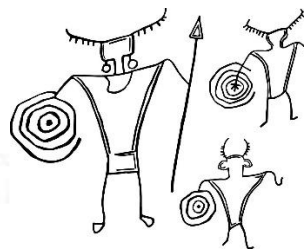


VESTIGES



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Table of Contents

From the Prez.....	1	Santa Fe Field Trip Report	6
Steven Manning 1943-2025	2	Shovel Bums Wind Down Field Season	7
San Rafael Swell Trip Report	2	Help Wanted to Address Archaeology's	
Vandalism Again.....	3	Newest Challenge	9
9 Mile Canyon Stewardship Day	4	Calendar, URARA Events and Trips.....	10
		URARA Board and Officers	11

From the Prez

Rick Mathews

October is upon us.

The Symposium is just a few days away now. I'm excited to see you there! The team has been working hard to make this a great Symposium. We've got some great speakers lined up and the field trips are going to be fun.

I have always enjoyed the Symposium Field Trips. You get out on the trail with fellow URARA members. Sometimes you get to scramble up a rocky slope to see exciting, relatively unknown imagery and other times you're standing in front of a well-known, super-public panel. Either way, you get to exchange thoughts, opinions and facts with others. I remember on one field trip we were at the Rochester Panel. We were there along with others. Of course, we all talked about URARA. There was a young kid there and I asked him if he could see Sponge Bob. He looked at me a little funny and then I pointed it out. He got a big grin on his face.



To me, the opportunities we have to share our knowledge and learn from each other is what makes URARA awesome!

Since this is October, it's also Hunting Season in Utah. When we're out on public land, I would encourage you to wear blaze orange. I steward a site for Utah SHPO next to a shooting range. I always put on my bright orange vest. Be careful out there!

October 2025

Steven Manning 1943-2025

Layne Miller

Many, many years ago, even before URARA's creation, I was invited to meet some people who shared my interest in rock art. At the time I believed I may have been the only person with that interest. As it turned out there were others. I'm not sure who organized the trip but there were three people I would meet who would become lifelong friends- Steve Manning, Jesse Warner and Clifford Rayl. We would all become members of URARA and we would form friendships that lasted for decades.

Steve was serious about rock art research and preservation. The State Historical Preservation Office has 259 of his site recordings in its records. Steve's interests in rock art were much more cerebral than mine. He looked at it scientifically and much more deeply than I did and he was very very careful who he shared the locations with.

Our families became very close and I still have memories of traipsing through the San Rafael Swell, the Maze District of Canyonlands or Indian Creek documenting sites, just enjoying ourselves.

Our most memorable experience occurred on the third day of a week-long backpacking trip into Grand Gulch. I suffered an attack of kidney stones and was unable to continue. Steve and Elna took the entire day walking back to the ranger station with their tiny daughter (only a few days old) in a backpack to get help for me.

Hearing about his death causes me to remember all the good times I have spent with Steve, Clifford and Jesse and it reminds me that our research and rock art presentations are important but the notes we take doing these activities are far outweighed by the friendships and bonds we make doing them.

Our best goes out to Elna and their kids. Life is short but the memories last forever.

See <https://www.memorialutah.com/obituaries/steven-manning>

San Rafael Swell Trip Report

Troy Scotter

On September 20-21 five intrepid members of URARA headed into the San Rafael Swell to see sites in the northern part near Castledale and Ferron. We had perfect weather for the trip. Sunny skies during the day and a brief rainstorm followed by a pleasant night with brilliant stars and moderate temperatures. We started day 1 with a trip to Molen Seep. It is a nice site with both pecked and painted images. The site was in shadow when we arrived allowing for good pictures. We then headed to the nearby Ferron Box. We spent quite a bit of time at this nice site. My Subaru had a little difficulty getting back out on one short hill. But some movement of a few rocks and good guidance helped. The four-wheel drives just roared up the hill. It was still early in the day so we decided to visit to public sites a little to the south. We stopped at the Big Snake site and then hiked out to Rochester Creek. We camped that night near our next objective: Prickly Pear Flat.

San Rafael Swell (continued)

There is a route to Prickly Pear that is suitable for four-wheel drive vehicles but definitely not for my Subaru. Years ago, for the Green River symposium, I found a hiking route that avoided the difficult boulders. I didn't find that exact route again but we arrived at the site with little difficulty. Again, the site was in shadow making for good photos. On a side note, the county has much improved the fencing around the site providing it with better protection. I missed a small panel along the way and need to return to find it.

On the route out I had a serious brain fart and took the group back to a wrong parking location. After much hiking around looking for the vehicles, we eventually called search and rescue who kindly, and efficiently, helped us get back to our vehicles. It was a lot longer day than I had anticipated but everyone was back in their beds by the end of the day.

Vandalism Again

from SHPO

Two significant cultural sites were recently vandalized in the last month when an individual or individuals used paint markers and other writing implements to deface Native American rock imagery panels.

