



# :Nine Mile Canyon Coalition News

Spring 2015

ninemilecanyoncoalition.org



## Board Chair's Message

J. Michael Hansen

**A**fter the mildest winter in my 62 year old memory, Spring is again upon us. The Cottonwood trees in Nine Mile are beginning to bud, and I await the blooming of the cactus. It's a great time to visit Nine Mile Canyon, enjoy its beauty, and make a difference. On April 25, the Coalition will be holding its annual cleanup day. If you're up for beautiful scenery, great times with good people, hopefully a lot of sunshine, and an opportunity to get some exercise and do a good deed, join us at the Cottonwood Glen picnic pavilion at 9:00 a.m. Bring something for a pot luck lunch, plenty of water and the beverage of your choice, and after a couple of hours of picking up roadside trash join us for lunch at the Daddy Canyon pavilion. A great time will be had by all.

As usual, the Coalition is busy doing what it can to protect Nine Mile. As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the Coalition has presented its official position on the Special Recreation and Cultural Management Area (SRCMA) proposed by the Price Field Office of the BLM in 2008. In addition, the Coalition is involved in meetings with the BLM regarding a state-wide management plan for OHVs, and continues to participate in meetings with the BLM and the other signators to the Programmatic Agreement reached with Bill Barrett Corporation and the BLM regarding the Canyon. In addition, members of the Coalition Board have communicated with the Carbon County Commission regarding the Coalition's concerns about the County's position on Congressman Bishop's Public Lands Initiative.

Finally, as reported elsewhere in this newsletter, an old friend of the Coalition has taken a new position with us. Dennis Willis has been elected the new President of the Coalition. Dennis will provide invaluable leadership to the Coalition as we move forward.

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## Coalition Defines Position on SRCMA

In a letter sent to the BLM Price Field Office Manager, Ahmed Mohsen, the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition presented its official position on the Special Recreation and Cultural Management Area (SRCMA) proposed by the Price Field Office (PFO) in 2008. The Coalition's position, as presented in that letter, follows-

Nine Mile Canyon as a geographic, biological, and cultural area is not confined to an area wholly within the jurisdiction of the BLM PFO and within the confines of Carbon County. Large portions of the Canyon are also located within Duchesne and Uinta Counties, under the jurisdiction of the BLM Vernal Field Office (VFO). Accordingly, the Coalition strongly feels that the development of a revised SRCMA for the Canyon must be done in conjunction with the VFO so that the integrity of the Canyon is maintained as a whole. The Interpretive Plan for the Canyon cannot be done piecemeal between the three counties and the two BLM Field Offices, but must address the Canyon as a whole. Therefore, the development of the revised SRCMA must be developed jointly between the Price Field Office and the Vernal Field Office.

That said, the Coalition is willing to go along with the boundaries of the SRCMA as set forth, including the PFO's Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) boundaries, the VFO's SRMA and ACEC boundaries, and the State Institutional Trust Lands located within these boundaries (see combined maps on centerfold). It must be noted that these boundaries leave certain significant archeological and cultural resources outside of the boundaries of the revised SRCMA.

Furthermore, the Coalition strongly believes that the development of an integrated Interpretive Plan for the

Canyon can occur simultaneously with the development of the revised SRCMA. This has always been the Coalition's position, a position not shared, until recently, by the BLM. As long as the Interpretive Plan is consistent with the SRCMA ultimately adopted, there is no reason to delay the development of the Canyon Interpretive Plan until the revised SRCMA is adopted. The Coalition recognizes that under the Programmatic Agreement ("PA") no site development can occur until the SRCMA is adopted. This should not, however, delay work on the Interpretive Plan.

Finally, the Coalition has expended tens of thousands of dollars in the development of an award winning Interpretive Plan for the Canyon. The Coalition's work has been given to the BLM and the result has been . . . nothing. The BLM has recently indicated a new position - that the Interpretive Plan can move forward simultaneously with revision of the SRCMA. That being the case, the Coalition is willing to devote more time, effort, and funding to the development of an integrated Interpretive Plan for the Canyon *if it receives a commitment from the BLM that the BLM will move forward with the implementation of the final plan.* Given the passage of time, additional work needs to be done on the Plan previously submitted by the Coalition. An Interpretive Plan for the Canyon is more than simply throwing up a few unrelated signs around the Canyon next to a few significant pictographs, petroglyphs, and ruins. It must take into account the varying forces at work in and on the Canyon over the millennia and into the future.

