

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Cueva Lucero

other names/site number JD-5, Guayabal II

2. Location

street & number

☒ not for publication

city or town Juana Diaz

☒ vicinity

state Puerto Rico code PR county Juana Diaz code 075 zip code

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Aida Belen Rivera Ruiz

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Cueva Lucero

Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
 ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
 ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
 National Register
☐ removed from the
 National Register
☐ other (explain):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

for Erik K. Montenegro 9/26/08

 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)
☐ district
☒ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

_____ 0
 _____ 0
 _____ 0
 _____ 0
 _____ 0

Noncontributing

_____ 0	buildings
_____ 0	sites
_____ 0	structures
_____ 0	objects
_____ 0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Prehistoric Rock Art of Puerto Rico

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_____ 0

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 08000936

Date Listed: 9/26/08

Cueva Lucero
Property Name

Juana Diaz
County

Puerto Rico
State

Prehistoric Rock Art of Puerto Rico
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for *Enikak Martha Gabat*
Signature of the Keeper

9/26/08
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination is amended to add 1 contributing site.

The nomination is amended to change "Archaeology" under the Areas of Significance to read:
"ARCHEOLOGY:prehistoric"

The nomination is amended to change the Period of Significance to: A.D. 600-1500.

The nomination is amended to add "Less than one acre" under the "Acreage of Property"

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religious/ Ceremonial Site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/ Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____

walls _____

roof _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(See Continuation Sheets)

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(See Continuation Sheets)

Art, Archaeology, Religion

Cueva Lucero

Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico

Period of Significance

Pre-Hispanic

Significant Dates

A.D. 600 - 1500

Significant Person

N / A

Cultural Affiliation

Primarily Pre-Hispanic, but a Historic component is also evident.

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See Continuation Sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(See continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
<div></div>					
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

(See Continuation Sheets)

Verbal Boundary Description

(See Continuation Sheets)

Boundary Justification

(See Continuation Sheets)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Yasha N. Rodriguez, Ph.D., Historic Property Specialist [of the PR-SHPO] and
Pedro Alvarado Zayas [of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture
Technical assistance was provided by: Berenice R. Sueiro, Architect (PRSHPO)

organization Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office date _____
street & number PO Box 9066581 telephone 787-721-3737
city or town San Juan state PR zip code 00906-6581

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

This nomination document includes 27 continuation sheets.

Maps

An aerial photograph showing general site location is provided in Section 10.
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location is provided in Section 10.
A **sketch map** illustrating cave shape and layout is provided in Section 7.

Photographs

Representative **black-and-white photographs** of the property, along with a **cd** with digital color images (tiff format), are included. A total of ten photographs were printed individually in acid free photographic paper and are provided to illustrate particularities of the cave such as general location and examples of rock art.

Additional items

Plates are provided to present the rock art images documented at Cueva Lucero archaeological site (these were taken by archaeologist Pedro Alvarado).

Property Owner

name Efraín Dalecio
street & number ██████████ telephone ██████████
city or town Juana Diaz state PR zip code ██████████

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Cueva Lucero
Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The archaeological site of Cueva Lucero contains approximately, one hundred rock art images, making it one of the best examples of aboriginal rock art in the Antilles. It is one of the best examples of sites with pictographs in the island of Puerto Rico. The cave can be described as a solution cave located [REDACTED]. It sits approximately 480 meters above sea level, to the north of [REDACTED]. The area surrounding the cave is heavily vegetated, so much so that the entrance of the cave is not visible from nearby roads (Photograph 1). The cave's entrance is, however, very accessible, by foot, from the road.



Photograph 1: View North towards Cerro Cuevas, where Cueva Lucero is located.



Photograph 2: Entrance of Cueva Lucero.

The cave contains several galleries and passages and lacks waterways and flooded areas (Map 1). There are at least two possible entrances, one to the south (Photograph 2) and another to the northwest, which is less accessible, but could have also been used as a lookout point. The gallery at the southern entrance is large, has an open ceiling and thus is totally lit. However, while some areas within the cave are more spacious, both horizontally and vertically, other sections are far more

