

# VESTIGES

April 2015  
Volume 35  
Number 3

*Monthly Newsletter of URARA, the Utah Rock Art Research Association*

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## President's Letter

Richard Jenkinson

I hope you are all enjoying this early spring weather to get out to see some of Utah's fabulous rock art. Preparations are underway for our annual symposium in Escalante in October. We still need volunteers to help with food and to help organize vendors. If you are interested, please contact me at rcjenkinson@yahoo.com.

We have been asked by retiring BLM ranger Randy Griffin to help save rock art west of Utah Lake from exposure to target shooting. The BLM will soon make a decision regarding whether or not to close areas containing rock art to target shooting and other potentially harmful activities. It is imperative that as many of our members as possible send an email in support of rock art preservation during the public comment period. To do this, send an email to the BLM so that you will be informed when the public comment period begins. The email address is pschulle@blm.gov. To be put on the list via US Mail, the address is Pam Schuller, BLM, 2370 South Decker Lake Blvd, West Valley, UT 84119.

If we can get one hundred or more emails sent in to support rock art preservation in this area, we can help save a sensitive area from vandalism and theft. This is an opportunity for URARA to make a genuine and lasting contribution to the protection of rock art. See Steve Mannings comments below.

## Site Steward Training in Moab

By Pamela Baker

On March 12 and 13 the BLM and URARA conducted a Site Steward Training in Moab. BLM archaeologists Leigh Grench, Don Montoya, and Jared Lundell were assisted by URARA members Pam and Quent Baker and Marty Thomas. Sessions were held both in the office and in the field. An enthusiastic group of stewards were assigned sites to monitor.

2 *Vestiges*

The new member on the team is Jared who transferred to Moab from the Richfield BLM office in December 2014.

He comes to Moab with a strong interest in southwestern archaeology and in the Moab Field Office focuses on lands, recreation, and grazing issues. His emphasis on working with consulting parties and user groups makes him a strong partner with URARA. Please welcome him when you work with the Moab BLM office.



Jared Lundell conducts a session on applicable laws and regulations. Photo by Pam Baker.



Future Site Stewards practice monitoring a site near Moab. Photo by Pam Baker.

## Calendar and Field Trip Schedule

March 12/13	Moab Stewardship & Recording Workshop
March 21/22.	Green River Area
April 11/12.	Caliente Nevada Area
May 1/2/3.	Western Colorado
May 22-25	ARARA Symposium, Laughlin, Nevada
June 12/13.	Sawmill and Coalville sites
July 11/12.	Fillmore and Delta Areas
Jul 31-Aug 2	Colorado URARA Summer Picnic, Blanding
August 6-9	Pecos Conference Mancos, Colorado
September.	Connor Springs, Box Elder Canyon
October 2,3,4,5.	URARA Symposium, Escalante
November 7/8.	Bluff
December 5/6	Nine-Mile and Argyle Canyons

For info or sign-up for URARA events, please contact Oscar Olson at 801-485-0862 or Steve Acerson at 385-985-5402, [whiteh20rockart@gmail.com](mailto:whiteh20rockart@gmail.com).

## Caliente (Alamo) Nevada Field Trip April 11-12

**Steve Acerson**

We are looking forward to the upcoming April field trip to Alamo, Nevada. Although it lists the trip as in Caliente, Nevada, we will actually be based out of Alamo. We are also fortunate to have Elaine Holmes and Ann McDonnell co-leading the trip for us. It's a exciting opportunity to see some fun sites outside our field trip areas in the great state of Utah.

Word is spreading fast about this trip and everyone interested will need to contact Steven Acerson (385-985-5402) email: [whiteh20rockart@gmail.com](mailto:whiteh20rockart@gmail.com), or Oscar Olson (801-485-0862), to get signed up. They are busy gathering more information about the event as the days go by and will make sure anyone desiring to go gets it all when they sign up.

