

Nine Mile Canyon Coalition News

Fall 2005

ninemilecanyoncoalition.org

Humankind
has not woven
the web of life.
We are but one
thread within it.
Whatever we
do to the web,
We do to
ourselves.
All things are
bound together.
All things
connect.

Chief Seattle

Board Chair's Message, by Steve Hansen

Greetings Coalition Members,

Its hard to believe that two years have passed since I became Chairman of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition. While the time seems to have flown by, the work that has been accomplished seems to have been non-stop.

The Coalition endorsed the nomination of Nine Mile Canyon to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*. This listing has been proven to be influential toward encouraging local, state and national governments to seriously address issues important to Nine Mile Canyon, such as improving the road, implementing interpretive and educational trail systems and day-use picnic facilities.

We have jump-started the effort to nominate Nine Mile Canyon to the National Register of Historic Places. This project, which has already been fully funded with the help of other generous organizations, is moving rapidly toward completion. The nomination's author, Jerry Spangler, gives us an update on the progress of the nomination in this newsletter.

We have implemented a Coalition email alert system, through which we are now able to send out alerts to those of you for whom we have email addresses. This affords us the opportunity to quickly alert you to issues and events relating to Nine Mile Canyon. Over the past month, we have sent bulletins to alert list recipients relating to the Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement in regards to Bill Barrett Corporation's planned West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Project. With this alert, we have been able to rally our members quickly to become involved in the public scoping process. If you have access to email technology and have not yet sent us your email address, I would encourage you to do so. This technology saves precious time and money, while allowing us to keep you informed.

Over the past two years, we have kept you informed of natural gas development applications in Nine Mile Canyon and the surrounding region. Each time environmental assessments were released, Coalition members stepped up to the task and submitted public comment letters to the BLM, encouraging them to make sure that energy exploration is done in a responsible manner in order to minimize industrial impacts to this extremely sensitive and unique national treasure.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve Nine Mile Canyon and you as Chair for the past two years, and look forward to serve with the Coalition in preserving and protecting the canyon for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Steven C. Hansen
Chair

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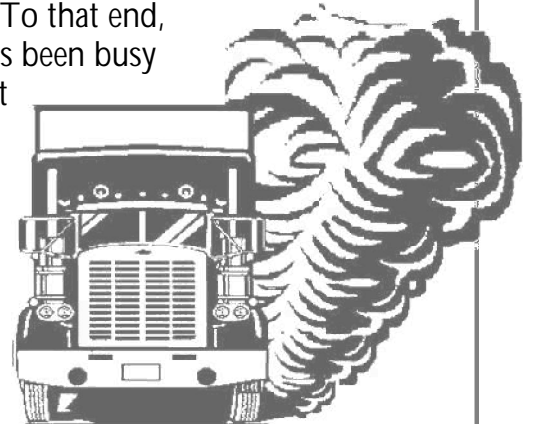
BLM Files Notice of Intent to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently submitted to the Federal Register, a "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and to Conduct Public Scoping for the West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan. The EIS is expected to take two to three years to complete, after which a decision based on the data compiled through extensive research will be announced by the BLM and public comments regarding the decision will at that time be solicited.

As many of you may recall, an article published in *The Salt Lake Tribune* ("Nine Mile, 750 gas wells", Aug. 2, 2005) announced that Bill Barrett Corporation's (BBC) "West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan" would encompass about 215 square miles and include the drilling of up to 750 natural gas wells throughout the region, including at least four alongside the road in Nine Mile Canyon. The Nine Mile Canyon National Scenic Backcountry Byway is already experiencing heavy industrial traffic with its accompanying dust, vibration, and noise, as BBC is currently busy drilling 38 gas wells in the region. The project is expected to take 20 years and industrial traffic will grow exponentially when "full field development" of 750 additional natural gas wells is in progress.

The BLM State and Price Field Offices held public scoping meetings in October in Price, Lehi, and Roosevelt to answer questions regarding BBC's proposal and the process of preparing the EIS. Unfortunately, due to the extremely limited time between the announcement and the scheduled public meetings, the Coalition was only able to alert those members for whom we have email addresses, prior to the meetings. The deadline for public scoping comments was November 14th. Please send us your email address to receive future Nine Mile Canyon Alerts.

As we have stated many times before, the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition does not object to the development of legally held mineral leases in the region, but our mission calls on us to preserve and protect Nine Mile Canyon's unique and irreplaceable resources. To that end, the Coalition has been busy making sure that all members interested in Nine Mile Canyon have an opportunity to voice their concerns and suggestions.



