



THE BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY BEARS EARS!

December 28th, 2020 marks the fourth anniversary of the establishment of the original Bears Ears National Monument. We celebrate this day every year because of its immense significance to our member Tribes, and all of those who worked for years to establish protections for Bears Ears, its cultural sites, and the Traditional Knowledge connected to the region. The declaration of this monument - the first successful monument proposed by Tribes in history - was a signal of great change taking place in the field of conservation, land management, and Tribal relations with the U.S. government; Native voices and perspectives would finally be given real influence in the oversight of their ancestral homelands. While we are still fighting against its illegal reduction in 2017, we are often reminded that the process of healing and recovery at Bears

Ears can be reinforced through a variety of actions. This includes everything from following respectful visitation guidelines, to starting social media campaigns that support Indigenous movements, and, ultimately, holding public officials accountable with your vote. We are encouraged that the movement to protect Bears Ears continues to flourish and grow. The anniversary of the Bears Ears monument designation is a joyous occasion, and it provides us momentum for restoring protections to the region in the future. We are hopeful to see how solidarity reinforces support around the landscape itself and the Indigenous peoples connected to it, and to witness this same reciprocity present within many other initiatives around the country that are



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focused on providing restorative justice for communities.

This time of year is also special as we celebrate the Winter Solstice and the changing of seasons. It is a period of reflection, renewal, and growth. Many Native communities acknowledge this time with ceremonies, prayer, storytelling, and rest. As the days turn brighter with the changing direction of Father sun, daylight offers us a window to reflect upon the year that has passed, and our future growth. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our normal ways of gathering and celebration, we remain connected together by this moment in the seasons. We lie on the bridge between colder days and the warmth of spring; between an unprecedented period of sorrow and a hopeful, joyous future; between a time of dormancy and a blossoming of creativity. This year has been hard for so many of us, especially in Indian Country. While we look to heal ourselves, our communities, and the land, we remain optimistic and hopeful for the road ahead and the opportunities it will provide us to create a more just and resilient future.



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DEB HAALAND MAKES HISTORY



Courtesy Photo

We would like to offer our sincere congratulations to Congresswoman Deb Haaland (NM-01) of Laguna Pueblo on her recent nomination to the U.S. Interior Department. Haaland would be the first Native American to serve as Interior Secretary and the first Native American part of a President's Cabinet. Her appointment signals a long-awaited shift to the Interior Department, which oversees public lands, waters, and wildlife, in addition to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education; a department that holds an immense responsibility to Tribal Nations by overseeing the federal-trust responsibility and managing Indigenous homelands. Historically, the agency has maintained a tumultuous and painful relationship with Native peoples, carrying out such policies as those that removed Native people from their ancestral homelands, while opening protected

areas to mining and drilling. As such, uplifting an Indigenous Pueblo woman to lead in this role is a monumental moment for all of Indian Country.



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It is clear that Representative Haaland cares deeply about addressing Native perspectives and the will of the public: she has long been an advocate for protecting areas like Chaco Canyon and Bears Ears, and she joined other land protectors at the Standing Rock gathering in 2016, where she cooked food and offered support to the inter-Tribal community. If Haaland's nomination is confirmed by the Senate, we may finally turn the page on a shameful history of environmental trauma inflicted upon the Land, Indigenous communities, and our non-human relatives and begin writing a new chapter where the original occupants of the United States are included

in fulfilling the agency's mission as it appears on its homepage: "The Department of the Interior (DOI) conserves and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, provides scientific and other information about natural resources and natural hazards to address societal challenges and create opportunities for the American people, and honors the Nation's trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities to help them prosper." We wish her all the best on the path ahead, and look forward to collaborating with her and her team to protect the Bears Ears cultural landscape.



"Growing up in my mother's Pueblo household made me fierce. I'll be fierce for all of us, our planet, and all of our protected land. I am honored and ready to serve."

- Congresswoman Deb Haaland, Laguna Pueblo



BEARS EARS HOPE RUN, FT. CAROLINE GLEICH



This month, we are very fortunate to receive support from Caroline Gleich, an activist and outdoor athlete (and overall superwoman!), who ran 50 miles through Bears Ears and generated hundreds of donations in the process. Her efforts helped us come closer to finalizing our Indigenous Land Management Plan. We are extremely grateful to supporters like Caroline who continue to find creative ways to raise awareness about the importance of Bears Ears to Indigenous communities and encourage others to get involved in advocacy for landscape protection.



To everyone who supported the run, thank you, and we have a special message from Caroline to share with you:

Thank you for donating and supporting the Bears Ears 50 mile Hope Run! Running that distance was a lifelong dream of mine. From starting under a full moon at Bears Ears Butte, to finishing at sunset in Indian Creek, there is a magical quality that the landscape evokes. We have to protect Bears Ears and restore the monument. Your support will not only help the BEITC accomplish their goals, it helped push me to the finish! I'm grateful and appreciative for the support.



We appreciate all of the support we received from the Bears Ears community during this very difficult year. We wish you and yours a safe and healthy holiday season. Be well, and see you soon!

Thank you - Elahkwa - Ahéhee' - Tog'oiak' - Kwakwhay - Askwali