



Effigy Mound Group - Wisconsin DNR photo.

## Effigy Mounds – Frank’s Hill, located on both sides of HWY193 just north of the intersection with HWY60 west of Muscoda.

During the Woodland period (about 500 B.C. to A.D. 1100), earthwork or “mound” construction, generally associated with burial of the dead came into being. For many hundreds of years, the Native peoples of Wisconsin built mounds out of rock and dirt. Some were shaped like cones or domes, and some were long and lean. Just over one thousand years ago, people began to make effigy mounds shaped like animals and even people. In the past, archaeologists dug into the mounds to find what was inside them. This is not done anymore, in order to respect the wishes of the Native Americans who are descended from the effigy mound builders. It’s known from past excavations that most mounds contain human bones and some contain special deposits of charcoal, ashes, animal bone, shell, or rock. Some people buried in the mounds were buried with arrows, pottery, and pipes.

Effigy Mound Sites in Wisconsin



Wisconsin has a large number of such mounds, although many have been destroyed or otherwise affected by later development and natural processes. In Late Woodland times, Indian peoples began to build animal-shaped or “effigy” mounds—birds, bears and panthers are common forms. Because of the especially dense concentration of effigy mounds in the state, Wisconsin is considered to be the center of what is referred to as “effigy mound culture.” In addition to building mounds, Woodland peoples developed other technological innovations including plant domestication, pottery and the bow and arrow. Richland County and Southern Wisconsin is where thousands of earthen monuments in the shapes of animals, spirit figures and human were built by these

ancient peoples. Internationally famous, the mounds have few items deliberately included that might help to explain them, which adds to the mystery. The mounds were built 1,000 years ago, between A.D. 750 and 1050. Most, but not all, of the effigy mounds contain human burials. All mounds are regarded by Native American people as being sacred. The most common mound types are those that show birds, bears, and long-tailed creatures that some people identify as panthers. Most animal mounds are shown from the side. When they are shown from the top, with all four legs sticking out, people call them "turtles." Birds and animals symbolized by effigy mounds most likely refer to spirits as well as actual animals. Native Americans divided the universe into Upper and Lower worlds. Birds inhabited the Upper World, while animals and Water Panthers inhabited the Lower world. Clans with bird names and animal names in Native societies were divided the same way, and sometimes lived in separate parts of the same village. Ho-Chunk people have identified some mounds as Thunderbirds and Water Panthers.

Shadewald Mound Group (sometimes called Elder Group) is well-preserved and easily assessable thanks to Frank Shadewald, who purchased the land with the sole purpose of preserving the mounds. (Mr. Shadewald is now deceased).



**Cultural Landscapes Legacies, Inc. photo.**

There are two clusters of mounds located here. One is located on top of Frank's Hill (above photo) and consists of, among others, an eagle and bison effigies. The other cluster is on top of the hill just across the road from Frank's Hill (below). It consists of 12 conical mounds in almost perfect linear formation within the same distance of one another. It is thought that the mounds have some calendar meaning.

Effigy Mounds National Monument, in Iowa across the river from Wyalusing State Park, has many effigy mounds. Many burial mounds, as well as other

burial sites (both Indian and non-Indian), are in DNR parks, forests and other properties. Other mounds, such as platform mounds, are also protected as burial mounds even though they served different primary functions. Examples are those related to Mississippian (not Woodland) people of Aztalan. There are very few such sites in Wisconsin, but Aztalan is important as the northern expression of a Mississippian period "empire," directly related to the great site of Cahokia, Illinois near St. Louis, a World Heritage Site.

Frank's Hill is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.