



## A Guide to Public Rock Art Sites in Utah

### Rock Art Site Visitation Ethics

1. Don't touch, in any way, the rock art or surfaces around it. The oils in your skin may cause damage to rock art. Don't apply **any** substance to the rock art surface, including water or any other fluids. Don't trace images with sticks, stones, chalk, or other substances.
2. Don't attempt to remove graffiti, chalking, lichen, bird droppings, or anything else from rock art.
3. Don't collect or disturb artifacts or features at a rock art site. It is acceptable to pick up surface artifacts, examine and enjoy them, or make sketches or take photos of them, as long as they're returned to the place where found, and no damage is done to the artifact.
4. Don't remove soil to expose subsurface rock art or archaeology.
5. Minimize the number of vehicles going to a site. Stay on existing roads and trails. Do not "pioneer" vehicle trails or parking areas. Avoid disturbing rocks, vegetation, or macrobiotic soil crusts.
6. Don't camp or build fires within one-quarter mile of a rock art site, even if the landowner or public land manager permits camping.
7. Don't allow children, pets, or inattentive people to behave carelessly around rock art sites. Kicking up dust or dislodging rocks can cause damage to the site.
8. Speak out when needed to prevent damage to rock art. Report new rock art destruction, charcoal near the site, or site vandalism.
9. Please remember that living people may consider these sites sacred. Please treat them with respect.
10. Be careful about disclosing site locations especially via the internet. Remember that smart phones and GPS enabled cameras embed specific site location data within the photo that others can use to find the site.
11. Don't visit sites on private land without the owner's permission.

### Safety Considerations

- If you are leaving the main road do so with a full tank of gas.
- Let others know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Many rock art sites are located on small, county roads that often aren't well documented on typical maps. I like to carry a Delorme Utah map book which has much more detail on minor roads.
- Bring water and food. You may find so much great rock art that you may be gone longer than you expect!
- Wear appropriate clothing (including hat and footwear) for the terrain and temperature.
- Check the weather report before you leave and watch the sky, especially if you are off paved roads.
- When possible, travel in a group with more than one vehicle.
- If you decide to wander GPS your vehicle location and know how to get back to it.



# Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

## Northeastern Utah

### *McConkie Ranch (Vernal)*

**Directions:** Drive to Vernal. From the center of downtown Vernal (Hwy 191 and Main street), head west to 500 West, turn north (right) and head out on the Maeser Hwy (121) to 3500 West. Turn North (right) and head about 10 miles up the road until you reach a major fork in the road (a sign reads "Red Cloud Loop") and turn right. Cross the bridge and continue on the pavement for another two miles until you reach the shade of the cottonwoods, box elders, steep canyon walls, and a large stream which is Dry Fork Creek. There is a sign to the ranch on the main road. The parking lot for the petroglyphs is located 3/4 of mile off the main canyon road and is accessible year round. The ranch is private but open to the public. Donations are appreciated.

**Time Requirements:** Vernal is about 2.5 hours from Salt Lake and the ranch is located about 20 minutes outside of town. You can spend as little or as much time here as you choose. You should plan on at least 4 hours to see everything, or no less than 2 hours to see all the major panels.

**More Info:** [www.utahoutdooractivities.com/dryfork.html](http://www.utahoutdooractivities.com/dryfork.html)

### *Cub Creek/McKee Springs (Dinosaur National Monument)*

**Directions:** Drive to Vernal and continue east to Dinosaur, Colorado, just across the Utah border. Check in with the National Park Service offices for a brochure and map of the driving tour. Rock art is located along the Cub Creek Road, which is accessible except during the winter. Several panels are quite visible and others are not. McKee Springs is accessible by a dirt road that is not passable when wet, but is well worth the effort to get there.

**Time Requirements:** Vernal is about 2.5 hours from Salt Lake and Dinosaur, Colorado, is about another hour. The Cub Creek Road is near the Dinosaur visitor's center. Plan on at least 4 hours for the driving tour, or spend the entire day exploring.

