Lori Hunsaker September Speaker

**Lori Hunsaker** is an archaeologist for the Bureau of Land Management, Saint George Field Office, which includes the Red Cliffs and Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Areas. She has over 25 years of experience in archaeology and heritage resource management, including serving as a former Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for the State of Utah, working for various consulting firms throughout the Western United States, and teaching as an Adjunct Professor.  Ms. Hunsaker completed a Masters of Arts in Anthropology at the University of California, Davis in 1999 and advanced to Ph.D. candidacy at the University of Utah, and is currently researching historic land use in the Beaver Dam Wash and variation in prehistoric agave use in the American Southwest. Ms. Hunsaker was elected to serve as the President of the Utah Professional Archaeological Council from 2005 through 2008 and the Vice President for the Great Basin Anthropological Association from 2010 through 2014.

Ms. Hunsaker stressed how graffiti on our public lands has reached epidemic proportions. Theft and looting are also problems. Internet posts help catch the vandals. The Anderson family was caught defacing the sacred sites via internet posts. They settled out of court. Remember, vandalism costs taxpayers money.

Lori addressed five sites in her lecture. The Red Reef Shelter is not a public use site, but hikers leave the trail and make their way up to the shelter. Charcoal is the main medium they use to write their names over pictographs. Experts, volunteers, and interns help clean up this vandalism. Claire Dean is the expert who lead the charge to clean up the graffiti.

White Reef Panel is regularly visited by staff. It is a small area and is not as well known. The word “RUSH” was written in magic marker and graffiti was scratched into the rock. Claire was the only person who worked at cleaning this site.

The third site is Land Hill Heritage Area which is part of Santa Clara River Reserve, established in 2008. This is a very popular hike and is often visited. Graffiti is scratched into the rocks. Along with Claire Dean, volunteers helped clean this area. Claire will be coming back to facilitate more clean up efforts.

Hildale Panel is riddled with bullet holes and has been shot up by paintball guns. To top that off, visitors were actually being targeted and shot at. Claire will teach a class on how to clean and repair this type of damage.

The last place Hunsaker talked about was Castle Cliff Service Station. To help protect this site, the BLM is purchasing it.

We should care because these sites have scientific, religious, and historical value. They have human and aesthetic value. They are sacred to Native Americans. Their economic value is enormous. People come from all over the world for the purpose of seeing these historic places. In 2015, travelers spent $8.7 billion. $1.15 billion of that went to taxes, $100,000,000 went to our schools, and another $100,000,000 went to transportation and infrastructure.

What we need to do to help is be an official or unofficial site steward. When you see something, say something. Document the vandalism and tell the BLM about it. You can volunteer by calling Scott Lowery 435-590-4838 or Lori Hunsaker 435-688-3347. Be sure that you’re not part of the problem. Don’t touch the rock. Oils from your hands leave marks and speed deterioration. Never build fires at rock art sites. Soot and charcoal can damage the sites. Be careful whom you tell. Some people don’t share our appreciation, respect, and reverence for these priceless places.