As we move along into the Spring of 2011, we are optimistic about many things relating to Nine Mile Canyon, and our enthusiasm for this wonderful place, so full of cultural and natural wonders, remains boundless.

We hope that the positive developments seen in 2010, such as the listing of a number of archaeological sites in Nine Mile Canyon on the National Register of Historic Places, will continue and expand. Of course, it takes the efforts of many to keep the positive momentum going.

In 2011 the Coalition plans to become more involved in tracing the history of Nine Mile Canyon and its surrounding areas. As portions of the landscape change, and prehistoric and historic sites are damaged or lost, the story of the past will be more difficult to recover. It also is important to document the memories and memorabilia of those who know portions of the canyon’s history, so that is not lost. Many lines of research need to be followed in order to draw together a clearer picture of how humans have interacted in and with Nine Mile Canyon. For the historic period, an excellent source of information is found in the Utah digital newspapers (http://digitalnewspapers.org/), where stories from historic local newspapers (many long out of circulation) about the canyon can be read in digital format. These stories provide an appealing window for viewing life in earlier days. We learn that concerns with the condition of the Nine Mile Canyon road (sometimes called the Price road) are not new but have been a consistent issue. For example, in the September 23, 1909 issue of The Uintah Chieftain, an article describes how strong storms caused floods in the canyon that closed roads and stranded some freighters along the road for up to 20 days, as well as damaging grain and hay crops. Many other news items reveal the history of those who settled in or in some cases traveled through Nine Mile Canyon.

Even as the Coalition and other groups and individuals attempt to protect the cultural and natural resources of the canyon and to record and learn more of its history, we must also help the public understand the importance of these efforts. In particular I believe that we must pass on our knowledge and enthusiasm to younger generations. We need to engage their interest in preserving the canyon and its history, although such may not be easy in an era of constant digital entertainment and distraction.
9MCC Comments on Gasco DEIS

by Dr. Pam Miller

The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition submitted formal comments to Stephanie Howard, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Field Office, concerning the Gasco Uinta Basin Natural Gas Development Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in late December, 2010. Under the Proposed Action, Gasco would drill up to 1,491 new gas wells, build approximately 325 miles of new roads, and construct approximately 431 miles of new pipelines. The Proposed Action would disturb approximately 4% of the total project area. The Coalition does not object to the responsible development of legal gas leases. However, we take a detailed look at any proposed action that may be detrimental to the Canyon. In the case of this Proposed Action we expressed several concerns, a few of which are listed here:

- The Vernal Field Office failed to conduct Section 106 consultation identified under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Coalition again requested consulting party status.

- The DEIS neglected to define in detail the southern boundary of the project area and therefore didn’t include Nine Mile Canyon as an area of potential effect.

- There was not a single alternative that emphasized Best Management Practices.

- Nothing in the air quality data indicates that the impacts of airborne dust, industrial particulates, magnesium chloride, and other dust-abating chemicals have been studied in relationship to the rock art and cultural resources of the Canyon.

- The real potential impacts to the prehistoric and historic cultural resources were not considered in the DEIS. These are traffic from Price unaccounted for anywhere in the document and the air flow patterns carrying dust and particulates into the Canyon.

- The Nine Mile Canyon road as a major road in the study area, and yet there is no mention of impacts to the road itself. The DEIS neglects to recognize the road upgrades which will make the Nine Mile road much more attractive to industry subcontractors and workers living in Carbon County.

EPA: Gasco EIS Inadequate

by Jerry Vaculin

In January the Environmental Protection Agency deemed the Environmental Impact Statement for Gasco’s 1491 well natural gas project near Nine Mile Canyon to be “inadequate”.

The Vernal Express reports that the EPA is particularly concerned about the impacts to air and water quality and have given the EIS a rating of 3 (the worst possible on a scale of 1 to 3).

James Martin, director of the region’s EPA office, believes the BLM needs to focus more closely on air pollutants, water resources, climate change and the impact on Uintah Basin residents and wildlife resources.