**More Info:** [www.nps.gov/dino](http://www.nps.gov/dino)

### *Canyon Pintado (Rangely, CO)*

**Directions:** Drive to Vernal and continue east on US 40 to Dinosaur, Colorado. Then turn south on Highway 64 and proceed to Rangely. Stop at the small museum in Rangely (or visitor info) for a brochure with a map of the driving tour. The historic district is located a short distance south of town.

**Time Requirements:** Vernal is about 2.5 hours from Salt Lake and Dinosaur, Colorado, is about another hour. Rangely is about an hour south of Dinosaur. The historic district has improved dirt roads leading to about a dozen different sites, and it will take a full day to visit all or most of them. All of the sites are close to a parking area and trails lead to the sites. You should plan to spend the night before in Vernal or Rangely to have a full day.

**More Info:** [www.dinosaurdiamond.org](http://www.dinosaurdiamond.org)



## Eastern Utah

### *Nine Mile Canyon (Price)*

**Directions:** Proceed to Price, Utah, and continue east on US-6 about 5 miles to the town of Wellington. On the east edge of town is a Walker Chevron. The road into Nine Mile Canyon is on the east side of this gas station. The rock art is quite obvious after about 25 miles or so into the canyon, mostly on the north cliff face next to the road. A lot of panels can be seen from the road, if you drive slowly. Hundreds of sites are not visible, but can be seen by exploring along the base of the first cliff level. Please respect private property and do not park in the middle of the road.

The canyon is a confusing mosaic of public and private land. It is difficult to determine where you can, and cannot, go. If you really want to see the canyon I recommend obtaining a good guide book. The Utah State University Eastern Museum in Price (155 East Main Street; 435-613-5060) generally carries several different guides.

**Daddy Canyon:** Located on the north side of the road approximately 44 miles from Highway 6. There is a prominent pull-off, a sign, and a trail that will lead you to several rock art sites.

**Great Hunt Panel:** About a mile past Daddy Canyon exit off the Nine Mile Canyon road to the south (right) into Cottonwood Canyon and proceed approximately 1.5 miles. Watch for a prominent pulloff on the right side of the road. Walk a short distance back to this fantastic panel which was published in National Geographic.

**Time Requirements:** Price is about 2 hours from Salt Lake, and it takes another hour to get into Nine Mile Canyon to the point where the rock art becomes noticeable. You should plan to spend an entire day. You can spend a lifetime and not see all the rock art.

**More Info:** [http://www.castlecountry.com/what\\_to\\_see/nine\\_mile\\_canyon.html](http://www.castlecountry.com/what_to_see/nine_mile_canyon.html)

### *Buckhorn Wash (Castle Dale)*

**Directions:** This site is located in the heart of the San Rafael Swell and is accessible either from I-70 (Exit 129) and driving north 22.5 miles, or off a well marked road just north of Castle Dale, located just south of Price on Highway 10, and driving east. The gravel road is improved and passable except under the wettest conditions. There is a major BLM campground where the road crosses the San Rafael River. The site is located 2.5 miles north of the campground and is quite visible and has an established parking area.

**Time Requirements:** Price is about 2 hours from Salt Lake City, and it takes another 1.5 hours to get from Price to the rock art panel. The site is ideal for a day trip out of Price or Castle Dale. Plan on an hour to enjoy to the site. There are other rock art panels in the same area but these are not readily visible from the road.

**More Info:**

[http://www.castlecountry.com/what\\_to\\_see/san\\_rafael\\_swell/cottonwood\\_buckhorn\\_wash.html](http://www.castlecountry.com/what_to_see/san_rafael_swell/cottonwood_buckhorn_wash.html)

<http://www.emerycounty.com/Travel/san-rafael-swell-buckhorn-wash-rock-art-panel.html>

### *Rochester-Muddy (Emery)*

**Directions:** The panel is located on top of a ridge overlooking the junction of Rochester and Muddy creeks, near the town of Emery, 50 miles south of Price. It is easy to find. From Emery drive north on Hwy 10 for about 3.5 miles, to the signed, paved road that heads east to Moore. Turn east onto



# Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

that road and follow it for about .5 miles to a gravel road that leads to the trailhead. The gravel road is signed and easy to find. Follow the gravel road for about 4 miles to the trailhead parking area. A well-defined trail leads down the canyon and then along a ridge to the panel. You've got to hike about 1 mile (round trip) to see the art.

