

EI-17907

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September 3, 2009

**Catherine Glidden
Environmental Protection Specialist
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001**

Dear Ms. Glidden,

At this time the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Historic Preservation Office concurs with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe's interpretation of "Criterion D" provided to your office by Mr. Ben Rhodd. We respectfully request that the language used by Mr. Rhodd be used verbatim.

Criterion D:

Criterion D of the National Register of Historic Places has application to sites of Traditional Cultural importance. The implicit contextual use of the criteria has been to protect traditionally and conventionally determined site types authenticated by utility of archaeological methodology. This use has created a recordation value that does not provide criteria driven protections to those sites possessing features attributable to the non-tangible values of site attributes within those site types as characterized by Native traditionalists. The employing of the criteria in this manner has limited its applicability to the continuum of generational knowledge possessed within the oral history, belief systems, art and lifeway of tribal peoples.

The traditional manifestation of belief practices in Native groups originates within and from the stone. The perpetuation of traditional belief is tied to sites possessing configurations, surface motif, and/or generated within landscape form(s). The stone(s) are centric on a broad scale to those belief relationships still in use in the present day. In the relatively recent past federal policy and institutions under supervision of the government have sought to interrupt the

traditional practices of Native belief practitioners. The policies even led Native peoples to adapt an alternative form of expression of their relationship to the stone through the use of other materials such as tobacco ties. The policies, in the end, were unsuccessful as Native believers were forced to conduct their ceremonial practices at night in secrecy and thereby continued their relationship to sites where sacred bundles were formed.

The importance of sites containing configurations; effigy; surface motif; aspect and landform positioning; landscape(s) containing non-typical stone forms; and the prime expression of belief continuity-the circle- cannot be fully characterized in non-Native terminology. This lack of full characterization does not negate other possibility that site types that are eligible for nomination under Criterion D may also be eligible for additional eligibility under Criterion A, B, or C. These sites types referenced therefore yield substantial sentient knowledge still in use today and are important to the history of the cultures in this land.

If you have any questions please contact our office.

Sincerely,

Dianne Desrosiers

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer