



:Nine Mile Canyon Coalition News

Spring 2008

ninemilecanyoncoalition.org

*The power
of
observation
is commonly
called
cynicism
by those
who have
not got it.*

*George
Bernard
Shaw*

Board Chair's Message, by Pam Miller

Friends of Nine Mile Canyon:

Spring is here and Nine Mile Canyon is thawing out and melting. I visited the canyon over Easter weekend and the trees didn't look like they were budding yet but the fields were greening up. The bluebirds were out and we had the striking contrast of snow covered hills on the south side of the canyon running into the red and yellow cliffs on the north side of the canyon. Above all was the impossibly blue sky. Celebrate Spring with us in Nine Mile Canyon on April 19th, our annual clean-up day. We will have students from the College of Eastern Utah's Sun Center working with us again. We enjoy their enthusiasm and energy. Please see the article in this newsletter for more information.

Coalition Board Members have been extremely busy over the winter. We finally convinced the BLM to check on the second damaged archaeological site in the Cottonwood Village area. We reported damage four times starting in November and they finally sent an archaeologist in two weeks ago. Now our goal is to work with BLM on a better monitoring and compliance plan for the road. The West Tavaputs EIS is out for public comment. Please read the article in this newsletter for talking points and how to submit comments. Although the final report and decision won't be out until the end of the year, Bill Barrett Corporation is planning to drill 50 additional wells this year on the Tavaputs Plateau under the 2005 Energy Act using statutory exclusions. We want to remind you that we haven't seen or heard of plans to drill wells in Nine Mile Canyon itself. Our concerns are the damaging effects of industrial traffic on the Nine Mile Road and the impact of dust, vibrations, and diesel particulates on the rock art and ruins. We are also worried about the safety of visitors while they are in the canyon.

Some good news is that Carbon County has formed a committee to study the Nine Mile Canyon road issues and come up with short term and long term solutions. We commend Carbon County Commissioners for this action and thank them for the opportunity to be part of the committee. If you see the commissioners, please tell them "thank you".

The many articles in this newsletter tell of other activities of the Coalition. We appreciate our editors, Steve Hansen and Jerry Vaculin. Every issue is better than the last. Our website has been updated thanks to webmaster Tracey Johnson and board member Bill Walsh. Check it out!

Thank you for your support of Nine Mile Canyon. We are getting inquiries from all over the country about the industrial activities in the canyon. Nine Mile Canyon is a special place and deserves special treatment. Help us make sure the canyon gets it!

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The West Tavaputs Plateau Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been released for public comment through May 1, 2008. The DEIS is nearly 2,000 pages long, leaving most of us too little time to read, comprehend and respond to it before the comment deadline. Therefore, the Coalition is dedicating this newsletter to helping you write a substantive and heartfelt public comment letter, and providing you information that will raise your awareness of some of the problems and shortcomings found in the DEIS (see “Issues To Raise In Our Public Comments” on page 7).

The purpose and need of the West Tavaputs Plateau Draft Environmental Impact Statement (WTP DEIS) is to consider the proposal for full field development of natural gas resources on the West Tavaputs Plateau in an efficient, orderly, and environmentally sensitive manner. The BLM is considering this proposed project to provide for the extraction and recovery of natural gas from Federal oil and gas leases on the WTP held by Bill Barrett Corp. and other operators in accordance with its multiple-use mandate and the goals and objectives of the President’s National Energy Plan. National mineral leasing policies, and the regulations by which they are enforced, recognize the statutory right of leaseholders to develop mineral resources to meet continuing increase in the United States’ demand for natural gas, so long as undue environmental degradation is not incurred. (DEIS ch1. p1-2)

The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition has not objected to legal development of energy resources on the West Tavaputs Plateau, but we have been emphatic that culturally-rich Nine Mile Canyon, with its world-renown prehistoric rock art and stunning landscapes, be protected and preserved by using alternate routes to avoid the canyon and employing technologies such as directional drilling to mitigate (minimize) negative impacts to the canyon and the surrounding region. The “purpose and need” of the DEIS mentions only “undue environmental degradation,” and does not mention undue degradation to cultural resources or tourism.

A few key items to remember as you compose your letters are:

- 1- You are not commenting on a decision that has already been made. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) presents five alternatives for you to review and comment on. The BLM is requesting your comments regarding the five alternatives. It is our responsibility to make sure that BLM makes sound and professional decisions pertaining to natural gas and other industrial development. It is our responsibility to insist that this be done thoroughly and responsibly.
- 2- Do not send a form letter. Use your own words. Share your ideas and feelings as you compose your letter. The BLM is seeking your letter of substantive content that will help them determine which of the five alternatives they should approve, if any. What is unique, pristine, fragile, and important to preserve and protect in the region? What alternative, or parts of one alternative or another would provide the best protection to the cultural sites, environment, recreation, agriculture and tourism in the region? What has been omitted or overlooked in the DEIS that must be considered before a final decision is made?

