



U.S. Forest Service
Kaibab National Forest
800 S. 6th St.
Williams, AZ 86046
Voice: (928) 635-8200
Email: mailroom_r3_kaibab@fs.fed.us
Web: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab

News Release

Media Contact: Jackie Banks
(928) 635-8314
jcbanks@fs.fed.us



Kaibab National Forest releases video showcasing Snake Gulch and its prehistoric paintings and etchings

Williams, Ariz., Aug. 24, 2017—For Immediate Release. The Kaibab National Forest has released a short video telling the story of a remote canyon north of the Grand Canyon that is home to an incredible array of prehistoric paintings and etchings.

“Snake Gulch: A Passage Through Time” captures the beauty and value of that place and its colorful images, which represent thousands of years of human history and leave a visual record of the rich cultures that once occupied the area. It also showcases the dedication of the people who cherish and work to preserve it.

Snake Gulch is located in the Kanab Creek Wilderness on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest. For the past three decades, Forest Service archaeologists, with the assistance of volunteers, academic researchers and local tribes, have been documenting, photographing, interpreting and working to preserve the thousands of sites over a winding 10-mile stretch within this remarkable canyon.

“Managing cultural resource sites on public lands is an enormous task, and federal archaeologists can’t do it alone,” said Connie Reid, archaeologist and tribal liaison for the North Kaibab Ranger District. “Our tribal partners and volunteers play a tremendous role in helping agency archaeologists like me in caring for these irreplaceable sites. Our goal is to share these incredible resources with the American public, while respecting tribal values and doing what we can to protect the area for future generations to learn from and enjoy.”

The ancient images found in Snake Gulch were left by Native American people who occupied the region thousands of years ago. Many of the images were made during the transition period from the hunting and gathering lifestyle to agriculture, often referred to as the Neolithic Transition. On the canyon walls, there are many anthropomorphic, or human-like, images with head dresses, necklaces and other forms of adornment engaging in celebratory activities like dancing and playing music, as well as other day-to-day subsistence activities such as hunting and farming. These images give archaeologists rare glimpses into the vibrant cultures that once called the area home.

In recognition of the significance of archaeological and historic sites like Snake Gulch that are located on public lands, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966. The act directs federal

agencies to protect significant cultural resources located on public lands and share that legacy with the American people.

October 2016 marked the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act and began a year-long celebration of archaeological and cultural resources in the Forest Service's Southwestern Region, which manages some of the most important and spectacular sites in the country.

As part of that celebration, the Kaibab National Forest developed an extensive photo library of the invaluable images of Snake Gulch that can not only be viewed by the public but can also serve as a reference source for researchers and a monitoring tool for forest archaeologists. Kaibab National Forest employees also decided to share the treasures of Snake Gulch and the importance of valuing them with a wider audience by producing "Snake Gulch: A Passage Through Time."

While the work in Snake Gulch is far from complete, the Forest Service has set a foundation to better protect and preserve these amazing nonrenewable resources over time. The Kaibab National Forest continues to work with youth groups, professional artists, tribal elders, volunteers, and other organizations and individuals to make progress on this significant documentation and preservation endeavor.

"I would say to the youth to be respectful of places like this, to take care of it so that their children and their grandchildren can see these writings. These places are places of power, what we call 'puha,'" said Glendora Homer, member of the Kaibab Band of Southern Paiute. "Respect is the most important thing that you can give a place like this. Respect the beliefs of the Indian people. Respect these writings. They might not mean anything to you, but they do have great meaning to us and great significance to us. This is also a part of your heritage as Americans, and we as Americans have to take care of our cultural heritage sites."

To view the video, go to <http://bit.ly/SnakeGulch>.

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Snake Gulch

*A Passage
Through Time*



<http://bit.ly/SnakeGulch>