

# Exposure





“We live in a hard and cracked world,” writes the poet Robert Lowell. Nowhere is this more evident than in America’s Red Rock Wilderness situated in southern Utah. This tract you hold in your hands is a celebration of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments and a warning. On April 26, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order calling for a review of 27 national monuments. He had two criteria: they had to have been established between 1996 and 2016, and be over 100,000 acres. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke was asked by the President to study the monuments, then make his recommendations. Out of the 27 monuments under review, Zinke advocated shrinking 6 national monuments. Two of those monuments are in Utah. Word out of Washington, D.C. suggests Bears Ears may be gutted by 80 percent with Grand Staircase-Escalante being cut in half, leaving fragile desert lands vulnerable to development. Utah’s record of exploiting our public lands from uranium and coal mining, to drilling for oil and gas, to the destruction of desert ecosystems by off-road vehicles, is a long and troubled history. We felt it was important to show what the future of these protected lands could be when monument status is lifted. This is a collaborative embrace born out of love and resistance by two American citizens, a photographer and a writer, created in the name of community.

*Fazal Sheikh and Terry Tempest Williams*  
*November 26, 2017*

# Exposure

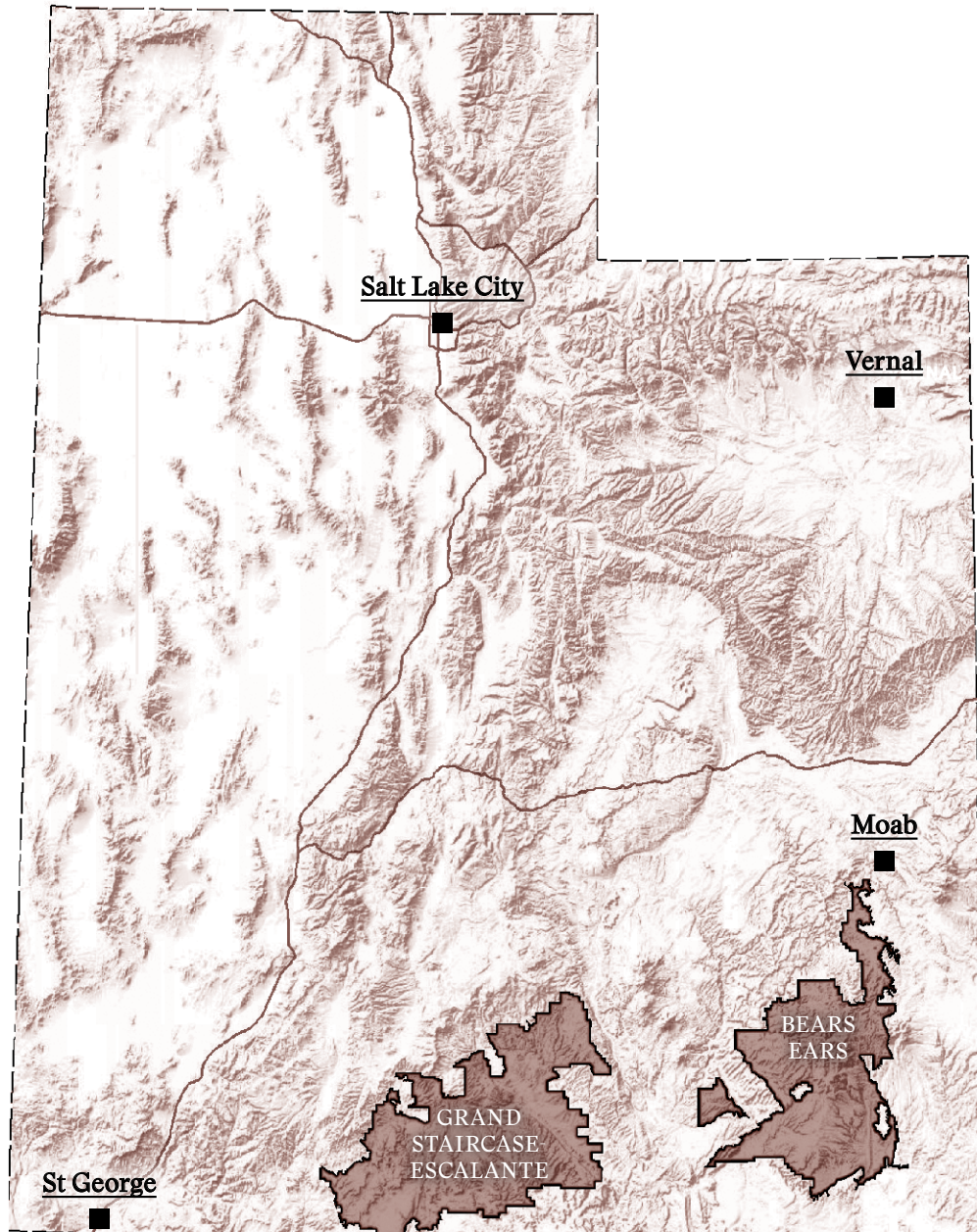
People + Land = Politics and it is a dirty politics that is being played out now by the Trump administration, hell bent on destroying two of America's historic national monuments located in the red rock desert of Utah. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke said: "They are too big." This radical view is shared by the Utah congressional delegation led by Orrin Hatch, along with Governor Gary Herbert and the majority of the Utah State Legislature. Morning Consult's "Energy Brief" reports: "The reduction would open hundreds of thousands of acres of land for oil and gas exploration and other uses that are blocked by the monument status..." Zinke's report notes that the sites contain "an estimated several billion tons of coal and large oil deposits."