Martin also believes that the EIS does not adequately disclose the possible impact to ozone levels in the area. Given the exceptionally high winter ozone levels already being measured in the Uintah Basin, this is an issue of significant concern.

Gasco has already been fined $350,000 for violations at their Riverbend Compressor Station on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

For the complete story, please visit the Vernal Express website at www.vernal.com.
Many people have volunteered to conduct interviews, be interviewed, and to transcribe the recordings of Nine Mile Canyon oral histories. Chair Deanne Matheny has been working on a plan to scan historic photographs at the time of the interviews. We have not yet begun this project because the Gasco Draft Environmental Impact Statement was issued to the public for comment and we have been busy plowing through hundreds of pages of data. We hope to be able to direct our efforts to this project soon and are looking forward to speaking with people about our common interest and passion, Nine Mile Canyon. Thank you for your patience while we get this project underway.
The origins of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition can be traced to Bert Jenson's house in Myton - more specifically to an August 1991 picnic. Bert had invited key people whom he knew cared about Nine Mile Canyon and were willing to work together in its best interests.

Among the attendees at that first meeting were: Clifford Duncan of the Ute Tribe, Jim Brown as caretaker of the Nutter Ranch, Pam Miller and Margene Hackney from the Prehistoric Museum at the College of Eastern Utah, Susan Wimmer from Nine Mile Canyon (replaced soon after by Russ Wimmer). Along with Bert, these are the Founders of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition. Jim, Pam, and Margene still serve on today's Board.

In 1994 the group began adding people as they established the Board of Directors:
- Wayne Woodward (1994-95)
- Betsy Chapoose Now on the Advisory Board.
- Steve Christensen (1994-96)
- Layne Miller (1994-2001)

Others who have served on the Board include:
- Lowell Caldwell (1997-99)
- Duane Taylor (1998-2001)
- Shirlie Burdick (1999-2005)
- Rhonda Clark (1999-2000)
- Bill Walsh (1999-present)
- Steve Hansen (2001-present)
- Craig Houskeeper (2001-present)
- Diane Gorman-Jenkins (2003-present)
- Steve Tanner (2003-2009)
- Chanel Atwood (2004-09)
- Jerry Spangler (2004-05)
- Doyle Cesspooch (2006-10) Now on the Advisory Board.
- Keith Rowley (2006-10)
- Myton Mayor Kathleen Cooper (2009-10)
- Misty Bruns (2009-present)
- Lewis Cooper (2010-present)
- Various representatives from the Price Field Office of the BLM

In 2002, the Coalition gained tax-exempt status.

Present Board Profiles:

Chair, Dr. Deanne Matheny: Deanne was born and raised in the Uintah Basin and has strong family ties with Nine Mile Canyon. She has been visiting the canyon as long as she can remember. Along with her husband, archaeologist Ray Matheny, Deanne has worked on archaeological surveys and excavations in the canyon. She is proud of the Coalition's efforts in many areas, especially its efforts regarding the National Register of Historic Places nomination. She hopes that the unique cultural resources of Nine Mile Canyon can be protected and preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

President, Dr. Pam Miller: Pam Miller is an associate professor at USU-CEU where she teaches anthropology and museum studies. She is married to BLM Price Field Office archaeologist Blaine Miller, and they have been researching and recreating in Nine Mile Canyon for 36 years. Their five children think they grew up in Nine Mile Canyon while participating on volunteer archaeology surveys. Pam was privileged to be one of the founding members of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition and served twice as Chair. Now President and Coalition spokesperson, Pam is gratified to see the positive results of parties working together for the preservation of cultural resources in the Canyon. She looks forward to the day that Nine Mile Canyon will be fully recognized and protected for its unique resources.

Secretary Margene Hackney: Margene Hackney is a charter member of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition. She has served as Chair, and Vice Chair, and is now the Secretary. Having always been a member of the Coalition, she resigned her board position in 2006 because of the declining health of her husband Bob.