In short, the Coalition wants to continue to work with the BLM in a collaborative effort to protect the Canyon and educate the public regarding this truly remarkable place. We look forward to a productive partnership in the future.

## 2008 Resource Management Plan and Nine Mile Canyon

The following are excerpts from the 2008 BLM Price Field Office's ("PFO") Resource Management Plan ("RMP") regarding Nine Mile Canyon, as pointed out to the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition by PFO Manager, Ahmed Mohsen.

### REC-56

Specific recreation management direction for the Nine Mile Canyon Special Recreation Management Area ("SRMA") includes direction for the following recreation management components: Market Strategy; Market;

Niche; Management Goals; Management Objectives; Primary Activities; Experiences; and Benefits.

### REC-57

The Nine Mile Canyon SRMA will be managed in coordination with the Vernal Field Office according to the *1995 Recreation and Cultural Area Management Plan*, except as modified by the management alternatives listed below. Such changes include Visual Resource Management ("VRM") objectives.

### **REC-58**

The Nine Mile Canyon SRMA will be created as indicated on adjoining map (24,300 Acres).

### **REC-59**

The purpose of the Nine Mile Canyon SRMA will be to manage recreation and interpretive activities related to the cultural and historic resources and landscapes in the area.

The Price 9 Mile ACEC is (26,200 acres) and land management prescriptions are listed on page 136 of the RMP. The Vernal Field Office manages the rest of the 9 Mile ACEC (about 45,000 acres). See the centerfold for combined maps.

### **REC-60**

Oil and gas will be open to leasing subject to minor constraints (timing limitations, controlled surface use, lease notices), except where the Nine Mile Canyon ACEC overlaps the SRMA. Where this overlap exists in the SRMA, the area will be open to leasing with major constraints (No Surface Occupancy, "NSO").

### **REC-61**

Development will be required to meet Visual Resources Management ("VRM") II and III objectives.

### **REC-62**

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum ("ROS") class semi-primitive non-motorized areas will be closed to Off Highway Vehicle ("OHV") use. No facilities will be located in these areas.

### **REC-63**

The remainder of the area will be limited to designated routes, including all BLM and county system roads.

### **REC-64**

ROS roaded natural (RN) class areas will contain visitor facilities, directional signage, interpretive materials, and infrastructure to support visitor health and safety, visitor appreciation of cultural resources, and resource protection.

### **REC-65**

Private enterprise on private lands in support of public visitation within RN class areas will be encouraged by the BLM.

### **REC-66**

The Nine Mile Canyon area will be closed to camping on public lands except for designated areas.

### **RMP page 136**

### **Nine Mile Canyon—Relevant and Important Values:**

#### **Cultural:**

#### **ACEC-10**

Rationale: This area holds significant prehistoric archaeological resources. Nine Mile Canyon is known to contain the country's highest concentration of rock art panels, remnants of the prehistoric Archaic, Fremont, and Ute cultures. About 80 percent of the known sites are rock art.

This ACEC is within the BLM Vernal and Price Field Offices.

Manage the area as an ACEC (26,200 acres). Special management prescriptions will include:

- Oil and gas will be open to leasing subject to major constraints (NSO)
- Split estate will be open to oil and gas leasing subject to minor constraints (CSU)
- VRM Class II and III in selected areas
- Utility corridor will be allowed

In addition, the following general management prescriptions will include:

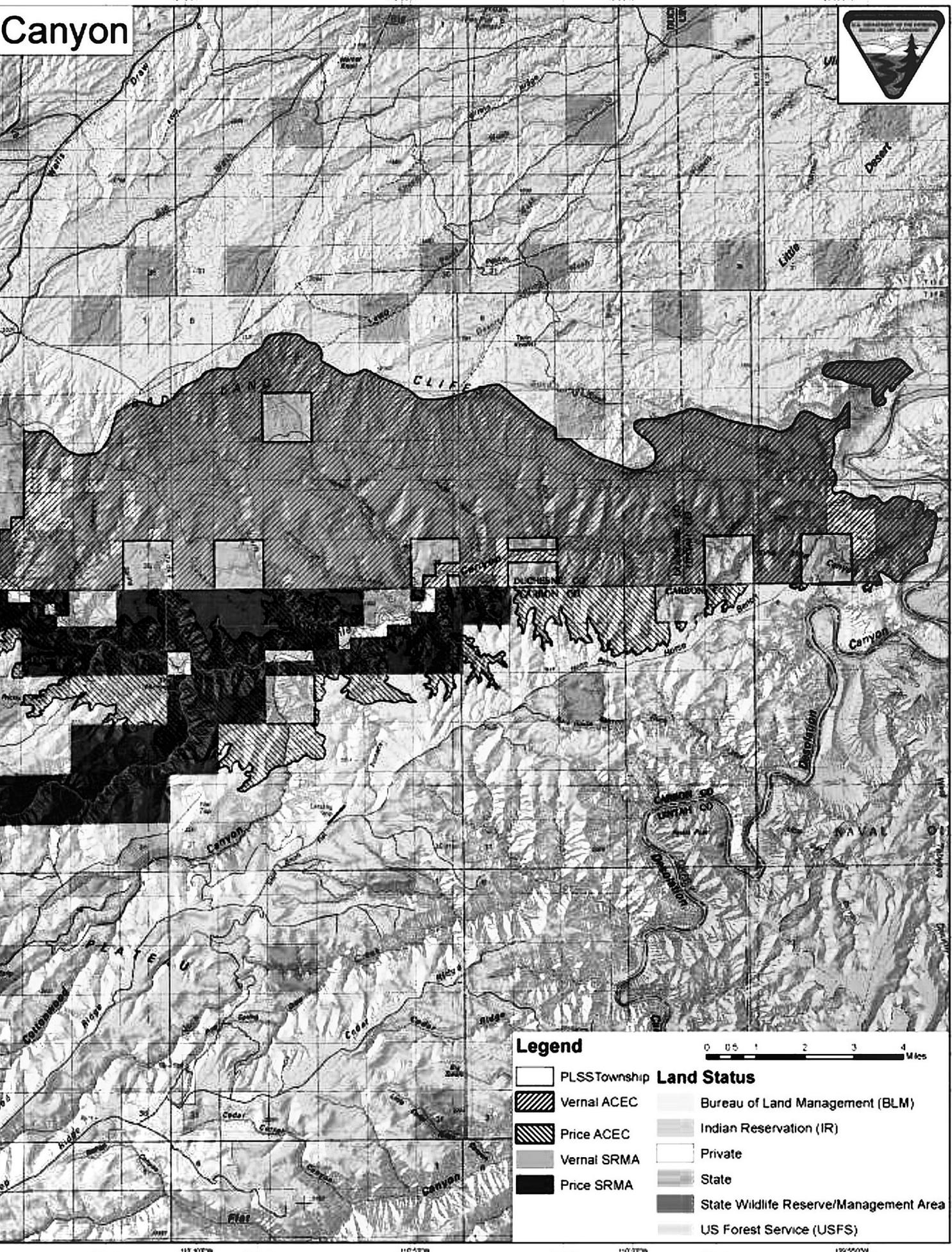
- Limit OHV use to designated routes
- Open to disposal of mineral materials
- Oil and gas development in the Nine Mile Canyon ACEC will be permitted after compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act

**NOTE:** The entire 2008 RMP for the BLM-Price Field Office, including maps and diagrams, can be found online at:

[http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ut/price\\_fo/Planning/rod\\_approved\\_rmp.Par.58259.File.dat/Price%20Final%20Plan.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ut/price_fo/Planning/rod_approved_rmp.Par.58259.File.dat/Price%20Final%20Plan.pdf)



# Canyon



## Legend

Land Status	
	PLSSTownship
	Vernal ACEC
	Price ACEC
	Vernal SRMA
	Price SRMA
	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
	Indian Reservation (IR)
	Private
	State
	State Wildlife Reserve/Management Area
	US Forest Service (USFS)



## ⋮ Dennis Willis' Message to CVAS: Numerous Issues Confronting Nine Mile Canyon

by Margene Hackney

The Castle Valley Chapter of the Utah Statewide Archaeological Society (CVAS) was very pleased to have Nine Mile Canyon Coalition Board member Dennis Willis as their special guest speaker on Thursday November 20, 2014. He started the program by reminding everyone that the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition was formed in 1991 at the request of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), with the purpose of protecting and educating the public about the prehistoric and historic resources of the canyon.