Mission Statement

The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition exists to preserve and protect Nine Mile Canyon, in partnership with land holders, user groups, federal, state and local agencies, and Native American organizations. To that end, the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition will foster educational and interpretive programs which include but are not limited to: assisting in the coordination of canyon interests; promoting programs of scientific research in the canyon; helping with inventory of cultural and natural resources; raising funds, from earnings or gifts, for research, education interpretive or preservation groups, as such funds become available.

Status Report on the Nine Mile Interpretive Plan

Hurray! The first two interpretive signs for Nine Mile Canyon are finished and delivered. After many years of hard work and diligence, we are on our way to realizing our dream of having interpretive signs and trails in Nine Mile Canyon. The finished signs are for the Great Hunt (Cottonwood Hunting Scene) and the Ute Hunt (east end of the Daddy Canyon Complex). Because the Great Hunt is on state land, CEU Academic Vice President Mike King has the sign in his office awaiting the completion of the rock and pole fence in front of the rock art panel before the sign can be installed. The Ute Hunt sign goes on BLM land, so Price Field Office BLM's assistant manager and liaison to the Coalition, Wayne Ludington has the sign in his office awaiting the construction of the sign's base. We appreciate CEU and the BLM for seeing these projects through from here and we look forward to these signs being installed and visible to the public soon.

The text for the Gate Canyon Kiosk has been approved and sent to the designer. The text for in-

terpretive signs at the First Site (2) and Owl Panel is nearly finished. Photographs to accompany the text have been submitted and are being reviewed for quality. The graphics for the clear panels at Cottonwood Glen are almost finished, and the text is in process of being written and reviewed.

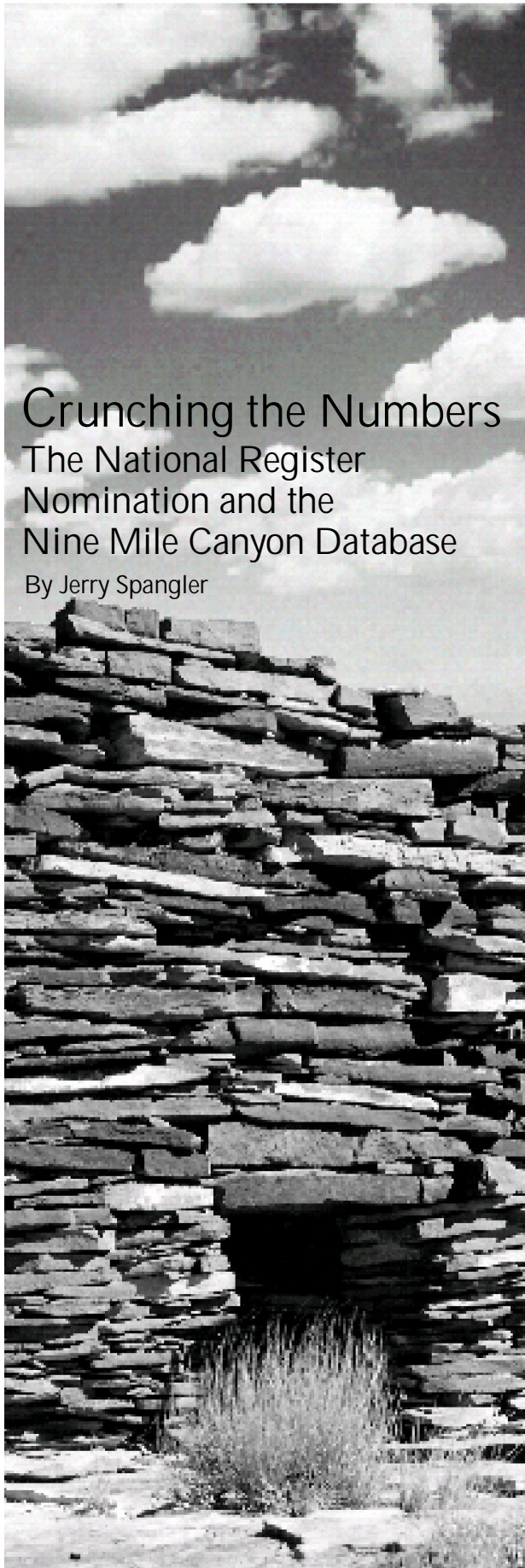
We are making progress on the signs, but there is still much work to be done. The BLM has to design trails and have the proper clearances done before the signs can be installed. There is funding in place to complete signs at Daddy Canyon, Big Buffalo, and Cottonwood Village, but the trail systems and clearances for Big Buffalo and Cottonwood Village have not been designed and completed. Our Price Field Office BLM has been so inundated with gas leases and applications to drill in addition to finishing their own Resource Management Plan that they haven't been able to direct staff time to the Nine Mile Interpretive Plan project. We hope they will find a window of opportunity in the near future.