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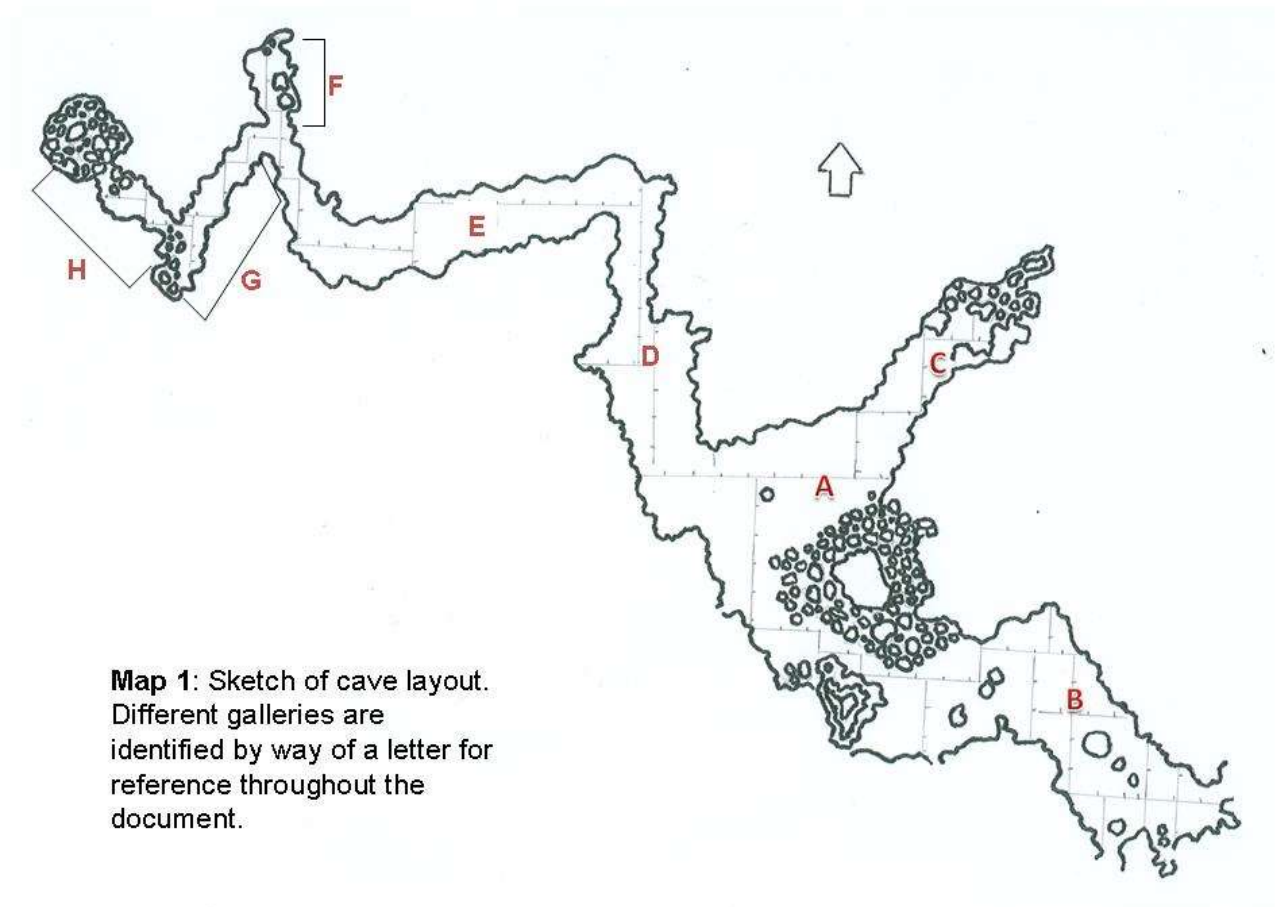
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constricted. In the same manner, some galleries are naturally lit, while others are extremely dark. In particular, the areas near the entrances are naturally lit (refer to Map 1 Gallery A and a section of Gallery B) while areas deeper in the cave are entirely dark. Cueva Lucero derives its name from a small opening in the ceiling of one of its deeper galleries (refer to Map 1 Gallery E) through which a circular beam of light emanates projecting light onto the cave's floor. It is possible to enter the cave through this opening, although dangerous, as evidenced by a recent accidental death.



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The system of galleries that composes Cueva Lucero is one through which the individual experiences changes in the degree of light, ranging from total visibility to complete obscurity; much of the documentation and photographs included in this document were only possible with the use of flash lights and flash cameras. In the same manner, the space within the cave also changes dramatically. Some of the galleries are larger than others and some areas within the cave are narrow and constricted. Thus, some areas allow for comfortable walking, while others require the individual to crawl (Photograph 3 and Photograph 4). In the same manner, light and darkness produce a different effect on the space, and the way it can be perceived and experienced. As such, the space changes as one moves through the cave allowing for differences in spatial perception and feeling.