Dennis had a slide tape presentation on the latest update on the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition and reported on the state of the West Tavaputs Programmatic Agreement of which both the Coalition and the Utah Statewide Archaeological Society signed as well as many others signatories on December 5, 2010. The agreements were,

1. A National Registration Nomination
2. A Site Stewardship Program
3. An Interpretive program.

Meetings have been held to urge The Bureau of Land Management to honor these agreements. So far BLM has not come up with any workable agreements. They need to have something in place by 2020. Time is running short and all the signatories are hopeful that these agreements will be something everyone can be happy with.

Dennis went on to update everyone on the conditions of

the Nine Mile Canyon road surface. These are real concerns; the speed of traffic, lack of road pull offs, the narrow road, steep drop offs, small or non-existence shoulders, and that the improved road access increases vandalism. These concerns need to be addressed.

Dennis then talked about the BLM's Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Scoping Document. The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition has some real concerns with the obvious differences in approach between the Price and Vernal BLM field offices. The task to determine boundaries for the SRMA is the BLM's. At a meeting, the Coalition was shown maps, side-by-side, of Price and Vernal Field Office's proposed SRMA boundaries (see adjoined maps on centerfold). Each indicated very different approaches to defining the boundaries. These need to also be addressed.

Other emerging issues that Dennis spoke of were that there is a liquid petroleum pipeline proposed that would go through Nine Mile Canyon. There is also pending oil and gas legislation, where public comment is viewed as "red tape" by the oil and gas industry. Legislation would try to cut off or charge for public input.

The audience had some questions for Dennis, which he obligingly answered. President Craig Royce then thanked him for taking time to speak to the group and invited everyone to stay for refreshments.

## ⋮ Dennis Willis Takes the Reins as Coalition President

In a meeting held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, Dennis Willis was elected to a two-year term as President of the Coalition by unanimous vote of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition Board of Directors. Dennis succeeds Steve Hansen as president, after a one-year interim term.

Dennis is the perfect fit to lead the Coalition at this time, as issues and proposed plans effecting Nine Mile Canyon are being confronted in seemingly record numbers. Some of the issues the Coalition is addressing include, but are not limited to 1) Nine Mile Canyon's possible future being addressed in Congressman Rob Bishop's Public Lands Initiative; 2) development of the Canyon's *Special Recreation and Cultural Management Area* as required in the 2008 Price Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Resource Management Plan; 3) new proposals for crude oil pipelines through the Canyon; 4) the status of obligations and conditions agreed upon in the 2010 West Tava-

puts Programmatic Agreement, including National Register of Historic Places listings, a fully-implemented Site Stewardship Program, and an Interpretive Plan for the Canyon.

Having recently retired from the BLM where he worked for over 35 years, Dennis knows BLM guidelines for public lands management, and has extensive experience in defending the many resources our public lands offer. He currently serves on the board of the Utah State University – Eastern Prehistoric Museum, and recently finished serving as President of the River Management Society.

Dennis is a founding member of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, served as Chair in 2002, and we are lucky and grateful for his continued leadership in the Coalition.

The 2014 Annual Fall Gathering was a great success! This year, participants were treated to an historic tour, conducted by former Nine Mile Canyon resident and chief story-teller, Norma Dalton. She guided us to an old cowboy camp at the top of Prickly Pear Canyon that her father and brothers used from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Norma was really in her element as she shared stories of the cowboy camp and growing up in Nine Mile Canyon.

Following a delicious dinner Saturday evening at the Nine Mile Ranch, hosted and prepared by Ben and Myrna Mead, Dr. Jody Patterson, an archaeologist, presented exciting new information, photographs and artifacts gathered from various archaeological surveys he has conducted in Nine Mile Canyon over the past few years, related to pipeline and road work.

