

Fast Facts and Q&A

Both Designations -- Q&A

What is the effect of the President's proclamations?

The President's two proclamations designate the Bears Ears National Monument and Gold Butte National Monument, comprised entirely of existing federal lands. These designations direct the responsible agencies to manage these areas for the care and management of objects of scientific and historic interest identified by the proclamations. The areas generally may not be disposed of by the United States and are closed to new extractive uses such as mining and oil and gas development, and subject to valid existing rights. The designations preserve current uses of the land, including tribal access and traditional collection of plants and firewood, off-highway vehicle recreation, hunting and fishing, legal grazing, military training operations, and utility corridors.

Site Specific Facts and Q&A - Bears Ears National Monument

Bears Ears National Monument

- 1,351,849 acres in San Juan County, Utah, jointly managed by the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service
 - 1.063 million acres managed by the BLM
 - 290,000 acres managed by the USFS

What kind of public process took place before this designation was made?

The idea of a national monument in this area is not a new one: calls for protection of the Bears Ears area began over [80 years ago](#). Tribes with ties to the area began working on a specific proposal six years ago to protect this area under the Antiquities Act. Last year at the invitation of the tribes, senior representatives from Interior and the USFS attended an Inter-Tribal Council meeting in the field at the Bears Ears buttes to engage in government-to-government dialogue. In July of this year, Secretary Jewell was joined at a [public meeting](#) in Bluff, Utah, by Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Robert Bonnie, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry Roberts, BLM Director Neil Kornze, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, and staff from the offices of Governor Herbert, Congressman Chaffetz, Congressman Bishop, Senator Lee, and Senator Hatch. At the meeting, an overflow crowd of over 1,500 citizens came to share their views. The majority of speakers encouraged permanent protection for this iconic landscape, as did the majority of almost 600 written comments. On that trip, the Secretary, Under Secretary, and other senior Administration officials also met with a number of local stakeholders to discuss protection of the

area, including a meeting with the San Juan County Commission that was well-attended by local citizens. The boundary of the monument is largely based on the Utah Public Lands Initiative ([H.R. 5780](#)), which was introduced by Reps. Bishop and Chaffetz after extensive consultations with stakeholders and the Interior Department and USDA.

The Governor of UT, Congressional Members and many members of the public have advocated for resolving this issue through legislation. How were their voices taken into account with this decision?

Congressmen Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz of Utah have also proposed to protect this area. Their Utah Public Lands Initiative ([H.R. 5780](#)), which Governor Herbert also supported, proposed to conserve roughly the same area as the Bears Ears National Monument by designating two new [National Conservation Areas](#) and a [Wilderness](#). See below for a more detailed comparison between the proclamation and the PLI.

How did this decision take into account input from tribal governments?

There is overwhelming support from tribal governments for protecting this important cultural landscape. An unprecedented coalition of five federally recognized tribes – Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribe of the Uinta Ouray – came together to develop a proposal for protecting the Bears Ears area, which is the ancestral grounds of numerous tribes in the region and remains an important area for traditional and ceremonial use. Over two dozen other tribes endorsed their proposal, as well as the National Congress of American Indians. Tribal support within the state of Utah is similarly strong. The Ute Indian Tribe of the Uinta Ouray is located in Utah, and the Utah Tribal Leaders Association endorsed the proposal. The Navajo Nation, which has seven chapter houses located in Utah, has supported the proposal at its highest levels, including support from its President and the Navajo Nation Council. Six of their seven chapter houses in Utah support the monument proposal, and the one that has rescinded its support has instead advocated for protecting the area through the Public Lands Initiative.

This designation will protect the story of hundreds of generations of native peoples who have lived in the surrounding sandstone canyons, desert mesas, and meadow mountaintops, which consist of one of the densest and most significant cultural landscapes in the U.S. Also protected by today's designation is abundant rock art, ancient cliff dwellings, ceremonial sites, and countless other sites of historic and sacred importance to Native American tribes. To reflect tribal expertise and traditional and historical knowledge, a Bears Ears Commission has been created to enable tribes to share information and advice with federal land managers.

Where is the Bears Ears National Monument?

The Bears Ears National Monument is located in southeast Utah's canyon country, in San Juan County. The boundaries of the monument encompass approximately 1.06 million acres managed by the Department of the Interior's BLM, and nearly 290,000 acres within the boundaries of the Manti-La Sal National [Forest managed by the USFS](#). The total acreage under federal management is approximately 1.35 million acres. Over 380,000 acres of the federal lands within the boundaries are currently managed by the BLM as 11 Wilderness Study Areas, natural lands without roads which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. Significant portions (totaling 29,000 acres) of the BLM-managed part of the monument are also currently managed as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, which are managed for the protection of their outstanding cultural, natural, and scenic values. The BLM-managed part of the monument also contains nine Special Recreation Management Areas, which are managed for their recreation opportunities. The USFS administers the 46,000-acre

Dark Canyon Wilderness just north of the Bears Ears formation, as well as the Cliff Dwellers Pasture Research Natural Area.

How does the designation compare with the Utah Public Lands Initiative?

The proclamation is similar to and builds upon the PLI in many ways.