The journey into the mountain, from light to darkness, and the visible to the invisible, is accompanied by rock art images of different types and motifs. Taino myths speak of caves as places of origin, ascribing to them a special sense of place that goes beyond functionality and may very well include ritual and/or ceremonial activities. While it is difficult to associate Cueva Lucero with a particular cultural time period, it is clear that it was consistently used by peoples from pre-colonial times to the present. Archaeological excavations and analyses of iconography, for example, are needed as future projects to better understand Cueva Lucero as an archaeological site. Nonetheless, as will be explained below, Cueva Lucero's rock art and its scientific potential, warrants its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.



Photograph 3: Main entrance to Cueva Lucero, Gallery A.



Photograph 4: Example of passageway within the Cueva Lucero Site.

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The images documented in Cueva Lucero include both petroglyphs and pictographs; pictographs are far more common (please refer to Additional Documentation section for individual photographs of rock art images). The choice in imagery and placement was clearly purposeful to take the best advantage of the interplays of light and shadow in relation to the specific setting for each petroglyph/pictograph within the cave. Also, it is likely that specific images were placed to hold particular relations to each other. Interestingly, the position of the images seems to be such that petroglyphs were placed in areas naturally lit and pictographs abound especially in the deeper and darker areas of the cave. Cueva Lucero hosts an assortment of pre-colonial images, the majority of which consist of identifiable zoomorphic forms such as birds, turtles, fish and serpents. Anthropomorphic faces (simple and more complex sun-like faces) have also been documented, most are petroglyphs rather than pictographs, and they are usually located near, or at the two cave entrances. It may very well be that some of these entities serve as guards to the entrances into the cave's domain, especially since the deeper areas of the cave feature mostly zoomorphic representations.

The pictographs, which are the most common, are monochromatic (in black) and probably made by applying charcoal to the rock surface. Future studies could address the investigation of type or types of pigment used at Cueva Lucero. Monochromatic rock art has also been documented at Cueva del Consejo, in Arecibo, Cueva Catedral, in Hatillo, and Cueva de las Golondrinas, in Barceloneta (Martinez 2005:227), among others.

Many of the images at Cueva Lucero were placed to form groupings. For instance, Gallery A contains a group of simple anthropomorphic faces within a cluster of stalactites and column formations (Photograph 5 and Photograph 6). These faces (please refer to Additional Documentation section) are one of the first images that a visitor encounters when entering though the south entrance of the cave. Due to their placement, and also because they are anthropomorphic beings, be it ancestors, gods or spiritual beings, they could have been intended to guard or oversee. In effect, the faces seem to be part of the rock formation and come out to look at the passerby. There exist within the cave several anthropomorphic pictographs, some full-bodied and others consisting of faces; but as already mentioned, anthropomorphic petroglyphs are relatively scarce and present only in particular areas (near the entrances) of the cave.

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Photograph 5: Simple anthropomorphic faces near entrance of Gallery A.



Photograph 6: Detail of the simple anthropomorphic faces in Gallery A.

A brief overview of the images documented permits a preliminary discussion of the images in each gallery (please refer to Additional Documentation section). Gallery A contains anthropomorphic petroglyph figures; Gallery B also contains anthropomorphic petroglyph images near both its entrance (still lit by the open ceiling of Gallery A) and also near its farthest point, which is the second possible entrance into the cave; Gallery C contains representations of animals, more than half of these are birds (one of these is particularly elaborate); Gallery D is narrow and contains many examples of historic graffiti, some with pictorial representations (see Photographs 7 and 8, for examples); Gallery E contains anthropomorphics, including a wrapped figure, objects and animals including iguanas, birds, and fish; Gallery F contains geometric shapes and objects, one iguana, and one anthropomorphic whose authenticity still needs to be corroborated (especially since there are other images that we have also identified as fakes); Gallery G contains only three images that can be described as one anthropomorphic and two zoomorphic; and Gallery H contains one petroglyph and several pictographs including a snake, geometric motifs and some anthropomorphic figures, some of which are yet to be corroborated as genuine.