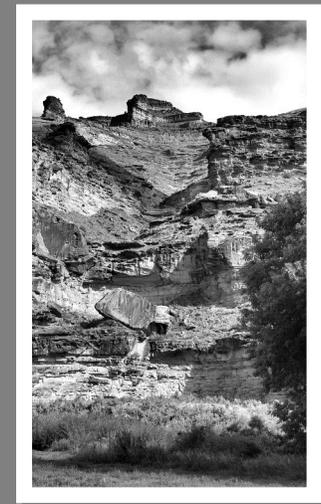
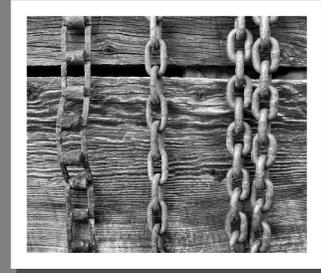
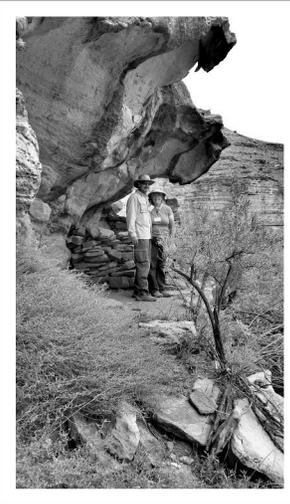
On Sunday, Coalition members Steve Hansen and Jerry Vaculin hosted a tour of rock art and ruins on their property in the lower canyon.

The weekend certainly wasn't without its share of adventure. On Norma's tour, a community effort successfully prodded the Hammerschmid's high-centered vehicle from the boulder strewn waters of Nine Mile Creek at the Prickly Pear Canyon Road crossing. The next day, another community effort was required to dislodge a flat tire from an SUV in our group. The wheel was fused to the axle and required a sizeable amount of elbow grease, a few good-sized rocks, and several poking and prying devices to eventually force the wheel from the vehicle.

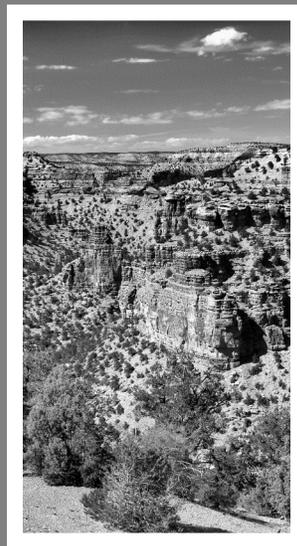
Participants at the Fall Gathering were pleased to be welcomed to weather that was nothing less than stellar—Warm days, blue skies, and no rain!

A BIG THANK YOU to Norma Dalton and Jody Patterson, for their insightful and educational activities. We appreciate the opportunity they provided for us all to learn and experience something new. And another BIG THANK YOU to Coalition board member, Diane Gorman-Jenkins, and Coalition treasurer, Dawna Houskeeper, for a very well planned, well executed, and much enjoyed occasion.

Mark your calendars now! This year's Fall Gathering will be held on the weekend of September 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> at the Nine Mile Ranch. Details to follow!



## FALL GATHERING 2014



# 2015 SPRING CLEAN-UP

## SATURDAY APRIL 25TH



Please join us for a much needed cleaning of the Canyon's roadsides. Work at your own pace and enjoy the incredible views as you work your way down the canyon. Be sure to wear appropriate clothing, such as gloves and a hat, and bring plenty of water to drink. We'll wrap things up around 1 o'clock and join a pot luck lunch at the Daddy Canyon bowery for everyone who'd like to participate. Hope to see you there!

START:

9:30 AM / CANYON GLENN

Mile post ~27.2

FINISH:

1:00 PM / DADDY CANYON

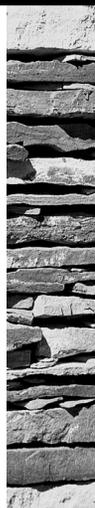
Mile post ~43.8

POTLUCK LUNCH!



In need of accommodations for  
the Spring Clean-up?

Nine Mile Ranch Bunk & Breakfast  
1-435-637-2572



Nine Mile Canyon Coalition

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Margene Hackney – Price, Utah  
Steve Hansen – Holladay, Utah  
Craig Houskeeper – Price, Utah  
Dr. Deanne Matheny – Lindon, Utah  
Dr. Pam Miller – Price, Utah  
Will Miller – Salt Lake City, Utah  
Bill Walsh – White City, Oregon  
Dennis Willis – Price, Utah

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