

Late Upper Paleolithic Archaeology of Coastal Northeast Asia and Its Relation to the Late Pleistocene Peopling of the Americas: An Update

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Paleogenetic evidence suggests that ancient Native Americans diverged from a mix of East Eurasian and Ancient North Eurasian groups, as early as ~23,000 years ago, followed by a period of isolation. Migration to the south of the continental Ice Sheets likely occurred between ~17,500 and 14,600 years ago, but precise locations and mechanisms remain unclear.

Archaeological evidence indicates human presence south of the ice sheets by ~16,000 cal BP (Davis et al. 2019), before the ice-free corridor opened. This suggests migration may have included coastal routes. Those Pre-Clovis period sites feature blade-based, flake-based, bifacial lithic reductions as well as osseous technologies (Waters 2019), including bifacial stemmed projectile points, differ from Beringian sites and are also dated earlier. Given the possibility of Pacific coastal migration, Late Pleistocene technologies in the coastal northeast Asia warrant comparison with early technologies south of the Ice Sheets.

The Paleo-Sakhalin-Hokkaido-Kurile Peninsula (PSHK) is key to understanding the Late Pleistocene peopling of the Americas, with over 188 sites with similar technological assemblages appearing by the same to earlier time periods (Buvit et al., 2021). This presentation provides Late Pleistocene sites, technologies, paleogenetics, and paleoenvironmental studies from PSHK, highlighting their relevance to the Late Pleistocene peopling of the Americas.