

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument



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Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah was designated as a national monument two decades ago. It is a diverse desert landscape that embraces a spectacular array of scientific, historic and natural resources worthy of continued protection. Since its creation, this national monument has proven to be a benefit to the land, the national and international scientific discovery and especially the people living in communities that surround it.

World-class historic, archeological and paleontological sites

- The national monument contains the richest fossil trove of the Late Cretaceous period in the world. It has become the epicenter of university paleontological research.
- 12 new species of dinosaurs have been identified in the Kaiparowits Plateau since the national monument's designation, even though only 6% of the monument has been surveyed.
- More than 5000 archaeological sites have been identified since the national monument's creation.
- The oldest evidence of human habitation on the Colorado Plateau is found within the national monument. These archaeological sites are substantially adding to what we know about the technology, food cultivation, and trade patterns of its earliest inhabitants (Bureau of Land Management, 2016).
- Important Mormon heritage sites such as Dance Hall Rock, the Old Paria Town-site, and 60 miles of the Hole-in-the Rock Trail are protected within the national monument.
- The Ute, Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Paiute nations all have cultural affiliation with the lands protected within the national monument.

Biological Diversity

- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is ecologically distinctive and contains regionally rare and unique species (Bureau of Land Management, 1999). The national monument contains 85% of all the plants found in Utah (Shultz 1992, <http://www.wildflowersearch.com/>) and approximately 2,600 species of animals.
- The largest riparian restoration project in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) history is currently taking place along the Escalante River within the national monument—supported by more than 25 non-profits, state agencies and government agencies and has greatly improved the health of the watershed.

Hunting and Recreation

- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is open to hunting, fishing and a wide range of recreational activities. The national monument is world- renowned for hiking, backpacking and canyoneering in places like Buckskin Wash, Spooky and Peakaboo slot canyons, and along the Escalante River, as well as ATV trails down the Johnson Canyon, Skutumpah and Smoky Mountain Road on the Kaiparowits Plateau (BLM, 1999).
- The number of special recreation permits for outfitters, guides, and special events, has grown dramatically over time. 115 such permits have already been issued in 2017.

- Hunting and fishing on the National Monument have remained under the authority of the state of Utah since its designation. Deer, elk and wild turkey are abundant in the Grand Staircase-Escalante, and the state opens permits as appropriate for pronghorn antelope, black bear, mountain lion and big horn sheep.
- Sport fishing occurs on Calf Creek, Deer Creek, Pine Creek and Boulder Creek for Brown trout, native Colorado Cutthroat, Rainbow trout and Brook trout.

Economic Benefits

- Small-business owners benefit greatly from the national monument. In response to the review of our national monuments, 53 business owners submitted letters to Secretary Zinke in support of the Grand Staircase National Monument, as well as unanimous support from members of the Boulder-Escalante Chamber of Commerce. Per capita income in the Grand Staircase-Escalante region increased 17% from 2001 to 2015 (Headwaters Economics, 2017).
- The regional economy has diversified significantly since the national monument's creation. Service jobs (e.g., doctors, engineers and teachers) grew in the Grand Staircase-Escalante region by 42% from 2001-2015 (Headwaters Economics, 2017).
- As part of the creation of the national monument, state lands within Grand Staircase-Escalante were exchanged with the state for natural resource-rich federal lands outside of the national monument so Utah could maximize potential revenue generation. As of April 2017, the exchanged "lands have produced \$341 million for the state." (Yachnin, 2017).

Continued Ranching

- More than 95% of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument has active allotments for cattle grazing.
- The national monument and BLM facilitate broad-scale, applied research on issues of improved rangeland management and sustainability.
- Important research that focuses on assessing rangeland health and identifying factors critical to managing and restoring sustainable rangeland ecosystems has been—and continues to be—conducted in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Overwhelming Public Support

- Early analysis of the 2.7 million public comments submitted to the Department of Interior found that 88% of Utahns support leaving our national monuments as designated.
- Public opinion polls show great support for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. On the 15th anniversary of the designation of the national monument, polling showed 4 to 1 support among Utahans (Republicans for Environmental Protection, 2011).
- Local communities support and promote the national monument. Both the Kane County Utah Office of Tourism and the Utah Office of Tourism promote Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Presidents do not have the authority to revoke or alter the boundaries of a national monument

- Credible legal scholars agree that the Antiquities Act only provides the authority to create national monuments. Any power to change that original designation resides with Congress. See analysis [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- In July 2017, 121 law professors sent a [letter](#) to the Administration expressing deep concern with the very process through which the Trump Administration 'reviewed' these national monuments.

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