



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUL 17 2009

Lu Ann De Cunzo, Ph.D., RPA
President
Society for Historical Archaeology
Department of Anthropology
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716

Dear Dr. De Cunzo:

Thank you for your letter of May 28, 2009, to Secretary Vilsack regarding the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, in which you requested the Department of Agriculture (USDA) consider endorsing and applying the Annex Rules of the convention to protect the underwater cultural heritage resources under its jurisdiction. It is my pleasure to reply for the Secretary.

We appreciate your kind words regarding USDA's record regarding historical archaeological sites. We recognize the importance of protecting our irreplaceable archaeological resources and take seriously our role as stewards of the land and of our overall environment, including our cultural heritage. We will examine the Annex language to determine if it is appropriate for Departmental or Agency endorsement.

Again, thank you for your letter and your advice on this subject. We appreciate your support as we continue our best efforts as stewards of our nation's cultural and natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James W. Miller", written over a horizontal line.

James W. Miller
Under Secretary
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services