Bears Ears National Monument is the ancestral home of the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribe. These lands are where the "Old Ones" are buried, their medicines found, where their ceremonies are held. Established by President Barack Obama on December 28, 2016, it was a handshake across history, helping to heal the wounds between the Tribes and the United States government. This is the first time a cooperative land management agreement has

been reached between the Tribes and the federal agencies that will honor traditional knowledge alongside Western science.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was established by President Bill Clinton on September 18, 1996. The Proclamation recognizes "this high, rugged, and remote region, where bold plateaus and multi-hued cliffs run for distances that defy human perspective." It was the last place in the continental United States to be mapped. 1.9 million acres of serpentine canyons and fossil beds are protected, making it the largest national monument in the United States.

Presidents have reduced previous monuments before, but never on the scale that Donald Trump is proposing. This will be a first. The Antiquities Act of 1906 will be on trial. If one monument is diminished, all national monuments are threatened. We the People, who recognize these lands as a "Geography of Hope," believe public lands belong to all people for all time. We will fight this aggression in the courts and on the ground. We invite you to join us. Through the leadership of the Tribes, we as a community of protectors will prevail. The Elders remind us that this can no longer be about anger, but healing.



This map of Utah shows the location of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (1996) and Bears Ears National Monument (2016), roughly 3.2 million acres of protected lands, part of the high desert ecosystem of the Colorado Plateau; ancestral home of the Hopi, Navajo, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe, and the Zuni Pueblo. (Map courtesy of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance)

*This is a war on our public lands.*

Senator Tom Udall, New Mexico

*It is my obligation as a direct descendant from the ancient Pueblo People who have our origins at the Bear Ears National Monument, and as a scientist, to protect the ruins for my children, and their children. Bears Ears is a peaceful area to come together with our contemporary siblings, the Diné and Ute People. It is common sense, decency, and respect to not harm or mutilate the footprints of our ancestors. It is also a right that monuments and public lands be protected for our fellow American citizens to be used and enjoyed by them. The Bears Ears National Monument is a gathering of peace.*

Kevin M. Madalena, Utah Diné Bikéyah,  
Cultural Resources Coordinator, Paleontologist,  
Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico





Graded coal and oil wells at the Huntington Power Plant. In 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) imposed a reduction of 10,000 tons per annum of the haze-forming nitrogen oxide emissions that threaten the wilderness and national parks. In response, the state and the company sued the EPA to block the plan, winning a stay from the court. The EPA has since proposed to reconsider the earlier decision, made under the Obama Administration.





