

VESTIGES



Brief

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Newsletter of URARA, the Utah Rock Art Research Association

President's Message

Greetings,

At the membership meeting during the symposium in Escalante we decided to try alternating the traditional 12+-page issue of *Vestiges* with a very short one. This is our first. We invite your comments regarding the change.

As announced in December *Vestiges*, the URARA board of directors will hold an annual planning retreat in Cedar City, Utah on January 24-25. The meeting is open to all members. Anyone interested in attending please call me at 310-378-0320 (home) or 424-903-6690 (cell).

Troy Scotter has provided us with an update regarding the Bureau of Land Management hearings relative to the potential selling of leases of BLM managed land to the oil and gas drilling industries. We have heard some about the controversy this has caused.

In a December 26 editorial, the LA Times went into some detail, in sympathetic terms, regarding the efforts of Tim Christopher, a University of Utah economics student, to derail the process by out-bidding the oil and gas interests at the public auction. We imagine Christopher has now become somewhat of a folk hero in the eyes of those protesting, or at least objecting to the BLM's efforts. We can only say, Hooray!

To all, best wishes for a great 2009 and happy rock scrambling!

Steve Robinson

2009 URARA President

"Drill, Baby, Drill"

This is the title of an eight-page article in the Winter 2008-09 issue of *American Archaeology*. The front cover of this issue is a full-page photo of the familiar Great Hunt Panel in Nine Mile Canyon. The article is liberal in the use of Nine Mile rock art photographs, which include the owl used as a logo for URARA, and the large Barrett Corporation trucks "tooling" through the canyon trailing clouds of dust. The inevitable dirt-covered rock art panels are painfully and readily apparent.

This *Vestiges Brief* is not the place to review comprehensively this interesting and balanced article. However, we do recommend it to your attention. We do so with the reminder that URARA is a "silent partner" with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, the Wilderness Society, and the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition in their joint lawsuit against the BLM and its management of the Nine Mile Canyon rock art treasures.

Oil and Gas Lease Sales

Troy Scotter

Many of you may have heard of the controversial oil and gas lease sale held in early December in Utah. In this sale, land near Arches National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, and right down the middle of Nine Mile Canyon was to be offered for development.

URARA members reviewed each of the lease parcels to see if they contained rock art and

prepared a list of concerns. We also noted areas where development might open access to areas rich in archeology that are currently difficult to access.

I need to thank the usual crowd of Diane Orr, David Sucec, Steve Manning, and Nina Bowen for doing most of the work. Pam and Quent Baker gave us detailed information on the Moab area. Utah State History was kind enough to provide us with good maps that made the process much easier. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, members of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, and Jerry Spangler (CPAA), as usual, provided helpful advice.

The BLM came under a lot of criticism for this lease sale. It was poorly planned and executed. Ultimately, the BLM removed many parcels from the lease sale. Most of the parcels we were concerned about were removed and we are pleased that the BLM was willing to reconsider leasing sensitive lands. The BLM issued a press statement that all parcels under the Nine Mile Canyon rim were to be removed from the sale, but didn't actually update the official documents removing the parcels. As a result, URARA still protested the Nine Mile Canyon leases although we hope that the BLM will be true to its word. We also protested one parcel in Vernal (recommending a small change in the parcel boundary) and a few parcels in the Moab area.

Editor's Note: Troy's thank you comments above are very appropriate. To those he mentioned we add a note of great appreciation from the board and all our URARA members, and special THANKS! to Troy for his efforts in organizing and leading this effort.

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Library, Archives, and Publications

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URARA has an extensive library of rock art publications, a collection of articles, and Clifford Rayl's photo collection, which are available for use by members. URARA also has educational materials which members are encouraged to use.

Calendar 2009

Jan 24-25 URARA board of directors retreat, Cedar City, UT

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