



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Geologic Resources Division
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225

December 10, 2004

Gary Lewis, Director
Education & Outreach
Geological Society of America
3300 Penrose Place
Boulder, CO 80301

Dear Gary,

The National Park Service is pleased to support the Geological Society of America's effort to expand earth science informal education (interpretation) through the innovative Earthcache program.

The National Park Service (NPS) is committed to working with the Geological Society of America to include national parks, when feasible, as part of the public lands involved in the Earthcache program. The Service is committed to utilizing the latest technology in informal geologic education. We believe the NPS can contribute unparalleled content, made unique by its inextricable link to the actual places that shaped the natural history of the country. The Geologic Resources Division (GRD) believes that this is an opportunity to extend the reach of content beyond what this Servicewide office and parks could ever do alone. The partnerships between GSA, GRD and associated parks, as well as other land managing agencies will build a strong foundation toward helping the public discover geosciences. Geologic features and processes do not end at park boundaries, and the opportunity to connect park sites with external sites appears to have many benefits.

Additionally, the opportunity to encourage the use of the Internet and global positioning system technology is exciting. The Internet has permanently changed the way we communicate, given its virtually unlimited potential to provide instant global access to information. This project provides a way to link a rapidly growing pastime (geocaching) with the discovery of natural resources. It may also be a means to introduce park visitors to technology.

The National Park Service preserves some of the most spectacular geologic features and processes in the world. Discovering these, through Geocaching, will provide visitors with an appreciation of physical sciences and a different perspective of the landscape. A basic understanding of this landscape is key to fully comprehending the value of our natural heritage, and may lead to appreciation of federal land management. Earthcaching is a unique way to take this message to a growing segment of visiting public.

The audience that this program reaches will include the technologically savvy public, the range to park-visiting public, and members of the scientific community. It promotes self directed learning. It blends Web based and on-the-ground learning opportunities.

The Geologic Resources Division is committed to working with parks to provide National Park Service input, and it will participate in meetings of the Earthcaching Advisory Group each year.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Higgins
Chief, Education and Outreach Branch

cc: Wesley Massey