**Time Requirements:** It takes about 15 to 20 minutes to hike to the site. It is not a large site, but the hundreds of images will have you scratching your head for hours. Plan on at least an hour to take in the site.

**More Info:**

<http://www.utah.com/travelheadlines/2007/03/easy-hike-to-view-mysterious-rochester.html>

## *Big Snake Site (Emery)*

**Directions:** The panel is located on the Moore cutoff road near the town of Emery, 50 miles south of Price. From Emery drive north on Hwy 10 for about 3.5 miles, to the signed, paved road that heads east to Moore. Turn east onto that road and follow it for about 6.5 miles. Look for a large, paved pulloff on the north (left) side of the road. There are two large rock art sites, a Civilian Conservation Corp inscription, and smaller sites at this location.

**Time Requirements:** The large sites are adjacent to the parking area. A few minutes of poking around should yield additional finds.

**More Info:** <http://utahpetrographs.blogspot.com/2013/10/moore-cutoff-petroglyphs.html>

## Southwestern Utah

### *Clear Creek - Fremont Indian State Park (Richfield)*

**Directions:** Site is located southwest of Richfield. From Richfield, proceed south on I-70 about 20 miles to where the freeway starts to enter a major canyon. There is a freeway exit sign here for the state park, which is located about another mile to the west along the frontage road. Trails lead from the museum to the rock art panels.

**Time Requirements:** Richfield is located about 2.5 hours south of Salt Lake City, and the state park is located about 30 minutes farther to the southwest. Access is very easy and the site is well marked.

**More Info:** <http://stateparks.utah.gov/stateparks/parks/fremont/>

### *Parowan Gap (Cedar City)*

**Directions.** From Cedar City go north on Main (or take Interstate 15 Exit 62) to UT 130. Continue north 13.5 miles, then turn east (right) 2.4 miles on a good gravel road to Parowan Gap. From Parowan go north on Main to 400 North, then turn west (left) for 10.5 miles on good gravel road (near Milepost 19). Site is located as the road enters a narrow "gap." There is an established parking area.

**Time Requirements:** The site itself is located only about 30 minutes outside of Parowan or Cedar City and access is easy. The entire gap, on both the north and south sides, has rock art and historic



# Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

inscriptions. It takes a couple of hours to see the hundreds of panels here, but the main panels can be enjoyed in less than an hour.

**More Info:** <http://www.parowan.org/city/pgap/>

## *Santa Clara Reserve (St. George)*

**Directions:** Sometimes referred to as Anasazi Ridge, this site is part of the Santa Clara Reserve located just west of the town of Santa Clara. From St. George, follow the signs to Santa Clara just west of town. Continue west a few miles and look for a prominent sign for the Santa Clara Reserve along the Santa Clara River. There is a large parking area and trails lead up hill to the rock art panels.

**Time Requirements:** The parking area is only about 20 to 30 minutes west of St. George. Foot access to the panels is about 20 minutes along established trails. The panels extend about a half mile along the ridge, and it takes several hours to see it all. The main trail is along the rim above the panels, but smaller trails below the rim lead to many panels not visible from above.

**More Info:** [http://www.petroglyphs.us/photographs\\_petroglyphs\\_anasazi\\_ridge\\_utah\\_AR.htm](http://www.petroglyphs.us/photographs_petroglyphs_anasazi_ridge_utah_AR.htm)

## *Fort Pierce Wash (St. George)*

**Directions:** Depart St. George south on River Road to the Virgin River Bridge. Cross the bridge and turn left on 1450 South. Continue on main road and keep bearing to the east through several 90 degree left and right turns until you come to a large two-story farm house on the west side of road as you are traveling south. Turn left (east) on dirt road at the Fort Pierce sign and continue 5.6 miles to a road that branches right along a small wash to the Fort Pierce parking lot. Dinosaur tracks are 2.1 miles farther down canyon.