If you have visited Nine Mile Canyon during the past two years, please include an account of your experience. Was it wonderful? How was the dust? Was the air hazy? How was the traffic? Was industry following the speed limits? Were they going too fast? Did you feel threatened or in danger by multiple large vehicles? Did you observe gas field workers driving to work or back home? How was their driving? Were there big trucks idling at the Daddy Canyon restrooms? How was the compressor noise at Daddy Canyon? Do you like the appearance of the new compressor village there? Did you have a flat tire? We should report our past experiences so the BLM can evaluate whether their past mitigation efforts have been effective.

- 3- The BLM works for us – you and me. It is the BLM’s responsibility to manage our public lands to ensure that multiple uses and resources are protected through proper management decisions and practices. Be sure to stress this strongly in your letters.
- 4- Allowing the impacts of any one use -such as industrial development- to trump the viability and values of all other uses, regardless of its potential impacts to other uses and resources in the region must not be tolerated. Let the BLM know that!

Please be sure to submit your comments to the BLM Price Field Office no later than May 1st, 2008.
Written comments can be submitted to

**Bureau of Land Management
Price Field Office
Attn: West Tavaputs Plateau Natural Gas Fill Field Development Plan DEIS
125 South 600 West
Price, UT 84501**

or comment by email at: UT_Pr_Comments@blm.gov

The full DEIS can be viewed online at: http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/price/energy/Oil_Gas.html

Following, is a summary of issues and concerns that were raised by the Coalition in the 2005 public scoping process, and the BLM was urged to address these in the resulting EIS. It is required that these issues be addressed in a comprehensive and complete DEIS, otherwise we, the public are unable to determine if the proposed project can be carried out in a manner that protects all public values. If these issues are not adequately addressed, including baseline data from which to measure future mitigation results, the DEIS should be withdrawn until such data can be provided in a revised document.

Feel free to use any of these points in your letter. Let your own words and feelings express the importance of a thorough examination of these issues and resources. This is your chance to take an active part in the management of one of America’s very unique and valuable public treasures.

- 1- Comprehensive Native American tribal consultation, including written and signed tribal statements from each of the southwestern tribes, indicating that the affected project area and the resources therein hold no historic/prehistoric cultural or spiritual significance to them. These clearances must be received from, but not limited to the following tribes
 - a. Northern Ute
 - b. Southern Ute
 - c. Paiute
 - d. Goshute
 - e. Navajo
 - f. Hopi
 - g. Zuni
 - h. Shoshone
 - i. Additional Tribes as requested.

COALITION NOTE: The DEIS does not address tribal responses to the proposal. Publication of Native American responses to the proposal should be made available to the public in the DEIS.

- 2- Cultural site and rock art integrity including pre-EIS decision baseline data
 - a. Full inventory of cultural and rock art sites through the canyon and along roadways, including all

- levels of strata and overlooking ridges above the canyon.
- b. Visual clarity of rock art, including a frequent monitoring plan
 - c. Full study of chemical (magnesium chloride, calcium chloride and other road bonding agents) effects on rock art, cultural sites and historic properties.
 - d. Effects of industrial pollutants on rock art and cultural sites, including but not limited to carbon monoxide fumes, diesel fumes, and burning fuel additives such as those used in jake brake exhaust systems.
 - e. Rock art surface seismic testing as related to traffic disturbance.
 - f. Effects of industry on historic and prehistoric viewsapes.

COALITION NOTE: *A comprehensive inventory of all cultural sites along all access roads has not been completed nor included in the DEIS. The DEIS exposes an extremely weak understanding of the volume and locations of the archaeology in Nine Mile and its tributary canyons. Mitigation of impacts to archaeology is scantily addressed, bordering close to non-existent in the DEIS. This is surely a result of removing the archaeologist who knows the canyon most intimately from the EIS process, and not including preservation organizations such as the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition and the Utah Rock Art Research Association in the National Historic Preservation Act's Section 106 Consultation (36 CFR 800).*

- 3- Effects of extraction industries on the tourism industry and comprehensive research on tourism values.
 - a. Noise
 - b. Traffic
 - c. Viewsapes
 - d. Air quality
 - e. Industrial odor
 - f. Tourist safety

