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Reay Bajada Hanging Canal Preliminary Field Notes

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The recently discovered Reay Canal is of considerable interest in that it might be about to become part of a housing development. It is among the northernmost of the **bajada** Canals. Associated with it is a remarkably large flat area that would seem eminently suitable for prehistoric fields.

It also seems a possible and credible destination for the previously only partially studied **Golf Course** Canal. Although a relationship with the **Robinson** Canal can not yet be completely ruled out.

Here is a map that combines the previously studied **Tailwater Canal** with the newer **Reay Canal** discovery extensions...



The new Reay finds range from **32.81970 -109.77393** to **32.82262 -109.77278**, while the Tailwater portions ranged from **32.80624 -109.77623** to **32.81007 -109.77628**. Intermediate areas have yet to be field verified, but are suggestive on [Acme Mapper](#).

The three kilometer long study area elevations range from 3220 to 3140 feet. To maintain a reasonable constant slope, some canal reaches had to be rather deep, while others were quite shallow. Canals in the area are all "normal" rather than "hanging". The area in general is far less rocky and more sandy than typical.

An existing housing development has likely obliterated any possible northern extension discoveries. A significant flat area to the east includes fascinating hints of possible but highly unverified canal like delivery structures.

The area to the south is quite culturally rich. The present study limit of the [Golf Course Canal](#) can be found at **32.79906 -109.77597**, and the somewhat nearby [Robinson Canal](#) exploration limit at **32.80575 -109.78736**.

There is a major pueblo in the vicinity and numerous decorated potsherds over wide areas. Curiously, there are also several "potsherd dumps" suggesting of pothunter shaker use.

The Tailwater Canal may have been historically modified as it seems somewhat of a deeper vee than usual, is in a cardinal direction, and is on Safford City lands. But the new Reay Canal finds give strong additional credibility to a prehistoric Tailwater origin. There are prehistoric constructs in direct Tailwater association.

It is not yet clear how the Spring Canyon crossing at **32.81482 -109.77583** was accomplished. Quite possibly, the depth and flow of Spring Canyon is a modern artifact caused in part by diversion of Frye Creek water into Sheep Tank Canyon at **32.76568 -109.79936**.

The area from **32.81389 -109.77601** to **32.81762 -109.77469** is somewhat indistinct on [Acme Mapper](#) but would appear to be a credible route still in need of field evaluation.

The field verified Reay Canal segment from **32.81922 -109.77408** to **32.82057 -109.77367** is quite distinct and rather deep, comparable to the Allen Canal segment from **32.79359 -109.82633** to **32.79558 -109.82586**. This stretch defines the prehistoric credibility of the entire Reay and Tailwater complex.

Surprisingly, the next northerly Reay Canal segment is quite sandy and quite shallow. Apparently caused by the overly gentle topographic slope. A final northerly segment is again deeper but somewhat indistinct.

There is a short and curious twelve rock alignment structure near **32.82228 -109.77295** that suggests an end delivery diversion canal. This would seem somewhat similar to structures in the [Lefthand Canyon](#) area.

The absolutely uniform patina strongly suggests a prehistoric age. The rocks seem to be a curious mix from outside the immediate and largely sandy area. Credibility of this structure could be very much improved by finding similar and related structures nearby.

As a curious sidenote, the Reay Canal appears to be consistently and perfectly aligned with the distinct Deadman Peak at **32.73118 -109.80185**. Whether this was a rank pure coincidence or an intentional survey design remains unknown.

Ownership is largely **Arizona State** lands, **Safford City** and **Private Inholdings**. Access involves 4WD tracks from the Daley Estate Ponds at **32.79888 -109.77563**, moderate hiking from the Reay Lane Bridge at **32.82077 -109.76709**, or private access via Thatcher's Sandy Creek Drive at **32.82624 -109.77322**.

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.

Here are some noteworthy **Reay Canal** features and locations...

- 32.80616 -109.77619** Southern study limit of Tailwater Canal.
- 32.81020 -109.77623** Northern study limit of Tailwater Canal.
- 32.81020 -109.77623** Area yet to be studied.
- 32.81482 -109.77589**
- 32.81482 -109.77589** Spring Creek crossing.
- 32.81482 -109.77589** Area yet to be studied.
- 32.81938 -109.77404**
- 32.81938 -109.77404** Deeply cut classic canal run.
- 32.82151 -109.77322**
- 32.82151 -109.77322** Very shallow and sandy canal run.
- 32.82119 -109.77331**
- 32.82119 -109.77331** Apparent flood damage.
- 32.82170 -109.77313**
- 32.82238 -109.77289** End use rock alignment construct.
- 32.82271 -109.77272** Further north obliterated by modern development.
- 32.81952 -109.76930** Unresolved canal hints nearby.
- 32.80814 -109.77628** Walled structure adjacent to Tailwater Canal
- 32.80432 -109.77619** Shaker potsherd spoil piles in area
- 32.80656 -109.78567** Northern exploration limit of Robinson Canal.
- 32.79895 -109.77636** Northern exploration limit of Gold Course Canal
- 32.79987 -109.78021** Golf Course canal transition from hanging reach.
- 32.79822 -109.78284** Southern limit of this part of Golf Course study.
- 32.78412 -109.78716** Projected Golf Course Rincon Canyon route.
- 32.74379 -109.83951** Predicted Golf Course perennial water source.
- 32.73139 -109.80185** Deadman Peak possible survey marker.

Further Reay Canal work might include...

- 1 — Determine feasibility of private landowner interaction.
- 2 — Seek out possible preservation options.
- 3 — Explore region from **32.81230 -109.77621** to **32.81475 -109.77580**.
- 4 — Explore region from **32.81052 -109.77627**to **32.81230 -109.77621**.
- 5 — Resolve how Spring Creek was crossed at **32.81481 -109.77585** .
- 6 — Determine significance of canal hints near **32.81952 -109.76930**.
- 7 — Attempt to verify use of Deadman Peak as a survey marker.
- 8 — Seek out further evidence of prehistoric **Tailwater** Canal use.
- 9 — Complete locating missing portions of **Golf Course** Canal.
- 10 — Exclude **Robinson** Canal involvement in **Reay** Canal routing.
- 11 — Attempt to locate additional end use diversion constructs.
- 12 — Significantly improve photography and annotation of canal complex.
- 13 — Do fly over drone and videotape survey.
- 14 — Mentor students and create field camps.

More Hanging Canal Resources: <http://www.tinaja.com/tinsamp1.shtml>

New Hanging Canal Discoveries: <http://www.tinaja.com/whtnu17.shtml> , etc...



REAYS - A deeper portion of the Reay Canal that is consistent with others in this **bajada** complex. This canal may be endangered due to residential development. View is northward from **32.81982 -109.77387**.



REAY2A - The Reay Canal is rather shallow near its known Northern limit. The routing appears aligned on Deadman Peak. The view here is to the south from **32.82131 -109.77352**.



REAY3 - A possible end use water diversion construct associated with the northern known limit of the Reay Canal. Rocks appear to have been imported from outside the immediate area and have absolutely uniform patina. Somewhat similar resources are found in the **Lefthand Canal** area. Seen to the southeast from **32.82228 -109.77295**.