Nine Mile Canyon E-Mail Action Alert List

As part of our continuing effort to protect and preserve Nine Mile Canyon we are in the process of compiling an e-mail Action Alert List. We believe this to be a valuable tool in promoting public awareness of issues pertinent to Nine Mile Canyon and the surrounding region. We encourage our members -and all interested parties—to join our list to receive immediate updates on Nine Mile issues and information on how you can make your voice heard. Nine Mile Canyon faces a very challenging future and we need your help in protecting this fragile and irreplaceable national treasure. To join the alert list, please register your name at :

hansenstevenc@qwest.net



Crunching the Numbers The National Register Nomination and the Nine Mile Canyon Database

By Jerry Spangler

It should come as no great surprise to friends of Nine Mile Canyon that the rock art Mecca has, well, lots of rock art. But just how predominant the rock art sites are is now coming to light as part of the continuing National Register nomination process. In an effort to understand the variety of prehistoric sites within the proposed archaeological district, researchers, with the assistance of the Antiquities Section of the Utah Division of State History, have completed a database of all recorded sites in the area, dividing the sites by type, associated archaeological features, distinctive or diagnostic artifacts, architecture and cultural affiliation. And then there's the rock art.

As noted in Section 7 of the nomination, now distributed to selected reviewers for comment, "Indeed, the sheer number of rock art sites tends to statistically overwhelm other archaeological manifestations in the canyon. Of the 711 sites on file with the state, at least 487, or 68.5 percent, have rock art components." Petroglyphs, the dominant method of execution, are found at 445 sites. Pictographs are found at 97 sites (sites with both petroglyphs and pictographs are found at 55 sites).

The database, which also provides the first quantitative examination of pithouses, granaries, rockshelters and other prehistoric features in the canyon, is the foundation for the national register nomination. As discussed by Jerry D. Spangler in the nomination, "the significance of the rock art sites cannot be fully appreciated without the archaeological context of the adjacent residential farmsteads, rockshelter occupations, storage facilities, defensive structures and special-use sites that collectively contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how human groups exploited this particular desert landscape, both spatially and temporally. When examined holistically, rock art sites can contribute important insights into prehistoric human behavior, among them mobility and sedentism, storage strategies, hunting strategies, socioeconomic relationships and changing technologies over time."

Of the 88 sites listed in the database with suspected residential features, 67 exhibit characteristics of a

single-family occupation (76.1 percent). These sites include single pithouses, single-room open structures, a single rubble mound or a single stone circle with associated residential detritus. They are typically located on benches, terraces or ridges up to 25 meters above the floodplain, although a few are located at much higher elevations in arguably defensive postures. Artifacts are common but not abundant at single-family sites, and the rich middens suggestive of longer-term or repeated occupations are rare (four sites). Grayware ceramics are surprisingly rare (or absent in many cases), implying that pottery vessels were not a significant part of local adaptations. On-site storage is not particularly common. Collectively, the evidence is suggestive of short-term or seasonal occupations focused on the cultivation and maintenance of domesticated crops by a single social unit, either an individual or family.

These residential sites appear to have been situated to take advantage of elevated topography in close proximity to arable lands. These ridges and terraces provide relatively flat living surfaces, but they are not always contiguous to stone surfaces conducive to rock art panels. Of the 67 single-family sites, only 14 sites (20.9 percent) have rock art panels in direct association with the residential activities (within 40 meters).

At least 21 additional sites are multiple-family residential sites, or clusters of two to five semi-subterranean pithouses, single-room structures and multi-room structures constructed on the same ridge line or bench, all in close proximity to one another. This clustering is suggestive of extended-family occupations directed at cooperative agricultural activities. These sites tend to be more complex, featuring retaining walls, outdoor work areas, rock alignments and other features. They typically feature greater residential detritus, including lithic debitage, potsherds and groundstone tools, although the total inventory cannot be considered large.

Like single-unit residential sites, multi-family sites are typically located on similar ridges and

terraces, although larger clusters tend to be located on the tops of mesas and small buttes in defensive postures. Collectively, the data from multi-family sites suggests that larger social units were remaining in the canyon to cultivate maize, perhaps in response to population expansion mandating increased food production, or increased risk of predation mandating greater vigilance in the protection of food resources. The clustering cannot be interpreted as a concentration of a large population. As mentioned above, 76.1 percent of residential sites are single-family sites, whereas another 14.5 percent have two residential structures, which may or may not imply an extended family social unit. Only 8 sites, or about 9 percent, have three or more residential structures suggestive of aggregations of extended family, kin or unrelated individuals.

As with single-family residential sites, multi-family sites appear to have been situated to take advantage of elevated topography in close proximity to arable lands. These ridges and terraces provide relatively flat living surfaces, but they are not always contiguous to stone surfaces conducive to rock art panels. Of the 21 multi-family sites, only eight sites (38 percent) have rock art panels in direct association with the residential activities. None of the sites with three or more residential structures have associated rock art panels.

