

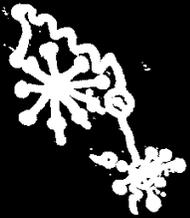


:Nine Mile Canyon Coalition News

Fall 2008

ninemilecanyoncoalition.org

Most of the
change we
think we see
in life



is due to
truths being
in and out of
favor

Robert
Frost

Inside:

<i>Board Chair's Message</i>	1
<i>More 9MC Public Land Up For Oil & Gas Sales!</i>	2
<i>US Congress Aware of Our Cause</i>	3
<i>NRPH Update</i>	4
<i>9MC Site Survey Update</i>	4
<i>Got Gravel?</i>	5
<i>Fall Gathering Photos</i>	6
<i>The Birthing</i>	7

Board Chair's Message, by Pam Miller

Dear Nine Mile Canyon Friends:

I reviewed my previous newsletter's Chair's Message and realized I could nearly just repeat my comments! For instance, the never-ending National Register Nomination application is heading down a new path. Again, please read Bill Walsh's article for an update on the process.

The West Tavaputs Final Environmental Impact Statement is rumored to be out soon. Watch for an alert because there may be only a two week comment period. Hopefully we will be able to see the final version of Constance Silver's Dust Study, and we are anxious to read how BLM is dealing with issues addressed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Coalition, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NRHP), SUWA, the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Hopi Tribe. There were many other great comments and we thank all who participated. Hope for the best for Nine Mile Canyon!

BLM did not do an analysis of alternative transportation routes to the West Tavaputs Plateau, but the Coalition partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NRHP) and Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA) in an engineering study of a few of the proposed alternative routes. It was submitted to the BLM in September as part of our comments on the WTDEIS. The study concluded that the Trail Canyon to Harmon Canyon route is feasible and relatively inexpensive while there are two possibilities for a connecting loop road on top of the Tavaputs that would be more costly but would help reduce the need for traffic through the canyon bottom.

The dust suppressant study was conducted over the summer by Carbon County, and we have heard that the final report is going to be presented to the committee soon. We will let you know the results. Our own observations are that although the suppressants appear to be quite effective in the short term, the county still struggles with the prepared road base. The suppressants break up in the soft spots and eventually contribute to the breakdown of the rest of the surface. We don't know where the suppressant goes when it is airborne or what the impact is to the rock art. There has to be regular application. The soft spots need to be replaced with road base or gravel, and the road needs to be crowned and ditched the entire route. Flash floods over Labor Day weekend caused much damage to the road between the Nine Mile Ranch and Harmon Canyon. Keeping water off the road is a continual challenge for the counties. Hopefully Carbon County will work on this section of the road soon as it continues to be very dusty with limited visibility in traffic.

Again we know that it is business as usual in the Canyon with BBC and the BLM. We reported previously the 33 categorical exclusions (CX) issued since March, but 39 Notice of Stakings (NOS) were posted in October. This means that 72 wells will be drilled on the West Tavaputs Plateau without public comment or input. Again, these CXs do not account for cumulative effects such as increases in the dust generated



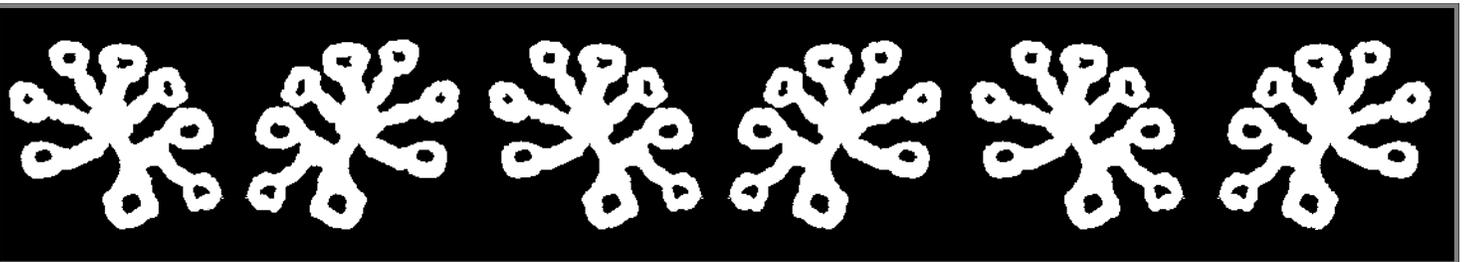
on the Nine Mile road, increases in emissions from industrial equipment, or increases in the development of ground-level ozone. Our lawsuit is proceeding through the legal process but it is a time-consuming effort.

