



## **BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION**

A Partnership of the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah & Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni Governments

# **THE TRIBAL PROPOSAL TO PRESIDENT OBAMA FOR THE BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT**

## **OVERVIEW**

The proposed Bears Ears National Monument is a place rich in history and culture. It is a place to connect, a place to heal, and a place where Native American Traditional Knowledge can be explored and nurtured so that it continues to inform and illuminate modern life. The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, a consortium of five sovereign Indian nations—the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah & Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni—has formally petitioned President Barack Obama to proclaim the Bears Ears National Monument in order to protect this extraordinary area for our Tribes, all Native people, and the nation.

The proposed 1.9 million acre monument is a landscape of deep, carved canyons, long mesas, inspiring arches, and arresting red rock formations. The monument's namesake, *the Bears Ears*, are twin buttes in the heart of the landscape that rise high above the piñon-juniper forests and canyons that adorn the renowned and majestic Cedar Mesa. It lies in Southern Utah, north of the Navajo Nation and the San Juan River, east of the Colorado River, and west of the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation. Bears Ears is adjacent to Canyonlands National Park and is every bit the equal of Canyonlands and the other great parks and monuments of the Colorado Plateau.

Ever since time immemorial, the Bears Ears area has been important to Native American people as a homeland. In the mid-1800s, Native Americans were forced fully and violently removed from the area and marched to reservations. But the Native bond to Bears Ears is strong and today is a place that embodies that history. Modern Native American people continue to use the Bears Ears area as a place for healing, ceremonies, and the gathering of firewood, plants, and medicinal herbs.

When they return to Bears Ears today, Native American people feel the presence of their ancestors everywhere. This landscape records their ancestors' migration routes, ancient roads, great houses, villages, granaries, hogans, wikiups, sweat lodges, corrals, petroglyphs and pictographs, tipi rings, shade houses, and burial grounds. Our people are surrounded by the spirits of the ancestors, and embraced by the ongoing evolution of their culture and traditions. For Native American people, Bears Ears is a place for healing. It is

also a place for teaching children—Native American children and the world’s children—about meaningful and lasting connections with sacred and storied lands.

All of this is threatened—by destructive land uses, such as mining and irresponsible off-road vehicle use and by the rampant looting and destruction of the villages, structures, rock markings, and gravesites within the Bears Ears landscape. The Bears Ears National Monument proposal is a bold and inspired plan to stem the tide of this erosion—and protect Bears Ears for the benefit of all.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

<http://www.bearscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Bears-Ears-Inter-Tribal-Coalition-Proposal-10-15-15.pdf>

### Mission Statement

The mission of this National Monument shall be:

To assure that the Bears Ears area will be managed forever with the greatest environmental sensitivity and healing of the land to make it fully a place where we can be among our ancestors and their songs and wisdom and our deepest values, where the traumas of the past can be alleviated, where we can connect with the land and be healed;

To make this National Monument the most deeply and truly “Native” of all federal public land units by honoring the historical and contemporary relationship between Native Americans and the natural world of Bears Ears;

To protect and preserve, for future generations of all Americans, the natural features, beauty, and inspiration found in the extraordinary Bears Ears landscape;

To bring to light, through research, public outreach, and actual practice, the many aspects and values of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge in its fullest sense as a philosophy, a cultural tradition, and a useful tool for enriching modern land management;

A monument to all of these values will speak to the finest dreams of our people and those of the people of the nation and the world as well.

## Objectives

In keeping with this mission, the Coalition advances the following objectives:

- (1) True collaborative management through the federally created Bears Ears Commission, to include representatives from each of the five Coalition Tribes as well as from three federal land management agencies, who will cooperatively develop a culturally and environmentally sensitive comprehensive management plan consistent with President Obama's proclamation and then carry out the monument's management;
- (2) The integration of Traditional Knowledge into the monument's land management practices and the creation of a world-class Bears Ears Traditional Knowledge Institute, where experts and lay people alike can learn from the rich intersection of Western and traditional Native world views;
- (3) Expanded law enforcement capacity to safeguard tribal antiquities, finally putting an end to the inexcusable, centuries-long grave-robbing, looting, and destruction of some of the most precious archaeological sites in the world;
- (4) A permanent withdrawal from mining covering all lands within the monument, and withdrawal from all other forms of leasing, selections, sales, exchange, and disposition, other than those exchanges that further the purposes of the monument;
- (5) Restriction of motorized vehicle use to existing and designated roads and trails, consistent with the purposes of the monument and with a transportation plan that prioritizes pristine and roadless areas within the monument;
- (6) The continuation of existing, compatible local uses such as climbing, firewood gathering, grazing, hunting according to state and tribal law, and the Native American collection of medicines, herbs, and ceremonial plants;
- (7) Boundaries encompassing 1.9 million acres to protect the area's unparalleled cultural antiquities as well as the ecological integrity of the greater Canyonlands Basin;
- (8) Management of recreational activities and other uses to allow for the continued enjoyment of the Bears Ears landscape in ways that honor and preserve its legacy for the public forever.

# PROPOSED BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

