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Contact: Bruce Milhans
(202) 606-8513

Preserving America's Heritage

ACHP Signs Programmatic Agreement for Utah's Nine Mile Canyon; Provides Enhanced Protections for Unique Art and Archaeological Sites

SALT LAKE CITY—The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) was one of the signatories today at the state Capitol for a Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the West Tavaputs Full Field Gas and Oil Development project, located near the historically and culturally important Nine Mile Canyon in central Utah.

The agreement, featured in the ACHP's *Case Digest* (www.achp.gov/docs/CaseDigestSpring2009.pdf) in spring 2009, focuses on mitigation of adverse effects to historic properties caused by energy development involving 138,000 acres. Principal concern centered on how dust from increased truck traffic would affect petroglyphs, pictographs, and archaeological sites in the canyon.

Expected to sign the PA at the Capitol are representatives of the following parties included in consultations: the ACHP, Barrier Canyon Study Project, Bill Barrett Corporation, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carbon County, Colorado Plateau Archaeological Alliance, Duchesne County, Hopi Tribe, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Navajo Nation, Nine Mile Canyon Coalition, Southern Paiute Tribe, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Utah Public Lands Policy and Coordination Office, Utah Professional Archaeological Council, Utah Rock Art Research Association, Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Utah State Institutional Trust Lands Administration, Utah Statewide Archaeological Society, and Ute Tribe.

The PA, developed through consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) led by the BLM, details how BLM in cooperation with other involved parties will protect petroglyphs and pictographs in Nine Mile Canyon. Many consulting parties were involved in resolving these issues and despite the challenging circumstances, the parties were able to conclude the Section 106 process with an agreement that addresses actions helping to protect irreplaceable historic and cultural sites. The ACHP is responsible for overseeing application of the federal Section 106 process as one of its core responsibilities under the NHPA.

“The ACHP appreciates BLM’s efforts to consult on this undertaking. The bureau invested a great amount of staff time and effort to ensure the work was done properly in the end, and to address the concerns of tribes and others about this unique and significant place,” said John M. Fowler, ACHP executive director. “The ACHP also appreciates the dedicated involvement of the Utah State Historic Preservation Office for its concerted efforts to make consultation successful. The Programmatic Agreement is a major success for all the parties involved, as well as for the Section 106 process itself.”

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