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# THE BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION

## WINTER NEWSLETTER



## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY BEARS EARS - HOLIDAY EDITION

Greetings Bears Ears community. December 28, 2021 is officially the 5th anniversary of the establishment of the original Bears Ears National Monument.

We recognize this date because it is important to the Coalition Tribes, grassroots organizations, conservation partners, and policy influencers who advocated for years to make the Bears Ears monument a reality.

Bears Ears is many things but above all we see it as an opportunity to protect cultural sites, an opportunity to improve federal-Tribal relations, an opportunity to incorporate principles of Traditional Knowledge into land management planning, and it is a precedent for Tribal peoples across- so called- North America to protect their ancestral homelands.

We like to recognize this date every year because it took decades of collective action to establish protections for the Bears Ears living landscape. December 28th will remain important because it represents the first time in history that a coalition of Tribes successfully garnered protections for their ancestral homelands via monument status.

Bears Ears was restored by President Biden in October of 2021. Both the Obama and Biden proclamations acknowledged the special relationship between the federal and Tribal governments.



We understand this to mean that Tribes will have a meaningful say in how Bears Ears is managed. It's time for the federal government to honor its trust responsibility to the Tribes, and Tribes must be included as full partners.

Bears Ears is a place of healing, when our ancestors hear our languages spoken on the landscape, we reciprocate that healing. You too, can help heal Bears Ears by following us on social media, promoting our Respectful Visitation guidelines, and supporting Indigenous-led organizations who are protecting their ancestral homelands.

The anniversary of the Bears Ears monument is an occasion to celebrate. Now that the monument has been restored, it's time to hold government officials accountable for their commitments to the five Tribes.

The Winter Solstice has passed, and the sun begins its retreat to the North, may the longer, brighter days illuminate your renewal and growth. The winter is a time for ceremony, prayer, storytelling and rest; and we hope you get the chance to safely gather and celebrate this holiday season. As we stroll through the dormant days of winter we look forward to transitioning to the warmer months, may we all be inspired by the blossoming and growth that is to come.

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## Reflection by Lieutenant Governor Bowekaty (Pueblo of Zuni)

For this year's Anniversary edition, we want to highlight some portions of a recent editorial authored by one of the Coalition's Co-Chairs. In this piece, Lt. Governor of Zuni Pueblo, Mr. Carelton Bowekaty, reflects on his trip to Bears Ears with the Zuni Cultural Resources Advisory Team (ZCRAT) and members of the Forest Service. His encouraging narrative concludes with an affirmation from the ancestors. We want to thank Lt. Governor Bowekaty for sharing his experience and wisdom.

See highlights from the piece:

*"Bears Ears and my elders reintroduced our Zuni Ways of Life into my life; particularly, our heartfelt desire for our ancestors to pity their children."*



*We beseech powerful ancient spirits, our ancestors that have won a place in water's eternal, from their place of peaceful warmth, to add to a good life's path, old age, water, seeds, blossoms/wealth, children, strength of character, and a place for all those things that we may not comprehend but add benefits to A:shiwi. Whether it be a child or a person whose soul is in desperation, we will never wish our children's nor our elders' life-breath/water to end...*

*The sky is overcast when I meet up with members of USFS and ZCRAT. Some faces are familiar from both Zuni and USFS as we begin our work... We observe mitigation taken to secure an exposed burial site with the very same USFS folks that conducted the work. As A:shiwi, we reconnected though our offerings – halowadinnan, ido:we, to'o:we. We were all less strangers as we hike out in the gentle rain that filled the air. K'yashimm otts'an k'ya:ts'ana tidonne confirms that our offerings were accepted.*

*The heavy clouds stayed overnight and into the next day. We hiked more miles through places that have Government names. Many words were shared, much Zuni spoken and heard – ts'i:bosho, dawí, bila, ibinna, kwimmin: otts'i, ha:millili, sa'do:we, ummonakkya kwimminne, heshoda:we, detashshinanne, uhlohnanne, akkwa:we, maya, hokwishsho tupts'inna, Ino:de Chimik'yanapkowa, annodi:we, oneyatakya,*