I mentioned in my previous message that there was realistic hope for the future. I don't know that anymore. The Price Field Office Resource Management Plan was released earlier this month (October) with few protections for Nine Mile Canyon. This sets the direction for the PFO for the next twenty years. A new administration will have a difficult task changing this even if they are so inclined. Let me remind you that the Coalition does not oppose the legal and responsible gas development and drilling on the West Tavaputs Plateau. We oppose the damage and destruction to Nine Mile Canyon and unsafe travel conditions to visitors.

The good news is that Nine Mile Canyon as an issue has received much press coverage through the summer and early fall. We hope it continues. I have taken trips through the canyon with writers from the London Financial Times and the Salt Lake Tribune, and reporters from ABC Nightly News. I didn't have to say much; the canyon tells the story. In addition, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) was directed by the House Subcommittee on Natural Resources to conduct an investigation into the statutory categorical exclusions mentioned above. We have already had one meeting and one day in the canyon with them. It will take up to nine months for them to complete the investigation.

As a group we are indebted to our board members and volunteers for all of their time and efforts. Our Fall Gathering Committee always does a great job, and this year's event was no exception! Staying up to date on all the issues is nearly a full time job and is impossible without help. As I wind down my term as Chair of the Coalition, I like to dwell on the positive side of working with friends and sharing experiences in one of the greatest places on earth. Hurray for Nine Mile Canyon, and long may it inspire, comfort and calm all those who have the privilege to visit there!

*My heart to yours –
Pam Miller*



Nine Mile Public Lands Are Up For Sale To The Energy Industry

by Steve Hansen

The sale of nearly all public lands in Nine Mile Canyon that are managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been put on the auction block for the December 2008 oil and gas lease sale. According to *The Salt Lake Tribune* staff writer, Patty Henetz, "On Election Day, when citizens most likely will be focused elsewhere, the BLM will announce an oil and gas lease sale involving large swaths of public land considered worthy of wilderness status – including artifact-rich Nine Mile Canyon, Desolation Canyon and areas around Dinosaur National Monument. The actual sale will be held the Friday before Christmas – 'the bow atop the massive gift to the oil and gas industry we've seen for the last eight years,' said Suzanne Jones, Regional Director of the Wilderness Society's Central Rockies Office."

The BLM is moving at break-neck speed to complete this action and without providing an opportunity for public participation and comment. The Obama transition team is aware of the planned sale, and has made suspending or reversing the action a priority (See "9-Mile Issues Under Congressional Scrutiny" on page 3).

For more information regarding the December 2008 oil & gas lease sale, go to the BLM website at:

http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/energy/oil_and_gas/oil_and_gas_lease.htm

Click on "December 19, 2008" just below "Current Sale Information."

The dedicated grassroots efforts of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition and our preservation partners are paying off, though perhaps too late. The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) continues its investigation of possible management violations between the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the energy industry. In the meantime, the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee has been conducting oversight and investigatory hearings, compiling a long list of questionable management practices as they relate to our public lands nationwide.

