

The Legislative Branch
The Navajo Nation



Lawrence J. Morgan
Speaker of the Navajo Tribal Council

February 26, 2007

Selma Sierra, State Director
BLM -- Utah State Office
PO Box 45155
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155

Sandra Meyers
BLM -- Monticello Field Office
PO Box 7
Monticello, UT 84535

RE: Navajo Utah Commission Resolution Requesting BLM Protect the Cultural and Natural Resources of Navajo Aboriginal Lands Including the Canyons of the Abajo Mountains and Deny the Jeep Jamboree Permit Application and Prohibit the Jeep Safari ORV Event from Using Arch Canyon and Hotel Rock

Dear Director Sierra and Manager Meyers,

The Navajo Utah Commission, composed of Navajo Tribal Councilmen and Councilwomen from Navajo Chapters located in Utah, passed Resolution NUCBEE-392-07 at its regularly scheduled meeting on February 14, 2007. The Resolution respectfully requests that the Bureau of Land Management protect the Navajo aboriginal lands in and near Arch Canyon and the natural and cultural resources of these lands from damages and impacts caused by continued off-road vehicle use.

The Utah Navajo Commission recognizes the Bear's Ears, Abajo Mountains and surrounding canyons, including Arch Canyon, as aboriginal land that is significant to Navajo culture. This area was the homeland of Chief Manuelito and his brother, Nabiih Kaa yi lli, and their descendants who are members of the Bitahnii clan. In addition, this area contains plants that are very important for Navajo traditional ceremonial uses, and that depend on a healthy ecosystem and riparian system for their continued existence. Continued off-road vehicle use in this area jeopardizes the health and continued existence of these plants and degrades the ancestral homeland of Chief Manuelito.

Arch Canyon contains numerous undocumented prehistoric cultural sites, including very sensitive ceremonial sites. These sites are at risk of damage and vandalism due to continued motor vehicle use in this canyon. Arch Canyon also provides

habitat in its perennial stream for sensitive fish species. These fish species are possibly a unique species and their habitat should be protected. Motor vehicle use in this canyon impacts this stream and likely threatens the continued survival of these fish species.

As you know, the Navajo Utah Commission has formally supported the Petition to Preserve Arch Canyon's Natural and Cultural Heritage, filed by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. The Navajo Utah Commission's Resolution NUCFEB 392-07 reaffirms our support for that Petition and reiterates our request that BLM preclude motor vehicle use in Arch Canyon and the adjacent canyon rims in order to protect important natural and cultural resources.

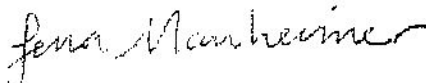
The Navajo Utah Commission's Resolution NUCFEB 392-07 requests that the BLM consult with the Navajo Utah Commission, the Navajo Utah Chapters, and the Navajo Nation Resource Committee in matters that affect cultural and natural resources on public lands before issuing decisions on such matters.

The Navajo Utah Commission is aware that BLM is reviewing an application for a motorized event, Jeep Jamboree, for Arch Canyon, scheduled for April 2007, and is aware that the Jeep Safari event intends to use Arch Canyon and the adjacent canyon rims in its April event. Based on the concerns expressed above and those discussed in detail in the Petition to Preserve Arch Canyon, the Navajo Utah commission respectfully, but strongly, requests that the BLM:

- 1) Deny the Jeep Jamboree permit application to hold a motorized vehicle event in Arch Canyon, and the adjacent canyon rim to access Hotel Rock, proposed for April 2007; and
- 2) Prohibit the Jeep Safari from using Arch Canyon, and the adjacent canyon rim to access Hotel Rock, in April 2007; and
- 3) Support the Navajo Utah Commission's position and desire to protect the important natural and cultural resources of Navajo aboriginal lands, including the homeland of Chief Manuelito and his brother Nahiil Kaa yi lli, and their descendants who are members of the Bitahnii clan. These lands include Arch Canyon and other canyons surrounding the Bear's Ears and the Abajo Mountains.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Lena Marheimer, Chairperson
Navajo Utah Commission

Copy: Leland Leonard, Executive Staff Assistant
The Navajo Nation
PO Box 1625
Window rock AZ 86515

Liz Thomas
SUWA
PO Box 968
Moab, UT 84532