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09/15/2020

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LOGAN – Drs. Molly Boeka Cannon and Anna Cohen, anthropology faculty at Utah State University, received \$217,000 in grant funding from the Bureau of Reclamation to study water heritage in Utah. Cannon and Cohen received additional funding this year to continue documentation of Utah’s historical irrigation infrastructure and research the meaning of water heritage for Utah communities.

The team is completing a research design that identifies and defines a research trajectory for the Water Heritage Anthropological Project, a project initiated with \$180,000 from the BOR in 2019, augmented with an additional \$37,000 in 2020 and \$7,000 from the Central Utah Water Conservancy District.

Cannon remarked that “We are excited by the opportunity to mentor USU undergraduate and graduate students and offer them a diverse set of skills.” The multi-disciplinary approach to Cannon and Cohen’s study of water heritage involves archaeological pedestrian and remote survey and mapping, archival research, and ethnographic methods including semi-structured interviews and oral history accounts. Cohen notes that “The use of these different datasets provides a unique perspective on the evolution of water management in Utah, incorporating a long-term approach that can be linked with social and environmental changes in the region.”

Cannon and Cohen adapted the project to the COVID pandemic offering remote learning labs in May as part of the Native American Summer Mentorship Program and virtual interviews with study participants. This past year the team conducted three virtual interviews. Currently, the researchers and their students Megan Jensen and Moni Butte, seek participants from Cache and Box Elder counties for interviews and oral history accounts about water heritage in the region and encourage interested participants to contact the team.