COALITION NOTE: *In a recent meeting held in Price to address problems in Nine Mile Canyon, Carbon County Tourism Board Director Kathy Hanna-Smith remarked "What can we do to survive together in that canyon? We are losing a lot of tourists because of the conditions." This remark came when there are only two drill rigs at a time are operating on the plateau. What will happen when there are as many as nine and 1,500 industrial trucks passing through the canyon each day?*

- 4- Surface and ground water studies including pre-EIS decision baseline data.
 - a. Surface watersheds
 - b. Artesian wells including full inventory of same.
 - c. Natural springs and seeps, including full inventory of same.
 - d. Regular and frequent monitoring of quality

COALITION NOTE: *The DEIS provides no information regarding any comprehensive inventory of seeps, springs, nor wells, nor has baseline water quality data been provided in the DEIS for areas along the proposed industrial commute routes and the project area in general. According to an independent hydrologist (Elliott Lips, Great Basin Earth Science, Inc., Orem UT) who has reviewed the DEIS, "There is a gross lack of baseline data and/or description of several key resources. Without a complete, adequate, current, and scientifically valid assessment of the affected environment, the analysis of the environmental consequences is meaningless."*

The hydrologist goes on to say that "The DEIS is completely lacking in any site specific analyses of the environmental consequences of several key resources. Rather, in many instances, the BLM simply states that impacts are possible."

- 5- Effects of extractive industries on the region's residents and ranching industry
 - a. Air quality
 - i. Airborne dust and its effects on crops, livestock, residents, pets and property
 - ii. Airborne industrial particulates on crops, livestock, residents and property
 - iii. The effects of airborne magnesium chloride, calcium chloride and other dust abating chemicals on crops, wildlife, livestock, residents and property.
 - iv. Industrial odor

COALITION NOTE: *The incomplete and inconclusive dust study is found in Appendix G of the DEIS. Industrial exhaust and emissions studies are provided in Appendix J. The mitigation plan for air quality and all other potential effects are covered on less than two pages, found in Appendix D of the DEIS. See the Coalition's suggestions for addressing effective monitoring practices of impacts in point number 3 of the article "Issues To Raise In our Public Comments", found on page 7 of this newsletter.*

- b. Noise
- c. Viewscape
- d. Industrial traffic – this will be significant.

- 6- Full inventory of wildlife species and the effects of extractive industries on the regions native flora and fauna
 - a. Endangered species
 - b. Birds of prey
 - c. Song birds
 - e. Water fowl
 - e. Fish
 - f. Wild horse and burro
 - g. Game animals
 - i. Deer
 - ii. Elk
 - iii. Bear

COALITION NOTE: *The DEIS fails to provide baseline wildlife habitat data that can be used for monitoring the effectiveness of mitigation plans and practices in the future.*

- 7- Effects of industry on air quality, including full public disclosure of pre-EIS decision baseline data, and subsequent and frequent monitoring.
- 8- Full disclosure of planned surface occupancy sites, including those planned for State and private properties.
- 9- Impacts to the fragile ecosystems and abundant prehistoric cultural sites within the Desolation Canyon and Jack Canyon wilderness study areas.
- 10- Full and realistic disclosure of the number of expected industrial commutes expected through the canyon on a daily basis to supply and operate activities, and the traffic's expected impacts to the viability and sustainability of the National Scenic Backcountry Byway and other public and private uses such as
 - a. Tourist visitation
 - b. Residential and ranching operations
 - c. Hunting activities
 - d. Wildlife

- e. Special designations such as Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and National Register of Historic Places designations.

11- Analysis of safety conditions and issues concerning the Nine Mile road as a corridor for industrial traffic including alternate routes of travel.

COALITION NOTE: *Alternate routes have been denied consideration in the DEIS. Reasons for not considering alternate routes are treated on less than one page of the DEIS (Chapter 2, section 2.8.6, pages 2-149, 150). Also see point numbers 1 and 2 of the article “Issues To Raise In Our Public Comments”, found on page 7 of this newsletter.*

12- Impacts to recreational opportunities

- a. Sightseeing
- b. Hunting
- c. Fishing
- d. Educational field trips and research

COALITION NOTE: *The DEIS (Chapter 1, section 1.7.1.16, pages 1-17, 18) suggests that the proposed project could diminish recreational experiences within the Nine Mile and Desolation Canyon Special Recreation Management Areas; could change the experience of visitors traveling the Nine Mile Canyon Backcountry Byway; noise from development could diminish recreational experiences within Desolation Canyon NHL; could reduce opportunities for high-quality hunting in limited entry areas.*

The Coalition is confident that the word “could” in each of these points should be changed to “will”. Each of these recreational values have already been affected significantly during development of the 38-well project approved in 2005. If you need proof, take a trip to Nine Mile this weekend and see for yourself.

