ranch staff destroyed the tepee rings on Bighorn Creek. However, there are a few in other areas that I can direct you to.

1. West of Scalp Creek

Cross Scalp Creek on the Cascade Fire Road. Take the horse trail that goes to the Water Slide. Once you start north on the horse trail you will notice a small grove of poplar trees on your right (East). Just beyond this cluster of trees is a complete tepee ring with entrance facing east. It is located in a grassy area and you need to ride off the trail about 30-40 feet to find it.

2. North of Bighorn Falls

On the west side of Bighorn Creek, proceed north. At the bottom of the hill where the trail starts to climb steeply and Bighorn Creek has made a bend to the East, ride along the base of the high bank. Watch for a partial tepee ring – double stones. It is hard to find in the tall grass and is best seen in the spring.

Also, two complete tepee rings can be found near a small grove of poplar trees further east along this bank. One is located on the west side of the grove of poplars. The second one is located on

the east side of the grove of poplars and slightly south. You should notice a low bench (2' or so) where the grove is located. Just below this low bench is a second complete ring. Again, it takes a bit of looking due to the grass.

There likely were more tepee rings in this area; however, the roadbed may have destroyed some of them. Archaeologists tell me that over the years the stones get moved around by other groups of people who camped there over hundreds of years and that is why there are partial tepee rings in various places.

There may be been more tepee rings along Scalp Creek as well, but due to constant flooding of the creek these rings may have been obliterated.

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