

**Copy of a letter : Original sent to the wrong Mail Stop!**

47 Four Oaks Road  
Bedminster, NJ 07921  
February 2, 2010

U.S. Department of Interior  
Office of the Inspector General  
Mail Stop 4428-MIB  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Sir:

I am writing to report what I think could be or will be a violation of federal code 5 U.S.C. § 3110 and the Department of Interior's "Ethics Guide for DOI Employees" dated January 2009 as it relates to nepotism.

At Mesa Verde National Park, Scott Travis has been the Chief of Research and Resource Management for several years.

The position of the "Museum Curator" has always been under the supervision of the Chief of Research and Resource Management and both the museum and curation center have always been a part of the Research and Resource Management department.

Simply stated, I am writing this letter because Scott Travis's wife is about to be appointed as the new Museum Curator for the park.

I'm not sure if there are any special exemptions that would allow this. There may be.... and if so, and if this particular instance of nepotism is acceptable, legal and ethical, please let me know.

On the other hand, I suspect there already has been some suspicion at Mesa Verde NP and some concerns among its staff that hiring Scott Travis's wife as the Museum Curator might be improper. Consequently, the park has suddenly changed the chain of command....so that the Museum Curator will report directly to the Superintendent and not to the Chief of Research and Resource Management.

From a structural, legal perspective this might be a way around the charge of nepotism, and it is a way to avoid the problem of having a wife being supervised directly by her husband.

Nevertheless, to be more realistic, I suspect few people looking at this would consider it to be anything but nepotism.

And looking towards the future, how many superintendents would want to get involved with or would feel qualified in supervising a museum curator? To be sure, most superintendents probably would presume the supervision of a museum curator would rightly be part of the position description of the Chief of Research and Resource Management---as it has been at Mesa Verde National Park for years.

Finally, since the person making this recent decision---both the hiring of Scott Travis's wife and the change in the chain of command---is currently the Acting Superintendent (since the former Superintendent retired in November, 2009), it seems ill advised to make a decision that could be in violation of federal code 5 U.S.C. 3110 and the Department of Interior's "Ethics Guide for DOI Employees" dated January 2009, and leave the new superintendent with potential legal problems, a skewed management structure, and the ill-will of other employees who may feel the rules and regulations and ethical guidelines have been ignored again.

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