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July 8, 1998

Lt. Colonel Donald R. Curtis  
District Commander  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Walla Walla District  
201 N. 3rd Avenue  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

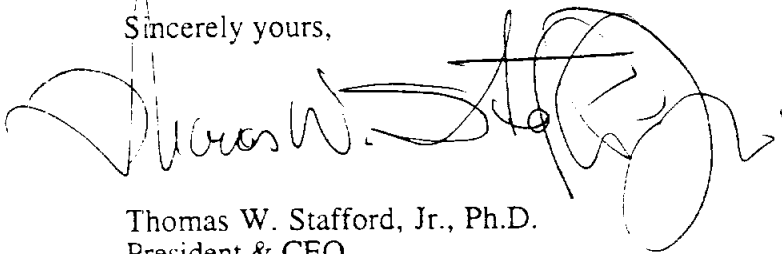
Dear Lt. Colonel Curtis:

I wish to restate my previous opinion that burial of the Kennewick Man discovery site has resulted in significant damage this unique locality, including the following: 1) the geological exposures at the location of the discovery site are no longer available for examination and resampling, 2) the geological exposures can no longer be traced continuously inland to determine their full geographic extent, and 3) chances are now lost for retrieving missing Kennewick Man skeletal remains.

I have recently seen photographs of trees planted by the Corps at the Kennewick site as part of its site burial project. I have also been told that newly planted trees extend inland as much as five or more feet from the edge of the terrace overlooking the discovery location. These trees do not protect but rather threaten the site, and they will cause even more damage to future geochemical work at the site. Because there is so much resistance to additional radiocarbon dating of the Kennewick Man's skeleton, age dating of associated sediments is that much more important. These age measurements would be radiocarbon dates on sedimentary organic matter from strata containing and bounding the skeleton's original stratigraphic location. The planting of trees along the edge of the terrace further compounds the damage already done to the site and will cause the following problems, which will worsen with time. First, organic matter, especially humates, will percolate into the geological strata from debris created by the trees. Second, roots from the willows and other new vegetation will penetrate and add modern carbon contamination to the geological strata. Third, the mass of debris "protecting" the site will facilitate the horizontal mixing of modern and ancient sediments by root and burrowing animal activity. Over time, the once pristine geological strata will be contaminated with recent sediment detritus.

The above physical and chemical processes will worsen over months and years. Consequently, the geological investigations requested in Dr. Huckleberry's permit application of August 1997 should not be delayed. Proper geological study of the Kennewick Man site is an essential line of evidence for substantiating the age of the Kennewick skeletal remains. Because the site's geochemical conditions will only worsen with time due to its burial, our request for additional geological work should not be delayed while site "improvements" progressively degrade the geological data.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas W. Stafford, Jr., Ph.D.  
President & CEO

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