On October 22, 2008, Congressman Raul M. Grijalva, Chairman of the Congressional Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands released a 26-page document titled "A Report On the Bush Administration Assaults On Our National Parks, Forests and Public Lands - A Partial List." It is under the heading, "Compromising Cultural Treasures", that Rep. Grijalva reports that Nine Mile Canyon is now threatened by increased energy development. The report recognizes that "BLM received more than 53,000 comments in opposition to the [West Tavaputs Draft Environmental Impact Statement (WTEIS)] project, including letters from the state of Utah, the Hopi Tribe, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. Further, the EPA deemed the draft EIS to be 'inadequate' and required BLM to prepare a supplemental analysis for public review to consider impacts to air quality." The report also acknowledges that regardless of overwhelming public opposition, the BLM has continued to approve numerous projects under its "categorical exclusions" (CX) authority which allowed them "to disregard public input and forgo any analysis of the potentially significant impacts that drilling and the subsequent infrastructure will have on the area's rock art." The full report can be viewed at

http://grijalva.house.gov/uploads/Grijalva_Public_Lands_Report_10_22_2008.pdf

While such Congressional attention would normally signal a possible end to the mode of operation in

Nine Mile Canyon, the Bush Administration has timed their "assault" on these public lands such that it may be too late in the game to prevent the canyon's industry-related destruction. The BLM has timed the release of the final WTEIS nearly on top of its release of six Resource Management Plans (RMP) -during the final days of the election, and into the busy Holiday season- when public attention is easily diverted in other directions, and away from the current administration's shenanigans affecting our public lands. The RMPs, which have the force of statute, will determine the region's public land management policies and strategies for the next 15 to 20 years, and they will be extremely difficult to reverse once their final Records of Decisions (ROD) are released.

Without waiting for the ROD on the WTEIS to be released, the BLM has recently posted 31 Notices of Staking and Applications for Permit to Drill, and has approved eight additional wells to be drilled as CXs. Coalition Chair, Dr. Pam Miller was in Nine Mile Canyon on a recent Saturday and she reported seeing another drill rig and a man-camp trailer being moved through the canyon toward it's destination on the Plateau. "It hasn't slowed a bit even under all of this scrutiny. Business as usual" says Dr. Miller.

John Podesta, Co-Chairman of President Elect Obama's transition team, appeared on Fox News Sunday (November 9th) where he addressed the scheduled December 2008 oil and gas lease sale for 360,000 acres of federal land in Utah, many of which are located in Nine Mile Canyon (see article on page 2). According to Mr. Podesta, the Bush administration wants "to have oil and gas drilling in some of the most sensitive, fragile lands in Utah ... I think that's a mistake." Mr. Podesta indicated several ways the Obama administration might be able to make an immediate impact, perhaps by issuing executive orders to halt actions by President Bush.

We can only hope that our efforts to preserve and protect Nine Mile Canyon come to fruition, and we can feel satisfaction to know that our grassroots efforts are making a difference in Washington.

Tid-Bit



A strong thunderstorm rumbled through Nine Mile this past Labor Day, causing some of the most severe flash-flooding the canyon has seen in decades. Virtually every northern drainage west of Gate Canyon experienced flooding. The road was heavily damaged in several places and in some areas actually became a temporary riverbed. Where the river jumped the banks on the Lower Ranch (just east of Cottonwood Canyon) the waterline on a gate was just under 4 feet high!

NRHP Nomination Developments

by Bill Walsh

A number of events in October significantly altered the course of the nomination of Nine Mile Canyon to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

On October 6, the State BLM Office and SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) put out a press release stating that they, as partners, were nominating Nine Mile Canyon to the NRHP. They announced that, rather than for a district—the long-standing plan to date—theirs would be a multiple property nomination (Multiple Property Submission or MPS). Among other additional points, they assured the public that NTHP listing is honorific and well deserved, but would not afford any additional protections.

On the same day, the BLM hosted a conference call among interested and invested parties, including the Coalition, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Utah Rock Art Research Association, the Utah Statewide Archeological Society, the Colorado Plateau Archeological Alliance, and members of the print media. The purpose of the call was to underscore the change from a district to a multiple property nomination. The change was required, they said, because the Keeper of the National Register had made it clear that she felt that a multiple property nomination was a much better format for the resources of Nine Mile Canyon and that the archaeological district nomination posed some major problems. The BLM and SHPO explained that the Commissioners in Carbon, Duchesne, and Uintah counties would likely look more favorably on a multiple property nomination, reminding participants that all had opposed the district nomination. BLM spokespersons estimated that it would

take four to six months to revise the nomination and submit it.