Eighty oil platforms in an area less than 2 square miles along the White River, south of Vernal. The region has 11,000 oil and gas wells, the primary source of ozone-producing gases. It is reported that the extreme methane levels have an adverse impact on child development and that stillbirths are increasing. The State of Utah is responsible for regulating fracking safety and places no restrictions on the industry's nearby evaporation ponds.

*Any reduction of the Bears Ears National Monument, as suggested by President Trump, would result in the conversion of these lands into short-term commodities. That in itself would not only be a desecration, a loss and a tragedy, but is extremely disrespectful to the Tribes and their tribal members who tirelessly worked for its permanent protection. We must consider the legacy we want to prevail. We must embrace the opportunity Bears Ears presents to truly bring the U.S. into a new era of land management, one that respects and incorporates the Native peoples who have lived on these lands for thousands of years.*

Jonathan Jarvis, Director of the  
National Park Service, 2009-2017



# Establishment of the Bears Ears National Monument

*by the President of the United States of America*

## A Proclamation

Rising from the center of the southeastern Utah landscape and visible from every direction are twin buttes so distinctive that in each of the native languages of the region their name is the same: Hoon’Naqvut, Shash Jáa, Kwiyaqatu Nukavachi, Ansh An Lashokdiwe, or “Bears Ears.” For hundreds of generations, native peoples lived in the surrounding deep sandstone canyons, desert mesas, and meadow mountaintops, which constitute one of the densest and most significant cultural landscapes in the United States. Abundant rock art, ancient cliff dwellings, ceremonial sites, and countless other artifacts provide an extraordinary archaeological and cultural record that is important to us all, but most notably the land is profoundly sacred to many Native American tribes, including the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah Ouray, Hopi Nation, and Zuni Tribe.

The area’s human history is as vibrant and diverse as the ruggedly beautiful landscape. From the earliest occupation, native peoples left traces of their presence. Clovis people hunted among the cliffs and canyons of Cedar Mesa as early as 13,000 years ago, leaving behind tools and projectile points in places like the Lime Ridge Clovis Site, one of

the oldest known archaeological sites in Utah. Archaeologists believe that these early people hunted mammoths, ground sloths, and other now-extinct megafauna, a narrative echoed by native creation stories. Hunters and gatherers continued to live in this region in the Archaic Period, with sites dating as far back as 8,500 years ago.

Ancestral Puebloans followed, beginning to occupy the area at least 2,500 years ago, leaving behind items from their daily life such as baskets, pottery, and weapons. These early farmers of Basketmaker II, and III and builders of Pueblo I, II and III left their marks on the land. The remains of single family dwellings, granaries, kivas, towers, and large villages and roads linking them together reveal a complex cultural history. “Moki steps,” hand and toe holds carved into steep canyon walls by the Ancestral Puebloans, illustrate the early people’s ingenuity and perseverance and are still used today to access dwellings along cliff walls. Other, distinct cultures have thrived here as well—the Fremont People, Numic- and Athabaskan-speaking hunter-gatherers, and Utes and Navajos. Resources such as the Doll House Ruin in Dark Canyon Wilderness Area and the Moon House Ruin on Cedar Mesa



allow visitors to marvel at artistry and architecture that have withstood thousands of seasons in this harsh climate.

The landscape is a milieu of the accessible and observable together with the inaccessible and hidden. The area's petroglyphs and pictographs capture the imagination with images dating back at least 5,000 years and spanning a range of styles and traditions. From life-size ghostlike figures that defy categorization, to the more literal depictions of bighorn sheep, birds, and lizards, these drawings enable us to feel the humanity of these ancient artists. The Indian Creek area contains spectacular rock art, including hundreds of petroglyphs at Newspaper Rock. Visitors to Bears Ears can also discover more recent rock art left by the Ute, Navajo, and Paiute peoples. It is also the less visible sites, however—those that supported the food gathering, subsistence and ceremony of daily life—that tell the story of the people who lived here. Historic remnants of Native American sheep-herding and farming are scattered throughout the area, and pottery and Navajo hogans record the lifeways of native peoples in the 19th and 20th centuries.

