Deadman Bajada Hanging Canal
Preliminary Field Notes

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The canal system in Deadman Canyon is a curious mix of apparently prehistoric channel originals which still flow to this day that were combined with major yet partially abandoned historic rework...

Routing begins with a single concrete takein from perennial Deadman Creek that is found at 32.73883 -109.81156, climbs “up” over a buried pipeline replaced initial hanging segment presumed immediately east of the Deadman 4WD track at 32.74242 -109.80886 to a mesa top historic distribution box that can be found at 2.74447 -109.80736. At this point, the water was historically diverted down to Frye Creek via a presently broken and non functioning transite pipe system.

The original and presumed hanging portion of the Deadman Canal has likely been obliterated by the buried pipe routing, although a short hint may still remain at 32.74448 -109.80736. Requiring a consistent and constant route slope limited by end point elevations strongly suggests that this portion of the canal route was either under the road or directly east of it.

From the distribution box, the original canal appears to continue down along the highest elevations of Deadman Mesa in its apparently original architecture. The latter totally free of any concrete, rebar, or headgates. The canal routing would seem to historically support an unnamed tank at 32.75259 -109.78980, Upper Deadman Tank at 32.75862 -109.77036, and to Lower Deadman Tank located at 32.77085 -109.75152. The latter is presently dry and seems to be abandoned.
The prehistoric canal appears to have had two main branches. Both of which remain woefully underdocumented. The eastern branch remains unexplored due to difficult access. Lengths remain unknown as the branch destinations remain speculative and unproven. Nonetheless, the Deadman Canal system is obviously a major and central contributor to the entire Bajada canal system.

Here is a map of the Western Branch of the Deadman Canal complex...

The West Branch consistently travels along the highest possible Deadman Mesa elevations. It splits at 32.75041 -109.79583 to prehistorically source the East Branch and historically serve a cattle tank.

A significant West Branch feature is a pinch point that might also be serving as a three way routing switch at 32.76067 -109.78143. At this point, the flat highest mesa top is only a meter wide and directly holds a half meter wide water channel. This strongly suggests the only possible canal routing in this area!

Movement of rocks would appear to easily perform switching to two or even three selected locations. The direct route continues northerly to the Lower Deadman Tank at 32.77052 -109.75154 tank and beyond. Hints of a Discovery Park Canal at 32.79415 -109.72946 might form a possible yet still unproven destination. There are significant cultural features in this immediate area, but canal evidence itself remains somewhat marginal and indistinct.

The Eastern switch route would appear to serve Upper Deadman tank found at 32.75863 -109.77041. Although not verified, it would also appear possible at the pinch point to switch water westerly down canyon to the Porter Springs tank at 32.77050 -109.77784. An enigmatic possible short Longview Canal wall appears at 32.78936 -109.75885 and could form a tentative destination.

— Deadman Canal Log 2 —
The significance of the “highest route”, “pinch point” and “multiple switching” unique engineering in the West Deadman Mesa area cannot be overstated!

Here is a map of the Eastern Branch of the Deadman Canal complex...

The Eastern Branch of the Deadman bajada canal remains unexplored and unproven owing to difficult access. Its presence and credibility is strongly suggested by Acme Mapper, satellite images. It would appear to potentially be as major and as significant as Deadman West.

The canal apparently starts today at 32.75283 -109.78848 near a historically developed and adapted canal. It then continues to several extremely narrow mesa top pinch points at 32.75455 -109.78144 and 32.75541 -109.77976, and its last southern trace currently appears to be near 32.75768 -109.77414. In general, the canal often seems to follow the extreme and narrow northern edge of its mesa.

The destination still remains unknown. Another possibility is a field near Lower Deadman tank at 32.75857 -109.77039 Also possibly Western Branch fed.

A second possibility is that this could be a feeder to the TB West canal, possibly near 32.76087 -109.74495. There are also some short canal hints centered around 32.77078 -109.74260 that might demand a credible water source.

ATV or drone use would be helpful for the long and steep return hiking path.

Ownership of both canals are a mix of private land, CNF and Arizona State lands, starting with an initial elevation of 4600 feet and possibly ending with the West branch at 3000 feet and East branch at 3200 feet.