13- Comprehensive research on law enforcement requirements and public disclosure of plans to expedite the needed resources. BLM should be the lead enforcement agency with a constant presence in the canyon.

COALITION NOTE: *The DEIS is silent on proposed law enforcement in Nine Mile Canyon.*

Remember to tell the BLM just how important protecting Nine Mile Canyon is to you and why. Briefly share a favorite canyon memory, or why your favorite spot in the canyon is your favorite spot.



Coalition Elects Two New Board Members

Two seasoned and staunch supporters of preserving and protecting Nine Mile Canyon have been elected to the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition’s Board of Directors. In the Coalition’s March 2008 board meeting, former Coalition Board Chair, Margene Hackney, and Dr. Deanne Matheny, an archaeologist and attorney were elected by unanimous vote.

The Coalition is pleased and excited to add Margene and Deanne’s experience and dedication to its governing board. Look forward to reading their biographies and experience in regards to Nine Mile Canyon in an upcoming newsletter.

1) The major impact of the West Tavaputs Gas Project is the industrial traffic that travels through Nine Mile Canyon and Cottonwood Canyon to access the West Tavaputs Plateau. We have been recording the impact of the gas drilling on "The World's Longest Art Gallery" since drilling commenced in 2005 on the approved 38-well West Tavaputs Plateau Drilling Project. We immediately started to receive reports from sightseers about dust and industrial traffic in the Canyon. We have compiled hundreds of photos documenting the impacts of industrial traffic in the Canyon. Surprisingly, the BLM admits in the West Tavaputs Plateau Draft Environmental Impact Statement (WTP DEIS) section 5.12 that they cannot mitigate the impacts of industrial traffic on the cultural resources by selecting any of the proposed alternatives. The reality is that the only way to save the canyon from the effects of heavy industrial traffic is to use bypass roads that will keep the traffic away from Nine Mile and Cottonwood Canyons. Unfortunately, the BLM has eliminated consideration of requiring industry to use alternate access routes in the WTP DEIS (see Draft EIS "Alternative Access Routes", chapter 2, section 2.8.6 http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/price/energy/Oil_Gas/Draft_EIS.html) without presenting detailed information from licensed road/highway engineers pertaining to these decisions. This is a violation of the Utah BLM NEPA Guidebook which states that "no reasonable alternatives can be eliminated from consideration in an EIS." The Guidebook also states that economic reasons alone cannot be used to reject an alternative. No engineering analysis has been provided in the DEIS to show that an east-west bypass road is not feasible across the plateau north of Nine Mile Canyon, even though an existing road north of the canyon from the Gate Canyon Rd west to Trail Canyon is currently being upgraded for gas drilling north of the canyon. Trail Canyon got its name from when it was the only access route in and out of Nine Mile Canyon prior to building the Gate Canyon road. Trail Canyon enters Nine Mile Canyon directly opposite the mouth of Harmon Canyon which is currently the main access to the proposed gas fields on the Tavaputs south of Nine Mile. There are numerous roads already built or proposed on the West Tavaputs that would lend themselves to a bypass road system.

The DEIS proposes upgrading and building approximately 180 miles of Gold Book roads on the Tavaputs Plateau south of Nine Mile Canyon. These are smooth, wide roads with crowns and drainage ditches. Providing the Trail Canyon/Harmon Canyon bypass route would require upgrading less than six miles of an existing road through Trail Canyon. This seems like a small price to pay to preserve Nine Mile Canyon's legacy. This alternative would reduce industrial traffic running through Nine Mile by nearly two thirds, as it would allow traffic to merely cross Nine Mile Canyon, rather than traverse long sections of the canyon.

High numbers of negative comments received from disappointed tourists have been recorded, wherein their experiences along the Nine Mile Road have been ruined by the nearly constant industrial traffic that is damaging the rock art and poses health and safety risks. The only reasonable alternative to these conflicts is a bypass road system.

2) The draft EIS says that the average daily traffic in the Canyon would be 550 vehicles with nine drill rigs operating on the Tavaputs. Carbon County did a 24 hour traffic count when there were two drill rigs operating and that traffic count was 340 vehicles. If you extrapolate from two drill rigs to nine you get a daily traffic count of 1,530 vehicles per day! The Canyon road has had only minor improvements since its construction in the late 19th Century, so how can it withstand this prolonged heavy traffic? How can the rock art and cultural sites survive this activity? The traffic counts that the Coalition has done since 2005 verify the County Survey. The Coalition counts of sightseer traffic show a steadily decreasing number of people coming to the Canyon to see the rock art and it is clear that the word has spread about the industrial traffic and the dust.

