# [***SECRETARY ZINKE'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON BEARS EARS A MONUMENTAL MISTAKE***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5NXS-4TX1-JCBF-S54N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

The following information was ***released by Defenders of Wildlife***:

Today, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke submitted a preliminary report on Bears Ears National Monument to President Trump. Secretary Zinke made interim recommendations concerning the future of the monument, including readjusting the monument boundaries. He also announced that the Department of the Interior will reopen the comment period on its "review" of Bears Ears until July.

Statement from Defenders of Wildlife President and CEO Jamie Rappaport Clark:

Public lands like national parks and national monuments are set aside for a reason: to protect vital cultural and scientific values, including protections for imperiled wildlife, for future generations. Bears Ears provides wildlife habitat to some of our most iconic native species, including golden eagles, mountain lions and bighorn sheep, as well as threatened species such as the Mexican spotted owl. More than a dozen federally protected species use the monument.

We reject any attempt to reduce the boundary of this national monument and we urge Secretary Zinke to consider the full record, including more than a million public comments, supporting the protection of Bears Ears and the many other national monuments that are under administrative review. This overwhelming public response by Americans in favor of preserving Bears Ears as a national monument shows that this is a critical issue that affects all of us. If the Secretary is delaying his decision because he didnt get the feedback he wanted, we should also watch out for industry lobbyists flooding the record with comments in an attempt to tip the balance.

No president has ever attempted to roll back a national monument designation and any attempt to do so should be rejected by Congress and the American people. An attack on one monument is an attack on them all, and reversing existing protections is a sellout of Americas public lands and waters for fossil fuel development and other narrow special interests.

National monuments arent arbitrarily designated, but Secretary Zinkes final decision could well pave the way for arbitrary attempts to eliminate them. The Trump administration needs to respect the importance of these lands and waters, and our nations conservation laws and legacy.

Background:

Despite the long and bipartisan tradition of designating national monuments, and in an unprecedented move that undermines the protection of these lands and waters, the Trump administration recently put at least 27 monuments under review, opening the door for stripping them of their status.

The Antiquities Act of 1906, the federal law that empowers the president to designate national monuments through public proclamation, marked its 111th anniversary on June 8. For more than a century, presidents have carefully implemented this law to preserve environmental, historic and cultural values on public lands and waters for all Americans.

Bears Ears National Monument is of great conservation value to many species. More than 15 species of bats can be found throughout the monument and topographic features such as rock depressions collect the scarce rainfall to provide habitat for numerous aquatic species. Bears Ears is world-renowned for its elk population and is also home to mule deer and bighorn sheep. The areas diversity of soils and rich microenvironments provide for a great diversity of vegetation that sustains dozens of species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

Later this summer, Secretary Zinke will submit a final report to the president making recommendations for the additional 26 national monuments currently under review.

More about Bears Ears at Monuments for All:

Bears Ears is a sacred landscape with more than 100,000 Native American cultural sites. The proposal to establish it was developed by a coalition of five sovereign Tribal Governments (Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute, Ute, and Zuni). The monument proclamation gave ***Tribes*** a strong voice in how the monument will be managed through the establishment of a Tribal Bears Ears Commission.

Visitors travel from all over the world to experience Bears Ears spectacular scenery and renowned outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, camping, rock climbing, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, paddling, and more.

This designation received an enormous amount of scrutiny, including years of debate and discussion. Dozens of community meetings and public discussions were held throughout 2016, including a well-attended public meeting with then-Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. Maintaining the status and boundaries respects local voices and an important part of our cultural and natural heritage.

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