

**Remarks delivered by Elena Daly**, Director, National Landscape Conservation System,  
San Juan County Antiquities Act Centennial Celebration  
Blanding, Utah  
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It was one century ago, on June 8, 1906, that President Theodore Roosevelt signed “An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities”, commonly known as the Antiquities Act. For the past hundred years, the Act has helped us protect, appreciate and celebrate America’s special places and the irreplaceable resources that are found there: the archaeological sites, fossils, and natural and geological wonders on our nation’s public lands.

This short, one-page law – a testament to our national sense for deep history and direct language – protects more than just places. It protects our sense of who we are and where we come from.

The language of the act takes us back to a time when America was beginning to understand where it stood in the greater schemes of time and place. Our country was young, but we saw ourselves as a nation with a rich and complex legacy. We had antiquities—artifacts, sites, the tangible record of human achievements—that were the equal of any in the world. We had objects of scientific curiosity—great canyons, ancient forests, towering mountains—the likes of which were not found elsewhere. The farseeing legislators of 1906 found a way to recognize these national resources, and to make their study and preservation a national concern.

One hundred years ago we made it unlawful to “appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity.” And we recognized the public good in naming monuments that recognized “historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.”

Today we are celebrating the special heritage of San Juan County, a place rich in historic and prehistoric resources. Few places could rival the spectacular landscape you live in here— this landscape which has seen a long history of human use, and continues to be a vital part of people’s lives. The numerous rock art panels, cliff dwellings, the Hole-in-the-Rock trail, the beautiful historic red sandstone homes – you are truly blessed with a rich legacy from your ancestors.

And not only are these places important to you, but they have captured the imaginations of people from distant places, who come here to steep themselves in this landscape and take in the tangible past. Your county provides such a unique opportunity for people to reflect on our links with a long line of ancestors who knew and loved this place too, and to learn from how they addressed the problems and issues all people face.

Today we’re taking time out to reflect on what 100 years of protection for heritage sites has meant for our ability to reach across the centuries and touch the lives of people who called the same landscape we do “home”. The centennial of the AA is absolutely the

right time to look to the future and the legacy we want to leave of our turn caring for this landscape.

BLM, acting as stewards on behalf of the American people present and future, has a special role in caring for our nation's past. With 263,000,000 acres of surface estate, BLM is responsible for the America's largest, most diverse and scientifically most important body of heritage resources. These special places, from ancient mammoth kill sites, giant figures etched in desert pavement, villages and cliff dwellings, to historic trails, mining encampments, and ghost towns tell the story of our nation and people; they speak of the achievements, disappointments, tragedies and triumphs, in all their diversity, that influence who we are today. These places help tell us who we are and where we've come from – and they can help us make wiser choices about where we want to go.

Caring for this historic and prehistoric legacy is a daunting and humbling task, and is a responsibility that BLM takes very seriously. And, it's quite clear – we cannot do it alone. Everyday, dozens, if not hundreds, of visitors are recreating on public lands in San Juan county and encountering historic and prehistoric sites. Recreational activities are increasingly important in this modern world, and more and more people every year seek rejuvenation in the open spaces and wild lands, so...more people visit these fragile places. We see evidence of increasing wear and tear on sites caused by well-intentioned people who just want to visit. Of course, there is still an element out there who want to take what isn't theirs, and that supply the illicit market by trafficking in the illegal sale of artifacts.

With far-flung lands and no entrance gate or toll booth to control where people go, BLM faces a unique challenge in caring for our nation's heritage resources. As BLM planned to celebrate the AA, we thought there could be no better message than that of citizen stewardship – the responsibility of every person to visit historic and prehistoric sites in ways that don't harm them. Our slogan for the AA celebration captures this important message: "Honor the Past – Shape the Future".

The behaviors that will preserve our heritage into the future are really pretty simple – treat these ancient places like the fragile outdoor museums that they are. Contemplate, appreciate, draw, photograph, meditate, and learn all you care to. Report acts of vandalism that you witness to law enforcement authorities. But, please, don't camp in sites, use them for latrines, lean against the walls, create new paths, or collect artifacts. These and other acts cumulatively degrade the condition and integrity of heritage sites and make visiting them much less appealing. In addition, the scientific values are lost, and the spiritual and heritage values that are dear to particular families and groups of people are profaned.

It is the responsibility of all of us today to provide the proper care and reverence for these places so that we can be proud of the condition we've left them in as the next generation takes their turn at stewardship. Honor the Past, and you shape the future. Your actions today will help make the difference 100 years from now, when our descendants and fellow Americans decide whether to celebrate the bi-centennial of the Antiquities Act.

Will these special places still be intact? Will future generations be able to look back and say “Thankfully, my ancestors left a legacy from which I can take direction and understanding today”?

There are some folks here today that are working to assure that our descendants will answer a resounding “yes!” to these questions. I want to introduce to you a group of dedicated citizens in your midst, the Utah Southeast Site Stewards, who have wholeheartedly picked up the challenge to protect America’s past. I want to salute their efforts today and let you know something about their work.

Since 2002, The Edge of the Cedars Museum, under the direction of Teri Lyn Paul, has coordinated the Utah Southeast Site Stewards Program, which is a partnership between BLM, Forest Service, the National Parks Service, the Division of State History, and State Parks. Bill Liam Downey is the Coordinator of the program; he is responsible for the recruiting and training of volunteer stewards. The program allows concerned citizens to take an active role in stewarding archaeological and historic sites on public lands. Volunteers are trained to monitor sites and to recognize evidence of damage due to natural processes or overuse and vandalism. They are the eyes and ears of the agency and they assist in the preservation and protection of sites. This is especially important at a time when agency staff are stretched to the limit and limited in number.

Additionally, volunteers are advocates for public lands and natural resources. They are trained to be educators providing visitors they may encounter with information specific to the archaeology and culture history of the area, as well as information on how to appreciate sites in a way that doesn't harm them. Studies have shown that the best hope for countering the problem of looting and accidental destruction of sites (due to misuse) is to have concerned and trained citizens in the field spreading the word about Site Etiquette. Site etiquette means that people visit sites without leaving a trace of their presence, taking only pictures, leaving only footprints.

Currently, there are 32 trained stewards watching over 40 sites in San Juan County. I would like to present the program with a token of our appreciation. Teri Paul, could you please join me on the stage? (present award)

The award reads: "The site steward believes in the value and importance of caring for cultural resources for the study and enjoyment of generations to come, and out of respect for contemporary Native American peoples. Thank you for taking an active role in stewarding public lands."

Won't you join me in expressing our appreciation to these guardians of the past? Thank you for your dedication and work, it is important and appreciated!

I would also like to publicly acknowledge and thank the BLM employees who have worked with the site stewards to make this program a success: archaeologists Nancy Shearin and Jim Carter, and Law Enforcement Officer Marie Tuxhorn. Thank you all for the valuable work you do.

(Time for Teri to say a few words in accepting the award)

(To audience) And thank you too for coming here today to be part of this Antiquities Act birthday celebration. Enjoy this remarkable place where you live and we invite your help as we work to Honor the Past and Shape the Future!