Prehistoric farmers also appear to have made a significant commitment to the storage of food resources, incorporating an elaborate strategy that involved many different types of storage facilities. Storage sites are generally located on narrow cliff ledges that are often inaccessible and protected by overhangs, and they are typically located about 5 meters to 75 meters above the valley floor. However, one of the most compelling characteristics is the ubiquity of granaries and caches. Structures range from small, single-chambered slab-lined caches hidden under ledges to clusters of large, cylinder-shaped masonry and adobe structures high on narrow cliff ledges. Some residential sites feature on-site

(continued from page 5)

storage, usually small masonry rooms attached to the exterior of the pithouse, in cists in the pithouse floor and/or in expedient adobe structures along adjacent cliff faces.

At least 85 sites in the archaeological district have storage facilities, although there is no convincing correlation between storage sites and the co-occurrence of rock art sites. At least 23 storage sites (27 percent) also have associated rock art panels, most of which are small, non-diagnostic images. These images are typically wavy lines, zigzags and other geometric shapes that could indicate ownership marks or clan symbols. Occasionally, granaries high on cliff faces will feature complex

rock art panels directly below at the base of the cliff, although a direct relationship between the two is tenuous.

The national register nomination process is continuing steadily, and completion is anticipated by the end of 2005. There are still many details to be worked out, photographs to be incorporated into the document, bibliographies to prepare and interpretive analysis that must be completed. One thing is certain: The data collected during the course of preparing the nomination will offer the first comprehensive view of the amazing archaeological resources of Nine Mile Canyon.



Fall Gathering 2005 – A Success

The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition held its annual Fall Gathering on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, September 9th, 10th and 11th. With the theme of “In This Land of Still and Motion”, it will be remembered by those who attended for many years to come.

This year’s gathering which was meticulously planned and carried out under the direction of board member, Steve Tanner, started out under one of the most impressive fireworks (thunder and lightning) displays ever experienced during the annual event. Rather than dampening the spirits of those in attendance, the storm only made the next two days of severe clear weather much sweeter.

Our camp hosts, Myrna and Ben Mead, did not disappoint. The campground was tidy and beautiful, and the food was sensational! Every year they work extremely hard to accommodate all who attend.

This year the Nine Mile road was washed out in many places throughout the canyon, due to the severe storms the region has been blessed with during the summer. As a result, most attendees chose to stay in camp over the weekend and enjoy the wide variety of events spread across the lush green lawns

at the Nine Mile Ranch. In addition to the traditional silent auction, several local vendors and artisans joined with the coalition store to provide souvenir and gift items to those who value Native American and Western art. All proceeds received through the auction and the Coalition Store, as well as revenue realized from meal tickets, provide funds for preserving and protecting Nine Mile Canyon.

The Gathering offered nearly non-stop educational opportunities throughout the event. We learned about the Navajo way of life from Navajos Joe and Shirley Begay, and Hopi artisan Earl Denet educated us about the history and significance of the Hopi Kachina. Patti Thompson taught us about the history of trade beads, Ray Thompson demonstrated atlatl hunting technique, Les Schultz presented historical accounts of the Lewis and Clark expedition, and Pam Miller presented a visual outline of the Nine Mile Canyon Interpretive Plan. The Coalition’s first-ever collectors pin was also unveiled and made available for purchase.

Thanks to Steve Tanner for a fun and event-filled weekend in Nine Mile Canyon!

Here's to the Fall Gathering Crew! By Steve Tanner, Fall Gathering Chair

My hat is off to the following for their hard work and continued support; Diane & Fred Jenkins, Pam & Blaine Miller & Family, Margene and Bob Hackney, Dawna & Craig Housekeeper, Steve Hansen, Jerry Vaculin, Chanel Atwood, Joan & Duane Taylor, and Ben and Myrna Mead.

A very special thanks to our Speakers, Shirley & Joe Begay (Navajo), & Earl Denet (Hopi), Patti Thompson, Les Schultz and our entertainers, the Nine Mile Players. Thanks also to Jay Fransen for demonstrating his flint knapping skills and Ray Thompson for his atlatl demonstration. Thank you, Les Schultz for furnishing your sound system, Don Darlington and the LDS Church for the tents, and Myrna & Ben Mead for preparing the great

food. Members, when you get a chance, please thank these folks too.

Thanks to all who patronized our Coalition Store, and/or donated items to the auction, and to those who bid them up and those who bought them.

The weather was a bit fickle to say the least, however, those attending were both strong willed, and steadfast and most said they will be back next year.

Again, "Here's to the Fall Gathering Crew" (clink, clink) who made it happen this year! Without all of you it would have never taken place.

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P E A E

