



# :Nine Mile Canyon Coalition News

Fall 2011

ninemilecanyoncoalition.org

By all these lovely tokens, September days are here



With summer's best of weather and winter's best of cheer.  
*anonymous*

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## Board Chair's Message

by Dr. Deanne Matheny

### Invitation to the URARA Symposium in Price, Utah

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to combine the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition's 2011 Fall Gathering celebration with the URARA (Utah Rock Art Research Association) Symposium to be held in Price, Utah, that will be held September 22-26, 2011. We wanted everyone to have the opportunity to participate in this important, informative, and fun URARA event.

The Coalition will co-host an opening reception with URARA on Thursday, September 22, at the CEU Museum.

URARA has scheduled a great group of speakers who will make presentations on Saturday, Sept. 24 and Sunday, Sept. 25 at the Carbon County Events Center. These include presentations about rock art in Nine Mile Canyon by our President, Pam Miller, along with two other presentations by Jerry Spangler and Layne Miller. There will be many additional interesting presentations about rock art in other areas.

URARA is graciously allowing Nine Mile Canyon Coalition members to register for the Symposium at URARA member rates. We have attached a registration application for the URARA Symposium to this newsletter which indicates your affiliation with the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition. **Note that there is a late fee for registration after September 12, 2011.**

**Please note:** Due to insurance-related issues, only URARA members will be eligible to participate in the field trips that will take place on Friday, September 23 and Monday, September 26. Should you wish to participate in field trips, you will need to join URARA and fill out the Field Trip Registration form found in the latest version of Vestiges found on the URARA website at:

<http://www.utahrockart.org/vestiges/archives/2011-08.pdf>

This edition of Vestiges (August 2011, Volume 31, Number 7) contains additional information about the Symposium, including speakers, activities, and other matters.

We highly value URARA's important efforts in protecting and preserving the rock art and other sites in Nine Mile Canyon and elsewhere.

We hope you will be able to attend the symposium!

## ⋮ Judge Nixes Tighter Oversight of Oil & Gas Operations

As you may recall, in March of 2010 (*Coalition and Partners Impact Federal Public Lands Policy*, Coalition Newsletter Summer 2010 <http://ninemilecanyoncoalition.org/news/> )

it was announced that the U.S. Department of the Interior had agreed in a legal settlement to curtail the use of categorical exclusions (CX), a provision enacted in the 2005 Energy Policy Act to speed up oil and gas development by exempting certain actions from full environmental oversight and public comment. The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition was a party in the complaint, along with other preservation organizations, that finally lead the Interior Department to ease the impacts CXs were imposing on culturally, archaeologically and environmentally sensitive public lands like Nine Mile Canyon.

On August 12, 2011 U.S District Judge Nancy Freudenthal of the District of Wyoming ruled that the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service had

failed to follow the correct procedures in issuing a new interpretation of federal law that limited the use of CXs. The ruling in *Western Energy Alliance vs. Salazar* effectively overturns the March 2010 legal agreement, and it applies nationwide.

This is not good news for special places like Nine Mile Canyon, where an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for GASCO's natural gas project on the Canyon's northern benches is nearing a Record of Decision. This proposed project is for nearly 1500 natural gas wells and a 325-mile web of new roads.

Nine Mile Canyon Coalition President Pam Miller says that Judge Freudenthal's ruling "is devastating for areas like Nine Mile that are impacted by industrial development that doesn't have to consider cumulative effects of case by case decisions on individual wells." We can only hope that Judge Freudenthal's ruling is overturned by a higher court.

## ⋮ GASCO Programmatic Agreement

In spring 2011 the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition was invited to be a consulting party in the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act for the GASCO drilling project. We had requested this status earlier during the public scoping process but were denied. After the draft GASCO Uinta Basin Natural Gas Development Project Programmatic EIS was released the Vernal Field Office BLM decided to pursue a programmatic agreement, similar to the earlier programmatic agreement that accompanied the West Tavaputs Natural Gas Drilling Project. This latter PA was signed after a year of intense dialogue between signatories and consulting parties including the NMCC.

