

December 16, 2003

Mr. Joseph Alston, Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023

Dear Mr. Alston:

It has come to our attention that a book espousing a particular religious interpretation of the Grand Canyon is being sold in bookstores within the Grand Canyon National Park under the guise of a being a scientific explanation for the origin of the canyon. The book, *The Grand Canyon: A Different View* (compiled by Vail, 2003), makes claims about the age of the rocks and the formation of the canyon that are at odds with the well-documented scientific understanding of Earth history. The book is not about geology but, rather, advances a narrow religious view about the Earth. We urge you to remove the book from shelves where buyers are given the impression that the book is about Earth science and its content endorsed by the National Park Service.

The National Park Service should be extremely careful about giving the impression that it approves of the anti-science movement known as young Earth creationism or endorses the advancement of religious tenets as science. The book aggressively attacks modern science and broadly accepted interpretations of the geologic history of the Grand Canyon. As such, any implied approval or endorsement by the NPS for the book and others like it undermines efforts to educate the public about the scientific understanding of Grand Canyon geology.

The Grand Canyon: A Different View is not about science and we strongly urge that, if it remains available in Grand Canyon bookstores, it be clearly separated from books and materials that do discuss our scientific understanding of Grand Canyon geology. As you know, the Grand Canyon provides a remarkable and unique opportunity to educate the public about Earth science. In fairness to the millions of park visitors, we must clearly distinguish religious tenets from scientific knowledge.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

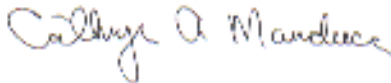
Sincerely yours,



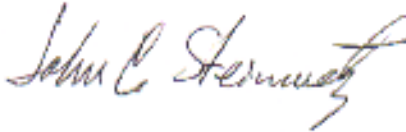
William I. Ausich, President
Paleontological Society



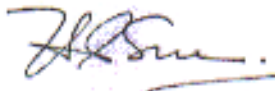
Robert E. Dickinson, President
American Geophysical Union



Cathryn A. Manduca, President
National Association of Geoscience Teachers



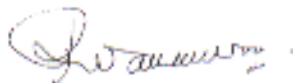
John C. Steinmetz, President
Association of American State Geologists



Hans-Dieter Sues, President
Society for Vertebrate Paleontology



Barbara J. Tewksbury, President
American Geological Institute



Robert van der Voo, President
Geological Society of America

CC: The Honorable Fran Mainella, Director, National Park Service
Dr. Michael Soukup, NPS Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science
Mr. Loran Fraser, Chief, NPS Office of Policy