



Archeology Excavation September 12-17 River Mile 71.6L



River Excavations

Learn more about Grand Canyon's culture history! Experience a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, view an archeological excavation in progress! All river and backcountry users are invited to visit an archeological excavation at Cardenas camp (river mile 71.6 left) between September 12 and 17. The site is being excavated because of on-going erosion as a result of Glen Canyon Dam operations. Park interpretive staff will be on site to give tours to all river and backcountry users that stop in. Participants will be able to view the excavations and a sample of the artifacts recovered. The current excavation project is part of an on-going data recovery project funded by the Bureau of Reclamation from power revenues generated from Glen Canyon Dam. Tours will last approximately 30 minutes although interpretive staff will be able to accommodate your trip's schedule. Stop in and visit.

Archeological Resources along the Colorado River

Almost 500 archeological sites have been identified along the river in Grand Canyon National Park. The National Park Service has been monitoring these sites since the 1980s. Monitoring has shown that terraces and slopes containing sites are eroding due to reduced sediment in the river since construction of Glen Canyon Dam. Although the National Park Service has a mandate to preserve cultural materials in place, where stabilization has not been successful, data recovery (excavation) is preferred before site or information loss occurs.

Prior to excavation work, the National Park Service & the Bureau of Reclamation consulted with affiliated Native American tribes to ensure that tribal concerns about the excavation work were addressed.

In 2008, the Bureau of Reclamation contracted with Utah State University to excavate 54 sites over a period of ten years. All of the sites recommended for excavation are impacted by erosion ongoing within post-dam environmental conditions. To date, portions of seven sites have been excavated.

Utah State University

The Bureau of Reclamation is funding the Utah State University project as part of the requirements for addressing impacts from dam operations. The National Park Service collaborates with Utah State University to develop annual work plans, to provide staff for field work and to provide tours and public interpretation during excavations. To date, excavations have identified the presence of corn pollen in a 2000 year old deposit in Western Grand Canyon, and have documented one of the oldest habitation sites along the river corridor. In addition to gathering data from archeological sites, this project is studying the stratigraphy of

flood terraces along the entire river corridor. Geomorphologists have recently discovered these cultural-rich deposits are in some places well over 10,000 years old; this greatly expands our current understanding of the river history and the potential to make new cultural and geologic discoveries.

The dating of terrace deposits containing cultural materials has been enhanced by combining traditional techniques with optically stimulated luminescence, or OSL. When you stop in for a visit you'll have the opportunity to learn all about these dating techniques.

Cardenas Camp

Cardenas Camp will be occupied by the excavation crew and therefore not available for camping from September 11th through September 17th. Excavations require the use of shovels, large screens and possibly wheelbarrows. Please expect screens, tarps and backfill piles to be present.

The excavations at Cardenas will be located along the trail leading to Hilltop Ruin. The trail will not

be closed and crews will make every effort possible to provide easy access through the excavation areas to the trail leading to Hilltop Ruin.

Questions or concerns regarding this work can be directed to Jen Dierker at 928-226-0161 or Jennifer_Dierker@nps.gov