Anti-Looting Reward Fund Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors, September 13, 2015

Looting, vandalism and disturbing human remains have been long-standing problems in the greater Cedar Mesa area and throughout southeastern Utah. However, recent reports suggest the problem of serious looting is on the rise in San Juan County. Friends of Cedar Mesa offers this reward to assist law enforcement in identifying, prosecuting, and convicting individuals perpetrating such illegal activities. We also hope the existence of the reward will help deter future criminal behavior and reinforce the community norm that we should all work together to prevent damage and theft of cultural resources, which are sacred to many Native American people.

Under the Archaeological Resource Protection Act [16 U.S.C. §§ 470aa-mm (1997)] it is illegal to take, injure, remove, damage, destroy or trade cultural resources found on federal public lands. The Utah State Antiquities Act of 1973 and Chapter 6, Part 9 of the Utah Criminal Code provide similar prohibitions for state-owned public lands. Several other laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the US Antiquities Act provide further legal protections for archaeological/cultural sites. Respect for these laws, American history, and the sacred nature of Native American ancestral sites lie at the heart of the reasoning behind this policy.

Policy Statement

Friends of Cedar Mesa will pay a reward up to $2,500 for information leading to the successful prosecution (e.g. conviction) of individuals perpetrating acts of looting, vandalism, and desecration of human remains or other serious damage to cultural/archaeological resources on public lands in San Juan County, Utah.

Anyone with information about such crimes is encouraged to call 1-800-722-3998. If you witness a crime in action, safely remove yourself from the situation and if possible collect license plate numbers or other information relevant to identifying the criminal. Do not wait to report the activity. Please call 911 immediately.

A decision to issue a reward is at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors of Friends of Cedar Mesa. Funds will be awarded after a successful conviction. Tipsters who wish to remain anonymous should inform the person to whom they report the activity of their desire to be anonymous. Unless legally compelled to do so or unless the tipster agrees to be acknowledged, Friends of Cedar Mesa will never share the identity of a tipster with the public.

While anonymous tips are appreciated and will be respected, Friends of Cedar Mesa cannot guarantee payment of a reward without sufficient proof that the information provided directly resulted in the successful prosecution of the criminal.

Friends of Cedar Mesa will not pay rewards to any person who has a legal duty to assist in the apprehension of fugitives or criminal suspects. This includes law enforcement, bonding companies, enforcement agents working for bonding companies, and the like. FCM will not pay rewards for information already in the possession of law enforcement, such as the existence of an arrest warrant or information already observed by in a law enforcement investigation.

Friends of Cedar Mesa may elect to pay a reward only to the first caller with correct information that leads to a conviction. In the event that two or more people contact a participating agency or Friends of Cedar Mesa simultaneously, any reward offered will be divided equally among the tipsters.

FCM retains the sole discretion to determine the reward amount or deny a reward in cases it deems to be minor offenses that would hurt or not help efforts to engage the public in protection of cultural resources. FCM acknowledges the land manager's responsibility to enforce the law as written and understands the land manager does not decide which cases may be prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The reward funds will be held by Friends of Cedar Mesa in a dedicated bank account. FCM is also accepting donations to the Cultural Resources Defense Campaign that will be used for, but not limited to, education, outreach, technology purchases, monitoring, and organizational expenses involved with preventing future looting incidents.

The Friends of Cedar Mesa Board of Directors may elect to terminate this fund if unused for a periods of 5 years. Upon termination, funds may be used for other cultural resource protection efforts. Donations to the Friends of Cedar Mesa Cultural Resources Defense Campaign are tax deductible.