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1. Trump slashes 2 Utah sites

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter

Published: December 4, 2017 at 2:34 PM

SALT LAKE CITY — President Trump today signed proclamations cutting the acreage of two national monuments in southern Utah, excising more than 2 million acres from them in the largest-ever reversal of federal monument protections.

<https://goo.gl/sRncnv>

2. Shrinking sites vital for states' rights — Trump

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

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<https://goo.gl/FnBsfW>

3. Trump is poised to shrink 2 areas today. Scientists are worried

Brittany Patterson, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

All eyes are on Utah today as President Trump heads to the state Capitol to announce major cuts to two of the state's largest and most controversial national monuments.

<https://goo.gl/D1qu3e>

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Lawmakers this week will turn a spotlight on the Interior Department's future.

<https://goo.gl/4KDJ2h>

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<https://goo.gl/Ep44ta>

6. Lawsuits begin after Trump pares 2 sites

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

SALT LAKE CITY — Environmentalists and tribal groups this afternoon moved to file lawsuits immediately after President Trump signed proclamations slashing the size of two national monuments in southern Utah.

<https://goo.gl/mqZ5MV>

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1. Trump slashes 2 Utah sites

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Published: December 4, 2017 at 2:34 PM

SALT LAKE CITY — President Trump today signed proclamations cutting the acreage of two national monuments in southern Utah, excising more than 2 million acres from them in the largest-ever reversal of federal monument protections.

Flanked by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert (R), Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) and Utah Republican Sens. Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee, Trump undid protections for 85 percent of the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears National Monument and nearly half of the 1.9 million acres in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

"Some people think that the natural resources of Utah should be controlled by a small handful of very distant bureaucrats located in Washington, and guess what, they're wrong," said Trump, who signed the proclamations inside the Utah State Capitol.

"They don't know your land, and truly they don't care for your land like you do," he added. "But from now on, that won't matter."

According to details provided by the Interior Department, the proclamations will retain both monuments' existing monikers but will divide the sites into five smaller units.

Grand Staircase-Escalante will become the Grand Staircase Unit of about 210,000 acres, the Kaiparowits Unit of 551,000 acres and the Escalante Canyons Unit of 243,000 acres.

The Bears Ears National Monument will be comprised of the Indian Creek Unit with 72,000 acres and Shash Jaa Unit with about 130,000 acres.

Environmental and conservation groups led by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the Sierra Club's Utah chapter protested outside the Utah State Capitol, which remained under heightened security for the president's visit.

Members of the five Native American tribes who lobbied to establish the Bears Ears monument vowed last week to immediately file a lawsuit challenging Trump's actions (*Greenwire*, Dec. 1).

The groups argue that while presidents have the authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish monuments to protect federal land with historic, scientific or cultural value, the law does not grant presidents the power to reduce those sites.

Although presidents have previously redrawn the boundaries of monuments — totaling about 461,000 acres, according to National Park Service data, about one-fourth of the land excised by Trump today — none of those actions has ever been challenged in court.

"Trump's unprecedented, illegal action is a brutal blow to our public lands, an affront to Native Americans and a disgrace to the presidency," said Center for Biological Diversity Public Lands Program Director Randi Spivak. "He wants to hand over these lands to private industry to mine, frack, bulldoze and clear-cut until there's nothing left for our children and grandchildren."

President Obama created the Bears Ears monument in late 2016, drawing the ire of Utah lawmakers who had failed to protect a similar area via legislation known as the Public Lands Initiative. Utah state and federal officials have also long been critical of the Grand Staircase-Escalante monument created by President Clinton in 1996.

<https://goo.gl/sRncnv>

2. Shrinking sites vital for states' rights Trump

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

SALT LAKE CITY — President Trump today described his anticipated cuts to two national monuments in southern Utah as "so important for states' rights," but the White House remained tight-lipped about details ahead of a formal announcement here this afternoon.

Trump, who traveled to Utah accompanied by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, is expected to sign presidential proclamations significantly reducing both the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah and the 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southwestern Utah.

"We're going to be doing something that the state of Utah and others have wanted to be done for many, many years," Trump said outside the White House this morning. "It will be one of the really great events in this country in a long time. So important for states' rights and so important for the people of Utah."