**Time Requirements:** This site is located only about 30 minutes southeast of St. George. Rock art sites and historic inscriptions are located along the trail leading from the parking area. Plan on about an hour to see the historic fort and rock art. If you have time to hike, more sites are located all along the wash.

**More Info:** [http://www.redrockadventure.com/gallery/main.php?g2\\_itemId=6916](http://www.redrockadventure.com/gallery/main.php?g2_itemId=6916)

## Central Utah

### *Calf Creek (Boulder/Escalante)*

**Directions:** From the town of Escalante, proceed east about 15 miles. On the north side of the river is a parking area. There is a \$2/vehicle usage fee. A beautiful 5.5 mile (round trip) interpretative trail leads to the falls. Along the way a trail marker will point out rock art.

**Time Requirements:** Access from Boulder or Escalante is quite easy and takes less than a half hour. Plan on spending a half day in the area.



# Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

**More Info:** [http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand\\_staircase-escalante/Recreation/hiking\\_backpacking/Lower\\_Calf\\_Creek.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/grand_staircase-escalante/Recreation/hiking_backpacking/Lower_Calf_Creek.html)

## *Capitol Reef National Park (Torrey)*

**Directions:** Proceed to Torrey about 2.5 hours southeast of Salt Lake City. Continue east on Highway 24 to the Capitol Reef Visitors Center. Check in with the desk. A major rock art site is located along the main highway near the visitors center and is well marked with signs. Other rock art sites are NOT open to the public. The national park has a \$5/vehicle entrance fee.

**Time Requirements:** These panels can be enjoyed in 30 to 60 minutes. Access is restricted to walkways and exploration of other areas is not allowed.

**More Info:** <http://www.nps.gov/care/historyculture/fremont.htm>

## *Horseshoe Canyon – Canyonlands National Park (Hanksville)*

**Directions:** Most visitors access Horseshoe from the west. Two-wheel-drive access to the west rim of Horseshoe Canyon is from Utah Highway 24 via 30 miles of graded dirt road (north of Hanksville), or from Green River on 47 miles of dirt road. Driving time is roughly 2.5 hours from Moab or 1.5 hours from Green River. Once on the canyon rim, the hike to the Great Gallery is 6.5 miles round trip. The trip is often very hot, is mostly in sand which makes walking difficult, and concludes with an 800 foot climb out of the canyon. Be sure that you are in appropriate physical condition and bring water.

**Time Requirements:** Spring and fall are the best times to hike. The panels are in the bottom of the canyon. Plan on at least 6 hours to reach the main panels and return to your vehicle.

**More Info:** <http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/horseshoecanyon.htm>

## **Southeastern Utah**

### *Sego Canyon (Green River)*

**Directions:** To reach the rock art panels, take Exit 185 off I-70 (east of Green River), proceed on State Highway 94 through Thompson, and continue driving approximately 3 miles to Sego Canyon. There is an obvious pull on the west (left) side of the road. Major rock art panels are visible from the road. Also visit the ghost town of Sego farther up canyon. The ghost town is on private property, but visitors are allowed to explore the area and take pictures.

**Time Requirements:** There are numerous rock art panels in this area, including Barrier Canyon, Fremont and Ute panels. The area can be explored in 1 to 2 hours. Allow another hour or so to explore the ghost town.

**More Info:**  
[http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/cultural/archaeology/places\\_to\\_visit/sego\\_canyon.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/cultural/archaeology/places_to_visit/sego_canyon.html)

### *Potash Road (Moab)*



# Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

**Directions:** This a great site to visit if you have only a few minutes. Go north of Moab about 2 miles to highway 279, also known as Potash Road. (The first major road turning left north of the Colorado River.) Turn west (left) and follow this scenic road around 5 miles to a BLM interpretive sign at a parking area on your left. This panel is 30 foot of the ground and is about 120 foot long. Another 200 yards will bring you to another Indian writings sign. Here is a large bear that is surrounded by hunters. Do not park in the road!