Law enforcement, alongside state and federal agencies, are urgently seeking information regarding this damage to a cultural site on public land in American Fork Canyon.

If you have any information concerning this incident, please immediately contact Utah Public Archaeologist Ian Wright at iwright@utah.gov.



9 Mile Canyon Stewardship Day

Steve Acerson

Saturday September 27th was a great day to be in Nine Mile Canyon. Diana and I woke up early to drive from Beaver to join others at Nine Mile Ranch and the always welcoming Mead family. We started out with a beautiful display of colors as the sun rose over the mountains. Driving through Clear Creek and visualizing the walls covered with images left by the Fremont culture, then turning at the Snake Village at the Junction of I-70 and SR-10 heading towards Price.

We arrived a little after 11:00 at Nine Mile Ranch. There were vendor booths of all kinds with their wares. State History, State Trust Lands and others had tables with information about programs and preservation activities from Nine Mile and other cultural places.

Nine Mile Canyon Coalition had sponsored this event to bring awareness to others about what Nine mile was about and the activities affecting the area. They had set up (8) locations through the canyon with people explaining different aspects and places in the canyon.

People attending were free to discover the canyon and learn about what had happened and what was planned for the future of this area. After spending the day in this rich cultural place, we were treated to music and a delicious Dutch oven dinner.

Thanks for the efforts of all involved, and get involved where you can to help preserve this natural environment and the cultural images left by those who lived here in days that have passed, so those who follow will be able to have the same experiences we have today.





Santa Fe Field Trip Report

Bob Crifasi

URARA members from Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas spent three days exploring petroglyph sites north of Santa Fe in late September. On the first day, we met the docents and staff of the Mesa Prieta Petroglyph Project (MPPP), who showed us multiple archaic through historic-era glyphs on this very special rock art preserve. MPPP is a small nonprofit dedicated to the preservation of a remarkable collection of rock imagery on the property. A second day involved a vigorous hike in Los Alamos County to see some outstanding petroglyphs, including some excellent examples of horned serpents. A final day included visits to two Archaeological Conservancy properties, one of which was the first time a group had visited since it was acquired for protection by the conservancy. Many thanks to April Brown, the Southwest Regional Director for the Archaeological Conservancy, for introducing us to the area, and to long-time rock art recorders Cathy Benhagen and John Kincheloe for sharing some of their vast knowledge of the region. John gave us a flute demonstration and explained that rock imagery depicting a flute-like object pointing downward is likely to be a flute, whereas if it is pointing up, it is likely to be a cloud blower. John could deduce this because of his extensive knowledge of the mechanics of flute playing. Overall, it was a successful trip that involved a lot of bounding from one boulder to another.



Shovel Bums Wind Down 2025 Field Season

John McHugh

The Blessed Sacrament School “Shovel Bums” archaeology club have made quite a stir in 2025. They helped to verify that the Table Rock petroglyph (42UT1454, Panel 1) situated near the shore of Utah Lake is indeed a summer solstice marker, and maybe more (Fig. 1).

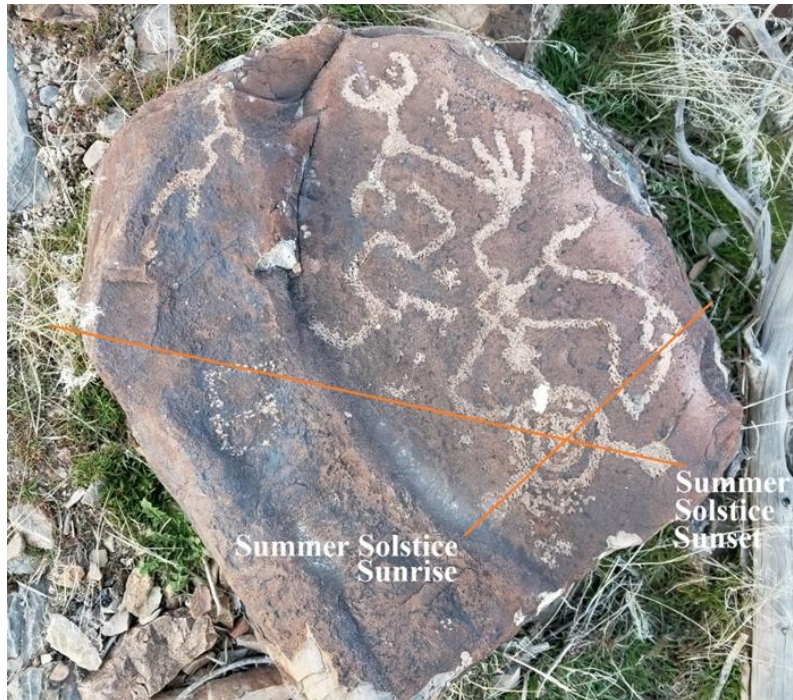


Fig. 1: The Table Rock “Line-and-Dot” motifs align with the summer solstice sunrise and sunset.