But he did not indicate how much of the more than 3 million acres in protected public lands he will excise from the current monuments.

House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) told E&E News this morning that he had yet to see the proposed cuts but expected to introduce related legislation tomorrow. Zinke has called for Congress to introduce legislation establishing tribal co-management of cultural areas within the new monument boundaries (*E&E Daily*, Sept. 27).

"Every rumor you've heard is people pretending to know the details," Bishop said of the expected cuts.

Environmentalists pushing for a last-minute reprieve from the anticipated cuts plan to protest outside Utah's state Capitol, where Trump is set to speak at 12:30 MST.

While similar protests attracted thousands of participants on Saturday, according to local media reports, the events appear unlikely to influence Trump.

In addition to Zinke, Trump was joined on Air Force One today by Republican Utah Sens. Mike Lee and Orrin Hatch, whom Trump has previously credited with aggressively pushing the White House to issue monument reforms (*Greenwire*, April 26).

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert (R) is also scheduled to attend today's event.

Neither White House officials nor the Interior Department has revealed the exact reductions that Trump will enact, but according to maps obtained by the Wilderness Society and the Native American Rights Fund and first reported by *The Washington Post*, the reductions would result in five smaller national monuments. None of the new sites would maintain the Bears Ears moniker (*E&E News PM*, Nov. 30).

In the meantime, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the Sierra Club's Utah chapter plan to hold a second round of protests near the state Capitol today.

The Saturday event attracted about 5,000 people, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which relied on Utah Highway Patrol estimates of the crowd.

Navajo Nation Attorney General Ethel Branch, who is expected to file a lawsuit challenging any reductions along with the Native American Rights Fund, urged Trump to "visit these lands" during the Saturday rally.

"I encourage him to take off his shoes and socks and feel the dirt with his toes, to reconnect and feel the heartbeat of Mother Earth," she said, according to the *Deseret News*.

Proponents of reducing the monuments gathered for a smaller rally in support of the reductions outside the San Juan County courthouse on Saturday, according to local news reports.

Legal battles ahead

Zinke has recommended that a quartet of other sites be cut, including the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and California and the Gold Butte National Monument in Nevada.

But opponents of potential reductions to national monuments have argued that Trump lacks authority to make such changes.

"The implications of President Trump attempting to overstep the limits of his power by rolling back national monuments extend well beyond the harm caused to the monuments themselves — and our natural and cultural heritage that they protect," Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship President David Jenkins wrote on his group's website last week. "It represents an abuse of power."

Although the Antiquities Act of 1906 allows presidents to establish national monuments from existing federal land to protect areas of cultural, historic or scientific interest, it does not grant the White House occupant the option to reduce or eliminate such sites.

Although past presidents have reduced monuments — the last incident occurred when President Kennedy adjusted the boundaries of the Bandelier National Monument in 1963 — none of those decisions has ever faced a legal challenge.

Jenkins also pointed to an analysis written by attorneys Bruce Fein and W. Bruce DelValle.

"The plain meaning of the Antiquities Act, however, does not delegate legislative power to the President to revoke or to materially disturb prior presidential national monument declarations," the duo wrote.

In addition to the five Native American tribes expected to file suit against Trump over the changes — the Navajo Nation, Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Zuni and Hopi tribes — Patagonia Inc. CEO Rose Marcario has said that her company and others plan to file their own lawsuit.

Numerous state attorneys general — from California, Washington and New Mexico — also pledged legal challenges to the Trump administration, although it remains to be seen whether a case will emerge unless Trump targets monuments in those states (Greenwire, June 9).

"Progressive state attorneys general are on record: The president does not have the authority under the Antiquities Act to override previous presidents' decisions to protect special public lands for the benefit of future generations through national monument designations. Only the Congress can do that," said former Obama administration Interior official David Hayes, now executive director of the State Energy & Environmental Impact Center at New York University's School of Law.

<https://goo.gl/FnBsFW>

3. Trump is poised to shrink 2 areas today. Scientists are worried

Brittany Patterson, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

All eyes are on Utah today as President Trump heads to the state Capitol to announce major cuts to two of the state's largest and most controversial national monuments.

Trump is expected to eliminate nearly 85 percent of Bear Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah, cutting more than 1 million acres from its current boundaries. He's also set to halve the nearly 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (E&E News PM, Nov. 30).

