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Contacts: Lisa Bryant (435) 259-2187

Josh Ewing, Friends of Cedar Mesa (801) 410-0773

\$2,500 Rewards Offered for Information on Archaeological Resource Vandalism

Salt Lake City– The Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-Utah and the non-profit Friends of Cedar Mesa have established an innovative partnership to combat the theft, vandalism, and damage of archaeological resources on public lands.

Under this collaborative effort, the Friends of Cedar Mesa is offering a standing reward of up to \$2,500 for information leading to the successful prosecution of anyone who loots, vandalizes, or causes other serious damage to archaeological sites, including those on BLM-managed lands. Additionally, the BLM will offer rewards, in cooperation with Friends of Cedar Mesa, as cases are reported on BLM-managed lands.

Anyone with information about such crimes is encouraged to call 1-800-722-3998. BLM-Utah's Office of Law Enforcement and Security will investigate legitimate tips and serious incidents occurring on BLM-administered lands, and will share information with other entities when the crimes occur within their jurisdictions.

The Friends of Cedar Mesa will also offer the \$2,500 reward for information that leads to the successful prosecution of such crimes that occur on public lands outside of the BLM's jurisdiction.

"Most people are unaware of the alarming and ongoing problem of looting and vandalism, including disturbing human remains, in the greater Cedar Mesa area," said Friends of Cedar Mesa Executive Director Josh Ewing. "We are so grateful for the hard work of so many in the BLM to preserve these resources through partnerships, education, and enforcement."

Looting, vandalizing, and intentionally damaging archaeological sites and artifacts, including cliff dwellings, shrines, pottery, stone tools, rock art panels, burials, and historic structures are violations of numerous federal and state laws, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Antiquities Act, and the Utah State Antiquities Act.

"Protecting these resources, which remain sacred to many Native American tribes and are important to many Utah residents, is one of the most critical components of the BLM's multiple-use mission," said acting BLM-Utah State Director Jenna Whitlock. "I hope that this new reward program sends a strong message to looters, vandals, and anyone desecrating burial sites that BLM-Utah considers these crimes morally and legally unacceptable. I applaud the Friends of Cedar Mesa for recognizing that we must work collaboratively to develop new and innovative solutions to eradicate these illegal activities."

This is the first time a non-profit friends group has partnered with the BLM to establish a standing reward program to promote the protection of archaeological resources. The Friends of Cedar Mesa was established in 2010 to promote good stewardship that protects the natural and cultural integrity of public lands in San Juan County.

Friends of Cedar Mesa also recently launched a series of [educational videos](#) as part of its [Visit with Respect initiative](#), which is a local offshoot of the BLM's broader statewide Respect and Protect campaign. Both campaigns encourage respectful visitation of archaeological sites.

The funds for this reward program are provided solely through private contributions to Friends of Cedar Mesa, and the decision whether to disburse the reward funds is the sole discretion of the Friends of Cedar Mesa's board of directors.

For details about the reward fund policy, visit CedarMesaFriends.org/reward. In addition to cooperative efforts with BLM-Utah, the Friends of Cedar Mesa also partners with the Utah State Institutional Trust Lands Administration, the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and the U.S. Forest Service to promote the protection of archaeological resources across in the Cedar Mesa area.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.

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Utah State Office 440 West 200 South Ste. 500 Salt Lake City, UT 84101