



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

September 24, 2004

Dr. Jan Matthews  
Associate Director, Cultural Resources  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street Northwest  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Dr. Matthews:

It has come to my attention that at the September 17, 2004, meeting of the NAGPRA Review Committee, NPS Deputy Director Randy Jones announced a major re-structuring of the Archeology and Ethnography Program, including a split between the Archeology and Ethnography programs and a move of Parks NAGPRA functions to Denver.

I am writing to express my deep concern that the Society for American Archaeology, which for decades has been a loyal supporter and partner of NPS in many areas of endeavor, was not consulted or even informed before this major change was announced and put into effect.

On April 19, 2004, I and a delegation from SAA met with you and Pat Tiller in your office. During that meeting, we asked you about persistent rumors that a major restructuring of NAGPRA implementation was in the works. We were told, in no uncertain terms, that (1) no major reorganization was imminent; (2) that there had been discussion of possibly moving some NAGPRA functions "out West," but that such a move would not happen any time soon, if at all; and, most importantly, (3) that we and all other stakeholders would be fully and fairly consulted before any final decision on such a reorganization was made. Clearly, this explicit promise of fair and informed consultation was not fulfilled.

The proposed reorganization has major implications for archaeology and for the implementation of NPS's mission, of which archaeology is a critical component. The philosophy and practice of the National Park Service has always been that decisions about such major changes are made in a transparent and impartial way, involving genuine consultation with all major stakeholders. To do otherwise undermines your agency's credibility and reputation for fairness.

The Society for American Archaeology therefore respectfully asks that the proposed reorganization be set aside until a fair process of informed consultations is carried out.

Sincerely,

/s/

Lynne Sebastian, Ph. D., RPA  
President

cc:  
Randy Jones (Deputy Director, NPS)  
Fran Mainella (Director, NPS)  
Craig Manson (Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks)  
de Teel Patterson Tiller (Deputy Associate Director Cultural Resources)