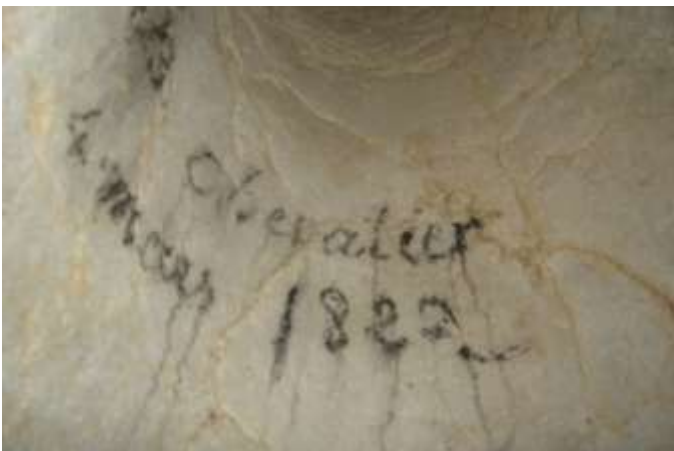
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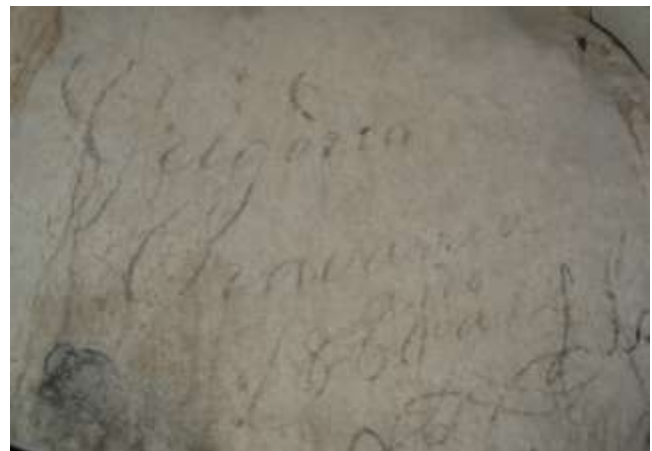
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Photograph 7: Example of historic graffiti in Gallery E.



Photograph 8: Example of penmanship in Gallery E.

Preliminary documentation work conducted as part of the preparation of this document identified several clusters of images that due to their position may have been interrelated. It is important to note, however, that these images may have been created at once or they may have been added over time alongside others with the passage of time. Thus, there is still the question as to whether the initial representation and the cluster we now observe are contemporaneous, or if the cluster developed sequentially into its present form. Still, there is clear intention of placement and choice of imagery that can lead to future studies of interpretation of iconography and symbolism of the Cueva Lucero rock art images.

Documentation work at Gallery B (Photograph 9) and at Gallery E (Photograph 10) allowed us to identify clusters of images (without overlapping on any of the images) that clearly represent groupings and could have been intended to be "read" or understood as texts. The specific placement of images throughout the entire cave, in relation to each other within the same "panel" or "tableau", by gallery and with others throughout the cave, needs to be carefully recorded and investigated in the future; we hope that future studies will focus on this aspect of the cave's imagery. It is our hope that once Cueva Lucero is listed as a historic place, other specialized studies (such as iconography, symbolism, dating, assessment of cave conditions, and others, may be undertaken).

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Photograph 9: Documentation work within Gallery B.



Photograph 10: Documentation work within Gallery E.

There is ample evidence that the cave's existence has been known to neighbors and other individuals from at least the early 1800s. In addition to pictographs and petroglyphs, Cueva Lucero features historic graffiti of beautiful execution and in excellent state of preservation. Such inscriptions range from names with year dates to full sentences and pictorial representations.

Future studies could address the historic graffiti and target it for in-depth investigation. The writing within the cave has continued into present times and more recent spray-painted names and images are also visible. This, together with some looting attempts, attests to its continued use through time.

