# [***TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ABANDONS TWO NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN UTAH TO DEVELOPMENT***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y57-4501-JCBF-S463-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

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

The U.S. Department of the Interior today released final Monument Management Plans and Records of Decision for lands within the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments. Both Utah monuments were severely, and unlawfully, reduced in size by President Trump in 2017; Grand Staircase-Escalante by half, and Bears Ears by 85%. The management plans fail to cover the original monument boundaries and thus expose vast acreages of natural lands revered by ***Tribes*** and rich in wildlife to mining, drilling, and off-roading. Further, the plans fail to protect the cultural and ecological values within the truncated boundaries, including sensitive wildlife populations. Bears Ears National Monument is home to the Mexican spotted owl and the southwestern willow flycatcher that are protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Grand Staircase-Escalante likewise is home to these species and potentially over a dozen more listed under the ESA.

Defenders of Wildlife is currently challenging President Trump's unlawful decision to significantly reduce the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in federal court.

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

"The Bears Ears and Grand Staircase landscapes are like no other. They deserve reverence and protection, but instead the Trump administration is abandoning the vast majority of these monuments to drilling, mining and other destructive uses. Exposing these lands to such irreparable damage is beyond shameful. We will never stop fighting for the protection of lands within national monuments and for the eagles, elk, owls and all the other wildlife that call it home."

Background:

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

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was designated in 1996 by President Clinton. In December 2017 President Trump cut almost one million acres out of the original monument.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is in the heart of perhaps the richest floristic region in the Intermountain West. The monument's vast and varied landscapes are home to mountain lion, bear, and desert bighorn sheep, more than 200 species of birds, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons and over 650 species of bees.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 is a federal law that empowers the president to designate national monuments through public proclamation. Presidents have carefully implemented this law to preserve environmental, scientific, historic and cultural values on public lands and waters for all Americans.

President Trump issued an executive order on April 26, 2017, calling for a "review" of certain national monuments designated or expanded since 1996, with the intent to remove monument protections that impeded energy and other development activities. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke subsequently identified and reviewed 27 terrestrial and marine monuments in accordance with the president's direction, and recommended downsizing or reducing protections for at least ten of them, including the Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

The president, in an illegal application of the Antiquities Act on December 4, 2017 reduced the Bears Ears National Monument by 85% (from 1,351,849 million acres to 201,876 million acres), opening up 1.15 million acres of monument-protected lands to development and harmful land use. Similarly, he reduced the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by almost half or about 1 million acres.

Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With over 1.8 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come.

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