INTRODUCTION

The Ruby Pipeline corridor traverses 360 miles across northern Nevada. It crosses through four habitat zones that generally have higher levels of subsistence productivity in the west and lower levels of production in the east.

IDEAL FREE DISTRIBUTION (IFD) AND THE COLONIZATION OF NORTHERN NEVADA

To help us understand how this region was initially colonized and filled in over time we rely on IFD modeling which provides two main qualitative predictions: (1) the most suitable habitats should always be occupied first; and (2) they should always have the highest population densities (Codding and Jones 2013:14569).

RESULTS

The distribution of 396 single component areas shows that the expectations of the IFD are met throughout most of prehistory, with the High Rock Country occupied first and always having the highest population density, and the other zones filling in as expected, especially Thousand Springs Valley, which comes in last.

The predictions are upheld; however, in the Terminal Prehistoric, where Thousand Springs Valley and Upper Humboldt Plains have higher population densities than the High Rock Country.

DISCUSSION

The radical shift in habitat preference is probably linked to a greater use of small seeded plant resources that are more abundant in the east. Although low ranked compared to many other foods, with proper technology and work organization brought by the expansion of Numic populations (Western Shoshone in this case), these resources could support higher populations than was the case earlier in time.

It appears that differences in the rate of dispersal between the Western Shoshone (faster/earlier) and the Northern Paiute (slower/later) also influenced the longitudinal character of the Terminal Prehistoric archaeological record. The ratio of Desert Side-notched to Rosegate points is much lower in Northern Paiute Territory, indicating that the intensive Numic subsistence pattern developed there later in time (see Delacorte 2008).

REFERENCES CITED