On October 30, another conference call was scheduled to identify and discuss the documentation necessary to complete the multiple property nomination. The BLM, SHPO, and staff to the Keeper of the NRHP were to be on the call. The Coalition asked to listen in, but our request was denied. BLM stated that since the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition was a party to a lawsuit against them, (over the categorical exclusion or CX issue), BLM would not communicate with us except in formal ways. Jerry Spangler wrote the NRHP nomination for the Coalition and also serves on the statewide BLM Resource Advisory Committee, but he could not listen in either.

So, it appears that we have entered a new phase in the long history of efforts to obtain the NRHP honor for Nine Mile Canyon. Another change in direction could occur, but the State BLM Office finally seems committed to move forward with the nomination. Working with the SHPO and staff of the Keeper should smooth the way. There's irony in the fact that the Coalition and other long-time allies and tireless supporters of the nomination are now shut out of the process.

But we will continue to monitor the situation and report as we are able. From whatever vantage point, if the listing of Nine Mile Canyon to the National Register of Historic Places finally comes to pass, it will be a joyous day.

Stay tuned

CPAA Site Survey Update

by Jerry Spangler

The Colorado Plateau Archeological Alliance, in partnership with Hunt Oil and the Utah Division of State History, has completed the first phase of archaeological survey of the historic Preston Nutter Ranch. Almost 100 sites were identified and recorded during 11 days of field work in September. Survey work was focused on the mouth of Carrant Canyon and the mouth of Gate Canyon, where crews investigated cliff levels to more than 300 feet above the valley floor. Spectacular rock art sites were documented at every level going up at least seven levels! The survey re-documented several dozen sites along the road that had previously been documented by Castle Valley USAS, but more than half of all sites documented were above the first cliff level and were previously unrecorded! In addition to the ever so abundant

rock art, among the newly documented sites were granaries, open surface structures and some pretty remarkable trails that cut through various cliff ledges. Although the analysis of the data is still preliminary, the surveys verified what we long expected: The archaeology of Nine Mile Canyon is not just a valley bottom phenomenon, but it extends up and up and up. Every level we looked at had sites! CPAA plans to return to the Nutter Ranch in early spring to resume the second phase of survey, which will focus on Pete's Canyon and the west side of Gate Canyon, as well as the south side of Nine Mile. CPAA thanks all who volunteered, as well as the University of Utah and Southern Utah University, who contributed personnel, logistical support and technical expertise!

Visitors to Nine Mile Canyon will encounter more evidence of industrialization: new operational gravel pits.

In October the Duchesne County Planning and Zoning Committee recommended to the Duchesne County Commission that Ames Construction be given a permit to operate a gravel pit on Hunt Oil property, near the Nutter Ranch. In November the same committee recommended the same permit for Nielson construction on Bill Barrett Corporation land in Currant Canyon. According to Steve Tanner, Chair of the Coalition Research Impact Committee, additional gravel pits exist in two other locations, along Wrinkle Road and at the top of Cottonwood Canyon.

There are no legal grounds for requiring that archeological clearances or other studies be done before a private landowner does whatever he/she pleases on their land. Consequently, an owner can doze his/her land for whatever purpose, or can drill for oil and gas on their private property. Hunt Oil has said they will not drill in Nine

Mile Canyon. Bill Barrett Corporation has said they would not disturb archeological resources in the canyon, "... not even an arrowhead," but not promised not to drill in the canyon.

If the energy industry wants to be believed that they will never willingly harm the archaeological resources in Nine Mile Canyon, they ought to mitigate their presence. It's fine if they need gravel for their roads, but they should mitigate and minimize their activity by bypassing the Nine Mile Canyon road using alternative routes whenever possible. They should also do archeological clearances on the gravel pit sites and remove any artifacts and protect existing rock art. That would send a powerful message to the public.

