



**NATIONAL TRUST**  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

*Protecting the Irreplaceable®*

RICHARD MOE  
PRESIDENT

September 11, 2007

Ms. Selma Sierra  
Director, Utah State Office  
440 West 200 South, Suite 500  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84145-0155

Dear Ms. Sierra:

A few weeks ago, I was privileged to visit Cedar Mesa and the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. Accompanying me on this trip were two other National Trust staff member: Emily Wadhams, Vice President for Public Policy and Barb Pahl, Director of our Mountains/Plains Regional Office in Denver. Both trips were organized and led by senior members of your staff – Don Banks, Deputy State Director for Natural Resources, Nick Sandberg and Nancy Shearin from the Monticello Field Office and Brad Exton, Larry Crutchfield and Marietta Eaton from the BLM Office in Kanab.

I am writing to tell you how grateful I am to your staff for the time they spent with me and my team on this visit. They are all, as I am sure you know, exceedingly competent and committed professionals and I valued their knowledge about the cultural resources we visited and their candor in talking with me about the pressures they face trying to protect them. I am also writing to share some of the discussions we had during the visit to enhance the protection of cultural resources in both Cedar Mesa and in the Monument.

My purpose in visiting Cedar Mesa was to see first hand archaeological sites that have been damaged by the illegal construction of an off road vehicle trail in Recapture Wash. I know this situation was brought to your attention by Barb Pahl during your meeting with her in March and again in a letter you received in May from Paul Edmondson, Vice President and General Counsel for the Trust. Paul's letter supported your decision to reopen the criminal investigation, and importantly, urged the BLM to protect archaeological sites in Recapture Wash by closing the trail.

Our hike into Recapture Wash confirmed that many archaeological sites were damaged by the construction and subsequent use of the trail. Additionally, in spite of obvious signage posted by the BLM to close the trail at Recapture Great House, the site was looted for archaeological material earlier this summer. Therefore, I am very supportive of your plan to close Recapture Wash while you conduct an evaluation and assessment of damage to archaeological sites caused by the construction and use of the



*Recipient of the National  
Humanities Medal*

Ms. Selma Sierra  
September 11, 2007  
Page Two

trail. It is also my understanding that following the assessment, the BLM will initiate an environmental assessment that will consider the future of the trail authorizing the use of any, all, or parts of it for off road vehicles.

It was pointed out to us that Recapture Wash has been designated "open" in BLM Management Plans. I would submit that land use decisions made in the absence of completed archaeological surveys predictably result in cases where BLM's mission of multiple use conflict. Nancy Shearin estimated it would cost \$100,000 to complete an archeological survey of Recapture Wash. I would be happy to support a request made by your office for an increase in funds from the BLM 1050 account to pay for this survey so that this data can be used to help inform the environmental evaluation for future use in Recapture Wash. I also hope that when Nancy retires next May, she is replaced with another full time archaeologist.

Our visit to the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument occurred on Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. The National Trust has been leading an effort to codify the National Landscape Conservation System into federal law and because of the controversy associated with the creation of this Monument, I was eager to see portions of it and meet with local people who live and work in the surrounding area. On Friday night I attended a dinner in Escalante organized by Steve Roberts, a local outfitter. Over dinner I had a chance to talk with several people from Escalante and with Mike Satter, President of the Monument Friends Group, who drove up from Kanab. Steve Roberts has organized a new group called Envision Escalante that is capitalizing on visitation to the Monument to develop arts and tourism in the community. There is strong support for the BLM and the Monument among members of this group.

However, I was concerned to hear that only 4% of the Monument has been surveyed for cultural resources – below the BLM norm of 6% –and that some sites are now being looted by helicopter. I hope that the additional funding requested for the Conservation System in the 08 budget can be used to fund a second archaeologist at the Monument and more cultural resource surveys.

Thanks again to your excellent staff for making our visit informative and enjoyable. I fully realize and appreciate the tremendous amount of work you accomplish with a very tight budget. Let us know how we can help.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,



Richard Moe,

Cc: Don Banks, Deputy Director, Utah State Office  
Brad Exton, Monument Manager, GSENM  
Nick Sandberg, Monticello Field Office Manager  
Wilson Martin, Utah SHPO