

## Conversation Contents

Zinke rides with cattle ranchers working on Bears Ears | Deseret News

**Heather Swift** <heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov>

---

**From:** Heather Swift <heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov>  
**Sent:** Wed May 10 2017 07:13:49 GMT-0600 (MDT)  
scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov,  
micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov,  
**To:** megan\_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov, laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov,  
james\_cason@ios.doi.gov,  
downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov,  
douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov,  
daniel\_jorjani@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** Zinke rides with cattle ranchers working on Bears Ears |  
Deseret News

## Zinke rides with cattle ranchers working on Bears Ears

Published: May 9, 2017 9:45 a.m. Updated: 6 hours ago



BEARS EARS, San Juan County — Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said Tuesday that in the context of Bears Ears National Monument, "cattle ranchers matter, too."

He put those words into action on a soggy afternoon, traversing 20-miles of winding, dirt road switchbacks on Elk Ridge Mountain in a 4-wheel drive vehicle to the Bears Ears grazing allotment managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

While the skies cleared, Zinke became acquainted with Payton, a tall flashy Tobiano paint mare who would take him through lush meadows high on south Elk Ridge Mountain, followed by a contingent of riders, including exclusive coverage by the Deseret News.

Zinke's no greenhorn on a horse and made plain to Utah cattle ranchers he understands what it's like to grow up in ranching country, with small towns, big dreams and tough challenges.

In a meadow, north of the Bears Ears buttes that rise 9,000 feet in elevation, he listened to Kenny Black talk about the controversial Bears Ears Monument designation made in December by President Barack Obama.

"There are a lot of protections in place," said Black, who began ranching in 2001 after buying a startup herd from his grandfather.

"There is nothing wrong with regular public land," he said.

The San Juan County native worries that the monument designation will bring another reason for the federal government to cut back on grazing allotments.

Right now, he runs about 225 head of cattle on two federal allotments from the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, which owns the majority of land inside the footprint of the 1.35-million-acre monument.

The presidential proclamation setting up Bears Ears National Monument declares that existing grazing will be honored, but Black, the Ivins family

and the Johnson family are skeptical.

## BrandView



Sponsored by **Homie**

### [Sales in Full Bloom: 7 ways to turn warmer spring weather into higher offers](#)

"The main thing is that it opens up the door to more federal regulations and scrutiny," Black said. "No one knows what the future will bring."

Zinke's visit to Bears Ears is part of an executive order directing the Montana native to review 27 monument designations — and come up with an answer on Bears Ears by early June — an unprecedented undertaking in the history of America's management of public lands.

Native American tribes, backed by environmental and conservation groups, pushed for a 1.9 million acre monument designation for Bears Ears, a successful act that Utah and San Juan County leaders called an affront to their concerns over how the sweeping landscape will be managed.

"Bears Ears is a little large to me. Beautiful country," Zinke said, jostling his horse to overstep sagebrush and fallen logs. He'd ridden some time in

an unchanging landscape dotted with wildflowers and sagebrush, pine trees and soaked with rain.

That is what Black, Shawn Ivins and Sandy Johnson hoped he would see — large — that this country can accomodate ranching, hiking and Native American interests — without what they say is absentee dictatorship from Washington.

Zinke said that won't be the case any longer.

"We are going to pivot and change," he said. "Some of it is cultural within the department itself. But we want to be the 'advocate, the yep' team."

There was a moment when he brought his horse to attention and just stopped on the ride.

"I don't want to overemphasize respect."

In the Bears Ears controversy, this is the second time an Interior secretary visited southeast Utah to conduct a listening tour.

No one disagrees about the differences between Zinke's visit and that of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell in 2016.

Sen. David Hinkins, R-Orangeville, just laughed at the contrast and shook his head.

"No comparison," he said. His smile was barely contained.

With Jewell's visit, monument critics were full of sighs, uptight, resigned. It's different now with Zinke.

"It was night and day," said San Juan County Commissioner Rebecca Benally, sporting a Brigham Young University ball cap while riding a dainty bay.

She said Jewell gave them 30 minutes in her listening tour, and listened to the coalition and Utah Dine Bikeyah — which spearheaded the proposal for the last seven years — for a day.

"I think he wants to listen to us."

That contrast has now put the opposing side in an attack mode, with Utah Dine Bikeyah issuing a statement that Zinke failed to give them enough time while he was here.

Board Chairman Willie Grayeyes said the one hour visit was a "tip of the hat" but worried it would not give the secretary the full story about the reasons for the monument push.

Grayeyes is an affable and sincere believer in the monument, and he is worried his voice, and that of the Navajo, are not being heard.

So do Sandy Johnson and Shawn Ivins, local ranchers who say there has never been such push for a monument until a few years ago.

"I've been coming off that mountain pretty much all my life, but until a few years ago is the only time I've heard of the Native Americans coming up here," Ivins said. [13 comments on this story](#)

Is it an Old West fight about cowboys and the Native Americans who were here first?

Zinke, taking his military training to bear, was a Western diplomat: "I am an optimist."

He rode through hail and sleet and blinding wind. Next came mud and 20 miles to pavement. The storm had directed Zinke's destiny where it might be dicey, and the big mare named Payton was left to watch him go.

"I think he enjoyed himself. Away from all the crazy things," the rancher Black said.

Sent from my iPhone