At present, no physical barrier or admittance procedure exists to prevent entrance to the cave, although a small sign has been installed at the main entrance that warns against damaging the rock art (refer to Photograph 2). The fact that most of the rock art images at Cueva Lucero are pictographs, and that most of those are zoomorphic, rather than anthropomorphic and/or geometric is notable. The importance of this site rests not only in the atypical quantity of images and the fact that most of them are still in great condition, but also in the potential for investigation. Future studies could address stylistic analysis, imagery and meaning, as well as establishing a clear understanding of the layout and relation of the images to rock formations, spatial qualities, and directionality, as well as to each other.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(Summary paragraph)

Cueva Lucero has been officially registered since 1979 but has been known to archaeologists since the early 1900s. It has been well visited by archaeologists and the general public and mentioned in a variety of publications though the 1900s. There is evidence of continuous use from pre-colonial to present times. Cueva Lucero is probably the best example of a site with pictographs in the island, as it contains such a high quantity of well executed images and a variety of motifs including anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images (zoomorphic being far more prevalent). The significance of Cueva Lucero rests on the artistic value of its rock art images, which are still in their original location, and the potential for these to yield information related to religious, social, and political aspects of the pre-Columbian cultures of Puerto Rico.

Historical Background and Significance

Aboriginal cave use throughout Puerto Rico is evident, as petroglyphs, pictographs, and artifacts have been documented at many of these locations. In all, the PR-SHPO site inventory has record of more than one hundred archaeological sites comprising caves; many of these require future archaeological documentation and study. The interpretations attributed to archaeological cave sites ranges from discussions of dwelling, burial, or ritual function (see for example Rainey 1940; Mason 1941; Hostos 1955); cave use has been recognized not only as shelter but also related to particular sacred beliefs and functions.

Some of the caves where rock art has been documented include Cueva María de la Cruz, in Loíza (Rouse and Alegría 1990); Cueva del Indio, in Arecibo; Cueva el Convento, in Arecibo; Cueva de las Golondrinas, in Manatí (Fewkes 1907); Cueva San Miguel, in Utuado; Cueva del Caballo, in Carolina; Cueva Ventana, in Guayanilla, Cueva de la Ceiba, in Utuado (Aitken 1917; Rainey 1940:115; Haeberlin 1917); Cueva Los Gemelos, in Morovis (Dávila 1981); Cueva La Mora, in Comerío (Roe 1996); and Cueva del Indio, in Las Piedras.

In 2001 the PR-SHPO submitted a Multiple Property Nomination titled Prehistoric Rock Art of Puerto Rico (Hayward, Cinquino and Steinback 2001) discussing the presence of petroglyphs and pictographs throughout the island of Puerto Rico and the lack of systematic documentation and study of such. This nomination was accepted and included by the Keeper of the National Register of

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Historic Places in 2002. Cueva Lucero was one of the sites mentioned as examples of cave sites featuring aboriginal images; it hosts aboriginal images, both pictographs and petroglyphs, along with a few examples of historical graffiti.

Cueva Lucero has been known to archaeologists since at least the early 1900s. Probably the first written mention of this cave is by Adolfo de Hostos in his book titled *Una Colección Arqueológica* (1955). Hostos was possibly the first Puerto Rican archaeologist to visit the area (1920) and may have excavated a bately near Cueva Lucero (Alvarado pers.com. May 2007). Apparently, his excavations recovered decorated sherds, presumably of Capa style, and stone objects such as *zemis* and *aros líticos* (also known as stone-collars). The cave is also mentioned by the *Sociedad Guaynía de Arqueología e Historia* (1974) who carried out an inventory of archaeological sites at Cerro de las Cuevas - where Cueva Lucero is located. Records at the PR-SHPO show it has been officially registered since 1979, at which point there were already some signs of vandalism. A more recent mention of Cueva Lucero is that by archaeologist Pedro Alvarado in his publication *El Arte Rupestre de Puerto Rico* prepared for the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture in 1999. In 2001, the cave was included in the list of Puerto Rican rock art sites presented in the Thematic Nomination titled Prehistoric Rock Art of Puerto Rico (Cinquino, et.al. 2001; see also Dubelaar, et.al. 1999). As part of the present nomination effort all aboriginal images within Cueva Lucero have been individually photographed (included as Plates in Section 10), the cave has been re-visited by PR-SHPO personnel and GPS coordinates established.

It is notable that Cueva Lucero contains approximately one hundred images and that most of them are zoomorphic images, rather than only antropomorphic and/or geometric shapes. Future studies could attempt to compare choice of imagery with that present at other caves. The preponderance of pictographs versus petroglyphs in Cueva Lucero is also significant in particular because most of the images created by carving (i.e. petroglyphs) feature antropomorphic beings. Also, there is a difference in placement by medium, with petroglyphs near or in the lit areas while pictographs were placed within darker areas of the cave and away from the entrances. Most, if not all of the images documented, are monochromatic (in black) and probably made by applying charcoal to the rock surface. Monochromatic rock art has also been documented at Cueva del Consejo, in Arecibo, Cueva Catedral, in Hatillo, and Cueva de las Golondrinas, in Barceloneta (Martinez 2005:227), among others.