The club re-located and helped document a structure whose data was incorporated digitally into 42UT1784, a site originally documented in 2011 by URARA’s beloved Steve Manning. This east-facing, “U”-shaped structure appears to be a solar observation site (Fig. 2) whose potential function will be discussed at length at the 2025 Symposium.

On Sept. 22-24 the Bums went up to Vernal on a 3-day, 2-night field trip to perform archaeological survey with BLM archaeologist, Dave Christensen. Although no diagnostic artifacts were found, they did encounter a petroglyph panel (Figs. 3-4). The experiential educational trip was funded by a generous donation from URARA.

The trip culminated with an outstanding Dutch Oven chili dinner cooked over the campfire by URARA’s Darlene Koerner and Tim Sweeney. Students loved the comradery and the delicious meal. The Shovel Bums look forward to more rock art stewardship, conservation, protection, and research in 2026!



Fig. 2: The Shovel Bums stand within a U-shaped structure whose data was incorporated into 42UT1784.



Fig. 3: Archaeologist Dave Christensen tutors the Shovel Bums in the function of diagnostic artifacts.



Fig. 4: The Shovel Bums discover a petroglyph panel while walking a transect.

Help Wanted to Address Archaeology's Newest Challenge

Elizabeth Hora *Executive Director, High Desert Heritage and Research*

What becomes of arrowheads after their collectors have passed? Where do potsherds go when families find them while clearing out an attic? We are on the brink of a crisis: hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of prehistoric and historic artifacts collected by older Americans will soon be in the hands of younger generations – often unexpectedly. Many inheritors are reluctant to keep these items due to concerns about the legal and ethical implications of possessing them. We're already hearing troubling stories from San Juan County of collections being discarded along roadways, as people see no other option.

To confront this challenge, I founded High Desert Heritage and Research, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving archaeological heritage. We aim to collaborate with local tribes to determine the best future for these private collections and to implement sustainable solutions. But we can't do it alone. We need your support to launch this vital initiative.

Help Wanted (continued)

With over 20 years of experience as an archaeologist, I am assembling a dedicated team to assess, stabilize, and transport these collections. However, we require the backing of our broader archaeological community to fund this essential work.

Having connected with many members of URARA, I know you share our commitment to respecting and valuing our tribal neighbors. Together, we can demonstrate our support for preserving more than land by preserving artifacts and removed rock imagery. Please consider making a donation to High Desert Heritage and Research, joining our mailing list, or sharing our mission with friends who may have private collections. Thank you for being a steward of the past and for helping us secure a future for these invaluable artifacts.

Calendar, URARA Events and Trips

October 9-13	URARA Symposium Kanab
Oct 15-18	GBAC Conference, Reno https://greatbasinanthropologicalassociation.org
November 9	URARA Field Trip Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado (Bob Crifasi/Tina Tan)
Nov 12-13	URARA Field Trip Gold Butte, Nevada (Deb and John Mitchell)

URARA symposia and field trips (FT) are available to members only. Members receive an email notification when a field trip opens for registration, usually about 3-4 weeks before a trip. You can register for a field trip when you get the notification. If a trip is full when you try to register, your name is added to a wait list. You will get another notification if and when someone drops out and you can be added to the trip.

American Rock Art Research Association (ARARA) is hosting on-line events. Free access is granted to URARA members. Registration at: <https://arara.wildapricot.org/Lectures>

Desert Archaeological Society (DAS), St George, meets on the second Wednesday of the month. Accessible on-line via ICL. Saturday field trips once a month.

San Diego Rock Art Association (SDRAA) meets on line until further notice.
<https://sandiegorockart.org/meetings>

Colorado Rock Art Association (CRAA) will continue to present occasional webinars on Zoom
<https://coloradorockart.org/>

The Utah State Historic Preservation Office has occasional events and tours.
See <https://ushpo.utah.gov/the-events/>

URARA Board and Officers

Utah Rock Art Research Association: Box 511324, Salt Lake City, UT 84151-1324.

www.utahrockart.org . Contact information - utahrockartresearchassoc@gmail.com

2025 URARA Board and Officers

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Secretary	Roger Cook
	John McHugh
	Darlene Koerner
	Tina Tan
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Coordinator Lead		
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Canyon Country	Monticello	Werner Duecker, Carol Duecker
Paria River	Kanab	Jeff Frey
Color Country	Cedar City	Diana Acerson
Color Country	St. George	Nina Bowen
Color Country	Richfield	Steve Acerson
Green River	Vernal	Tim Sweeney, Darlene Koerner
Green River	Price	Layne Miller
West Desert	Fillmore	Jeff Roberts
West Desert	Salt Lake	Don & Adele Leavitt