



Society of Vertebrate Paleontology

SVP Headquarters • 7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102, USA
Phone: +1 (301) 634-7024 • Fax: +1 (703) 506-3266
Email: svp@vertpaleo.org • Web: www.vertpaleo.org
FEIN: 06-0906643

February 1, 2022

Mr. Greg Sheehan
State Director for Utah
Bureau of Land Management
blm_ut_state_director@blm.gov

Dear Mr. Sheehan,

As leaders of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP: <http://vertpaleo.org/>), we are writing about damage to the Mill Canyon Dinosaur Tracksite that appears to have occurred during an upgrade to visitor facilities. SVP is a non-profit global scientific organization with about 2,000 researchers, educators, students, and enthusiasts, whose aim includes protection of vertebrate fossils and fossil sites. We have always enthusiastically partnered with BLM and other agencies to offer professional assistance on matters relating to our mutual goals of preserving and studying paleontological resources on federal lands, including ongoing collaboration on the 2009 Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA).

Recent reports and photographs from our membership about damage at the Mill Canyon site are disturbing, and we fear that irreparable, and avoidable, damage has been done to this scientifically important site. As you know, PRPA Section 6302 requires the Bureau to “manage and protect paleontological resources on Federal land using scientific principles and expertise”. We are aware that the Canyon County District and the Utah office have paleontologist positions that are vacant, and we cannot help but feel that the errors at Mill Canyon would have been avoided if qualified paleontologists had been on your staff.

On behalf of our membership, we would appreciate answers to the following questions:

- 1) BLM Utah is responsible for some of the most important paleontological sites in the world spanning most of Earth’s history. How does your office plan to implement the PRPA?
- 2) Does BLM Utah plan to rehire the Canyon Country District Paleontologist vacant since 2018?
- 3) Does BLM Utah plan to rehire the Regional Paleontologist position vacant since 2021?

How can SVP assist the BLM in the future to better manage paleontological resources on public lands? Please let us know if our members can lend their expertise in assessing the damage at Mill Canyon or assist in the scientific aspect of planning on future projects.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica M. Theodor, Ph.D.

Margaret E. Lewis, Ph.D.

Emily J. Rayfield, Ph.D.

SVP President

SVP Vice President

Past SVP President

CC: Moab Field Manager, Nicollee Gaddis-Wyatt, utmbmail@blm.gov
BLM Canyon Country District Manager, Gary Torres, blm_ut_mb_mail@blm.gov