

**To:** Perea-Richmann, Joann[jperearichmann@blm.gov]; Richardson, Carrie[crichardson@blm.gov]; Vickie Briggs[vbriggs@blm.gov]  
**Cc:** Jayson Barangan[jbaranga@blm.gov]; Gary Torres[gtorres@blm.gov]  
**From:** Roberson, Edwin  
**Sent:** 2017-09-22T11:03:29-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: BLM 12117 BEC and San Juan County re Bears Ears  
**Received:** 2017-09-22T11:04:01-04:00  
[Director Briefing-BEC field tour 092117.docx](#)  
[SJCounty BENM Response Letter 091917-ER.docx](#)  
[BECommission Response Letter 091917-ER.docx](#)

Carrie, Vicki and Joann,  
Here are the draft Director Information Memo, response to San Juan County and response to the Bears Ears Commission. Let me know if there are questions or concerns. Thank you. ed

On Thu, Sep 21, 2017 at 7:34 AM, Perea-Richmann, Joann <jperearichmann@blm.gov> wrote:

Ed,

Do we have anything to upload on this?

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Joann Perea Richmann  
Executive Assistant for the  
BLM, Utah State Director  
and  
Associate State Director  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
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**From:** Briggs, Vickie <vbriggs@blm.gov>  
**Date:** Thu, Sep 21, 2017 at 6:50 AM  
**Subject:** BLM 12117 BEC and San Juan County re Bears Ears  
**To:** Joann Perea-Richmann <jperearichmann@blm.gov>

Any progress on the draft replies for these letters? The replies were to be uploaded to DTS by Sept 14.  
Thanks for your help.

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Vickie Briggs  
BLM Correspondence Office  
202-208-6671

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Ed Roberson,  
Utah BLM State Director  
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>>>>Response to San Juan County – written as response from Sec. Zinke<<<<

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Ryan Zinke dated July 5, 2017. I was asked to respond to you on the Secretary's behalf. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have not initiated preparation of a management plan for the Bears Ears National Monument (BENM). The Secretary has completed his review of the monument, as directed by Executive Order 13792, and made a final recommendation to the President. However, the development of resource management plan will not start until sometime after the President makes a final decision on the future of the Monument. When a decision is made to proceed with land use planning, the BLM is committed to meet, and exceed, its coordination responsibilities with tribes, as required by law.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, representatives of the BLM and USFS conducted a field tour with the Bears Ears Commission (Commission) to some cultural sites located in the BENM. The purpose of the trip was to serve as a listening session with the Tribes about recreation use at some cultural sites.

Visitation to public lands in the BLM Monticello Field Office has been steadily increasing the past few years and designation of the BENM has amplified interest in the area. In an effort to protect the integrity of cultural resources and improve visitor experiences, the Monticello Field Office has been implementing stabilization and protection practices and is proposing to make recreational improvements at some sites, such as construction of a parking area and restroom at Mule Canyon/House on Fire. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the existing monument proclamation, the agencies must consult with the Tribes on all Federal undertakings and coordinate with the Commission.

The field trip conducted was part of this Tribal consultation and coordination effort. Visiting sites on the ground provided Tribal leaders with an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns about individual sites. This information will be used to consider the type of additional protection practices and recreational improvements that may be needed at different locations. Please continue to work with the Utah BLM and the Monticello Field Office as they move forward with planning and other activities in the BENM consistent with the President's final decision.

Thank you again for your interest in BENM. If you have any additional questions [please contact...](#)

>>>>Response to Bears Ears Commission to Sec. Zinke – written as response from BLM Director<<<<

Thank you for your letter Secretary Ryan Zinke dated August 31, 2017. I have been asked by the Secretary to respond to you. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have not initiated preparation of a resource management plan for the Bears Ears National Monument (BENM). The Secretary has completed his review of the monument, as directed by Executive Order 13792, and made a final recommendation to the President. However, the development of resource management plan will not start until sometime after the President makes a final decision on the future of the Monument. When a decision is made to proceed with land use planning, the BLM is committed to meet, and exceed, its coordination responsibilities with tribes, as required by law.

Although a land use planning process has not been initiated, it is my understanding that BLM and USFS officials at the State and local level have been collaborating with the Bears Ears Commission (Commission) on many ongoing management decisions effecting lands within the BENM. I fully support federal agency officials continuing to work with the Commission and other Tribal leaders to ensure protection of Indian sacred sites and traditional cultural properties, and provide access to members of Indian tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses.

In addition to attending several meetings, I am aware that federal agency officials conducted a field tour June 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, with the Commission to visit to some cultural sites that have been impacted by increased visitation. I know that visitation to public lands has been steadily increasing the past few years and designation of the BENM has amplified interest in the area. In an effort to protect the integrity of cultural resources and improve visitor experiences, the Monticello Field Office has been implementing stabilization and protection practices and is proposing to make recreational improvements at some sites, such as construction of a parking area and restroom at Mule Canyon/House on Fire. Collaboration with the Commission and other interested Tribes on these projects is imperative.

