



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE---- June 9, 2008

Archaeological Group Receives Forest Service Award

ARIZONA STRIP—The truth of archaeology today is a far cry from the glamorous cinematic adventures of Indiana Jones. It's often tedious work, under glaring sun, gusty winds, or blowing snow. Accommodations are often less than five-star.

But the work is critical to saving the Southwest's rich archaeological heritage. A government-private-tribal partnership has just received the U.S. Forest Service Southwest Region's Windows on the Past award for efforts to help professional archaeologists protect the cultural resources of the Arizona Strip north of Grand Canyon.

The partnership is the Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance. The Forest Service award was announced at the Alliance's quarterly meeting at Vermilion Cliffs Lodge on June 4. In making the presentation, Acting Kaibab Forest Supervisor Ed Armenta said it recognizes the "innovative and cooperative approach" the Alliance takes. A letter from the Forest Service's Washington, D.C. office stated that the Alliance "leverages our ability to protect valuable resources, it engages the public and helps raise awareness of the importance of resource conservation." It commended the Alliance "for recognizing a need and seizing an opportunity."

The Alliance formed in 2007 after Coconino County Supervisor Carl Taylor toured the new Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. Taylor quickly realized the sheer fact of the size of the

territory (the eastern Arizona Strip is some 2 million acres) and the daunting responsibility facing agency archaeologists.

Around the same time, the Flagstaff-based conservation group Grand Canyon Trust purchased the Kane and Two Mile Ranches, which holds grazing permits for 860,000 acres of public lands on the eastern end of the Arizona Strip, lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. The Trust has developed a number of partnership projects with the agencies with the goal of helping them meet their management goals, including the research, protection, and interpretation of the cultural resources scattered across the eastern Arizona Strip.

Joining the Trust and Coconino County in the Alliance are the North District of the Kaibab National Forest, Arizona Strip District of the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Canyon National Park, along with the Museum of Northern Arizona and Northern Arizona University.

During its first year and half of existence, the Alliance has supported:

- *volunteer projects conducting archaeological surveys and site mapping
- *a field school for training college students in archaeological methods
- *college internship opportunities
- *a conference on ceramics and related research
- *public outreach programs

For more information about the Alliance, go to <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/programs/kane/kaibab-vermilion-cliffs.php>

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