



Utah Crossroads Chapter
Oregon-California Trails Association

2660 Filmore Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

January 26, 2013

Foster Wilson
President and CEO
Mesa Exploration Corp.
290 Gentry Way, Suite 7
Reno, NV 89502

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The Utah Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association is pleased to receive your communication on the Bounty Potash Project. It affords us an opportunity for direct exchange.

In your communication to Travis Boley and me you mention a desire to preserve the important National Historic Trail in the Pilot Valley area. However, we cannot help but notice some major discrepancies between your statement and Mesa's web post and news release of July 31, 2012. Your company's official approach appears unaware of the extensive cultural and environmentally sensitive resources. Superficial mitigation in the pursuit of a mining development would severely and irreparably damage a national historic treasure and a unique landscape. We view the proposed mining as incompatible with other long-established uses of the Pilot Valley area.

Your news release statement that "Because the area is a lifeless, barren salt flat there are no anticipated environmental or permitting issues," is incorrect, narrow, misleading and obviously self-serving. In that release, you also claim compatibility with the Pony Express Resource Management Plan. Such an interpretation of that outdated plan is inconsistent with the facts.

There can be no question that this potash mining project would be fundamentally destructive to one of the best historic trail segments anywhere in the world and similarly destructive to one of the most important, best-preserved salt flats landscapes in existence.

Certain places on the Salt Flats have been shown to accommodate mining, although certain problems, like environmental air quality, land-form reclamation, etc., persist. The Magnesium Corporation's salt flats mining debacle destroyed trail and left a terrible scar upon the land. Crossroads has no desire to have any such adverse impacts come to the unusually pristine Pilot Valley.

We do want Mesa's help in preserving the trail, but we perceive we presently have two very different notions of what preservation involves. In this Pilot Valley situation, the Crossroads' preservation policy involves far more than just avoidance of trail ruts.

Mesa could render a great public service if it were to consider making a success of that former Magnesium Corporation operation. We urge you to consider acquiring that area for development. It has features which recommend it. Additionally, we know that there are other areas of the salt flats that could be developed toward your purposes without the environmental costs involved in a Pilot Valley

development. For instance, while slightly more remote, the Newfoundland Basin has a far greater return and development potential.

Crossroads is aware that the potash resources of the Pilot Valley area have not been adequately explored to determine if such mining is really feasible. However, our point is that this activity is not in the public's compatible-usage interest, nor good for the National Historic Trail, nor acceptable within such a scenic setting. Therefore, an exploration permit should not be granted to this project.

We note that Mesa's official list of potential difficulties that you and your investors might face fails to acknowledge these important trail and environmental considerations. From our perspective, following an expensive NEPA process that might lead to limited but harmful exploration, Mesa would only face a far more difficult and costly NEPA process for actual mining. The outcome of that second process is significantly even more risky for Mesa. Along the way, we will be watching to ensure that the full processes of environmental review, current statutory protections and possible additional new resource protections are legally followed and/or added. From our trails perspective, there are no adequate mitigation treatments for the kind of destruction these world-class cultural, scenic and natural resources would suffer. Again, we simply don't see the pursuit of a mining venture at this location in anyone's best interest, for the environmental issues your promotional material so conveniently ignores are not going to be ignored. We would advise you to simply mine elsewhere, for there are better alternative locations.

We are pleased to see you reaching out to us. We appreciate your statement that you do not want to damage the trail. Excellent—but here we wish to emphasize that this trail segment is far from just a couple of surviving ruts across a salt playa! It is a variety of ruts sometimes visible and sometimes not visible on the Pilot Valley landscape. It may contain hidden cache sites as well as semi-buried and buried artifacts at multiple locations. It is a wide trail corridor yet to be adequately defined because the seasons and years offer differing views of such resource. Part of an historic trail is its setting and that setting is extensive, interlinking with the wilderness-like aspects of this area. This National Historic Trail is now part of the National Landscape Conservation System. Hence, historic trail resources are not your only environmental concern; there are also scenic, natural landscape, and wilderness issues.

To summarize our principal environmental concerns, we not only take exception to your failure to recognize the National Historic Trail until your recent letter to us, but also Mesa's repeated lack of mention of the exceptional landscape values of the area, the public visitation the area receives (yes despite your previous claim to the contrary, people actually visit this area because of its wilderness and historic values), the scenic byway present, or the nearby Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Given this level of high quality resource and environmental concern, we feel that the further pursuit of exploration would not be in the public interest.

Crossroads would like additional industry and jobs to come to the region, but not at the cost of losing such singularly important historic and environmental resources. We will be pleased if your sensitivity to these concerns will trigger withdrawing the request for exploration at this location.

Sincerely yours,



T. Michael Smith
2013 Past President and Preservation Coordinator
Utah Crossroads Chapter, OCTA