Chair Deanne Matheny and President Pamela Miller attended the GASCO PA meetings by telephone. On July 15, 2011, the Coalition and other groups received the final version of the GASCO PA with instructions to inform BLM by July 22 regarding our intention to sign the document. A decision was reached not to sign. The

BLM was informed, and we thanked them for the opportunity to participate.

Although the Coalition decided not to sign the PA, Director Dennis Willis expressed the Coalition's sentiments when he stated: "The Board however retains an interest in the GASCO project given its potential to affect cultural resources in Nine Mile Canyon and resources outside Nine Mile Canyon which may be related to or affect Nine Mile Canyon."



Utah has, from its earliest settlement by Mormon Pioneers in 1845, held to a firm education ethic, one that prescribed school for all children through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. That ethic went with early settlers into virtually every far-flung and remote area of the territory, even into Nine Mile Canyon.

Starting sometime between 1886, the year the Army built the road from the railhead at Price and through Nine Mile Canyon to the garrison at Fort Duchesne in the Uintah Basin, settlers with families came to Nine Mile in such numbers that schooling was necessitated.

The Carbon County School Census of July 1895, shows that 35 students were attending school in Nine Mile Canyon, which means that school was in session at least by the Fall of 1894. Probability is, formal schooling was underway in the Canyon before that time, though records have not been found to prove it.

The Minnie Maud School District Board was made up of parents of children attending school there. For those board members, administering such a remote school was not easy. Money was scarce, teachers were hard to find, and there were always rules to follow, and reports to make out. Minutes of the Minnie Maud District show that in 1897, it had only \$10.85 to go against a negative balance of \$298.20. The district had a teacher's desk and a few other tools, but no desks for the students, an apparent lack of enough up-to-date texts, and no school building!

Classes had been held in various structures in the area, and at this time were being held in an abandoned house. By 1899, concerned individuals were fed up with empty

government promises of help in building a school, and collectively decided to build by subscription. In fact, they went into the hills and cut logs with which they built their own school, in the lower end of the Houskeeper's field. Teachers then were boarded with the Houskeepers and taught in the adjacent school.

Within three years, ca 1902, a real, honest-to-goodness school house



was built in Nine Mile Canyon. Located just south of the Ed Harmon home, this one-room frame structure quickly became the unofficial town hall, and was home to many community hoedowns and other activities. But the new school was not used for instruction long. With continued financial problems, class sizes and the new State laws to contend with, on July 10, 1905, the Minnie Maud Board of Trustees voted to disband, joining their district with that of Wellington. Children from Nine Mile Canyon now went into Wellington and boarded during the

school months, going home on week-ends or whenever to see the family.

Education in Nine Mile Canyon did return along in the late teens, early 20's and continued off and on through the next few decades. The new school house burned in the 1930's and classes once again went from one place to another. Lucille Wimmer was the last to teach regular school in the canyon. As a certified teacher she taught into the 1950's.

Katherine Nutter, long time resident of that area, told of two schools being in operation there at one time: one for Carbon County, one for Duchesne County. Duchesne County was not formed out of Wasatch until 1914, so it was after that date and going into the 1920's. Unlike the unified efforts of the Minnie Maud district of years-gone-by, the drawing of county lines brought special problems.

Mr. Houskeeper explains that the little log school house, first built on his father's place, was dismantled and reconstructed in the mouth of Argyle Canyon. This building housed Carbon County students while the "New School" next to Harmon's served the people of Duchesne County, it being barely over the line and into that jurisdiction.

Some of the teachers during this era were: Charlette Davis Liddell, Mrs. Hyate and Ms. Cruz.

Before and during the early 1930's, the physical face of education in Nine Mile Canyon took on a drastic change. Asa Draper was President (Mayor) of Wellington during those years. He tells of their need for a town hall. It was suggested that they move the little log school house in Nine Mile Canyon to Wellington,

*(Continued on page 6)*

# Nine Mile Canyon Coalition Members

## Membership Renewal (URARA) & 2011 URARA Symposium Registration Carbon County Events Center (310 S Fairgrounds Rd) Price, Utah September 22-26, 2011

Please complete and mail with fees to:  
2011 URARA Symposium Registration  
P. O. Box 1351  
Washington, UT 84780  
Make check payable to **Utah Rock Art Research Association**

