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Communication Plan - BLM-USFS Fall 2017 Outdoor Retailer Booth - re BENM inquiries.docx

Here's my first shot at it and this should give us something to discuss on the conference call, feel free to share as draft for comment. I can take the lead in accepting review comments and tightening it up, but will need to complete on Fri to send back out. Out of pocket next week. Planning on coming up on Tues and could help with training staff.

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Communication Plan

2017 Summer Outdoor Retailer Show Fielding Questions: Bears Ears National Monument

INTRODUCTION

The Summer 2017 Outdoor Retailer Show is scheduled for July 26-29, in Salt Lake City, Utah. BLM and USFS will be hosting an information booth. We anticipate that staff and volunteers will be questioned about the Bears Ears National Monument. This document provides consistent messages and information to use when responding to both public and media.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

1. Increase understanding of opportunities for recreation within the Monticello Field Office, Manti-La Sal National Forest, including areas now within Bears Ears National Monument, stressing safety and respect for important cultural and natural resources.
2. Clearly communicate BLM's support of DOI efforts to conduct the review of National Monuments, including outreach to public and stakeholders, and follow direction given in Presidential Executive Order 13792.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Event attendees, including general members of the public, recreation community

KEY MESSAGES

1. Public input is key to sound decision making. BLM and USFS appreciate the time and effort people take in providing comments and input for our projects.
2. As part of its review of national monuments, the Department of Interior conducted the first ever formal public comment period regarding monument designations under the Antiquities Act of 1906.
3. Secretary Zinke and key members of his staff also met with stakeholders and local community members on the ground, demonstrating his commitment to hearing from everyone, particularly local voices affected by national monument designations.

STRATEGIES

1. Generally, any questions regarding the status of the monument review will be answered using information within DOI press releases. Members of the media may also be referred to press_interior@ios.doi.gov.
2. Copies of DOI Press Releases will be provided on display and for reference.
3. Provide information regarding recreation in the Monticello Field Office and southern Manti-La Sal National Forest. Copies of fact sheets, FAQs, brochures, and maps found on the website will be available on display. Members of the public will be referred to the BLM website page for more details or to obtain copies. For those with mobile apps, demonstrations can be provided to assist in download and use of georeferenced maps.

TACTICS

Provide information and training to everyone staffing the booth to ensure they are comfortable fielding questions and responding with consistent and accurate information, while respecting Department guidance for discretion on this topic.

Volunteers are encouraged to listen openly as people express opinions or repeat comments that they made, whether they are expressing support, opposition, or providing additional information about the resources found within the Bears Ears National Monument and others under review. We ask that they do not offer their personal opinions, but thank people for their efforts and for taking the time to provide comments.

If someone pushes for opinions or comments from volunteers, ask volunteers to redirect the question, say they are more interested in hearing from the that person about their views, demonstrating and modeling good listening skills and the importance of hearing from the public.

TALKING POINTS

I. Secretarial Review of National Monuments:

In response to media inquiries:

The Department of Interior is coordinating all media inquiries regarding Bears Ears National Monument at this time. Please contact interior_press@ios.doi.gov. You may also contact Jayson Barangun, Acting Public Affairs Chief in the BLM-Utah State Office. Thank you.

If asked about Utah's efforts to transfer Federal Lands to States:

In recent statements, Secretary Zinke has firmly restated his general opposition to the sale or transfer of public lands and the importance of retaining federal ownership regardless of any recommendations for modifications to national monuments

Other questions (*All but the last one are paraphrased or direct quotes from DOI Press Releases*):

“We are grateful to...” or “BLM and DOI extend our appreciation for” - everyone that took the time to comment, and to stakeholders that hosted field trips or met with Secretary Zinke. This was the first ever public review and comment for decisions about national monuments created under the Antiquities Act. The comments received will help inform Secretary Zinke’s recommendations to the President.

Twenty-seven National Monuments and Marine National Monuments were included in the review, although on July 13, The Secretary announced that he will not recommend changes to Craters of the Moon and Hanford Reach National Monuments.

On June 12, 2017 Secretary Zinke submitted a 45 day interim report on Bears Ears National Monument to the President. His initial recommendations include:

- Right-sizing of monument boundaries,
- Areas with significant cultural interest be co-managed by Tribal Nations, and
- Congress take action to protect some areas.

The public comment period was open for about two months from May 12, 2017 to July 10, 2017 and is now closed. The final report is expected to be complete in late August.

The Department has not provided any official statements regarding the number of comments received, although estimates from various sources have appeared in the media. Regardless of the number, every comment is important and the information gathered during this review will be carefully considered in developing final recommendations.

II. Recreation Information within the Monticello Field Office and Manti La Sal National Forest, including Bears Ears National Monument

Recreation and Visitor Safety

- Visitor safety is of utmost importance, particularly as we enter into the drier hotter summer months.
- Visitors are encouraged to plan day trips rather than overnight stays, as water resources are extremely limited and temperatures are routinely over 100 degrees this time of year.
- Water is scarce and crucial for wildlife survival.
- Backpacking and overnight excursions are better suited to spring and fall months.
- Permits are self-service during the summer months and may be obtained at trailheads
- Day trips, short hikes, and scenic drives are encouraged for exploring this region during the summer season when temperatures are routinely in the 100's and water is scarce. For a safer, more enjoyable visit, carry plenty of water and wear protective clothing.
- The Kane Gulch Ranger Station is closed for the summer season, but will reopen in the fall on September first.
- During the spring and fall seasons, when the ranger station is open, permits must be obtained at that location for overnight use.
- The Kane Gulch Ranger Station has an excellent gallery exhibit of the archaeological resources found in the Cedar Mesa area.
- BLM is grateful for the dedicated volunteers that assist at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station providing information, issuing permits, and aiding visitors.

Provide links to the BLM website for BENM and the "know before you go" pages.

Provide display copies of maps, brochures, the FAQ, Fact Sheet, etc.

Use the FAQ to answer common questions

Refer people to the BLM website:

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/utah/bears-ears-national-monument>

It contains the proclamation, a fast fact sheet, and a frequently asked questions document that you might find helpful.

If asked about current management or visitation:

Currently the area is managed under guidance found in the Presidential Proclamation, and the 2008 Monticello Resource Management Plan as amended in 2016 by the Moab/Monticello Master Leasing Plan (at the top of the page under the Final Record of Decision - ROD) The primary change, based on the proclamation is that the area designated within the proclamation is withdrawn from future mineral entry and leasing.

It's okay to confirm that visitation has been increasing generally throughout the Moab and Monticello Field Office areas and nearby National Parks and Forest Service lands and that with increased publicity around the national monument designation, we did see more visitors this spring than in the past.