

Lithophones from the San Luis Valley, Colorado: Utilizing Sound as a New Functional Dimension for Ground Stone Artifact Analysis and Interpretation

WHAT IS A LITHOPHONE?

"Litho" is Greek for stone
"Phone" means sound

A **lithophone** is a musical instrument consisting of a purposefully-selected rock (often formally-shaped) that is tapped or played with friction to produce musical notes.



A number of **portable lithophones** have recently been identified from Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve and in private collections from the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado.


22 lithophones have been analyzed for the Friends of the Dunes as part of a CO State Historical Fund grant.

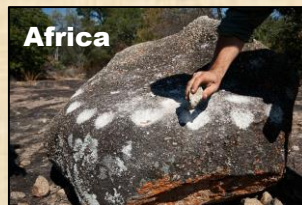
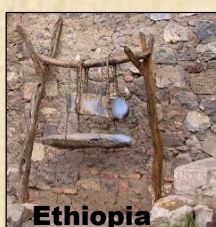


Lithophones (portable & stationary) have been utilized in ancient cultures around the world including Europe, the Far East, Africa, the South Seas, and South America. Only a few portable lithophones (in addition to Kiva Bells) have been formally recognized in North America and none have been previously documented in CO.



Sounds produced by the sample lithophones:

- Ringing similar to a marimba, xylophone, or metal bell
- Most exhibit dual sound planes (produce two notes) 



San Lazaro Pueblo, NM
Emily Brown (2014:57)

Biface lithophones - Labrador



If you know of potential lithophones in CO or other areas, please contact:
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