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Vincas Steponaitis, President  
William Lovis, Chair, Committee on Repatriation  
Society for American Archaeology  
900 Second Street NE #12  
Washington DC 20002-3557

Dear Dr. Steponaitis and Dr. Lovis:

I have received from the Forest Service a copy of your letter to Mr. Charles Cartwright of the USFS Southwest Region regarding the affiliation statements produced jointly by the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Arizona State Museum. I am co-author of the Tonto Basin assessment that is specifically addressed in your letter. I also administer the Arizona repatriation statutes, A.R.S. §41-844 and 41-865.

“Prehistoric Cultural Affiliations of Southwestern Indian Tribes” responds to the NAGPRA requirement that agencies and institutions holding NAGPRA-eligible collections make assessments of affiliation in association with the required summary inventories. These were necessary to determine the appropriate recipients of those inventories. Hundreds of agencies and institutions have now made such assessments, usually conducting and documenting that process with considerably less care than is demonstrated in “Prehistoric Cultural Affiliations of Southwestern Indian Tribes.”

ASM has had the experience of almost 200 successful repatriation cases under Arizona laws and several under NAGPRA to assist in this process. The other agencies involved brought their own experiences to the preparation of the document. Tribes were consulted through a variety of additional mechanisms, including the ASM Advisory Group. In addition, the Forest Service held meetings throughout the Southwest to solicit the input of a broad range of archaeologists who were not otherwise involved in preparation of the document, including participants in the Roosevelt studies that you mention in your letter. Information from many sources, not just archaeology, was used in the assessments.

We nevertheless expect that there will be significant additional information that may be relevant to individual NAGPRA claims, and we are open to receiving that information. Page iii of “Prehistoric Cultural Affiliations of Southwestern Indian Tribes” provides the following clear and unambiguous statement:

**The assessments are based on the evidence presently available to the authors and consultations with the Indian tribes will be ongoing. The Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Arizona State Museum consider these assessments to be working documents that are subject to revision and modification based upon information or evidence that any Indian tribe might wish to share with the museum or the agencies in the course of making claims for the repatriation of NAGPRA items.**

In addition, each assessment includes a statement reaffirming this position. "Prehistoric Cultural Affiliations of Southwestern Indian Tribes" does not attempt to cut off debate on the subject of Southwestern cultural affiliations pursuant to NAGPRA or to represent itself as a final determination with respect to any specific repatriation. Accordingly, individual NAGPRA cases have involved separate more detailed consultations (as in the case of the Roosevelt area, where Forest Service consultation meetings with tribes have now continued over a period of several years). "Prehistoric Cultural Affiliations of Southwestern Indian Tribes" is appropriate to its place in the NAGPRA process.

It is possible that someone might attempt to misuse the document, as you note in your letter. Fortunately, NAGPRA provides for *Federal Register* publication, for consultation with competing claimants, for National Park Service review, and ultimately for appeal through the Review Panel.

What, then, is the source of the great concern expressed in your letter?

It is the Roosevelt Dam Project controversy that is at the root of the complaints that you cite. The specific concerns expressed in your letter as well as the focus on the Forest Service rather than BLM or ASM make this clear. This is also apparent in your listing only the Hopi Tribe, of all the many affiliated groups in the Southwest, as recipients of your letter.

I have not been directly involved in the Roosevelt controversy. However, information that I've received from participants in that consultation process, including tribal representatives, differs in many respects from the information upon which you appear to base your criticisms. More important, you are critical of the Forest Service for not broadening the scope of their inquiries, but before writing your letter you made no effort to solicit information from the agencies, institutions, and persons involved in producing "Prehistoric Cultural Affiliations of Southwestern Indian Tribes" or from those directly involved in the different but related matter of the Roosevelt burial claims.

I hope that in the future the Society for American Archaeology will take its own advice regarding the importance of gathering complete information before taking a position. The Society could then serve its proper and productive role of fostering greater dialogue on difficult and complex questions.

Sincerely,



Lynn S. Teague  
Curator of Archaeology

cc: Charles Cartwright, USDA Forest Service  
Tessie Naranjo, NAGPRA Review Committee  
Frank McManamon, National Park Service