**Time Requirements:** Access from Moab takes about 15 to 20 minutes. There are multiple panels in this area, and you can spend as little or as much time as you want. The main panel is 25 to 30 feet above the road, and viewing them from the parking area is ideal if you don't have a lot of time. Watching the rock climbers takes more time.

**More Info:**

[http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/cultural/archaeology/places\\_to\\_visit/potash\\_road.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/cultural/archaeology/places_to_visit/potash_road.html)

## *Courthouse Wash Site (Moab)*

**Directions:** This site is located just north of Moab next to Highway 191. Between the Colorado River Bridge on the southeast and the entrance to Arches National Park on the northwest is a large parking lot on the north side of the road. A trail leads from this parking lot to the rock art site. The hike is about 0.5 miles each way.

**Time Requirements:** Hiking to this site takes less than 30 minutes and is relatively easy. The rock art panel can be enjoyed in 30 minutes or so.

**More Info:**

[http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/recreation/rock\\_art/courthouse\\_wash\\_rock0.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/recreation/rock_art/courthouse_wash_rock0.html)

## *Moonflower Site (Moab)*

**Directions:** In Moab go to the corner of Main Street and Kane Creek Drive (by McDonald's) in the southern part of town. Turn west and follow Kane Creek Drive 2.9 miles. Moonflower Canyon is a prominent pulloff and camping area on the left side of the road. Behind the enclosure there is a 100 feet long panel.

**Time Requirements:** This is a short drive of less than 10 minutes and requires no hiking.

**More Info:**

[http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/recreation/campgrounds/kane\\_creek\\_road/Moonflower\\_Camping\\_Area.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/recreation/campgrounds/kane_creek_road/Moonflower_Camping_Area.html).

## *Golf Course Site (Moab)*

**Directions:** Take the highway south of Moab approximately 4 miles, turn east (left) by the Shell gas station and stay on this road to a traffic circle. Turn right on Spanish Trail Road past the firehouse. Turn right on Westwater. You will be going through a group of townhouses. When you get to the outcrop you will see a parking area on your left. Do not block the private driveway. This large panel runs from ground level to about 30 feet high and is nearly 100 feet long. It is the home of the town's mascot, "the Moab man".



# Utah Rock Art Research Association (URARA)

**Time Requirements:** This is a short 15 minute drive from Moab and requires no hiking.

**More Info:** <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/cultural/rockart/GolfCourse.html>

## *Newspaper Rock/Indian Canyon (Monticello)*

**Directions:** Newspaper Rock is located on Hwy 211 about 25 miles before the entrance to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. It is 28 miles northwest of Monticello and 53 miles south of Moab. The main “panel” is located next to the road and there is a prominent parking area. Rock art panels are found on both sides of the canyon for several miles. A famous cluster of flute players (and dinosaur tracks) are found about 2 miles west of the parking area on the south side of the canyon.

**Time Requirements:** This canyon is famous for its rock art, and you can spend as little or as much time as you want. Most rock art will be found by accident while exploring along the base of the first cliff level.

**More Info:** <http://www.go-utah.com/newspaper-rock>

## *Sand Island (Bluff)*

**Directions:** This site is located along Highway 153 about 4 miles southwest of the community of Bluff, on the south side of the highway. There is a BLM ranger station here, and the rock art is found along the base of the first cliff to the west of the ranger station.

**Time Requirements:** There is plenty of rock art at this location to occupy several hours if you have the time. The best way to see it is leave your vehicle at the range station and walk along the cliff upstream from the campground.

**More Info:**

[http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/cultural/archaeology/places\\_to\\_visit/sand\\_island.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/cultural/archaeology/places_to_visit/sand_island.html)

## **Acknowledgements**

I appreciate Jerry Spangler who was kind enough to provide much of this information. I also appreciate Dell Crandall who provided information on some sites in the Moab area.