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Cueva Lucero is significant under **Criterion C** because it contains petroglyphs and pictographs of high artistic value associated to an aboriginal cultural group. The images can still be observed, recorded and analyzed in their original location. Even though there is spray-paint damage throughout the cave (refer to Photograph 11, for example), most of the aboriginal images are intact, exhibiting integrity of workmanship (for the individual images). In addition, the images and the setting still convey a sense of the property during its time of use; thus the site retains integrity of feeling.



Photograph 11: Example of recent graffiti at Cueva Lucero.

The cave is also significant under **Criterion D** because it contains important information on style, technique, and choice of imagery that is likely to contribute to our understanding of the prehistoric cultures in the island. The cave site holds a relation to the nearby spring, valley, and other geographic features. It also must have held a relation to cultural features such as neighboring archaeological sites. As such, we can propose it holds integrity of setting. In the same manner, the position of the different images within the cave holds its intended location and relation with each other. Future studies should address the relation between the images in respect to each other and also in respect to the space and light within the cave. Cueva Lucero also holds the potential for future studies in areas such as social, political, and religious systems (see below).

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Criteria or Reasons for National Register Inclusion

- locational representation – the study of rock art may be used to investigate boundary definitions and rock art distribution. The image assemblage at Cueva Lucero can serve to contrast and compare images within cave settings and also to other settings such as rivers and coastlines. Furthermore, when examining the cave, it appears that the images are positioned so that some are in naturally lit areas and others in darker spaces within the cave. The symbolism and placement also needs to be studied.
- social/political system – the choice of images should be analyzed to explore settlement and functionality issues.
- religious system – the choice of images, mainly zoomorphic, could be associated to particular human-animal associations, traits of the animals depicted, or aboriginal myths.
- stylistic characteristics – the images, in particular those of birds, need to be studied as to ascertain whether these can be linked to those visible in other mediums, such as pottery. Also, the study of rock art may elucidate stylistic boundaries.
- practical reasons – although the images at Cueva Lucero have been individually photographed, archaeological projects to compare and relate the images to those of nearby sites have not been conducted. In the same manner, archaeological excavation within the cave and the surrounding area has not been undertaken. The inclusion of Cueva Lucero in the National Register of Historic Places will assign value to this resource and aid in efforts to properly manage the site.

It is also important to mention that the cave is currently being used by townsfolk and spelunkers; it has even been highlighted in a newspaper article ([REDACTED]) as a good place for rock climbing. The continuous use of the cave and its accessibility provides for public enjoyment of the site, but also makes defacement of the images and looting possible. In effect, modern graffiti is evident throughout the cave. However, as explained above, Cueva Lucero holds a tremendous quantity and variety of images that still retain integrity. The cave itself, with its system of galleries and passages, can also be enjoyed experiencing the original spatial characteristics in regards to dimension, interplays of light and darkness, and layout of the original images. It is however, commendable that the cave has a long history of use, dating from aboriginal times, through the historic periods, and up to the present.

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National Park Service

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**Toda
Verbal Boundary Description**

The Cueva Lucero Archaeological Site is located within the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. Access to the cave can be obtained by way of [REDACTED] and walking off the roadway
along the natural water spring uphill to the main entrance. It is yet to be determined whether the
area outside the cave contains archaeological artifacts and/or features. However, it is certain that
Cueva Lucero, as defined by its geological formation, is an archaeological site. As such, this
nomination pertains to the rock art site delimited by the physical limits of the cave.

Boundary Justification

The Cueva Lucero archaeological site encompasses an area of approximately .085 acres. A total of
100 images have been documented within the physical limits of the cave formation; among these
are pictographs, which are the majority, and petroglyphs.