There are accommodations in Alamo at the Alamo Motel (you can book on line), or the Windmill Ridge Lodge and Restaurant - (775-725-3686). We are still checking on camping facilities for those of you who would prefer to do that.



## URARA Summer Picnic, Blanding

Joe Brame

The annual summer picnic is scheduled for the weekend of July 31 – August 2, 1915. As last year, camping will be at the Nizhone Campground group site SG1, north of Blanding. The proposed schedule of activities follows:

### Pre-picnic activities:

07/29/15 Wednesday Record Coal Canyon site  
07/30/15 Thursday Record Coal Canyon site

### Picnic:

07/31/15 Friday Check in after 2 PM to Nizhone Campground group site SG1  
08/01/15 Saturday Day 1 field trips  
08/02/15 Sunday Day 2 field trips  
08/03/15 Monday Check out before 1 PM from group site SG1

### Post-picnic / pre-Pecos optional recording by remaining attendees:

Finish recording Coal Canyon  
Hovenweep – need location of rock art  
Canyon of the Ancients – need location of rock art  
Mesa Verde – need location of rock art

**Pecos Conference in Mancos Colorado (97 miles / 2 hours from Blanding), August 6-9**

[www.coloradoarchaeology.org/BULLETINBOARD/2015-Pecos-Conference.pdf](http://www.coloradoarchaeology.org/BULLETINBOARD/2015-Pecos-Conference.pdf)

## Green River Trip Report, March 21-22

Steve Acerson



Green River Wild Bunch March 21-22

The Sheriff would have had a tough time keeping up with this bunch of characters. We were up early to catch the Spring Equinox at Crescent Junction, which turned out to be the eye of a wolf shaped rock lighting up. Then a visit to Sege canyon, and back into the vehicles to pay respect to an Owl image in a canyon.

We tried to prepare the newest members to URARA with a little warm-up on Friday before the whole group showed up. Let's all welcome Merlin and Marion Brown from Salina, Utah.

Saturday morning found the group ready to go, so we holstered our cameras, and found a wagon seat and took off. We drove out of town, and quickly had to leave a wagon behind because of a dry gulch, but managed to double up and continue. After a short bumpy ride, we turned the big kids loose in a boulder playground.



Back to the vehicles and off for a scenic drive on back country roads through the Book Cliffs. Desert Bighorn sighting at a Bighorn sheep panel was amazing, somethings go unchanged through time. South through Valley City, then across Bluehills road, and one flat tire, finally found us at a favorite water hole, Ray's Tavern, drinking and eating burgers. Dusty from a long day on the trail we allowed the sun to drop below the ridge of the Swell.

Sunday morning found the group ready to get back to the dirt roads. The County road crews had been out and doing a great job of maintaining the roads so travel was fast and dusty. Another loop into the Bookcliffs found us in narrow canyons and on high benches, thinking about the views, and all the newborn calves basking in the warm sun, while their mothers trail for miles to water.





A short stop to watch thirsty cows with tongues extended drinking out of a spring pipe. Travelling across the sands found us pulling hard on the reins, some dude had put a fence across our free range, tipping our hats we turned and headed for the San Rafael, completing our assigned route found us back at our favorite bar for steaks and chops, and fluids of choice.

With hugs and smiles and promises to ride again soon, we headed for our bedrolls and home. Next ride will be in Nevada, so get ahold of the trail bosses, Steve or Oscar and get signed up !!!!

## West Side Utah Lake, Plea for Protection

Steve Manning

After several years of documenting petroglyph sites, meetings with BLM officials (from the State Director to the Field Office Director) the BLM has finally agreed to pursue action on the issue of target shooting on the west side of Utah Lake in the area north of the soldier pass road to stop the damage to the prehistoric rock art sites. The BLM proposes to amend the current land use management plan to permanently close the area to target shooting. They will shortly post a notice in the Federal Register stating that they intend to close the area and ask for public comments.