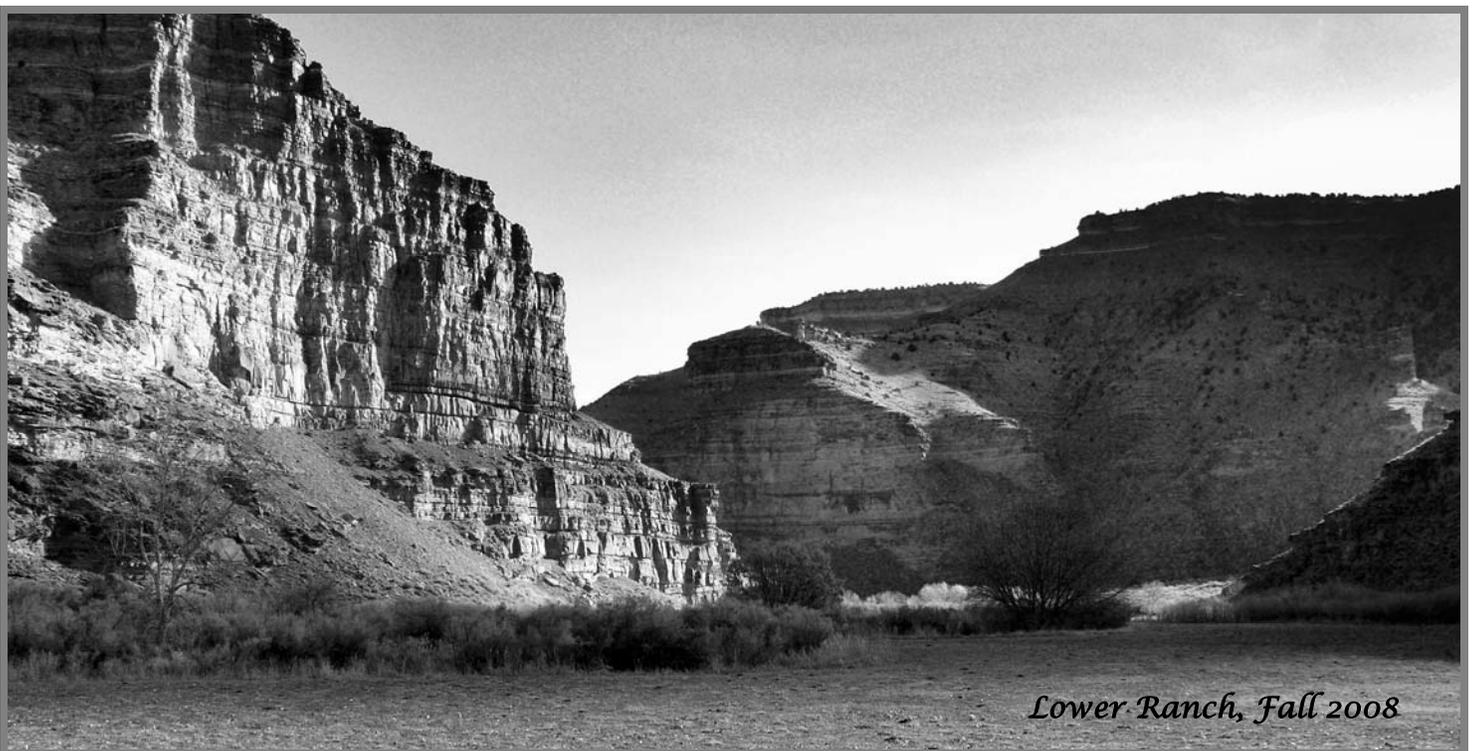
The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition will be the first to commend oil and gas industry companies if they take actions to fulfill their words of bringing no harm to the resources in Nine Mile Canyon.



