Studies of lake bed sediments from Phayao suggest that human-induced land-use changes occurred here up to 20,000 years ago. Dan Penny and Lisa Kealhofer, writing in the Journal of Archaeological Research, base their assertions on evidence of altered sedimentation rates and the presence of phytoplankton to conclude that agricultural intensification in the early part of the first millennium AD destabilised catchment slopes, through clearance of dry-land vegetation and swidden agriculture. They found no direct evidence for the impacts of earlier peoples on the vegetation of the area, which they took to indicate that agricultural intensification was later here than in the lowlands to the east and south.


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