It is absolutely essential that all URARA members, and as many other people as possible – family, friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. – comment favorably on this proposal. Once the BLM has an opportunity to review all of the comments they will make a decision.

We do not know exactly when this initial notice will be published. It could be as early as two weeks, so we plan on sending all URARA members an email letting you know when the notice is posted and the deadline for comments.

The following is a random collection of information about the petroglyphs and the problems of protection for you use in composing letters.

The petroglyphs on the west side of Utah Lake have been, and are being heavily damaged by target shooters. Some groups of images (panels) have nearly been destroyed. The damage is occurring everywhere there are petroglyphs. There have been 20 documented incidents, since 2010 through to the present, resulting from the theft, vandalism, and/or threats to the cultural sites that contain prehistoric Native American petroglyphs in this area. These incidents are as follows: Theft of archaeological resources 2. Vandalism of archaeological resources 13. Illegal dumping in an archaeological site 3. Motor vehicle in an archaeological site 1. Creating a hazard or a nuisance in an archaeological site 1.

The area contains the largest concentration of prehistoric petroglyphs in northwestern Utah. Dates for the petroglyphs range from about 13,000 years ago up to historic Paiute Indians. Because of this the area should be protected. Many of these petroglyphs were created by the Fremont Culture, which existed nearly exclusively in Utah from about 100 BC to AD 1250. The exact images they created on the rocks exist nowhere else in the world. Some of the Fremont petroglyphs are even unique to the west side of Utah Lake. Once they are gone, they are gone forever.

The southwest side of Utah Lake has the potential to become a State or Regional Park. It would attract children from all of the schools along the Wasatch Front. Here they could learn about Utah's prehistoric past, and actually see it in person. There could be nature, hiking, biking and running trails in the area. There could be educational programs at the petroglyph and stabilized archaeological sites. Scholars could study the petroglyphs without fear of being shot. The scenery overlooking Utah Lake and the rugged Wasatch Mountains is spectacular.

We are likely in the same circumstances in our understanding of what the petroglyphs mean as were the people who discovered the hieroglyphs in Egypt and in Mesoamerica in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It took many years of research by scholars around the world before they began to be deciphered. These petroglyphs are important because they contain the record of these lost civilizations.

The area where the petroglyphs are is an unmanaged, undesignated, out of control gun range where participants designate the targets and the extent of the shooting. Not only is shooting destructive to petroglyphs and the archaeological sites, but it is hazardous to other people visiting the area. We recently learned from a local public official that one death and several injuries have occurred here.

Target shooting has been responsible for 80 wildfires between 2002 and 2012. The intense heat from fires causes spalling of the rock surface, which damages or destroys the petroglyphs.

Target shooting on BLM land in the area of the petroglyphs has recently increased because Utah's State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) closed all of the roads on state lands in the area of the petroglyphs that parallel the foothills of the Lake Mountains, and also those that went into the canyons. About 9.5 miles of roads were eliminated. SITLA also removed 13 tons of debris abandoned by target shooters (*Deseret News*, April 16, 2014). These road closures drastically restricted the land available for target shooting. Consequently, target shooting is now concentrated on a narrow strip of BLM land, where many of the petroglyph sites are located. Last Saturday (March 14) it was reported that about 50 groups of target shooters were positioned along the base of the foothills where many of the petroglyphs are located. Usually there are five to ten.