The move is being praised by Republicans who have long argued that the Antiquities Act — the 1906 law that allows presidents to set aside public land — is being used unlawfully to lock up tracts of federal land. On the other side, Democratic allies have vowed to take any monument reductions to court.

Scientists who have studied the region, especially Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, say redrawing its boundaries could be detrimental to scientific research and discoveries.

"The monument has been demonstrably a very, very important scientific laboratory to learning and understanding on many realms," said Mike Scott, a retired U.S. Geological Survey researcher.

Scott and his colleagues have spent time in Grand Staircase-Escalante studying how different management policies and activities on rangelands — there are many different kinds across the ecologically diverse monument — affect the health of those ecosystems. Rangeland activities include anything from how grazing affects soil quality to the health of different soil types.

As climate change brings warmer, drier conditions, understanding how to keep soils and grassland ecosystems healthy in arid landscapes is crucial to avoid desertification, Scott said. Grand Staircase-Escalante has been "a really critical living laboratory," he said.

When President Clinton designated the monument in 1996, it drew fire as a land grab from many local residents. A major coal deposit sits inside the monument boundaries, as do untold archaeological and

paleontological artifacts. Allowing access to that coal would release carbon dioxide and add to climate change, environmental groups argue.

In his monument **proclamation**, Clinton wrote about the immense ecological diversity, both current and past, inside Grand Staircase-Escalante and touted its scientific value. Today, many refer to the monument as the "science monument." Although it has faced major funding cuts and seen its ability to conduct science shrink in recent years, research coming out of the area has been "some of the most incredible science," said Phil Hanceford, conservation director of the Wilderness Society's Bureau of Land Management Action Center and a member of the advisory committee for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

"It's so remote, it's a living museum," he said. "Anybody who went out there, including the president, would realize what a treasure we have in this place."

Paleoecologist Scott Anderson studies the middens, or dens, created by pack rats in Grand Staircase-Escalante. The small creatures, common across the West, store plants and other organic material in small crevices. While the rats may only live a few years, the middens can survive for thousands, providing a unique opportunity for scientists to reconstruct the ecological portrait of the environment of that time.

Midden data help scientists understand past climates and how ecosystems have changed. Clinton addressed those data specifically in his presidential proclamation as a reason to protect Grand Staircase-Escalante.

As people face current and future environmental challenges, including climate change, having a window into the past can shed light on the magnitude of changes to come for Western ecosystems, said Anderson, who is a professor of environmental and quaternary sciences at Northern Arizona University.

Slashing the boundaries of the monument could uproot long-term research, he added.

"One of the points of preserving public lands is to allow for the development of knowledge," Anderson said. "You don't put land aside for scientific inquiry and then suddenly, after 10 years, say you know everything."

Shrinking the monuments could also reduce the landscapes' physical resilience and disrupt wildlife migration corridors, experts say. Wildlife corridors are expected to become more important as the impacts of climate change deepen.

The large size of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears means both offer protection to a wide variety of plant and animal species, and ecological processes and conditions. At Grand Staircase-Escalante, the monument encompasses red rock canyon bottoms, valleys, mountain peaks and everything in between.

At Bears Ears, landscapes vary by type but also encompass a large change in gradient. Mule deer, black bears and mountain lions roam the pinyon juniper woodlands at lower elevations and mixed conifers at higher elevations, said Brett Dickson, co-director of the Lab of Landscape Ecology and Conservation Biology and an associate professor at Northern Arizona University.

By protecting a wide variety of habitats, Bears Ears contains a built-in buffer against climate change. It also plays host to endemic species and their unique habitats, which are only found in the monument.

"The range of conditions is pretty phenomenal in Bears Ears when it comes to variety of species and habitats that occur there," Dickson said. "As we lose protections, we would certainly be concerned about loss of species, especially those species that may be only found there, as well as a loss of the habitat that supports them under climate change or land-use change."

In an **analysis** for the liberal Center for American Progress, Dickson and his colleagues found that both Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears topped the charts in terms of ecological intactness and connectivity. They assessed 22 monuments altogether.

"Losing those protections is like losing protections for some of our most prized and cherished national parks," he said. "The values are that comparable from an ecological and biological standpoint."