Now back on the Board of Directors, Margene has vowed to do everything she possibly can to save Nine Mile Canyon from the ravages of vandalism. Other main issues are the road problem, the dust, and trying to get the message out about how precious this canyon is to all future generations. We need to let the public know about the prehistory of the native peoples and the historical stories of the farmers and ranchers.
Treasurer Dawna Houskeeper and Board member Craig Houskeeper: Craig Houskeeper and his wife, Dawna, live in Price, Utah. Craig works for Carbon School District and Dawna works for Zions Bank. They have been Coalition members since 2001. Craig became a board member a year later. Dawna became the treasurer in 2009. Craig’s father, Ted Houskeeper owned a ranch in Nine Mile and Craig lived in the canyon until he was 12. The Houskeeper family was one of the original homesteaders in Nine Mile.

Craig is discovering and enjoying the pre-historic nature of the canyon but his strongest desire is to learn more of the history of the early settlers and homesteaders. Craig and Dawna are very proud of the Canyon being listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the small part they had in making it happen.

They would like the Coalition to continue to be involved in the protection of the canyon by recognizing more pre-historic sites and work with private owners to help the historic sites be preserved.

Jim Brown: Jim and Joye Brown have four children. After retiring, Jim became a consultant on range issues. Jim was the ranch manager for the Nutter Ranch for 25 years. He enjoyed providing information about Nine Mile Canyon to countless visitors from around the world. He did guided tours for Utah State University.

The Browns look forward to the development of more sites for the public and students.

Misty Bruns: Misty was born and raised in Roosevelt but has worked all over the West and D.C. She is married with three children, the youngest being in high school. Presently she is the Director of the Homeland Security Emergency Management Department of the Ute Tribe.

Misty is tied back to Nine Mile Canyon because of the rich culture, history, and beauty in the canyon and her Ute heritage. She hopes the Coalition will be able to keep Nine Mile intact and help save the beauty and culture for future generations.

Lewis Cooper: Lewis Cooper operates a small software company in the Uintah Basin and is a Utah native. He became a Coalition member in 2010. He feels extremely fortunate to have the world’s largest and longest art gallery in his backyard. He enjoys hiking, exploring and photographing Nine Mile Canyon in an attempt to document as many of the pictograph panels and structures as possible. He believes that by making these photographs available to the world via the Internet, we can heighten awareness of this national treasure we call Nine Mile Canyon.

Lewis hopes that the Coalition and Industry can develop a good working relationship and are able to strike a balance between preserving this wonderful canyon for future generations and allowing for the responsible production of natural resources by employing win-win concepts - like greater utilization of bypass roads.

Diane Gorman-Jenkins: Diane and her husband, Fred, joined the Utah Rock Art Research Association and the Utah Statewide Archaeological Society in Cedar City in the early 90’s. This led to their involvement with the Coalition. Their strongest tie is with the archaeology and history of the canyon. They would like to see industry find an alternate access route and educate more people to the need to preserve the canyon.

Steve Hansen: Steve Hansen is a technical services supervisor for a library automation company in Provo, Utah. He resides in Holladay, Utah and is a co-owner of the historic Lower Ranch in Nine Mile Canyon.

Steve has served on the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition Board since 2001 and served as Chair in 2004-05. As a private property owner, in 2004 Steve successfully nominated Nine Mile Canyon to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s annual list of America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Today Nine Mile Canyon continues to be listed by the National Trust as endangered.

Steve loves sharing the Lower Ranch with others and telling stories around the campfire with guests.

Bill Walsh: Bill Walsh and his wife, Shirley Weathers, work as consultants and live in Fruitland in Utah’s Uintah Basin. They have been Coalition members since 1998 and Bill chaired the Coalition Board in 2002-03.

We appreciate the history of Nine Mile Canyon, we love hearing Canyon stories, but the pre-history is the thing we most like to learn about. Our fondest wish is
that industry agrees to use by-pass roads instead of the main Canyon Road. That would solve so many problems. As a Board Director, Bill is most proud of the Coalition and its Friends in our role in successfully listing the Canyon on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009.

