

IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Chaco Culture National Historical Park
Post Office Box 220
Nageezi, New Mexico 87037-0220
(505) 786-7014; FAX (505) 786-7061

H20(AZRU/CHCU)

September 3, 1997

President, Dr. Vincas Steponaitis, Ph.D
Chair, Committee on Repatriation, Dr. William Lovis, Ph.D
Society of American Archaeology
900 Second Street NE #12
Washington, D.C. 20002-3557

Dear Dr. Steponaitis and Dr. Lovis,

We received your letters dated July 30, 1997 and acknowledge the concerns you have raised in regard to the Memorandum of Understanding between Chaco Culture National Historical Park, Aztec Ruins National Monument and Affiliated Tribes regarding the reburial of human remains and funerary objects from Chaco Canyon and Aztec Ruins. We must begin by saying that the staffs of both parks fully support NAGPRA and recognize the law as the appropriate legislation to guide the proper disposition of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony. We also understand that NAGPRA does not mandate reburial of any human remains or cultural objects, it merely creates a mechanism for possible repatriation.

Several weeks ago, members of the Chaco Culture NHP and Aztec Ruins NM staffs attended a meeting to discuss with members of our joint consultation committee the very issue that you raise; the process embodied in NAGPRA. Both Aztec Ruins NM and Chaco Culture NHP read NAGPRA, 25 USC 3009, Section 11, as allowing for the development and implementation of formal agreements such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) and Memorandums of Agreement (MOA's) that satisfy the desires of affiliated tribes for the proper disposition of human remains, funerary objects or other cultural objects covered under the law. However, we also recognize that this may be perceived as side stepping the issue of cultural affiliation. We view the MOU's between Chaco, Aztec, and the affiliated tribes as a vehicle to repatriate to multiple claimants as outlined in the regulations, 43 CFR 10; Section §10.10 of the regulations. Both Chaco Culture NHP and Aztec Ruins NM have made preliminary determinations of cultural affiliation based on the following lines of evidence: geographical, archaeological, anthropological, folklore, oral tradition, expert opinion and other relevant information including consultation as mandated in the regulations 43 CFR 10, Section §10.14. The likely culturally affiliated tribes were to be the signatories on the MOU. However, the decision was made during the most recent consultation meeting to work towards the publication of our Notices of Inventory Completion in the Federal Register. Once published, our determinations of cultural affiliation will be made public. We hope to have the notices published in late fall 1997.

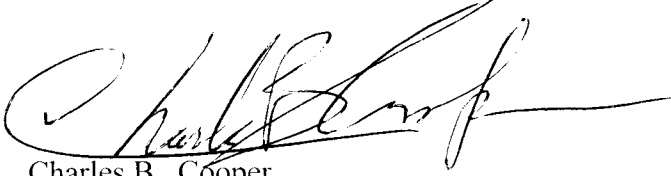
We appreciate your comments regarding this issue and your interest in the management of Chaco Culture National Historical Park and Aztec Ruins National Monument. If we may be of further assistance in this matter, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



C.T. Wilson

Superintendent, Chaco Culture NHP



Charles B. Cooper

Superintendent, Aztec Ruins NM

cc: Frank McManamon, Departmental Consulting Archeologist, National Park Service
Tessie Naranjo, NAGPRA Review Committee
Ernest Ortega, Director, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers, National Park Service
Jerry Rogers, Director, Southwest System Support Office, National Park Service
Mr. Petuuche Gilbert, Reality Officer, Pueblo of Acoma
Mr. Rex Salvador, Lt. Governor, Pueblo of Acoma
Mr. Joseph Quintana, Governor, Pueblo of Cochiti
Mr. Leigh Jenkins, Director, Hopi Cultural Preservation Office
Mr. Alvino Lucero, Governor, Pueblo of Isleta
Mr. Randolph Padilla, Governor, Pueblo of Jemez
Mr. Will Herrera, Tribal Secretary, Pueblo of Laguna
Mr. Roland Johnson, Governor, Pueblo of Laguna
Ms. Lela Kaskalla, Governor, Pueblo of Nambe
Dr. Alan Downer, Director, Historic Preservation Department, Navajo Nation
Ms. Clarenda Begay, Historic Preservation Department, Navajo Nation
Mr. Albert Hale, President, Navajo Nation
Mr. Gerald Nailor, Governor, Pueblo of Picuris
Mr. Jacob Viarrial, Governor, Pueblo of Pojoaque
Mr. Lawrence Troncosa, Governor, San Felipe Tribal Council
Mr. Elmer Torres, Governor, Pueblo of San Ildefonso
Mr. Earl Salazar, Governor, Pueblo of San Juan
Mr. Alex Lujan, Governor, Pueblo of Sandia
Mr. Leonard Garcia, Governor, Pueblo of Santa Ana
Mr. Gilbert Tafoya, Governor, Pueblo of Santa Clara
Mr. Vidal Aragon, Governor, Pueblo of Santo Domingo
Mr. Mike Concha, Governor, Pueblo of Taos
Mr. Fredrick Vigil, Governor, Pueblo of Tesuque
Mr. Stanley Pino, Governor, Pueblo of Zia
Mr. Joseph Dishta, Director, Zuni Heritage and Historic Preservation Office
Mr. Donald Erachio, Governor, Zuni Pueblo