<https://goo.gl/D1qu3e>

4. Committee eyes agency's potential transformation

Michael Doyle, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

Lawmakers this week will turn a spotlight on the Interior Department's future.

Hidebound to some, and hallowed to others, the sprawling department established in 1849 is now subject to renewed organizational scrutiny from Congress and Trump administration officials alike. The end results could be dramatic.

"There's two elements to what they're talking about," Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said in an interview. "One would be physically moving the people closer to where the customers are ... [and] there's also a cultural change."

Bishop leads the House Natural Resources Committee, which gives him a seat on the panel's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee that is convening the Thursday morning hearing titled "Transforming the Department of the Interior for the 21st Century." The 11-member subcommittee is led by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.).

Some Democrats worry about the kind of organizational revolution Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke may have in mind. A retired Navy SEAL officer, Zinke has previously suggested Interior could take a page from the military's system of combatant commands that consolidate forces around regions.

In Interior's case, that might be translated to something like watersheds.

"Certainly, Secretary Zinke has made clear his desire to really fundamentally change the structure of the department," Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) said in an interview. "I'm never one to defend the status quo of a big bureaucracy; however, some of the things he's said cause me concern."

Huffman, a member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, cited in particular the possibilities of a "militarily inspired structure" or of mandating "two-year rotations" by Interior staff.

"Maybe there are reasons for the ways things have been done," Huffman said, "and so instead of just blowing everything up and putting it back together again ... I think you should be a little more thoughtful."

In April, speaking of reorganization, Zinke said that he would "approach this job like I approached every command I was tasked with in the Navy: empower the front lines; cut the waste, fraud and abuse; hold people accountable; and do more with less."

The Interior Department has not yet made any formal reorganization proposal, and it's not clear when one might be forthcoming, nor what sort of legislative-, administrative- or appropriations-related steps might be required.

One commonly heard notion, though, would involve moving one or more of Interior's public land agencies out West, so officials might be closer to their customary clients and, the theory goes, better reflect the region's culture (*E&E News PM*, Nov. 16).

Most of the 247 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management, for instance, is located in Western states.

In July, Zinke suggested to some employees that the BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Reclamation could all eventually relocate their headquarter operations to Denver, according to employee notes previously obtained by E&E News (*Greenwire*, Aug. 15).

"It's big, [and] it's bold, and it's desperately needed," Bishop said of the reorganization push. "We've talked about these things before, but Zinke is the first secretary to speak seriously about making these sorts of moves."

Reporter Kellie Lunney contributed.

Schedule: The hearing is Thursday, Dec. 7, at 10 a.m. in 1324 Longworth.

Witnesses: TBA.

<https://goo.gl/4KDJ2h>

5. Western governors push for disaster aid, smaller herd sizes

Scott Streater, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

The Western Governors' Association approved a series of public lands resolutions over the weekend calling on federal agencies to reduce the size of wild horse herds on rangelands and to make it easier to provide disaster relief to Western communities, especially those affected by wildfires.

The governors also approved a resolution at their winter meeting in Phoenix, calling on federal land managers to allow for "the continued responsible use of federal lands for grazing."

Those three resolutions, approved by the governors on Saturday, update similar resolutions the governors approved in 2015. A fourth resolution updates one approved last year encouraging an "all-of-the above approach to energy" and prioritizing energy storage, grid resilience and cybersecurity.

But the wild horse and burro management resolution is notable because it does not offer support for proposals by the Trump administration, and some in Congress, to allow horses and burros that cannot be adopted to be sold without restriction or, if old or sick, to be euthanized.

The national debate over reducing growing herd sizes has included the controversial idea of euthanizing animals that cannot be adopted.

The House version of an Interior Department fiscal 2018 spending bill includes a provision that would lift restrictions on the Bureau of Land Management to sell or, in specific circumstances, euthanize excess animals; the Senate version does not.

But BLM's National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board in October approved a resolution stating that the agency should remove all "excess animals" from federal rangelands within the next three years (*Greenwire*, Oct. 20).

The advisory panel also expressed renewed support for a resolution it approved last year calling for unadoptable horses and burros to be euthanized.

While not addressing euthanasia, the governors' resolution does acknowledge the need for action, noting that there are now more than 72,000 feral horses and burros roaming millions of acres of federal rangelands.

