

# Lovelock Cave Archaeological Site

## Pershing County

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**NEVADA** Lovelock Cave  
Archaeological Site

Courtesy Nevada Magazine  
Photo by Matthew B. Brown

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Archaeologists began excavating Lovelock Cave in 1912 and continued intermittently through the 1970s. Scientific and theoretical approaches to archaeology evolved significantly in the latter half of the twentieth century allowing scientists to use the data from Lovelock Cave to more accurately date and understand the region's prehistory.

Many thousands of artifacts have been recovered from Lovelock Cave over the years, ranging from elaborate mats and bags made of tule and cattail leaves to a remarkable cache of duck decoys, at 2,000 years old the oldest in the world! Each artifact and the position in which it was found adds to our understanding of human prehistory and the changing ecology of this region. For example, we know Lovelock Cave experienced its heaviest use between about 2,000 B.C. and A.D. 1,000 during the period known as the Lovelock Period. It was a time when water was more plentiful and the area was rich in plant and animal resources. Over time, the area became warmer and dryer. Fewer people inhabited the area and the style of many of their tools and possessions, what archaeologists call "material culture," changed.

For more information on the Lovelock Cave Back Country Byway please visit:

[http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/nv/field\\_offices/winnemucca\\_field\\_office/programs/](http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/nv/field_offices/winnemucca_field_office/programs/)