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The Coalition Board would like to express our sincere appreciation to our new webmaster, Phil Miller. As a specialist in web site development and consultation, Phil has generously offered his guidance and expertise to the Coalition—free of charge! If you're in need of a professional consultant, please consider giving Phil a call.
(← contact info)

Thanks Phil!



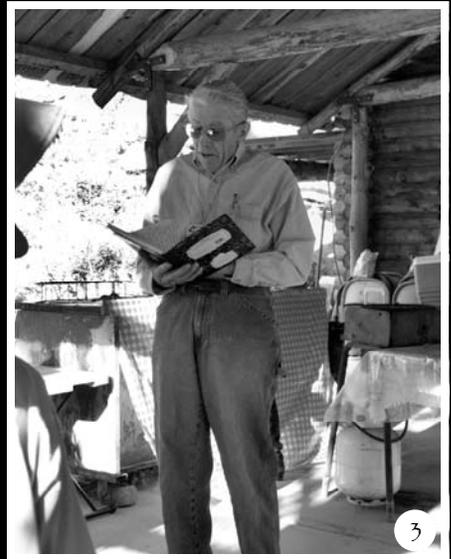
Lower Ranch, Fall 2008



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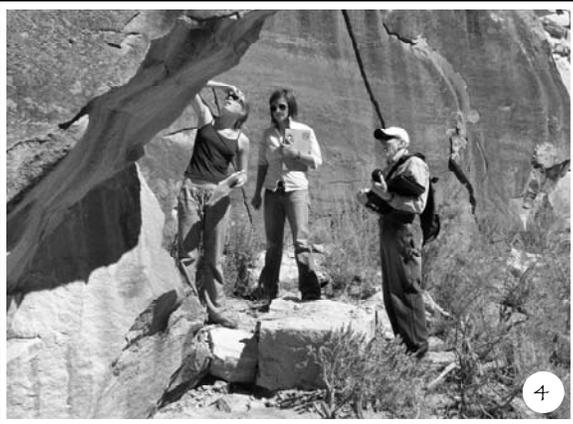


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fall GATHERING 2008

Despite severe flash-flooding earlier in the week, participants at this year's Fall Gathering enjoyed plenty of sunshine and warm weather. Thank you to Diane Gorman, Chanel Atwood, Margene Hackney and Dawna Houskeeper for putting together yet another great fund raiser! 1) Gracious hosts Ben & Myrna Mead whip-up an incredible dutch-oven dinner. 2) Delicately carved sheep petroglyphs. 3) Dr. Ray Matheny spoke of his 20+ years of experience in the canyon. 4) Dr. Matheny

and two U of U archaeology students at work on a site-analysis survey conducted by Jerry Spangler / Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance (CPAA). 5) One stop on Chanel Atwood's tour included the archaeologically rich area at the mouth of Harmon Canyon. 6) Field trip participants enjoyed the sunshine and a leisurely trip through the canyon. 7) Nancy Kronthaler and Vi Corkle bend the ear of a CPAA volunteer.



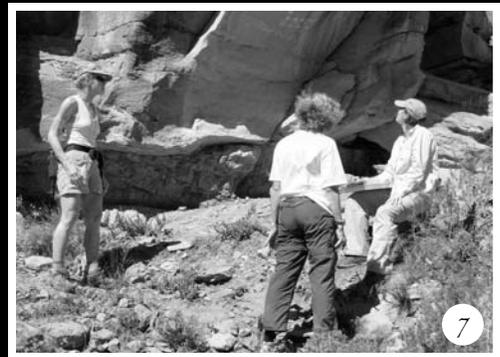
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The Birthing

By Elaine Wimmer Goodrich

She was born in the winter on a cold clear day when all the world was beautiful. The sky was a deep rich blue found only in the countryside, and the newly fallen snow made the hills and valleys a wonderland. I was barely seven years old and in the First Grade at the Nine Mile Elementary School when the amazing thing happened in our family.

We lived in a house made of large rocks which had been there for a long time. My mother and father bought the rock house and the cattle ranch that came with it from Ed Harmon in 1940. The inside walls were covered with white muslin on top of the rocks to keep out some of the cold, and George Washington's birthday, February 22, 1950 was a very cold day indeed.