*łashhiyakya, k'yashimma, doshshonanne, udenanne, deyapk'unanne, sawanikya, tse'makkwin ts'ummeh, binanne. Medicinal plants, ceremonial wood types, birds, concepts and values weave our narrative as we reconnect at more cultural sites. Over nine miles hiked that day but every step made the knowledge earned, indelible.*

*I was tired but my spirit alive as we drove out that final day. The view kept drawing my gaze from the road and we stopped to take in Fall's majesty on full display. Red, yellow, and orange colliding against the evergreens, grasses and shrubs contrasting against exposed rock surfaces while the billowing clouds filled the air. Our final site visit was familiar to me and I share that experience with ZCRAT and USFS. The site has not changed but I see with different eyes.*

*We received no moisture but a different affirmation from our ancestors. A flurry of messages that President Biden will restore Bears Ears National Monument.*



*On October 8, 2021, I witness history as Governor Val R. Panteah, Sr., stands with the BEITC Leaders as the President of the United States signs his proclamation. All those faces are familiar to me and my heart is full."*

## Healing Bears Ears Campaign: Tribal Co-Management

Before we go for the year, we will leave you with our final chapter of the Healing Bears Ears Campaign which sought to highlight significant issues happening in Bears Ears work.

Deep ancestral and traditional connections tie many Native Nations to the federal government's (so-called) public lands. The removal of these lands from Indigenous control, their acquisition by the federal government, and the federal government's approach to their management are largely premised upon the erasure or marginalization of those connections.

As more Americans recognize that Indigenous and frontline communities should be included in the decisions around public lands management we want to provide a little more clarity to the conversation around collaborative management and co-management. Consider the fact that many National Parks only became "public" after forcibly removing a Native community who had made a home there for thousands of years, and consider that frontline communities are often underserved and disproportionately made up of people of color. These historically marginalized voices need to be included in the conversation and decisions about land use around them.

The absence of marginalized voices in public land management reveals why industrial, toxic, and high risk activities always take place in our backyards.

While definitions are important, what matters most are the core principles or attributes of a co-management or collaborative management approach; in other words how the collaboration plays out in practice brings meaning to the concept more than any particular word choice. Some of the principles that can promote a good collaborative or co-management relationship include:

- 1) Recognition of Tribes as sovereign governments.
- 2) Incorporation of the federal government's trust responsibilities to Tribes.
- 3) Legitimation structures for Tribal involvement.
- 4) Meaningful integration of Tribes early and often in the decision-making process (see [Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#)).
- 5) Recognition and incorporation of Tribal expertise and;
- 6) Dispute resolution mechanisms.

**BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION**  
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The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition works to engage with the federal government on these levels by preparing our collaborative Land Management Plan and working closely with the five Tribal Nations we serve.

These and many other efforts toward Tribal co-management of federal “public lands” demonstrates the potential for Tribes to engage with the federal government in new ways, while honoring Tribal values and connections into the law and management of ancestral lands.

You support these efforts by donating to our mission. To donate online click [here](#).



## Elevating Indigenous Perspectives

During Native American Heritage Month we started a campaign that recognizes Indigenous-led organizations who are protecting their sacred places, ancestral homelands, and Tribal resources. We felt that this campaign was a valuable way to elevate Indigenous perspectives and highlight organizations doing important and inspirational work for Indian Country and beyond.

So far we have highlighted the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and the effort to designate the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

See the posts on our socials for more information and stay tuned for more highlights.

## In a good way...

We want to thank you for your continued support. Sometimes the world seems chaotic and uncertain but we are happy to be engaged in the effort to honor Tribal sovereignty and to defend the sacred. We also want to leave you with this beautiful piece of art by Venaya J. Yazzie (Diné and Hopi).

[\(See her narrative about this painting on Youtube\)](#)

Thank you for your support.  
Stay safe and take care.

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





# The mountain is a sister (series 1)

By Venaya J. Yazzie



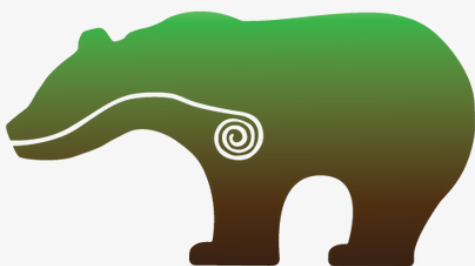
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