



February 3, 2012

Maria Baier, Land Commissioner  
State Land Department  
1616 W. Adams Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

**RE: CONSERVATION STATUS OF PICTURE CANYON**

Dear Commissioner Baier,

I am writing in support of the reclassification of state trust lands as suitable for conservation purposes for Picture Canyon situated in Section 4, Township 21 North, Range 8 East in the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County.

As you may know, Picture Canyon has been listed on the National Historic Register since 2008 following many years of dedicated efforts by the Picture Canyon Core Group, supported by Coconino County and the City of Flagstaff. Core Group members who bring expertise in archaeology, biology, and stream channel restoration have worked to protect this significant community resource with supporting funding from the City of Flagstaff, Arizona Game and Fish and the Arizona Water Protection Fund. Over the last decade, these efforts have resulted in an archaeological survey and inventory of the nationally recognized type-site for Northern Sinagua rock art, restoration of a key segment of the Rio de Flag Greenbelt including enhancement of riparian vegetation, and improvements to the regional trail system providing connectivity to the Flagstaff Loop Trail, the Arizona Trail and the Flagstaff Urban Trail System.

Picture Canyon was initially recognized for its open space and resource values in 1998 when the Flagstaff Open Space and Greenways Plan (OSGP) identified it as one of the first priority areas for retention located on state trust lands. Following the OSGP recommendation, the 2001 Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan, adopted by the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County and ratified by the voters, set forth land use policies that demonstrated the community's desire to preserve and protect the outstanding resource values associated with first priority areas for retention in the plan's Open Space, Parks, Recreation & Trails Element that includes the following policies:

Implement Urban and Rural Open Space Plans;  
Preserve Priority Open Lands;

Provide Parks, Open Spaces and Recreation throughout the Region;  
Preserve Rural Character and Natural Environment.

The petition recently submitted by the City of Flagstaff seeking reclassification of state trust lands at Picture Canyon is consistent with the above stated land use policies. Therefore, Grand Canyon Trust strongly supports this reclassification and the subsequent City acquisition of Picture Canyon through the Arizona Preserve Initiative grant process.

Sincerely,

Nikolai Lash  
Program Director  
Grand Canyon Trust