3) The BLM proposes a monitoring system wherein the BLM and the Bill Barrett Corporation would pick a company to monitor the project for compliance with the stipulations and mitigation directives agreed to, and approved in the EIS. The monitoring company would report to the BLM and BBC. This is completely unacceptable based on the last four years of experience where the BLM allowed winter drilling after promising there wouldn't be any and couldn't mitigate the traffic problems even after they were shown photos of the damage being done. An example of a potential problem in the DEIS is where the statement is made that BBC has informally agreed to help with problems on the Gate Canyon Road resulting from the traffic. What is required is an oversight committee like the one set up in Wyoming because of corruption in the Pinedale BLM office. Members of the oversight committee should include stakeholders such as the BLM, the State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), hunters, property owners, the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, Carbon County, the State Historic Preservation Office and others. The monitoring company would report to the oversight committee to ensure compliance with mitigation requirements.

4) The BLM has consistently refused to admit that they are responsible for seeing that all significant impacts from the West Tavaputs Project are mitigated no matter where they occur or who does the impact. An example of this is the Dry Canyon Compressor Station (located in Nine Mile Canyon) which started out with two compressors and has grown to ten. The pollution from this compressor station has never been measured or modeled even though it is in a

narrow canyon with a high concentration of dust added to the chemical emissions from station engines. The BLM insists that the pollution (visual, sound, and chemical) is beyond their responsibility to mitigate because the compressor station is on private property (BBC's). A federal court ruled in the Calvert Cliffs decision of the 1970's that the federal lead agency was required to see that all significant impacts were mitigated. If the impacts cannot be mitigated then the proposed action cannot be carried out. This applies not only to the Dry Canyon Compressor Station but also to the traffic impact on the Gate Canyon, Nine Mile Canyon, and Cottonwood Canyon Roads, as well the impacts to any of the cultural resources in the region.

5) This DEIS offers less protection for Nine Mile Canyon's cultural resources than what's currently in place. One alternative briefly suggests having the county construct pull-outs and install signs and trails at the identified sites as addressed in the BLM's 1995 Special Recreation and Cultural Area Management Plan (SRCMP). However, those needs are only part of the 1995 SRCMP. The plan also called for a visitor contact station, a full time archaeologist, and a full time recreation planner. There would have been temporary staff during the visitor season. The preservation promises made by the BLM need to be included in the DEIS. It is irresponsible to invite people to Nine Mile without having a presence there to protect the resources and teach proper etiquette. Signs alone won't protect the canyon's delicate resources.

6) We also need to ask for a full time law enforcement presence in the canyon, whether it be a Carbon or Duchesne County deputy or a BLM ranger, to enforce traffic regulations and laws pertaining to cultural resource protection.

7) In our public comments, we need to ask for reconsideration of the by-pass roads (see Draft EIS "Alternative Access Routes", chapter 2, section 2.8.6 http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/price/energy/Oil_Gas/Draft_EIS.html), full implementation of the recreation and use plan, and full time law enforcement in the canyon. The wildlife plan is irresponsible and weak, and the state is going to lose a large financial investment it has made over the past several years to increase the deer and elk herds on the Tavaputs Plateau.

8) At public scoping meetings held in 2005 regarding this EIS process, the BLM assured those attending that there would be no surface occupancy allowed on Federal public lands in Nine Mile Canyon. This was proposed in their Agency Preferred Alternative for the Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. However, three of the alterna-

tives in this DEIS, including the Agency (BLM's) Preferred Alternative, propose two pump stations to be located in very scenic and archaeologically rich areas of the canyon, one on federal public land and one on private property (not BBC's property). By doing so, the BLM is violating another public commitment made in their Draft Resource Management Plan (DRMP) Could it be coincidence that the final decision on the DRMP has been timed to allow for industrial surface occupancy to be approved before a final decision on the DRMP is announced?

