



# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2011

## DIXIE ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

P.O. Box 611

Washington, Utah 84780

John Mangels - President & Newsletter Editor	Dave Evans - Treasurer
Barbara Bergman - Secretary	Susannah & Mark Nilsson, Board Members
John Macumber, Board Member	Jon Gum - Board Member

### June Meeting

**When:** June 8th @ 7 PM

**Where:** DSC  
Udvar-Hazy Bldg.  
Room 203

**Why:** Robert Nash of Big Horn Archaeological Consultants will speak on the “Excavation of Two Virgin Branch Puebloan Sites at the Proposed Jackson Flat Reservoir, Kane County, Utah”

Bighorn Archaeological Consultants, LLC (Bighorn) is involved in on-going cultural resource mitigation work on several archaeological sites located within the proposed boundaries of Jackson Flat Reservoir near Kanab, Utah. This work has included the excavation of two Virgin Branch Puebloan residential sites dating from the late Basketmaker II period to Early Pueblo II period, roughly AD 250 to AD 1050. Virgin Branch Puebloans occupying these sites not only hunted and gathered wild resources, but also farmed maize, as indicated by numerous pithouses, large storage facilities, and a wide variety of artifacts. Bighorn will present their discoveries at these sites, and discuss their importance in furthering our understanding of the prehistoric occupation of Southern Utah.

## New Business

We have an opening on the DAS board. This creates an opportunity for someone to step forward to help provide direction for DAS into the future. We are looking for someone who has a passion for rock art and is willing to work behind the scenes to assist in the running of DAS. Please contact me or any other board member to express your interest.

## Web Site

The Dixie Archaeology Society web site ([www.dixierockart.webs.com](http://www.dixierockart.webs.com)) is up and running. Please consider signing up as a site member. Site members should receive email updates whenever anything on the site is updated.

Please post your comments on the blog that is part of the site. This site is for you, the members. We'd like to hear what you think.

## Field Trip Report

The May field trip to Paiute Cave and Nampaweap was cancelled due to poor road conditions caused by the three days of rain prior to the trip. This trip will be rescheduled for the fall.

## Field Trip Info

The next field trip will be Saturday, **June 18<sup>th</sup>, to Parowan Gap**. This will be an afternoon / evening trip. We will view the petroglyphs and then view the presentation about the site and then view the sunset. This is an easy trip. The petroglyphs are a "drive up" experience, requiring no hiking.

**Remember, you must be a member of DAS to participate in a field trip. You must be at the meeting in order to sign up for a field trip.**

## Meeting Report

The May meeting featured DAS member Ben Everett giving a presentation entitled “**Art as a Window to a Farther Reality**”. The premise of Ben’s talk is that mankind has always tried to represent reality in its art, with each artist giving his perception of reality. He gave examples of art created in the middle ages to the present to make his point. He then extends this hypothesis to early Native Americans by detailing two very different rock art sites.

**Flag Point** is a site located east of Kanab, Utah. On a plateau, one finds large, three toed dinosaur tracks (Figure 1).



**Figure 1 – Dinosaur tracks at Flag Point**

On the cliff face below the plateau one finds a large pictograph panel (Figure 2).



**Figure 2 – Pictograph Panel at Flag Point**



**Figure 3 – Dinosaur Track Pictograph at Flag Point**

On the panel at the lower left, one finds what appears to be a large “bird” track. This track was much larger than a bear track, which is shown to provide a sense of scale. There are a number of “bird like” figures associated with the large bird track. Knowing about

the dinosaur tracks above the glyph panel, one can make the assumption that the large bird track represents the dinosaur track seen on the plateau. One can also assume that the artist thought that this was made by a giant bird, hence the large bird like figures. He also must have thought that this was an important being, because he painted a series of “dancers” on both sides of the large track, in essence paying homage to the large creature. Were special ceremonies held at this location?

**Quail Point** is a pictograph site located on the Gila River in central Arizona. The dominant feature of the glyphs at Quail Point is birds, such as Quail (Figure 4), Hummingbirds (Figure 5) and Eagles (Figure 6 and 7).



Figure 4 – The Quail of Quail Point



Figure 5 – The Hummingbird of Hummingbird Point



Figure 6 – Birds (Eagles) in Flight

Figure 7 represents a typical bird (eagle) at Quail point. They are generally shown with round bodies and cross shaped wings and tail feathers. Their heads are in profile with a beak that is shaped like an eagle's beak. Their heads are generally pointed in the same direction, east. Also the bird image appears to be associated with a crack in the rock.

Examination of the image in Figure 7 will show that the round body and wings and tail feathers look like the sun with the sun's rays. The cross shaped image to the left of the bird represents the Venus star. The birds looking east indicate that they may represent the rising sun and Venus as the morning star. The association with the crack means that they are emerging from the rock.

However if you in fact look east you will see the rock images in Figure 8. The rock formation clearly shows the shape of an eagle's head with a pointed, hooked beak. They also show a number of "birds" "emerging" from the rock face. This is clearly the reality that the artist was trying to show in his rock art drawings.

One must speculate that at some point in the Venus cycle, she will appear in the precise location as indicated by the rock art image in Figure 7. Could this be a time of ceremony?



Figure 7 – An Eagle of Quail Point



Figure 8 – Rock formations at Quail Point

**Commentary:** One point that I and others have made many times is that when viewing rock art, one must also view the surroundings in order to attempt to understand the context of the rock art and the native peoples that created the art. Ben’s talk makes this exact point. One would not have understood the rock art if they were merely presented with photographs. These two cases clearly show that the rock art is all about the surrounding features that inspired the artist(s) and likely were the reason for the ceremonies that may have taken place at these locations.

John Mangels

**Thanks**

Thanks to Ben Everett for his very enlightening talk.

**Final Thought**

Summer is upon us and hopefully the hot and dry weather that we expect in St. George. Be careful when going out to the visit rock art sites – take special care to have more than enough water and proper sun protection.

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