My mother, Lucille Wimmer, was the school teacher in our one-room school house which was just over a mile up the dirt road from our house. We walked to school every day and were slim and healthy. The school had eight grades, and my mother was the janitor, cook, Principal and only teacher. Before we began classes in the winter, my mother would request help from the children in building a warm fire in the coal burning stove.

Generally, each child brought a lunch pack from home, but often the mothers would take turns bringing hot lunches from their homes so we wouldn't have to eat cold sandwiches. I especially loved when it was Mrs. Gonzales' turn to bring hot lunch because she brought wonderful homemade tortillas and beans which none of the rest of us got at home. For desert she brought homemade rose-hip jam to put on warm, buttered tortillas. Sometimes the mothers would volunteer to drive their trucks to take the school kids on outings up beautiful canyons far from our little school.

But only my mother could teach, as she was the only mom in Nine Mile who had graduated from the University with teaching credentials. We were thusly surprised when she asked one of the other mothers to teach school for her for a couple of weeks and she started to stay home all day. She had also added quite a bit of weight which was odd, and quite a change from her normally tiny and petite figure.

A couple of days before our wondrous event my father's mom, known to all of us as MOTHER, came to

visit us. This was very delightful because she fulfilled the time-honored tradition of spoiling grandchildren. And there were several of us to spoil. In addition to myself, there was 11-year old J.D., 9-year old Arlene, 5-year old Lee and my 3-year old brother Billy, all living in the rock house that winter along with my mother and father. My father's younger brother, Uncle Neville, lived very near us in a bunk house.

My 15-year old brother Jack and 17-year old sister Jean were too old to attend the elementary school that winter, so they lived in town with my grandmother during that school year. My 23-year old sister Edythe lived in Arizona with her husband and baby daughter, and my 21-year old brother Kent was serving his country in the Army.

On this particular cold morning, my grandmother helped us get out of bed and get cleaned up for school. She cooked us a big hot country breakfast and had us all sit down at the table. We were all at the table except my mother, which seemed very strange.

Suddenly the door to the bedroom opened and our mother peeked her head into the kitchen and in a rather urgent way said just one word, "Harold". We all, including my mom, generally referred to him as "Daddy". He was a giant of a man, over six-foot-four, but he moved with the grace of a ballet dancer in getting away from the table and into the bedroom. Soon he came to the door of the kitchen and said one urgent word, "Mother!" She was a fairly tall woman herself but she moved even more swiftly than him in rushing to the bedroom. Soon she came back into the kitchen and put several pans onto the coal-burning stove. We had no water heater and heated all of our water on the stove. We knew this was a lot of water and wondered if we were all going to have to take baths or something.

Uncle Neville, who ate all meals with us, instructed us to continue eating and not dare move from the table. Soon, however, just as we were putting on our coats, hats and gloves to walk to school, in came MOTHER with huge grin on her face. She said, "Well isn't this just the most wonderful thing? You have a new baby sister." She proceeded to help us get moving out the door to school and smiled and sang the whole time.



Sally Ann Wimmer, Summer 1952

She was just in a great mood, even more so than usual, and through our shock we realized that our mother had just had a baby.

We were too polite to say anything while in the presence of adults, but as soon as we were walking to school, safely away from the house and big ears, we expressed our amazement to each other. We just could not believe the whole thing. My 9-year old sister said, "I just can't believe it. We didn't hear one sound from that bedroom. Aren't new babies supposed to cry or something? And don't women scream and holler when they're having kids? I mean it, I just can't believe it happened." My 11-year old brother looked wise, and said to us, "Well, I knew there was something funny going on in there." I, of course, was just overwhelmed. I listened to Arlene and J.D. talk back and forth and pretend they were very worldly and smart, when in fact, they were both just as overwhelmed as I was. We talked about nothing else all the way to school! We didn't even discuss the snow and cold which was our most common topic of conversation that winter.