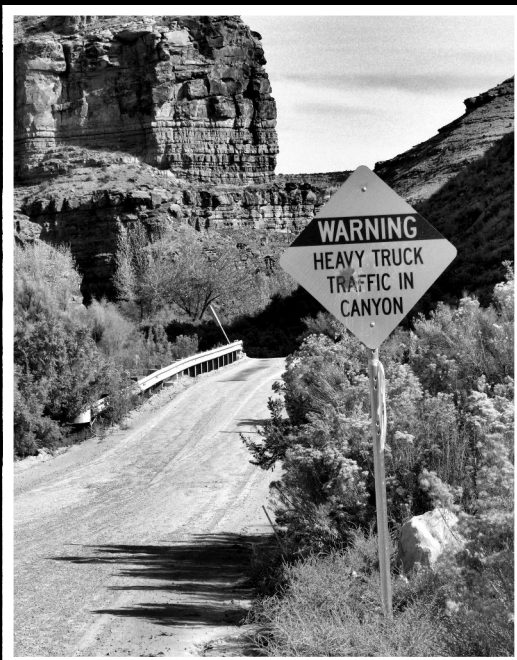
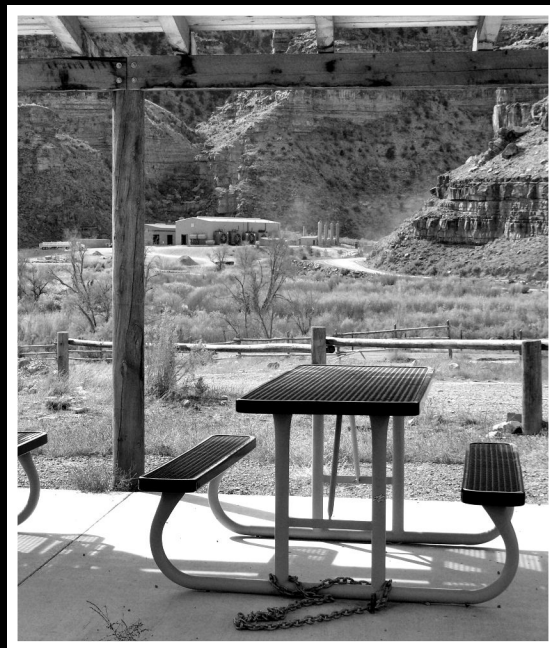
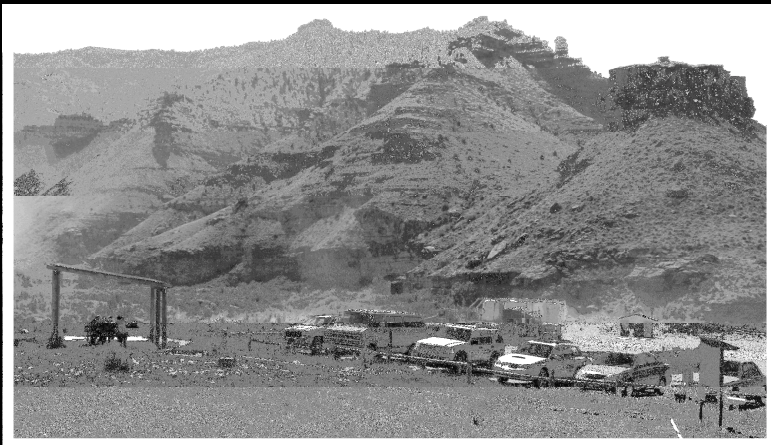
9) The DEIS alternatives address the project area's surface disturbance (such as well pads, access roads, compressor and pump stations, and storage facilities) as the area of potential effects (APE). The wind blows and the river flows, and the DEIS does not address the vast surrounding region being polluted by industrial noise, fugitive dust, magnesium chloride, industrial vehicle exhaust and equipment emissions as part of the APE. Potential effects spread far beyond the massive proposed surface disturbance. The DEIS must address impacts to the whole region, including effects of the above named pollutants on the air, the water, and the environment far downstream and downwind.

10) On November 8, 2005, the Coalition requested participation in the National Historic Preservation Act's (NHPA) Section 106 Consultation process (36 CFR 800). This was not the first, nor the last request made by the Coalition, and other interested groups including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to be a consulting party. But even though Section 106 of the NHPA requires the BLM to allow interested parties to participate in the process, conservation organizations have been denied that privilege. If the Coalition had been granted opportunities to participate, numerous cultural sites that have already been severely damaged along the roadsides could have been identified and protected. We reported damage to one particular site a year ago, but it wasn't until the past few weeks that the BLM actually went out to check on the damage. In the mean time, the same site was damaged four more times before they could find the time to get to it. Not an effective measure. Current mitigation plans relating to the 38-well EA are now proven ineffective and those in the WTP DEIS aren't any better.

PLEASE be an active participant in this extremely important public awareness and comment process. The well-being of Nine Mile Canyon depends on US!

Please encourage your friends and family to join our e-mail Alert List at

9mcc@xmission.com



Faithful readers of this newsletter have been patiently reading updates on the Nomination of Nine Mile Canyon to the National Register of Historic Places (“the Register”) since 2001. This “space odyssey” may just about be over.

The Coalition and BLM originally formed a partnership on this endeavor: The Coalition was to hire an archeologist to write the narrative sections; the BLM was to produce the maps and photos. The Coalition hired Jerry Spangler, Director of the Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance, and funded \$12,000 for the writing of the very technical sections and lists of locations of prehistoric rock markings (art) and cultural sites.