Acreage

The Bears Ears National Monument is similar in size to the Bears Ears and Indian Creek National Conservation Areas and Mancos Mesa Wilderness in the PLI:

	PLI Acres (Bears Ears and Indian Creek NCAs + Mancos Mesa Wilderness)	Bears Ears National Monument Boundary Acres
Federal	1,277,076	1,351,849
State	99,422	109,106*
Private	12,556	12,652*
Total	1,389,074	1,473,607

* The monument designation does not impact or affect non-federal acreage. Only federal land is subject to the terms of the proclamation

Management Plans

The PLI and the proclamation both require the development of management plans for the designations with robust public involvement, including consultation with state, local, and tribal governments. The PLI's boundary includes 115,000 acres of land managed by the National Park Service. The monument boundary does not include NPS land, but the BLM and USFS land managers will work with the NPS to ensure consistent management of these important landscapes.

Tribal Commission

The PLI and the proclamation both establish tribal commissions to provide information and recommendations to allow for the integration of tribal expertise and traditional knowledge into management. The PLI's commission would be for the Bears Ears NCA only, and would not include the Indian Creek NCA or Mancos Mesa Wilderness.

Advisory Council

The PLI and the proclamation both call for advisory committees or councils made up of a variety of interested local stakeholders to assist in the development and implementation of management plans for the NCAs and monument, respectively.

Withdrawal

Neither the PLI nor the monument would affect existing oil, gas, and mining operations. Both the PLI and the proclamation would prohibit new mineral leases, mining claims, prospecting or exploration activities, and oil, gas, and geothermal leases.

Grazing

The PLI and the monument both allow livestock grazing to continue. The PLI includes additional management guidelines including setting a floor that would prohibit managers from reducing grazing below certain levels. The BLM and the USFS will continue to grant grazing permits and leases under the proclamation.

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use

The PLI and the proclamation would both require travel management plans, and would limit OHVs to routes designated for their use. The proclamation would require those roads and trails to be consistent with the care and management of the objects the monument protects, and that new roads or trails for motorized vehicle use be for the purposes of public safety or protection of the monument's objects.

Hunting & Fishing

Neither the PLI nor the proclamation would affect the jurisdiction of the State of Utah with respect to fish and wildlife management, including hunting and fishing.

Who supports the Bears Ears National Monument?

In addition to the significant tribal leadership on this effort, this designation is also supported by a broad group of stakeholders from the recreation, archaeological, paleontological, conservation, business, and religious communities. A number of these letters of support can be found [here](#).

How does the proclamation impact water rights?

The monument designation is subject to valid existing rights, including water rights.

How does the designation impact public access?

The designation allows for public access, such as for hunting and fishing, which continue to be managed by the State of Utah. It also ensures that tribes will continue to be able to collect plants, firewood, and other traditional materials within the monument. Visitors may continue to use motorized vehicles and non-motorized mechanized vehicles (e.g. mountain bikes) on roads and trails designated as open for their use.

How will local input be incorporated into the monument management plan?

The proclamation retains the existing management responsibility for the lands in the respective agencies, but requires the agencies to cooperate in management planning. The BLM and USFS will undertake a monument planning process for the monument, including opportunities for public input according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and each agency's planning regulations and policies. The BLM and USFS staff will schedule informal open houses in January to answer questions from permittees and other interested stakeholders, and as part of the formal management planning process will announce public sessions later this winter and spring. The agencies will cooperate and consult with state, local, and tribal governments as part of each planning process. The proclamation also establishes a local advisory committee made up of interested stakeholders including state and local governments, tribes, recreational users, local business owners, and private landowners, as well as a Bears Ears Commission to enable local Tribes to provide guidance arising out of their traditional knowledge to the federal agencies.

How does the designation impact off-highway vehicle use?

The proclamation requires the Secretaries, through the BLM and USFS, to prepare a transportation plan that designates the roads and trails where motorized or non-motorized mechanized (e.g. mountain bikes) vehicle use will be allowed. That will allow off-highway vehicle (OHV) use to continue on roads, routes, and trails presently designated as open to motorized use. It does not confine motorized vehicles to roads, but allows the management agencies flexibility to allow OHVs on appropriate trails where they will not harm cultural sites or areas of scientific or historic interest. In keeping with the BLM's 2008 Monticello Field Office Resource Management Plan, motorized cross-country travel will remain prohibited. Any new roads or trails designated for motorized vehicle use would be for the purposes of public safety or protection of the monument, for example if traffic became too heavy on existing OHV trails. In existing wilderness areas, motorized and mechanized transportation is and would remain prohibited under the Wilderness Act.

How does the designation affect military uses of the land and airspace?

Nothing in the proclamation precludes low-level overflights of military aircraft, designation of new units of special use airspace, or the use or establishment of military flight training routes over the lands reserved by the proclamation, consistent with the care and management of the objects to be protected.

How is the Bears Ears Monument area treated in the BLM's Moab Master Leasing Plan?

A small portion in the north of the monument overlaps with the BLM's Moab Master Leasing Plan area. Much of that overlapping area would already be closed to leasing under the plan. The majority of the rest would be closed to surface activity, so there would have been no disturbance aboveground. A very small portion of the monument would have been open to surface leasing with stipulations under the Moab MLP. That activity, along with leasing with no surface occupancy, will not be allowed anymore under the monument designation.

How does the designation impact grazing?

The proclamation acknowledges that careful management of grazing today is consistent with efforts to restore and maintain the health of vital watersheds and grasslands. Grazing permits and leases will continue to be issued and administered by the BLM and USFS.

How, if at all, will tribes manage the monument?

Honoring tribal expertise and traditional and historical knowledge, a Bears Ears Commission has been created that will enable tribes to share information and advice with federal land managers. While tribal input will be carefully and fully considered during such planning and management, the BLM and USFS retain ultimate authority over the monument.

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