The Secretary of the Interior, and I as acting BLM Director value the input the input of American Indian tribes and I am committed to ensuring that the Department is an effective partner. Please continue to work with the Utah BLM as they move forward with planning and other activities in the BENM consistent with the President's final decision.

If you have any additional questions [please contact ...](#)

INFORMATION/BRIEFING MEMORANDUM  
FOR THE BLM DIRECTOR

**DATE:** September 21, 2017  
**FROM:** Edwin Roberson, BLM Utah State Director  
**SUBJECT:** Bears Ears Commission Field Tour

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Secretary of Interior received letters in July and August from the Utah San Juan County Commission (SJC) and the Bears Ears Commission (BEC) regarding a BLM and US Forest Service (USFS) field tour with Tribal leaders to various sites in the Bears Ears National Monument (BENM). The BLM Director was asked to respond to those letters.

**BACKGROUND**

On June 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> representatives of from the BLM and USFS conducted field tour with the BEC to cultural sites located in the BENM. Two days were spent visiting sites on BLM-administered lands that have experienced increased visitation. The third day was spent visiting sites on National Forest System lands. The purpose of the trip was to serve as a listening session with Tribal leaders regarding recreation use at certain cultural sites.

On July 5, 2017, SJC sent a letter to Secretary Zinke stating “we have been told numerous times by federal officials that all meetings or planning for the BENM have been put on hold. This postponement of planning was due to the State of Utah and San Juan County’s opposition to the monument and the more recent Secretarial review and pending recommendation for certain national monuments including BENM.”

On August 31, 2017 the BEC wrote a letter to Secretary Zinke asking him to, disavow that County’s statement and “instruct departmental officials to proceed with meetings and planning for the monument.”

**DISCUSSION**

Since designation of the BENM, the BLM and USFS have been meeting with Tribal representatives, including the BEC, which represents the elected representatives of the tribes identified in the proclamation. These meetings have primarily been government to government with the line officers of the BLM and USFS representing the federal government and members of the BEC. (Per the Proclamation, the Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent permitted by law and in consultation with Indian tribes, ensure the protection of Indian sacred sites and traditional cultural properties in the monument and provide access by members of Indian tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses, consistent with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 U.S.C. 1996) and Executive Order 13007 of May 24, 1996 (Indian Sacred Sites)).

Recreation activity in the Monticello Field Office (MFO) has been steadily increasing and designation of the BENM has amplified interest in the area. The MFO has a limited number of cultural sites that are identified as “public use” sites. In an effort to protect the integrity of cultural resources and improve

visitor experiences, the MFO is proposing to identify additional public use sites and make improvements in management of recreational activities and sites.

On June 28th-30th, representatives of the BLM and USFS conducted a field tour with the BEC to some cultural sites located in the BENM. The purpose of the trip was to serve as a listening session with the Tribes about recreation use at some cultural sites. Impacts to cultural sites from increased visitation is an issue that has been raised in every meeting. Prior and subsequent to monument designation, the BLM initiated planning for several projects to safeguard cultural resources including stabilization of archeological sites, increase in cultural resource inventories, and organization of site ambassador and site stewardship programs. Work on these projects is ongoing.

At the BEC meeting held on April 2, 2017, the BLM provided the BEC with a list of 15 proposed “public use” sites. Locational information regarding all of these sites is readily available to the public on the internet and, based on accessibility of the sites, they receive frequent visitation. At some sites, visitation has already resulted in adverse impacts. This point was made by Secretary Zinke in DOI Budget Hearings, when he discussed his concern about the lack of infrastructure at sites that are receiving high levels of visitation.

At the request of the BEC, the BLM and USFS arranged a field tour to allow the BEC members to see a representative sample of these sites. On all three days, representatives from the BLM and USFS were present. Attendees included managers and specialists from the cultural and recreational programs. During portions of the field tour, representatives from three Tribes were present- Zuni, Navajo, and Ute Mountain Ute. Representatives from the Hopi and Northern Ute were unable to attend.

Tribal leaders that participated in the field trip did not express concerns with identification of any site as a “public use” site. However, there was agreement that some actions are needed in order to protect fragile cultural resources and to ensure that some items utilized in Tribal rituals or for medicinal use are protected. Tribal leaders communicated the importance of using sites within the BENM as a means of educating people about American Indian history and culture. Several other issues were discussed including involvement of Tribal youth in cultural resource protection and visitor improvement projects and access to traditional uses.

After the field trip, the SJC sent a letter of concern to the Secretary. The County Commission indicated that the hike may represent the initiation of the planning process by the BLM and USFS. That is not the case.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The initiation of monument management planning will follow a decision by the Secretary and the President regarding the monument designation, the establishment of a monument advisory committee, the publication of a Notice of Intent to initiate the plan, a request to the county to participate as a cooperating agency and the scheduling of scoping meetings. The BLM and USFS think it is beneficial to continue to meet with the BEC to establish good working relationships, and will continue to consult with the BEC, other tribes, and the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on projects. The BLM and USFS will also continue to coordinate with and engage the SJC on management activities within BENM.