For thousands of years, humans have occupied and stewarded this land. With respect to most of these people, their contribution to the historical record is unknown, but some have played a more public role. Famed Navajo headman K'aayéllii was born around 1800 near the twin Bears Ears buttes. His band used the area's remote canyons to elude capture by the U.S. Army and avoid the fate that befell many other Navajo bands: surrender, the Long Walk, and forced relocation to Bosque Redondo. Another renowned 19th century Navajo leader, "Hastiin Ch'ihaajin" Manuelito, was also born near the Bears Ears.

The area's cultural importance to Native American tribes continues to this day. As they

have for generations, these tribes and their members come here for ceremonies and to visit sacred sites. Throughout the region, many landscape features, such as Comb Ridge, the San Juan River, and Cedar Mesa, are closely tied to native stories of creation, danger, protection, and healing. The towering spires in the Valley of the Gods are sacred to the Navajo, representing ancient Navajo warriors frozen in stone. Traditions of hunting, fishing, gathering, and wood cutting are still practiced by tribal members, as is collection of medicinal and ceremonial plants, edible herbs, and materials for crafting items like baskets and footwear. The traditional ecological knowledge amassed by the Native Americans whose ancestors inhabited this region, passed down from generation to generation, offers critical insight into the historic and scientific significance of the area. Such knowledge is, itself, a resource to be protected and used in understanding and managing this landscape sustainably for generations to come . . . .

*Barack Obama*

*December 28, 2016*





Mexican Hat Uranium Mill Tailings Repository. In the 1950s, the Texas-Zinc Minerals Corporation constructed its uranium processing mill on land leased from the Navajo Nation. The mill operated between 1957 and 1965 (taken over by the Atlas Corporation in 1963), along with a sulfuric acid manufacturing plant that shared the site. In 1970, the lease expired and the land, along with the tailings and contaminated mill structures, reverted to the Navajo Nation. In the years that followed, the uranium tailings remained uncovered, and the contamination was spread by wind and water erosion. In 1995, as part of the Department of Energy's Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Program, 1.3 million tons of toxic

waste and uranium tailings were trucked to the site from another mill and placed atop the waste, along with the demolished structures of the mill, 11 buildings, and a schoolhouse that had been constructed using contaminated material. The 4.4 million tons of material of the waste pile was capped using a 24-inch thick radon barrier and 20 inches of coarsely hewn riprap rock. The disposal cell now measures 1,400 feet in length and covers an area of nearly 68 acres adjacent to the village of Halchita. In referring to the contamination subsequently detected in groundwater, the Department of Energy declared that it "is not expected to produce any adverse effects to human health or the environment."



*I worked in the uranium mines for more than fourteen years, until the mid-70s. With the other men from our family serving in the military, I wanted to contribute, and the mines were close to our homes. Each morning, we Navajo would arrive at the mine site near the opening of the tunnel, where the white manager would instruct our Navajo foreman which part of the mine to work in that day. We would enter the shaft and descend the 500 feet to the work zone, where we remained for the rest of the day. I was in charge of drilling and blasting new areas and always worked without protection. At lunchtime, we dusted ourselves off and found a place to sit together on the ground, eating our sandwiches in the same space we had been working in. We used to collect the cool water running down the walls in cups to drink. We never thought twice about it, since no one had ever told us it could be dangerous. Only much later, when people started dying, did we start to realize the uranium would have such a long-term impact on our lives, as well as the lives of our families. Most of those men died from complications of exposure to uranium, and since we returned home at the end of each day with clothes and shoes caked with the uranium dust from the mine, many of our family members did too.*

Navajo miner (Name withheld to protect privacy)

# An Open Letter to President Donald J. Trump

*by Willie Grayeyes*

EDITORS' NOTE: "An Open Letter to President Donald J. Trump" was sent to the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times* in late summer, 2017. Each newspaper turned it down for various reasons, from "We've published too much on Bears Ears" to "This isn't right for us" to "We don't publish Open Letters." It was eventually published online on Utah Diné Bikéyah's website. We are honored to publish it here with the permission of Willie Grayeyes.