That figure is approaching 50,000 more animals than the appropriate management level, or what regulators believe is the maximum number of horses and burros the rangeland can support without causing damage to vegetation, soils and other resources.

The resolution notes that some fertility control options "have proven effective on domestic animals, including horses and burros, and should be utilized for wild horse and burro population management." It also states that the gathering and removal of wild horses on federal rangelands "should continue and be expanded by BLM."

President Trump's fiscal 2018 budget request, however, calls for cutting \$10 million in funding from BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program, with the idea of reducing the number of horse gathers.

Wildfires, cattle

The governors also approved a **resolution** acknowledging that natural disasters, "especially wildfires," have increased, and that a better process is needed to allow states to have access to disaster relief funding.

It also calls on the Federal Emergency Management Agency to work with "states and territories" to "jointly identify disaster risks and methods by which such risks may be addressed."

The resolution contains a section focusing on the need for mitigation.

Nowhere is that need more pronounced than in national forestlands, where there are millions of dead trees killed by insects or disease that can help spread wildfires.

The cost to fight wildfires across the West this year has exceeded \$2 billion, leaving little or no money left for mitigation projects, such as removing dead or dying trees.

"While aid may be provided following a natural disaster, the event itself could be avoided or minimized if resources were directed to pre-disaster mitigation efforts," the resolution states. "When possible, pre-disaster mitigation should be incentivized at the state and local levels."

The livestock grazing resolution focuses on efforts in recent years to limit or curtail grazing on some federal allotments.

"Livestock grazing on federal lands is compatible with recreation and wildlife management and fulfills the multiple use and sustained yield mission of both the [Forest Service] and BLM," the resolution says.

"Policies, analyses, or planning decisions that lead to closing allotments must be based on documented threats and causal factors consistent with state policies and programs as well as federal multiple use missions," it adds.

Any decisions by federal land managers to reduce the size of or close a grazing allotment "should only be based upon completion of a full and complete administrative review and analysis," it says.

<https://goo.gl/Ep44ta>

6. Lawsuits begin after Trump pares 2 sites

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter Published: Monday, December 4, 2017

SALT LAKE CITY — Environmentalists and tribal groups this afternoon moved to file lawsuits immediately after President Trump signed proclamations slashing the size of two national monuments in southern Utah.

Trump removed more than 2 million acres from the sites in the largest-ever reversal of federal monument protections. He undid protections for 85 percent of the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears National Monument and nearly half of the 1.9 million acres in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Ten green groups filed a suit alleging the move is an abuse of presidential power, and five tribes also plan a legal challenge.

"Some people think that the natural resources of Utah should be controlled by a small handful of very distant bureaucrats located in Washington, and guess what, they're wrong," said Trump, who signed the proclamations inside the Utah State Capitol.

"They don't know your land, and truly they don't care for your land like you do," he added. "But from now on that won't matter."

According to details provided by the Interior Department, the proclamations will retain both monuments' existing monikers but will divide the sites into five smaller units.

As shown on this [map](#), Grand Staircase-Escalante will become the Grand Staircase Unit of about 210,000 acres, the Kaiparowits Unit of 551,000 acres and the Escalante Canyons Unit of 243,000 acres. The Bears Ears Monument will comprise the Indian Creek Unit with 72,000 acres and Shash Jaa Unit with about 130,000 acres, per this [map](#).

"We will put our nation's treasures to great and wonderful use," Trump said.

In addition, the proclamations will include language requiring that existing levels of grazing will not be reduced within the new monument boundaries.

Both proclamations also include provisions granting access to both motorized and nonmotorized vehicles on all "roads and trails that were in use prior" to national monument designation.

Trump signed the proclamations flanked by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and at least four Utah Republicans — Gov. Gary Herbert, Sens. Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee, and House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop.

"Our public land is for the public to use and not special interests," Zinke said in remarks at the event. "As important, is this is about us. This is about giving rural America a voice — in giving the great state of Utah a voice — on how and when and what and why we love our lands and giving the local voice back to America."

San Juan County Commissioner Rebecca Benally, a member of the Navajo Nation who has been an outspoken critic of the Bears Ears monument, thanked Trump as well as the conservative Sutherland Institute for its work to roll back the monument.

