

**From:** Tom Cors  
**To:** [Downey Magallanes](#); [Wynn, Todd](#)  
**Subject:** TNC response  
**Date:** Monday, December 04, 2017 4:53:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)

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Downey and Todd,

Here is a copy of our statement in response to the announcement in SLC. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Best,

Tom

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<https://www.nature.org/newsfeatures/pressreleases/the-nature-conservancy-disappointed-by-decision-to-shrink-national-monumen-1.xml>

**The Nature Conservancy Disappointed by Decision to Shrink National Monuments**

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## **ARLINGTON, VA. | December 04, 2017**

The Nature Conservancy expressed disappointment and concern with President Donald Trump's announcement today to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments.

"The president's actions are unprecedented in scale and will substantially undermine the protection of two of America's most significant natural landmarks," said Mark R. Tercek, The Nature Conservancy's president and CEO. "As a livestock operator and the largest private landowner in Bears Ears National Monument, The Nature Conservancy consistently [indicated](#) to the Administration that we do not support changing the boundaries of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments—or any of our country's national monument designations. We are deeply disappointed that the Administration created an incomprehensible patchwork of land management jurisdictions. Shrinking these national monuments is the wrong direction for our country."

The Administration's proclamations will cut Bears Ears by 85 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante by 50 percent.

"The president's actions go beyond simple boundary adjustments. This is a direct challenge to the purposes of the Antiquities Act itself," Tercek said. "The Antiquities Act is an important tool for protecting significant natural areas and cultural resources. If today's announcement stands, the Antiquities Act will no longer be a reliable conservation tool, and every national monument that was established through the act can no longer be considered permanently protected."

The Conservancy has the following concerns about the cuts to Bears Ears National Monument:

- Shrinking Bears Ears from 1.35 million acres to 201,876 acres removes more than 1 million acres of land from national monument status.
- Dividing a contiguous management unit into two smaller, independent monuments will create a patchwork of jurisdictions that is more difficult to manage and costlier for taxpayers. This also applies to Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.
- By dividing the Bears Ears monument into two parts—the Indian Creek National Monument and the Shash Jaa National Monument—the decision bifurcates

existing grazing allotment boundaries, which will create confusion over management and will likely restrict and complicate the Conservancy's grazing and research programs on the ground.

- Today's announcement references retaining the Bears Ears Tribal Commission but makes no mention of the local stakeholder advisory committee found in the original proclamation that was established to provide guidance on grazing, recreation and the development of a management plan. The president did not specify whether other portions of the original Bears Ears proclamation still apply. This lack of clarity is confusing and adverse to sound management.
- Unlike in the original Bears Ears proclamation, the president's announcement did not mention the need to exchange state institutional trust lands from either of the two new monuments.

President Barack Obama established Bears Ears National Monument in 2016 after Congress and the Utah delegation failed to protect the area through the Utah Public Lands Initiative—a three-year-long, community-based legislative process involving extensive public input. This is a textbook example of why the Antiquities Act is needed—when legislative solutions are exhausted, but resources are still at risk, the president can act.

Lands and waters designated as monuments are already owned by the federal government—the national monument designation simply provides additional protections for these landscapes. National monument sites make up only a small fraction of the lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and monument designations have not significantly reduced opportunities for grazing or oil and gas leasing on public lands overall.

“The Administration should preserve all of the country's national monuments to bring economic, environmental, recreational and social benefits to local communities,” Tercek said. “Americans employed by the farming, ranching, forestry, fishing and recreation industries rely on healthy lands and waters for their livelihoods. National monument designations boost local economies, provide recreation opportunities, protect wildlife habitat and improve the health and well-being of the American people.”

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The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We are tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and

oceans at an unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. Working in 72 countries, we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. To learn more, visit [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org) or follow [@nature\\_press](https://twitter.com/nature_press) on Twitter.



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