



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

September 14, 2023

Mr. David Jenkins
BLM National Headquarters, Western Office
760 Horizon Dr., Suite 102
Grand Junction, CO 81506

VIA: BLM_HQ_420_NPA@blm.gov

Dear Mr. Jenkins,

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) appreciates this opportunity to provide comments on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) renewal of its National Programmatic Agreement (Agreement) with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO). Because of BLM's status as the largest federal land-managing agency, the Agreement has a major impact on the protection and interpretation of the archaeological record in the United States.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 5,500 members, the SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. The SAA has members throughout the United States, as well as in many nations around the world.

Though July's letter stated that "comments will be most helpful if they reference the specific section or paragraph of the (current) Agreement" being discussed, we believe that in order to improve upon the existing document, our comments should best focus upon what it is missing. Specifically, the current Agreement does not contain any kind of enforcement mechanism. Under the document, there is no way to ensure that the agency, or those acting in its name, conducts their Section 106 work as agreed upon. This is also true of the Agreements that BLM has with individual states, and which are based upon the NPA. The central issue with any NPA is that it is only as good as the accountability that is built into it. The SAA strongly recommends that the BLM, ACHP, and NCSHPO include language in the revised NPA that provides procedures for

evaluating agency Section 106 compliance, and for measures to address instances of non-compliance.

We stand ready to work with you in the months ahead on this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Sandweiss", enclosed in a light blue rectangular border.

Daniel H. Sandweiss, Ph.D., RPA

CC: Reid Nelson, Executive Director, ACHP