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Trump Administration Unveils List of National Monuments Under Review

Five ocean preserves and 22 land monuments are on the list

By *Jim Carlton*

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The Interior Department has narrowed its list of national monuments and marine preserves to be reviewed for possible downsizing or elimination to about two dozen, including two of the more contentious in recent years: [Bears Ears](#) and Grand Staircase-Escalante, both in Utah.

The 22 land monuments and five ocean preserves, most of them in the Pacific Ocean, on the list released by the agency Friday total about 210 million acres, and were all created or expanded by former Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

They include some of those presidents' most high-profile land-preservation actions, and are likely to spark opposition from environmentalists who have fought for preservation of public lands.

However, the review is welcomed by those who have complained about government overreach in its control of federal lands, an issue that played out in dramatic fashion across the West with [standoffs in Nevada](#) and [Oregon between ranchers and federal officials](#).

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created in 1996, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke also is taking a look at eight other Clinton monuments including Grand Canyon-Parashant, with

1,000,000 acres in Arizona, and Nevada's Basin and Range monument with 700,000 acres.

Some of Mr. Obama's biggest monuments made the list too, including a large swatch of Pacific Ocean around Hawaii that he expanded in 2016.

In releasing the list, officials also announced the start of a public-comment period as part of the administration's review, scheduled to begin May 12. Both President Donald Trump and Mr. Zinke have said they feel the public should have a voice in such decisions.

"Today's action, initiating a formal public comment process finally gives a voice to local communities and states when it comes to Antiquities Act monument designations," Mr. Zinke said in written statement. "There is no pre-determined outcome on any monument. I look forward to hearing from and engaging with local communities and stakeholders as this process continues."

The action comes after President Trump on April 26 signed an executive order for the review of national-monument designations over 100,000 acres made since 1996, when then-President Clinton set aside about 1.8 million acres of Utah canyonlands as the Grand Staircase monument.

That monument and many others created by mostly Democratic presidents since have delighted environmentalists, but outraged many other locals who say the designation restricts traditional activities including ranching and mining.

In signing his order, President Trump said his predecessors had abused the Antiquities Act of 1906 by cordoning off federal land into monuments without seeking adequate local agreement.

He gave Mr. Zinke 120 days to report back to him on which monuments need to be revisited, and 45 days to report back on what should be done with the 1.35-million acre Bears Ears preserve, which Mr. Obama created late last year over strong local objections.

As part of his fact-finding tour, Mr. Zinke is scheduled to tour both the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments next week, and meet with local residents and officials.

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