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FYI - you probably saw this but I have to say that I think we got a positive nod to WSRs and National Historic Trails from the Secretary with his quote: "The monument is one of the only free-flowing areas of the Missouri that remains as Lewis and Clark saw it more than 200 years ago." Maybe he pulled it right out of the review report, but I like that he referenced the "free-flowing" Missouri.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Zinke exempts Upper Missouri Breaks from review

Jennifer Yachnin, E&E News reporter

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Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke recommended making no changes to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Bob Wick/Bureau of Land Management/Flickr

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke confirmed yesterday that he will not recommend changes to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Montana, marking the fourth site he has exempted in an ongoing review of dozens of national monuments.

Zinke's reprieve for the 378,000-acre site, created by President Clinton in 2001, was widely expected, given his remarks in late June that he anticipated leaving the Montana monument "as is" *E&E News PM*, June 27).

"The review of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument has concluded and I am recommending to the president that no changes be made to the monument," Zinke said in a statement. "The monument is one of the only free-flowing areas of the Missouri that remains as Lewis and Clark saw it more than 200 years ago."

While conservationists praised the decision to maintain the monument, many organizations used Zinke's announcement to criticize the continued review of 23 other such sites nationwide.

"Montanans have breathed a collective sigh of relief today, as the Department of the Interior announced that they will be recommending the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument remain unchanged," said Bozeman, Mont.-based Barb Cestero, the Wilderness Society's senior regional representative.

"While we are pleased to hear that The Breaks will be spared, today's announcement demonstrates just how haphazard and arbitrary the monuments 'review' has been to date," Cestero continued in her statement. "It is unclear why the storied waters and majestic White Cliffs of the Upper Missouri River Breaks received a reprieve from this unnecessarily damaging review — while other priceless American treasures remain on the chopping block."

President Trump in late April signed an executive order mandating a review of all monuments created since 1996 that contain more than 100,000 acres, with an eye toward reducing or even eliminating some sites.

Zinke has now recused four monuments. He announced last month that reviews of Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve in Idaho, Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington state and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado had likewise concluded without recommending alterations. But he also indicated in an interim report that he will seek significant reductions to Bears Ears National Monument in Utah. A final report is due Aug. 24.

Poll finds support for monuments

A majority of Americans oppose the Trump administration's ongoing review of monuments, according to a poll released today by government watchdog Western Values Project.

A nationwide survey of 1,013 registered voters conducted for the Montana-based group by Global Strategy Group and Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group found that 53 percent opposed Trump's order mandating the review, while 33 percent were in support of his executive order.

The survey also asked whether voters believed Trump would "continue to protect these public lands or should he review the status of these public lands to see if they should be used for private development?"

Among those polled, 75 percent said the Trump administration should continue to protect the lands, while 17 percent said public lands should be reviewed.

"Unlike President Trump and Secretary Zinke, the vast majority of Americans see no reason to open up iconic landscapes to private development," Western Values Project Executive Director Chris Saeger said. "This is another sign that this sham review is happening only to benefit a narrow range of special interests. It never should have started to begin with."

Although Zinke has repeatedly asserted that he is opposed to the transfer or sale of the federal estate, changes to monument boundaries could open the public lands under review to oil and gas development or new mining claims ([Greenwire](#), July 28).

The July 24-27 survey had a 3.1-point margin of error.