



February 12, 2016

The Honorable Sally M. Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) expresses deep concern for protection of archaeological resources that may have been impacted when the occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) allegedly bulldozed a road through an archaeological site.

SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the research about and interpretation and protection of the American archaeological heritage. SAA represents more than 7,900 professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world.

Hundreds of recorded archaeological sites exist within the MNWR. Some date to more than 9,800 years ago and continue into the European settler period. These sites contain artifacts, human remains, and contextual information that tell the story of all people in the region.

Now that the standoff is resolved, it is imperative that the integrity of these precious archaeological resources be restored. SAA urges the Department to launch a full investigation into various allegations in the media of mistreatment of cultural assets at Malheur. These contentions are of great concern to the Burns Paiute, the local public, as well as the wider scientific community. The information needs to be verified—or disproved—by a team of qualified investigators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane Gifford-Gonzalez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a checkmark-like flourish at the end.

Diane Gifford-Gonzalez, Ph.D.
President