***Name(s)***

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

<b><i>Symposium Registration</i></b>	
	<b>URARA Member Rate</b>
Individual	\$35
Couple (children under 18 free)	\$60
Sunday Banquet (\$24/person) ___ x \$24 <i>London broil with mushroom sauce, chicken with artichokes, vegetables and beverages, orange dream cake.</i> <i>Vegetarian option check here _____</i>	\$ _____
Late registration \$10 after September 12	\$ _____
<b><i>Annual Membership Fees</i></b> <b><i>Membership Renewal to October 31, 2012</i></b>	
Student Membership	\$15
Single Membership	\$25
Family Membership	\$30
<i>Add \$10 for postal Vestiges</i>	\$ _____
<i>T-shirt and hat order</i>	\$ _____
Total Enclosed	

# T-Shirt & Hat Order Form

2011 URARA Symposium

Carbon County Events Center (310 S Fairgrounds Rd)

Price, Utah

September 22-26, 2011

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

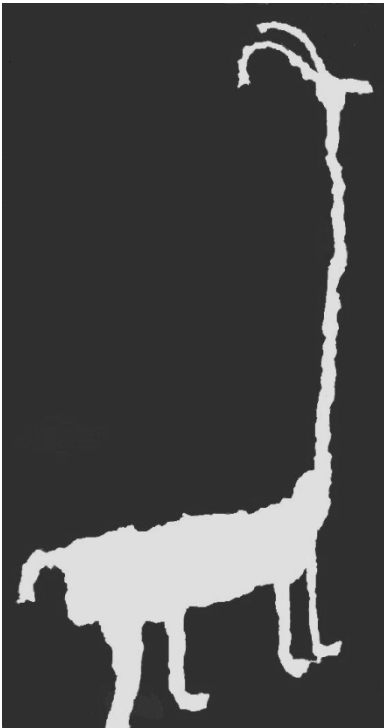
Email \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt (\$15 per shirt)

Small	Medium	Large	XL	XXL	XXXL	Total Tshirts

Hat-adjustable to fit all (\$18) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total t-shirts and hats \$ \_\_\_\_\_



T-shirt color is chestnut, the image Vegas gold

as it had not been used in a number of years. Sometime in the 1920's, the schools had again fallen empty in the Canyon.

Mr. Draper explains that the town received a WPA grant and went to Nine Mile, numbered the logs, and tore the log school house down, moving it into Wellington where it was reconstructed and used as a town hall. Years later it burned.

The "New School" burned also. Neville Wimmer and his brother Jack, moved to Nine Mile Canyon in

the late 1930's and farmed the ground surrounding the Harmon home. Asking those who had lived there for years about the uncultivated spot next to the house, it was explained that that was where the school house had sat; only someone had burned it in the night, an act of arson.

This did not stop interested parents from providing schooling to their children. When Jack Wimmer came to the Canyon in 1939, Mrs. Art Stratman was teaching in a cabin abandoned by "Montana Bob," an early

member of the Nine Mile community. Mr. Stratman then constructed a small school house, a frame structure, across the road from Balanced Rock (Pig Head Rock). When Stratmans moved from the area, the small building was moved with them.

A CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) camp had been built in the mouth of Argyle Canyon during the 1930's. Mrs. Wimmer taught school in one of its empty barracks. Thus, education in Nine Mile Canyon ended as it began, in an abandoned building.

## Salazar and Hurry-Up Drilling

by Jerry Spangler

*(The following is from the August 26, 2011 Opinion section of the Salt Lake Tribune).*

There is a certain sense of irony in the recent federal court ruling out of Wyoming that Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar had misstepped when he limited "categorical exclusions," not because the limits were inappropriate but because the public had not been allowed to comment on Salazar's decision.

A categorical exclusion is a bureaucratic tool used by the Bureau of Land Management to more-expeditiously approve drilling operations without a full environmental review — all without public comment on the effects that development might have.

I have long opposed categorical exclusions, in large part because they exclude the level of public participation that is essential to sound environmental policy.

I believe the best decisions are those that bring together all stakeholders to resolve concerns — wildlife advocates about diminished habitat, air-quality experts with insights into dust pollution and ozone, wilderness advocates, those with public access concerns, and archaeologists, like myself, who are worried about the long-term effects of development on irreplaceable cultural resources.