When we arrived at school we naturally shouted out the news to all. The entire school was just as surprised as we were. Some of the older children said that mama had, no doubt, been getting ready for daddy to take her to the hospital in Roosevelt when the baby just got in a hurry to be born. This was probably true. In any case, almost no school work got done that day as we all discussed what we were going to name the baby.

The standard First Grade reading text of the day featured an all-American family, consisting of a mother and father, a son named Dick, a daughter named Jane and a younger daughter called Baby Sally. They had a dog named Spot, a cat named Puff and a teddy bear named Tim. We learned to read by going over the same words again and again until all of these names were as familiar as our own families. After considerable hashing it out among ourselves, "Smokey" Clark, who was in the same class as my brother J.D., declared that our new baby could only be "Baby Sally". We all agreed that this was proper and fitting.

After school we invited the other children to come see our new baby sister, even though we hadn't laid eyes on her ourselves. I can only imagine my mother's surprise when we came through the door with the entire school following us—right into her bedroom.

My mother was laying in bed in a housecoat, looking calm and serene, and the baby was sleeping peacefully in a crib next to her bed. My mother was a gracious hostess and invited us all to quietly look at the baby. When informed that we were going to name her Baby Sally, my mother said that would be fine. My 11-year old brother, perhaps bent a little out of shape by

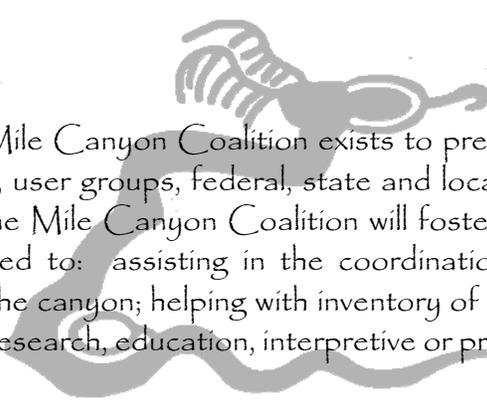
Smokey Clark getting credit for choosing the name and my mother agreeing so readily, said the baby had to have a middle name and he thought Anne would be nice. My mother said this sounded lovely, and so it would be. After a few more minutes the school children went home, all happier for having named the teacher's new baby.

My 9-year old sister and I decided we had to do something special to mark the occasion. We thought and thought about what would be appropriate and finally agreed on a plan. We found a huge old ladder and propped it up against the outside of the rock house. We then took a piece of black chalk, and on the top rock on the northeast corner of the house my sister printed, "Sally Ann Wimmer was born today."

Normally it could be assumed that chalk would erode fairly rapidly on an outside surface, but for some reason that little message stayed on the rock house for over 20 years. It was on a top rock just under the eaves so it was protected from the rain, and there were several big old trees which protected it from the wind. And for years and years after we had moved from the rock house into more elegant housing we would take enormous pride and delight in taking friends and relatives to see that rock. Visitors always made us happy by expressing how charming it was. We would delight in telling them the whole story about the amazing birth.

When we were much older, our visitors would look at us skeptically on hearing the story and would ask if our mother really allowed us to name the baby after a storybook character. And when we would sense a little disbelief on their part, we could always find mama and she would validate our story. And of course, being the child of the Canyon, Sally Ann was duly spoiled by everyone in Nine Mile. And of course, being the 10th living child or our parents it was assumed that she would be the caboose of the family train, so spoiling her was accepted by all.

It was 3 1/2 years later that my mother gave birth to the genuine caboose in the family, my brother Max Roy. By then, many of the families in the Canyon had moved to town permanently for higher paying jobs and the Nine Mile Elementary had closed its doors for the last time. The Nine Mile families still keep in touch and there is a bond between us that time will never erase. Now the Canyon has become world famous because of its beauty and it is filled with tourists. But whenever I go there I stop and look at the rock house and remember a kinder, gentler time when a few choice farm families had the Canyon all to ourselves, and I remember how we shared everything, right down to naming our newborn baby.



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.

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