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Topographic Map

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Photographic Map

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Additional Documentation

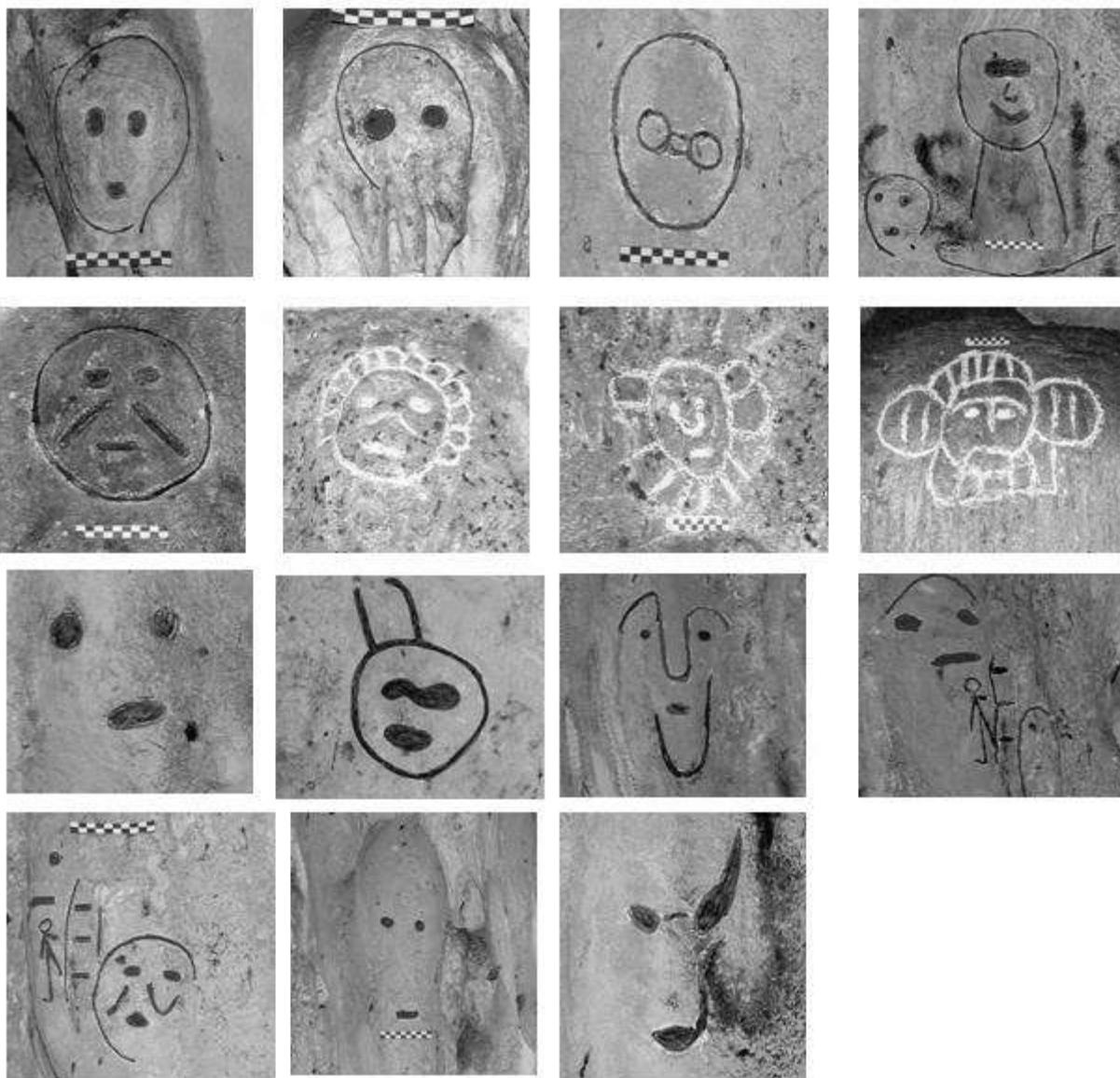
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Cueva Lucero
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Note: Clockwise from Upper Left Corner Figure 1 Example of Petroglyph; Figure 2: Example of Modern Graffiti; Figure 3: Example of Historic Graffiti; Figure 4: Example of Pictograph; Figure 5: PR-SHPO Personnel during Site Visit.

GALLERY A



GALLERY B



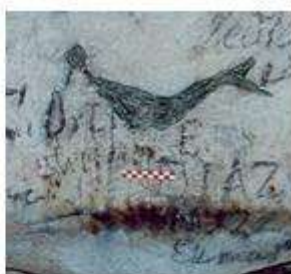
GALLERY C



GALLERY E



GALLEY E (continues)



GALLERY E (continues)



GALLERY E (continues)



GALLERY F



GALLERY G



GALLERY H