"The monument designation was nothing but a land grab," Benally said in opening remarks.

According to information provided by Interior, Benally is expected to become a member of the Bears Ears Commission that advises the federal government on management of that site.

Protests

Outside the Utah State Capitol today, environmental and conservation groups led by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the Sierra Club's Utah chapter protested Trump's expected announcement.

Environmental organizations as well as Native American tribes are now filing lawsuits against the Trump administration challenging its actions.

"This is unprecedented — and it's illegal," said Natural Resources Defense Council President Rhea Suh.

Opponents argue that while presidents have the authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish monuments to protect federal land with historic, scientific or cultural value, the law does not grant presidents the power to reduce those sites.

Although presidents have previously redrawn the boundaries of monuments — totaling about 461,000 acres, according to National Park Service data, about one-fourth of the land excised by Trump today — none of those actions has ever been challenged in court.

"Presidents use the Antiquities Act to create national monuments and protect our special lands and waters for future generations," Suh added. "This president thinks he can use it to destroy them, grabbing the iconic landscapes and marine areas all Americans own, and handing them over to polluters and private interests."

She added: "What's next, President Trump — the Grand Canyon? See you in court."

Earthjustice is representing eight organizations in one lawsuit: the Wilderness Society, the Grand Canyon Trust, the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, the Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians and the Western Watersheds Project. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and Natural Resources Defense Council also are co-plaintiffs but are represented by in-house counsel.

"This is a shameful and illegal attack on our nation's protected lands. National monuments are designated for their scientific, cultural and conservation value — because they are too important to damage and degrade. Teddy Roosevelt is rolling in his grave," said Defenders of Wildlife's President and CEO Jamie Rappaport Clark, referring to the former president and conservationist icon.

Members of the five Native American tribes who lobbied to establish the Bears Ears monument also vowed last week to immediately file a lawsuit challenging Trump's actions ([*Greenwire*](#), Dec. 1).

The Ute, Ute Mountain, Navajo, Hopi and Zuni tribes will file a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, officials said today.

"The Monument isn't just about a few isolated artifacts. The Monument is a living part of our culture as well as the history and culture of the United States," Ute Indian Tribal Business Committee member Shaun Chapoose said in a statement. "It's a sad state of affairs when the President of this great Nation shows manifest disregard for our history and culture as a people, but we are prepared to fight for our rights, and to protect Bears Ears."

"Mr. Trump seems to take a perverse joy in ignoring federal law and dismissing the wishes of Native American tribes, conservation leaders and millions of everyday Americans," said Arizona Rep. Raúl Grijalva, the top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee. "Presidents don't have the power to wipe existing monuments off the map, and Republicans know it."

President Obama created the Bears Ears monument in late 2016, drawing the ire of Utah lawmakers who had failed to protect a similar area via legislation known as the Public Lands Initiative. Utah state and federal officials have also long been critics of the Grand Staircase-Escalante monument created by President Clinton in 1996.

'Threatened your hearts'

But the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and Public Lands Council praised the reductions, calling the existing sites the result of "egregious federal overreach."

"Previous administrations abused the power of the Antiquities Act, designating huge swaths of land as national monuments without any public input or review," said PLC President Dave Eliason. "Rural communities in Utah and across the West have paid the price."

NCBA President Craig Uden said he hoped to see Congress move to reform the Antiquities Act next.

The House is expected to take a floor vote early next year on legislation sponsored by Bishop, while the Senate has yet to hold hearings on its own versions of the reforms (*[Greenwire](#)*, Nov. 2).

"We are grateful that today's action will allow ranchers to resume their role as responsible stewards of the land and drivers of rural economies," Uden said.

Trump echoed that criticism in his meandering 20-minute remarks — in which he praised Hatch and Lee, touted the Christmas holiday, and discussed religious liberty — saying that national monuments bar many forms of recreation.

"We've seen many rural families stopped from enjoying their outdoor activities. And the fact that they've done it all their lives made no difference to the bureaucrats in Washington," Trump said, without offering specific details.

He added: "These abuses of the Antiquities Act have not just threatened your local economies, they've threatened your way of life. They've threatened your hearts."

[Click here](#) to read the Grand Staircase-Escalante proclamation.

<https://goo.gl/mqZ5MV>