The BLM has gone through new state and local directors and since 2001 and has been barraged by the gas and oil industry to approve applications to drill (APDs). During this time BLM mandated the boundaries of this archaic district be contained within canyon bottoms and only one kilometer wide on either side of Minnie-Maud Creek (Nine Mile Creek). The Coalition pressed for rim-to-rim boundaries but lost.

The federal regulations concerning procedures to nominate an archaic district are very complex and specific. Plus, the Utah State Historic Preservation Office and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Wilson Martin, consider this nomination very significant because there are other similar nominations waiting in the wings.

At this point the nomination has been approved by the BLM State Director, Selma Sierra, and the national BLM Federal Preservation Officer, Robin Burgess. BLM officially delivered the nomination to the SHPO at the end of March 2008. As this article is written in early April, the SHPO has sent letters to the landowners located within the proposed district boundaries, informing them that they have the right to support or object to this nomination. If a majority of landowners support—or do not formally object in writing—the nomination goes forward to the State Board of History.

On June 19, 2008 there will be a meeting of the Board of State History, 1:00 p.m., at the Utah State Capitol in Salt Lake City, Capitol Board Room, to review the nomination. Property owner objections must be received by the SHPO prior to this meeting. The June 19 meeting is open to the public but is not a public

hearing. (Questions can be directed to Cory Jensen, NRHP Coordinator at the Division of State History, (801-533-3559, coryjensen@utah.gov)

After the June 19 meeting, all comments will be forwarded along with the nomination to the BLM. The BLM will review the comments and determine whether to forward the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places. The Keeper makes the final determination as to eligibility and listing to the Register.

What could happen – “best” and “worst” case scenarios?

Best case: The nomination will proceed along this path, the BLM will send the nomination to the Keeper, and the Keeper will determine Nine Mile Canyon eligible for the Register and list it on the National Register of Historic Places. Nine Mile Canyon will finally be recognized as an important place in preserving our Nation’s heritage.

Worst case: Politics could intervene. Unnamed persons at the local, state, and/or national levels are already trying to delay or subvert the process for their own purposes. They could get away with it and Nine Mile Canyon will be back in limbo, without the honor it so richly deserves.

What can we do?

The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition and its allies will be following the nomination situation closely and will send Alerts to the public if interruptions occur or threats materialize. We ask our readers in advance to react swiftly and decisively if you see an email alert. We have all come too far and invested too much to have this fail. We thank you in advance for your vigilance.

NOTE: If you are not currently receiving email alerts from the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, you may register to do so by emailing us at 9mcc@xmission.com.



Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Clause

At the March 2008 Board meeting of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, Board member Jim Brown shared a story about Virginia Nutter Price, daughter of the famous Cattle Baron Preston Nutter, who declared that her favorite petroglyph was the “Santa and reindeer” panel, located high on a cliff in the canyon. The story was told during deliberation of the “Save Santa” public relations campaign (see press release below). The story prompted Blaine Miller to quip: “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Clause.”

The purpose of the PR campaign was to encourage the public to comment on the West Tavaputs Plateau Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan DEIS by the May 1, 2008 deadline. It was approved and the press release is carried below. It will be on the Send2Press.com web site until March 26, 2009. You can view it at

www.send2press.com/newswire/2008-03-0326-003.shtml

PRESS RELEASE: March 27, 2008

According to Pam Miller, a trained archaeologist and Chair of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, “Santa’ is one of more than 10,000 unique petroglyphs and pictographs (prehistoric Indian art painted on rock) found in the canyon that are being obliterated by dust and destroyed by dust-suppressant chemicals (magnesium chloride) that is being sprayed on roads. Additionally, the vibrations of huge trucks, drill rigs, bulldozers, and industrial traffic are also affecting these ancient works of art.”

Bill Bryant, the photographer who managed to photograph “Santa” using a super-telephoto lens said that, “The destruction going on here is tragic. This entire canyon is a national treasure that should be made into a national monument or park.”

Additional photos of “Santa” and other petroglyphs can be viewed at: www.flickr.com/photos/bryant99/.

So, why is this happening? The Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has sold mineral leases in Nine Mile Canyon and on plateaus north and south of it. BLM has not ordered industrial traffic to be re-routed to preserve countless prehistoric and historic sites in the canyon.

“BLM has decided to do the bidding of the gas and oil industry and the Bush Administration while sacrificing cultural and historic values, air and water quality,” Miller said. “It’s time to restore balance to BLM’s public land policies and decisions.”