Jerry Vaculin, VP for Communications and newsletter editor: Jerry Vaculin is an accountant and lives in Holladay, Utah. As a co-owner of Nine Mile Canyon’s historic Lower Ranch, the preservation and protection of Nine Mile’s irreplaceable resources has become very personal. He not only appreciates the canyon’s amazing history and cultural resources, but also values the canyon’s incredible scenic beauty and enjoys any opportunity to spend time in the canyon no matter what the season.

The Board wants to express its appreciation for our volunteer Web Master, Aaron Oldroyd.

Members of the Board also want to thank their spouses and partners for their constant support. All Directors and Officers are volunteers.

As we celebrate our 20th Anniversary, the Coalition has been supported over the years by members, allies, and friends too numerous to count. Past and future efforts to preserve and protect Nine Mile Canyon go forward - as envisioned at the 1991 picnic in Myton.

[Author’s note: I would welcome corrections and additions to this list. The Board would also welcome another volunteer who would be willing to serve as Coalition Historian. – BW]

Back Country Byway Improvements Planned

Carbon and Duchesne Counties and the Bill Barrett Corporation (BBC) are working quickly toward a project that proponents believe will improve Nine Mile Canyon Road. The improvements will total approximately 36 miles and will extend from the end of the pavement near Soldier Creek Mine to Cottonwood Canyon. The proposal includes one mile of Harmon Canyon, one mile of Gate Canyon, and two miles of Cottonwood Canyon Roads. Project components will include drainage improvements, a roadway gravel base, double chip-seal surfacing and safety improvements. Construction is anticipated to begin approximately April 1, 2011 near Cottonwood Canyon, and progress westward toward the Soldier Creek Mine, concluding in approximately August 2012.

This project is considered by the engineers and counties to be a “band-aid” effort that will eliminate dust in the Canyon corridor while the counties work toward a configuration that more permanently addresses safety and access issues.

A property owner meeting, hosted by Carbon County and Jones & DeMille Engineering, was held at the Carbon County Events Center on February 8th. Property owners were asked to surrender a Fee Title Right of Way (ROW) to the counties and to consider benefits the ROW would provide them, including reduced personal liability, reduced tax liability, improved access and safety, and improved property and crop values. Property owners raised concerns of increased vandalism that comes with easy access, and the county’s ability to provide an increased police presence in the Canyon. Property owners are also concerned about the effects road widening will have on their irrigation systems and fences.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) held a public meeting in Price on February 15th and in Duchesne on February 17th. The public was asked to submit comments to the BLM by February 25th. The Nine Mile Canyon Coalition submitted comments that urged the following:

- That the Coalition be invited to participate as a consulting party in the development of the environmental assessment (required by NHPA sec. 106).
- An experienced professional archaeologist be on-site during all construction activity, even on private land.
- A Class III archaeological survey be completed for the entire length of the project (36 miles of road).
- Certain archaeology sites be mitigated and subject to full data recovery.
- Dust control be in place through all phases of road construction.
- Traffic monitors and flag persons be utilized to protect the public.
- Current speed limits remain in force and be enforced after completion of the project to protect travelers in the Canyon.
- The BLM needs to update the Special Cultural Resource and Recreation Use Plan for the Canyon immediately so that the road improvements can include pull-outs for visitor parking at designated interpretive sites.

The Coalition is in favor of this project because it is seen as a first step in reducing dust and vibration along the Back Country Byway. Of course, we expect it will be managed and completed in a responsible way that will ensure the integrity of the Canyon’s archaeological and historic landscapes.
A big celebration was held for the 2010 Fall Gathering of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition on September 24th, 25th and 26th. Everyone was in high spirits for the event to celebrate the listing of Nine Mile Canyon on the National Register of Historic Places.

The gathering was held at the Nine Mile Ranch, owned by Ben and Myna Mead. They were as usual, great hosts and very accommodating. Artisans Bruce Burgess and Jay Frandsen kept the crowd entertained with their hand-made wares. There was a good visit and story telling about Nine Mile by the guests.