Slopes are estimated in the one to two percent range.
If the Discovery Canal link proves valid, the possible West Deadman length could approach 11 kilometers. Deadman West is presently limited to 2 kilometers or so. And remains largely underexplored.

This prehistoric bajada canal is located in Arizona’s Safford Basin in the Upper Gila Valley and is believed to date through the 1350’s. Access is usually quite difficult and can be reached via the rough Deadman Canyon 4WD track off lower Frye Creek or the poor trail routing southwardly from Lower Deadman Tank.

The study area is a good candidate for foot, possible ATV, or drone access.
Here are some noteworthy Deadman Bajada Canal features and locations...

32.73706 -109.81399    Perennial Deadman mountain stream source.
32.73706 -109.81399    Historic concrete pipe delivery takein.
32.74113 -109.81098    Pipe believed to follow prehistoric canal route.
32.74330 -109.80872    Required slope suggests canal beside road.
32.74505 -109.80660    Pipe and canal appears to deviate from road.
32.74496 -109.80659    Upper historic headgate and distribution box.
32.75074 -109.80721    Broken transite pipe routes to Frye Creek
32.74639 -109.80380    No concrete, iron, or headgates north of here.
32.74832 -109.79895    Flowing canal routing appears to follow original.
32.75049 -109.79592    Presumed original fork of East and West canals.
32.75244 -109.78995    Historic tank still water fed.
32.75244 -109.78995    Presumed deviation of historic and East canals.
32.75467 -109.78119    Mesa extreme knife edging.
32.75581 -109.77901    More knife edging defines only possible route.
32.75861 -109.77029    Upper Deadman tank.
32.77078 -109.74260    Possible destination in unexplored canal segments
32.76167 -109.74425    Possible destination as TB West Canal
32.76080 -109.78133    Presumed "knife edge" three way switch.
32.77056 -109.77800    Porter Springs tank.
32.78936 -109.75885    Possible Longview Canal wall.
32.75954 -109.78208    Likely the only feasible canal route.
32.76280 -109.77511    West canal continues to Lower Deadman tank.
32.77139 -109.75161    Lower Deadman tank.
32.79343 -109.72822    Strongest evidence to date of Discovery Canal.
32.79740 -109.72541    Possible Discovery Canal destination fields.

— Deadman Canal Log 5 —
Further Deadman Canal work might include...

1 — Verify original hanging route of pipeline overlay.
2 — Seek proof of pipeline overlay to prehistoric original.
3 — Determine if Porter Springs was a downcanyon possibility.
4 — Establish credibility of Longview Canal wall.
5 — Determine if Lower Deadman Tank has an underlying field.
6 — Attempt to increase credibility of Discovery Park Canal.
7 — Determine if Deadman West sources the Discovery Park Canal.
8 — Explore short canal hints north of Lower Deadman.
9 — Field verify Deadman East Canal, possibly with ATV’s.
10 — Verify any relationship between Deadman East and TB West Canals.
11 — Significantly improve photography and annotation of canal complex.
12 — Do fly over drone and videotape survey.
13 — Mentor students and create field camps.

New Hanging Canal Discoveries: http://www.tinaja.com/whtnu17.shtml, etc…
DEADMAN3 - The Mesa top is extremely narrow along this Deadman West course. This "pinch pont" appears capable of a three-way switching that can route to Upper Deadman Tank, Lower Deadman tank, or (possibly) even downcanyon to Porter Springs. View is downward with north=up at 32.76073 -109.78137.

DEADMAN4 - An apparent pinch point on the Deadman East Canal "hung" on the very edge of a mesa top. The appears to be the only feasible canal routing in the area. View is downward with north=up at 32.75434 -109.78194.
DEADMANS - "Knife Edging" would seem apparent in this Google Earth 3D image. Purpose, efficiency, linearity and slope constancy are all consistent with a Bajada Hanging Canal, but this image still awaits field verification. The view is to the northeast at 32.75399 -109.78250.
Here is a topographic map of the Deadman West Canal...

Here is a topographic map of the Deadman East Canal...

You can click through on the above images to directly reach Acme Mapper at a higher resolution.

A hanging canal directory can be found here and its sourcecode here.
This field note is associated with directory #21 DCM1 Main Deadman Canal and #68 DEC1 Deadman East Canal.
This document can be found here and its sourcecode here.