



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

AUG 31 2010

Mr. Jeff Ruch
Executive Director
Public Employees for
Environmental Responsibility
2000 P Street, N.W., Suite 240
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Ruch:

The Office of Inspector General received your August 11, 2010 letter concerning noncompliance with regulations governing protection of natural resources within the care of the National Park Service (NPS). Specifically, you alleged that NPS managers, contrary to long-standing rules, are allowing Native Americans, even those not affiliated with a federally-recognized tribe, to gather entire plants, roots, or other plant parts from parks.

Our office is charged with addressing allegations of fraud, waste, and mismanagement in the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and its programs. However, allegations are sometimes referred to the responsible DOI bureau for review and appropriate action. Review by senior management officials of the Office of Investigations have determined that this matter would be better addressed by the NPS; therefore, we will not initiate an investigation but refer it to them for review and any action deemed appropriate.

We appreciate you communicating this matter to us. Your commitment in helping the DOI improve the effectiveness of its programs and operations benefits not only the Department but also the public we serve. If you need additional information about our referral, please contact Special Agent Edward Woo, who is a member of my staff, at (703) 487-5425.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Culver".

For Scott L. Culver
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Investigations