



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 17 2009



Col. Thomas C. McSwain, Jr.
President
The Locust Hill Graveyard Foundation
2200 Owensville Road
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Dear Col. McSwain:

The Secretary of the Interior has asked me to respond to your letters of March 13 and May 7, 2009, regarding a request to meet and the status of a permit to exhume Governor Meriwether Lewis. There have been no changes in the policy of the Department of the Interior or the National Park Service (NPS) regarding the exhumation of Governor Lewis from the January 11, 2008, letter to Mr. Quarles from the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Please be advised that the National Park Service (NPS) is in the process of working with the permit applicant to secure the information necessary for the preparation of an environmental assessment as detailed in the January 2008 letter and which is necessary prior to the exhumation of Governor Lewis. Information obtained from the environmental assessment process will provide critical data and ultimately is used to determine the terms of issuance or denial of a permit.

Decisions on permits under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) are issued from the regional office, in this case the Southeast Region Office in Atlanta, Georgia. The Regional Office will communicate directly with the applicant throughout the process.

Consideration of a permit request requires that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance first be initiated and completed. The NEPA compliance steps include consultation with interested public and all potential family members. While consideration of this request began promptly, a final decision will not be possible prior to conclusion of the NEPA process. Given the time of the permit submission, any plans to excavate in 2009 are ambitious.

The Secretary of the Interior is not able to meet. However, National Park Service Regional Director David Vela (404) 507-5604, located in Atlanta, Georgia would be available to meet specific to the permit and Acting Deputy Director, Ernest Quintana (202) 208-3818, located in Washington, D.C., is available to meet pertaining to other issues. We appreciate your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

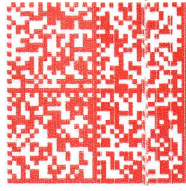
Daniel N. Wenk
Acting Director



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