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Here you go. Robin

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**Date:** Mon, Jan 9, 2017 at 12:09 PM  
**Subject:** WO410 Transition Briefing Papers  
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Hi Kim and Lark,  
Please find attached a Jan 21 briefing paper on new national monuments we were asked to prepare. The 50th Anniversary for River and Trails briefing paper should also be included but there are no changes needed.

Thanks,

Nikki Moore  
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## **ISSUE: BLM'S NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS**

### **NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREAS UPDATE**

#### **I. KEY POINTS**

- On December 28, 2016 President Obama issued two Proclamations that designated the 1.35 million-acre Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah and the 300,000-acre Gold Butte National Monument in southern Nevada.
- These new monuments encompass approximately 1.36 million acres managed by the BLM, and nearly 290,000 acres within the boundaries of the Manti-La Sal National Forest managed by the USFS. The two monuments will protect unique and irreplaceable sacred sites, spectacular scenery, and important desert landscapes.
- 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, grazing, military training operations, utility corridors, and other valid and existing rights.
- BLM's National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and Similar Designations (NM/NCA) Program comprises some of the agency's most visited sites. Each year, millions of Americans and international tourists visit these areas to experience the fantastic range of recreational activities these lands provide.
- Some of the most popular activities on NMs/NCAs include hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, off-road vehicle use, horseback riding, target shooting, and boating.
- These areas provide great economic benefits to their surrounding communities. For every \$1 the NM/NCA program receives in funding, it generates approximately \$16 for local economies.<sup>1</sup>
- These lands contribute over \$600 million to regional economies each year.
- Excluding Federal employees, the NM/NCA program supported 6,000 jobs as of 2016.

#### **II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

- The current budget of the NM/NCA program is \$2.73 per acre. Comparatively, the National Park Service has a budget of \$35.71 per acre.<sup>2</sup>
- The program's budget has remained nearly flat for several years, despite the addition of millions of acres. This inadequate level of funding reduces the ability of the agency to

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<sup>1</sup> See "Economic Report: National Conservation Lands," Feb. 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Determined using the NPS FY2016 total budget and total land acres figures.

properly manage these lands, resulting in fewer benefits for the public—decreased recreational opportunities, economic contributions, and community jobs supported.

### **III. BACKGROUND**

#### **National Conservation Lands**

- The two monuments will become units of BLM’s National Conservation Lands system, which contains some of the West’s most spectacular landscapes.
- These lands include 876 federally recognized areas and approximately 36 million acres of NMs/NCAs, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservation Lands of the California Desert.
- BLM’s NM/NCA program maintains 23 National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and Similar Designations that have been legislated by Congress as well as 25 National Monuments that have been designated by Presidents.
- Like all BLM land, NMs/NCAs are multiple-use sites that are open to a wide variety of activities. These include recreation, scientific research, and energy development.
- Each NM/NCA is unique, encompassing landscapes as diverse as lush coastlines, colorful desert canyons, and mountainous tundra, as well as cultural treasures including remnants of America’s pioneer history and ancient tribal pueblos. These lands preserve the incredible cultural and recreational legacy of our country.
- The Bears Ears NM protects some of the most significant cultural landscapes in the U.S., including abundant rock art, ancient cliff dwellings, ceremonial sites, and other places important to Native American tribes. To reflect tribal expertise, the Bears Ears Commission has been created to enable tribes to share insight with federal land managers.
- The BLM and USFS will undertake a monument planning process for the two new monuments, including opportunities for public input, according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and each agency’s planning regulations and policies.
- Both proclamations also establish local advisory committees made up of interested stakeholders including state and local governments, tribes, recreational users, local business owners, and private landowners.

**IV. PREPARED BY:** Mark Conley, Acting National Monument & National Conservation Areas Program Lead, 202-912-7172, and Ilana Cohen, Natural Resource Specialist, 202-912-7299  
**DATE:** January 6, 2017