

For Immediate Release

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CROW CANYON ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER CALLS FOR PROTECTION FOR BEARS EARS AREA

“The value of the Bears Ears area to both tribes and archaeologists is beyond question,” said Bill Lipe, a member of the [Crow Canyon Archaeological Center](#) board of trustees and a past president of the Society for American Archaeology. Lipe has researched the archaeology of the region for more than 50 years. “We are glad Secretary Jewell has come to Utah, and hope that her increased understanding of the significant cultural importance of Bears Ears will lead to swift action to protect the area.”

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center’s support comes as U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Agriculture Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment Robert Bonnie, and other high ranking Obama administration officials are touring the Bears Ears area this week. This tour includes a listening session on Saturday, July 16, in Bluff, Utah, to hear more from tribes, local residents, and other stakeholders about the future of the region’s public lands.

With more than 100,000 archaeological sites, Cedar Mesa and the greater Bears Ears area is America’s most significant unprotected cultural landscape. It is famous for the incredible preservation of its backcountry cliff dwellings, numerous rock art panels and surface sites (e.g. towers, shrines, and pueblos), unique artifacts, and American Indian burials.

“The archaeology community supports the tribes in asking for increased protection for the Bears Ears area,” stated Deborah Gangloff, president and CEO of the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. “As we’ve seen at Chimney Rock and Rio Grande del Norte, national monument designations provide not only increased preservation, but benefits to the tribes who consider the areas sacred. Archaeologists and scientists can conduct additional research, and most importantly, the public is now aware of what each spectacular place has to offer.”

In June 2016, more than 700 archaeologists signed a letter to President Barack Obama supporting the designation of a Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah should Congress fail to pass meaningful legislation this year to protect Bears Ears.

“Cedar Mesa and Bears Ears was a formative place in American archaeology. It holds enormous scientific potential to continue to inform us about American prehistory,” continued Lipe. “Given the ongoing looting of the area, if we don’t do something soon, much of the archaeological record of America’s ancient cultures may be lost forever.”

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About the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center: Located just 45 miles from the proposed Bears Ears National Monument, the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to understanding and teaching the rich history of the ancestral Pueblo Indians who inhabited the canyons and mesas of the Mesa Verde region more than 700 years ago.