Byron Loosle, Utah State BLM archaeologist, was our guest speaker. Dr. Deanne Matheny, chair of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, and Dr. Pam Miller, president of the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition each presented a brief history of the journey that the National Register nomination had taken to finally be listed.

Jim and Joye Brown used their talents to grill hamburgers and added all the fixings. The meal was finished with a celebration cake. The evening ended with a live auction and the awarding of the silent auction that had been going all day.

Sponsors for the Fall Gathering were, Price City Wal-Mart, the UPS store, Utah Statewide Archaeological Society, Castle Valley Chapter of USAS, Hunt Oil and the Nine Mile Canyon Coalition.

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Kick off the Spring season by joining our annual Nine Mile Canyon Spring Clean-Up.

For everyone’s convenience, we’ll have two starting points. Those coming from Carbon County will meet at Cottonwood Glen (milepost 27.2) and folks from the Uintah Basin at the Myton Kiosk (near the Hollow Moon). Please plan to be there by 9 AM. We’ll spend a few minutes planning the day’s activity, hand out plenty of trash bags, then set everyone free for an enjoyable day in the canyon.

At 2:30 we’ll all join together at the Daddy Canyon pavilion for our traditional pot-luck lunch and social-hour which will be followed by an optional board meeting. The rest of the afternoon is yours to enjoy however you see fit.
When I went to work on the Nutter Ranch in April of 1970, there were a lot of deer. There were lots of does and bucks. There were deer coming off the ledges into the green fields, and up on Horse Bench there were deer moving toward the high country. The big bucks followed the snow getting the first green grass as it came up. There were so many that people hardly looked at the many does and smaller bucks with their but-tons. There were deer everywhere, hurrying to keep the migration moving.

The job at this time of year was for the cowboys to move the cows and new calves off the winter range and toward Bruin Point. We would see many groups of deer moving out of the draws and rims above Desolation Canyon looking down toward the Green River below.

In Nine Mile canyon, at the ranch head quarters, there were deer in every hay field and in the evening it looked like as if you could jump from one to another. As one group would migrate out another would move in.

When we moved to the Willow Springs cow camp in the summer, in the evening Joye and I would take a walk around the horse pasture and count only the bucks we would see in the pasture. We never did see 100 bucks. Our entertainment during the summer was to drive around and see Mother Nature at her finest over looking Desolation Canyon in the distance.

When it came to hunting season there was no shortage of deer licenses to be had. A person could buy a buck license, and in some areas get up to two additional tags for antler-less deer. If you wanted more hunting it was available on the Ute Reservation where you could get a couple more deer tags. Deer were a cash-cow to the DWR. They were being fed by the ranchers in the summer and the predators were being controlled so they could sell lots of licenses.

The job at this time of year was for the cowboys to move the cows and new calves off the winter range and toward Bruin Point. We would see many groups of deer moving out of the draws and rims above Desolation Canyon looking down toward the Green River below.

When hunting season came around the ranch would open the Cold Spring area to the public for hunting. People would come from just about everywhere to hunt on the mountains and in the canyons. Everybody was looking for the biggest buck so they could win the Jeep at Zinik’s Sporting Goods store in Salt Lake City.

As everyone was hurrying to their favorite camping spot you could see every make of car - from VW’s to Cadillacs — and all kinds of trucks and trailers. Some were homemade but still functional.

Some of the horses were only rode during hunting season and should of been in a rodeo string on opening morning. Some of the horses spent some time with the wild ones until they got good and hungry.

One year there was a heavy snow and some trucks and trailers ended up spending the winter on the mountain. The hunters migrated out — along with the deer — and left everything behind ’til spring.

by Jim Brown
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.

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
Name:______________________________
Address:____________________________
City:________________ State:__________
Zip_________ Date______________
Phone: (          )_______________
e-mail____________________________

Your support has helped create real change in the management of Nine Mile Canyon!

Please circle membership type:

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

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

Thank you for your support!
2011 SPRING CLEAN-UP
SATURDAY APRIL 30TH