

Intaglios along the Colorado River

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, March 9, 7:30 am – 6 pm

Meet at: [Oasis Visitor Center](#) (click on link for a map of the meeting site)

74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Instructor: Daniel McCarthy, M. S., Anthropology

Overview

Intaglios or large figures laid out on the ground are one of the unsolved mysteries of modern Archaeology. Officially classified as a form of rock art, there are over 300 intaglios in the American Southwest and Mexico. Daniel McCarthy will lead this all-day field class to three sites to explore these larger than life images preserved on the desert floor. The best known of these are the Blythe Intaglios along the Colorado River that are famous for multiple human-like figures. The largest human figure is 240 feet in length! Participants will learn about these “gravel pictographs” and their significance. This is a great opportunity to visit these immense drawings with an expert archaeologist. **Participants will drive 230 miles (round trip) during the class, from Twenty-nine Palms to just north of Blythe where the class will finish.** Carpooling is encouraged.

Itinerary

Saturday, March 9, 7:30 am – 6 pm

Oasis Visitor Center, 74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms

- Introduction: a slide presentation will be provided before departure setting the cultural context and discussion the various forms of ground figures or earthen art, including mounds, intaglios (geoglyphs) and rock alignments (geoscript).
- First stop at the famous Blythe Intaglios
- Lunch break in between, **bring your own food**
- Second stop to visit another location

What to Bring to the Course

Optional Class Materials

- Camera
- Stool or small ladder

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.

The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

Fitness Requirements

Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

Hike Level

Easy

Guidelines

- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.

Instructor Biography

Daniel McCarthy, M. S., Anthropology, has worked at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Joshua Tree National Park, and throughout Southern California compiling photographic inventories of the rock art of this region. He has served as District Archaeologist for the San Jacinto Ranger District and acting Forest Archaeologist for the San Bernardino National Forest where he was also the Tribal Relations Program Manager for 18 years. His research interests include desert archaeology, aboriginal trail systems, and rock art. McCarthy also conducts southern California Native American cultural awareness classes providing information about native plant uses, rock art, and material culture.