Target shooting has become so overwhelming in this area that the Salt Lake Field Office, on August 14, 2014, offered a \$500.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of the people who painted at least a dozen targets onto the rocks near the petroglyphs, and then engaged

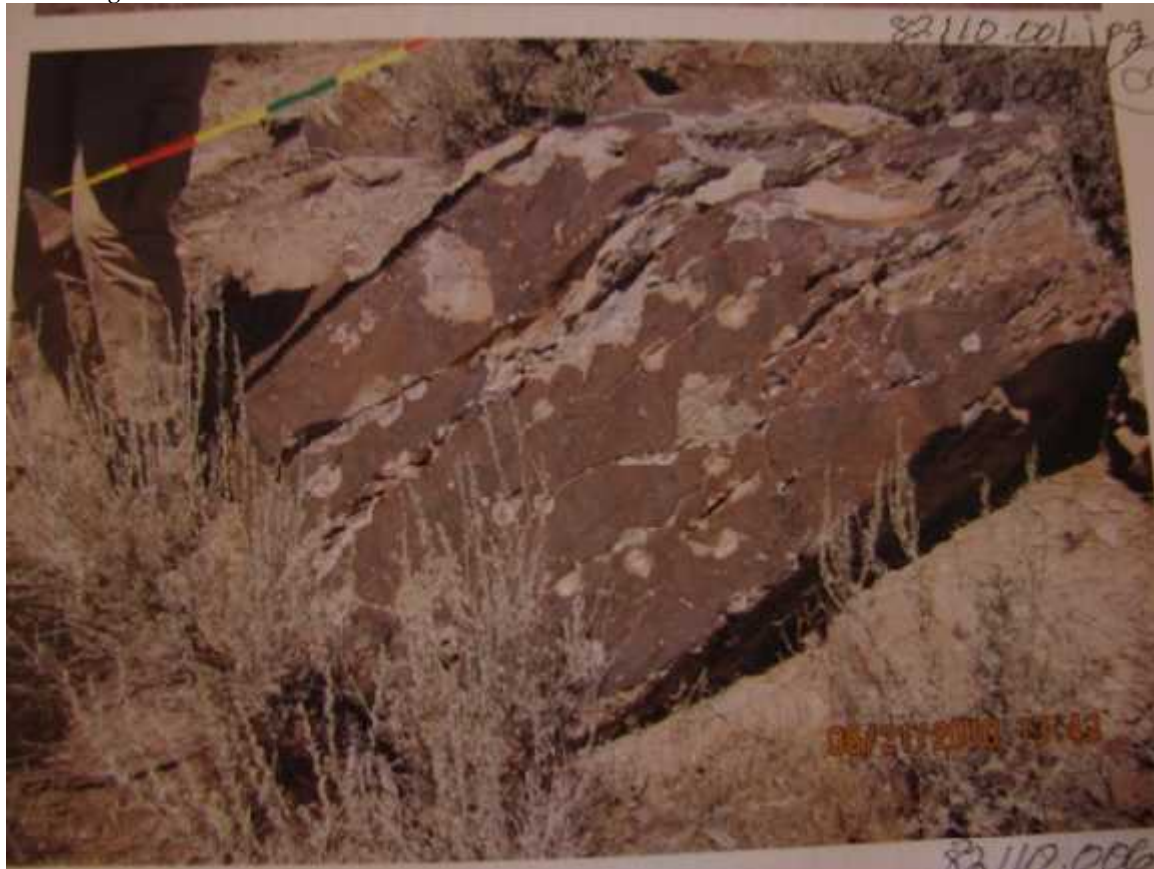
in shooting at them with a large caliber gun (*The Salt Lake Tribune*, August 14, 2014 and the *Deseret News*, August 15, 2014 (Page 10)).

Permanently closing the area surrounding the petroglyphs to target shooting will only minimally inconvenience the shooters. Only about 500 acres need to be closed, which is a small part of the BLM's 3,000,000 acres adjacent to the petroglyph sites. There are other places west of the Wasatch Front where people may shoot.

The record of America's (and Utah's) prehistoric past is being forever obliterated, likely at this very moment. We urgently need the BLM's help to prevent further damage and destruction to these unique, significant and irreplaceable prehistoric petroglyphs. Therefore, we are sincerely asking that target shooting be immediately and permanently closed on all BLM lands in the area of these petroglyphs.







## URARA Board Contacts

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Please address all membership applications/renewals and checks to URARA, Box 1351,  
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