During the past 20 years of my own archaeological research in Nine Mile

Canyon, I have watched as the canyon has evolved from a sleepy backwater with only a handful of hardy ranchers into an industrial zone with a steady stream of heavy trucks hauling drilling rigs onto the plateau to tap immense reserves of natural gas.

Yes, the canyon, renowned the world over for its tens of thousands of ancient rock art images, looks and feels dramatically different, for both good and bad.

The canyon is noisier, dirtier and busier than ever before. But the road is wider and safer, steps have been taken to eliminate the persistent dust problem that has plagued the quality of the rock art images, and the canyon is more accessible to visitors of all ages who seek to enjoy the archaeological treasures there.

In 2010, we and others in the conservation community signed a landmark agreement with the BLM and the Bill Barrett Corp. that lays out a long-term strategy to minimize the impacts of the Barrett development on cultural resources in Nine Mile Canyon.

And since that time we have worked closely with the corporation and other private land owners in the canyon to see that the agreement is implemented.

No lawsuits have been filed or even threatened, and to my knowledge

there have been no delays due to environmental opposition.

Why? Barrett has willingly engaged in conversations with all parties about how to resolve our concerns, while still pursuing its own corporate interests.

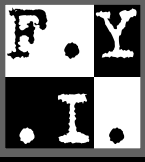
And therein is the lesson learned: Because of an open process that invites public participation, relationships were built, trust was established and the project moved forward.

It was a testament that environmental protection and development interests are not mutually exclusive, that responsible energy development can also balance the needs of other concerns.

A categorical exclusion circumvents that public process, as it did when the BLM first proposed exclusions for the plateaus above Nine Mile Canyon and we and others were not allowed to comment on the potential impacts.

We believe that Secretary Salazar was correct in ordering the BLM to use the tool more judiciously.

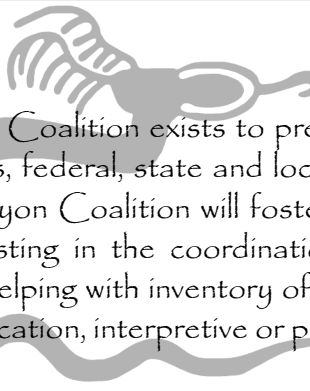
Categorical exclusions should be used cautiously and only in the rarest of circumstances. As noted in a report by the Government Accountability Office, the BLM had been abusing the exclusion process, and there remains the potential that it could happen again



# 59th Annual Utah State History Conference—September 9-11, 2011

This year's Utah State History Conference will be held at Fort Douglas (32 Potter Street, Salt Lake City, Utah) on September 9-11<sup>th</sup>. The theme for this year is "The Peoples of Utah: Celebrating Diversity." There are many interesting sessions and activities scheduled for the public to attend.

For more information go to: [http://history.utah.gov/historical\\_society/annual\\_meeting/index.html](http://history.utah.gov/historical_society/annual_meeting/index.html)



## 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.

[ninemilecanyoncoalition.org](http://ninemilecanyoncoalition.org)

Be sure to visit our new website!



Nine Mile Canyon Coalition

### Board of Directors

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## 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: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

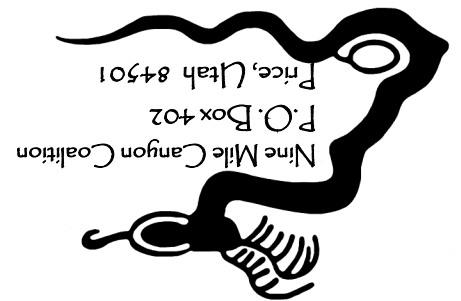
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_



- Annual (\$25)
- Corporate (\$1000)
- Additional Gift
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Thank you for your support!*

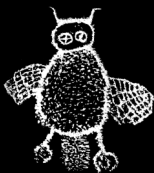


# Nine Mile Canyon Coalition

TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2011

## U.R.A.R.A.

UTAH ROCK ART RESEARCH ASSOCIATION



# SYMPOSIUM



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CARBON COUNTY EVENTS CENTER

SEPTEMBER 22-26 2011