# [***ZINKE PROPOSES TO MONUMENTALLY SELL OUT AMERICAN PUBLIC, WILDLIFE AND WILD LANDS***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5PHF-JH91-DYTH-G4R0-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

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

Major news outlets last night publicized a memorandum by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke that recommends downsizing some national monuments and marine national monuments while increasing extractive resource uses in others. The White House has refused to release the memorandum since Zinke submitted it late last month, and some are speculating that it is because the president does not have the legal authority to reduce or revise monument designations.

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

"Secretary Zinke is monumentally and irrationally out of step with the American public. Our national monuments provide critical habitat for endangered and threatened species, and are essential to thousands of species of plants, fish and animals. We understand what the Trump administration does not: national monuments protect irreplaceable parts of our nations conservation, cultural and historical legacies.

"The Secretary of the Interior likes to compare himself to Teddy Roosevelt. You, sir, are no Teddy Roosevelt. By blatantly disregarding Native American ***tribes*** and communities across the nation, Secretary Zinke has revealed his true motivation to downsize and sell out our shared natural heritage for damaging resource extraction and short-term profits. Defenders of Wildlife will defend our national monuments against this attack and we will see this administration in court."

Background:

Cheat sheet on national monuments in Secretary Zinkes recommendations.

Our National Monuments Reporter Resources page, with background info, comments, video, photos, past statements and blogs.

The Antiquities Act of 1906, the federal law that empowers the president to designate national monuments through public proclamation, marked its 111th anniversary this year. Presidents have carefully implemented this law to preserve environmental, scientific, historic and cultural values on public lands and waters for all Americans.

No president has ever revoked a monument designation made by a predecessor; only Congress has revoked a monuments status, and only in limited circumstances. Previous presidents, including Woodrow Wilson and Howard Taft, did reduce the size of monuments, but this hasnt been done since John F. Kennedy and has been prohibited by law since 1976. Many of our most cherished national parks like Grand Canyon, Zion and Olympic were initially designated as national monuments.

President Trump issued an executive order on April 26, 2017, calling for a review of certain national monuments designated or expanded since 1996. The Department of the Interior subsequently identified 27 terrestrial and marine monuments for review in accordance with the presidents direction.

Nearly 3 million people weighed in on the national monuments review over the summer, most of whom are opposed to this and any action that diminishes our national monuments.

Monuments and Wildlife Habitat

Gold Butte National Monument in Nevada is an incredibly valuable corridor for large species such as the bighorn sheep and mountain lion. Analysis has shown the monument is likely to be highly resilient to climate change and contains critical habitat for the threatened Mojave desert tortoise.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is a unique haven for wildlife in Utah. Spanning an area the size of Delaware, the monument protects a variety of habitats, from deserts to coniferous forests. Grand Staircase is home to bears, desert bighorn sheep and mountain lions, as well as over 200 species of birds including bald eagles and peregrine falcons.

Bears Ears National Monument in Utah is of great conservation value to many 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 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.

Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and California is unique in that it was expressly established to conserve biological diversity. The monument area is a fusion of three different ecoregions, characterized by varying elevations and moisture regimes, and supporting a broad range of species and habitat types. Ongoing research has already discovered that 135 species of butterflies use the monument.

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine spans three ecoregions, which produces an amazing amount of biodiversity within the designation. The monument provides key habitat for moose, bear, threatened Canada lynx and endangered Atlantic salmon, all of which require large ranges to ensure viable populations. Seventy-eight species of birds also breed in the area.

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument in New Mexico protects portions of five mountain ranges rising above deserts, grasslands and scrublands of the Chihuahuan Desert. Ponderosa pine and seasonal springs and streams are found in the uplands. These ecosystems provide habitat for many endemic and threatened wildlife species, such as the endangered Aplomado falcon. It is also home to a stunning array of reptiles, including black-tailed, banded rock and western diamondback rattlesnakes and tree, earless, Madrean alligator and checkered whiptail lizards, just to name a few. Species such as mountain lions, mule deer, golden eagles, ladder-backed woodpeckers, cactus wrens and kangaroo rats also live within the monument.

Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument in New Mexico preserves a large stretch of the Central Migratory Flyway, a key migration corridor for birds such as Canada geese, herons, sandhill cranes, hummingbirds and American avocets. It is also habitat for several bat species and raptors, the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, rare Gunnison's prairie dogs, Rocky Mountain elk, black bear, mule deer, pronghorn, red foxes, cougars, bobcats, bald eagles and many other species. The North American river otter was also recently reintroduced into the monument.

Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument protects almost 5,000 square miles of ocean biodiversity, much of which is not found anywhere else in the world. The monument supports deep sea corals, sperm, fin and sei whales, Kemps ridley sea turtles and a large bloom of phytoplankton and zooplankton that feeds whales and other marine species.

Rose Atoll Marine National Monument protects the uninhabited easternmost island of American Samoa and its surrounding waters. The reef is nesting habitat for green and hawksbill sea turtles, and is home to 97 percent of American Samoas seabirds. The surrounding waters contain 270 species of fish and 100 species of coral.

Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument is comprised of seven atolls and islands located south of the main Hawaiian Islands. It is an important seabird colony, and the surrounding waters are important habitat for sea turtles, sharks, whales and many fish species. The monument also protects undersea mountains that are home to many species found nowhere else on earth.

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Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With nearly 1.2 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come. For more information, visit Newsroom.Defenders.org and follow us on Twitter @DefendersNews.

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