What can be done? Fortunately, there is time to stop further destruction. A public comment period ends May 1 on the BLM West Tavaputs Plateau Natural Gas Full Field Development Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The proponent prepared DEIS is a proposal from the Bill Barrett Corporation to drill over 800 wells over the next eight years using the historic and scenic National Back Country By-Way Nine Mile Canyon road as its industrial thoroughfare and staging area.

Petro-Canada Resources (USA) is also drilling in the area. Public comments can be submitted electronically and all information can be found on the Nine Mile Coalition web site at: www.ninemilecanyoncoalition.org/.

“While the intentions and beliefs of the original artist(s) will never be known, the beauty of rock art is that future generations will continue to be inspired by it,” Miller explained. “Of course this ‘Santa’ interpretation must clearly be seen as ethnocentric by later observers; it is not likely that Santa, the elf, and reindeer were in the mind of the original people making the markings.”

According to Miller, “The only way to save ‘Santa’ and the world-renown rock art of Nine Mile Canyon from destruction is for people to get involved and make their voices heard to BLM and their elected officials across the country. This place needs to be saved for future generations.”



Annual Spring Clean-Up Saturday

April 19th
2008

Please mark your calendars and plan to join the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition and the College of Eastern Utah's Sun Center student volunteers at the Daddy Canyon Complex, at 9:30 am, Saturday April 19th for our annual canyon clean-up.

We'll spend the morning sprucing up the Daddy Canyon Interpretive Trail and Picnic Area and picking up trash along the road. We'll regroup later for a potluck lunch and short membership meeting. Then to reward ourselves for a job well-done, we'll spend the afternoon touring rock art and cultural sites with our archaeology experts.

So, pack your work gloves, hat, sunscreen, plenty to drink and a potluck contribution, and join us for a wonderful Spring day in the canyon!



ninemilecanyoncoalition.org

Please be sure to visit our
Newly Updated Website

Board Members

Chair: Pam Miller - *Price, Utah*

Past Chair: Steven Hansen - *Holladay, Utah*

Treasurer: Craig Houskeeper - *Price, Utah*

Board Members:

Chanel Atwood - *Price, Utah*

Jim Brown - *Roosevelt, Utah*

Doyle Cesspooch - *Fort Duchesne, Utah*

Diane Gorman - *Price, Utah*

Keith Rowley - *Duchesne, Utah*

Steve Tanner - *Helper, Utah*

Bill Walsh - *Fruitland, Utah*

Margene Hackney - *Price, Utah*

Deanne Matheny - *Lindon, Utah*

Ex Officio Board Members

H. Bert Jenson - *Myton, Utah*

Betsy Chapoose - *Fort Duchesne, Utah*

Bureau of Land Management Representative

Wayne Ludington - *Price, Utah*

Bookkeeper

Dawna Houskeeper - *Price, Utah*

Newsletter Editor

Jerry Vaculin - *Holladay, Utah*

Web Master

Tracey Johnson - *Price, Utah*

2008 Board Meeting Schedule

The Board of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition meets at least six times each year to discuss issues and plan activities. Following, is the schedule of Coalition Board meetings through 2008, and you are always welcome to attend.

Saturday April 19, 9:30am Annual Spring Cleanup and Board Meeting in Nine Mile Canyon. We will meet at 9:30am at the Daddy Canyon picnic bowery (milepost 43.8). A potluck lunch will begin at noon at the picnic bowery, followed by a short board meeting and a tour of a cultural site or two.

Friday June 20th at 6:30pm . Email us at 9mcc@xmission.com for specific location.
in Duchesne

Friday August 1st at 6:30pm Email us at 9mcc@xmission.com for specific location.
in Price

Saturday September 6th Annual Membership Meeting at the Fall Gathering in Nine
at 4:00 pm Mile Canyon

Saturday December 6, 1:00pm Christmas Dinner and Board Meeting at the home of Bill Walsh and Shirley Weathers. RSVP wrw@ubtanet.com if you wish to attend.

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 programs, as such funds become available.

JOIN THE COALITION, RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR SIGN UP A FRIEND!

Please mail this form to: **Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, P.O. Box 402, Price, Utah 84501**

Please circle membership type:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip _____ Date _____

Phone: () _____

e-mail _____

Annual (\$25)

Corporate (\$1000)

Additional Gift

\$ _____


With the many pressures currently facing Nine Mile Canyon , your support has never been more important

Please make check or money order payable to: **Nine Mile Canyon Coalition**

Thank you for your support!

Remember, DEIS comment letters are due May 1st!

2008
Saturday
April 19th

Spring
clean-up




Nine Mile Canyon Coalition
P.O. Box 402
Price, Utah 84501