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you from Navajo Mountain within view of Bears Ears National Monument, as a community leader among our people here in southeastern Utah. Today, we have an opportunity for healing before us. As President of the United States, you can create common ground for all American citizens to stand upon. By honoring the land, you will honor all people who serve as stewards of these public lands. Everyone has a stake here, but for us as Native Americans, these are lands we call home. We live an indigenous truth here and we are ready to share what we have learned over the past 12,000 years as we chart a path forward together.

Your energy would be most powerfully spent by honoring the boundaries of the Bears Ears National Monument set by the Bears Ears Intertribal Commission and supported by Tribes across this country.

Instead of changing these protected lands, we ask you to rescind or review your Executive Order of April 26, 2017. We ask you to transform your leadership into an act of advancing Native People's priorities that will help everyone in society. Please work with us in forging a new way forward in the name of commonality for all people, for all time.

If you are serious about making America great again, you can further that greatness by honoring this historic proposal and your federal trust obligation to the Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Ute Mountain, and Ute Indian Tribes. We also ask that you consider fulfilling the original proposal we requested for a 1.9-million-acre boundary as a gesture of healing toward all Indigenous People across these United States of America.

You have charged Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke with making his final recommendations on the fate of twenty-seven National Monuments by Thursday, August 24. Let me be honest in terms of what I have seen and heard



from Tribes: Secretary Zinke did not meet the requirements laid out in your Executive Order which directed him to meet with state, local, and tribal governments. He did not meet with any tribal presidents or chairmen, nor did he meet with any local tribal officials. Letters of invitation were sent to him from many Utah Navajo Chapter Houses as well as local community groups, inviting him to meet. These letters were ignored. Secretary Zinke met for just one hour with the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition in Salt Lake City.

The Moapa Band of Paiutes in Nevada reported that Secretary Zinke merely helicoptered over Gold Butte National Monument, also under review, and ignored the sovereign government request to meet with the Moapa Tribal Council. His boots never touched the ground within the Monument.

The Secretary of Interior stated in the Bears Ears Interim Report dated June 10, 2017: “Co-management will be absolutely key going forward and I recommend that the monument and especially the areas of significant cultural interest be co-managed by the Tribal nations.” The Secretary’s words do not match his actions. He chose to meet only with non-tribal leaders and he did not set foot in a single Native community in Utah to learn where our cultural sites are and why they matter to the traditions of our people.

As Native people, we are hardly alone in our concern or support for maintaining the integrity of Bears Ears and all National Monuments. More than 2.7 million Americans submitted their public comments to the Department of Interior, with 98 percent in support of protection. Less than 1 percent favor rescinding or reducing these National Monuments. It is clear that an overwhelming majority of citizens want these magnificent places which hold our individual and collective histories to

remain whole, not sacrificed to oil and gas development.

At a time when the United States feels anything but united under the shadow of Charlottesville, Virginia, please—hear our voices. These sacred lands have held our songs, our stories, and our prayers since time beyond memory, and these lands continue to hold the promise of our future. They are places of peace. Bears Ears National Monument is the source of our healing and shared humanity, not just for Native peoples but for all people, for generations to come.

President Trump, this powerful path of healing is open to you. Let the land thrive with us.

Respectfully,

*Willie Grayeyes*  
*Chairman of Utah Diné Bikéyah*  
*Navajo Mountain, Utah*



Bulldozers and transport vehicles maneuvering atop the Moab Tailings Project Site. Radioactive material was discovered to have been seeping into the Colorado River. The site is currently part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Project, and is in the midst of a multi-year plan to transport 16 million tons of radioactive material by rail to a new site, Crescent Junction, thirty miles to the north.





All-terrain vehicles and tracks rupturing the membrane of crypto-biotic soil, the thin crust of the Earth that is a mixture of cyanobacteria, mosses, lichen, fungi, and algae, which helps bind the desert sands and absorbs moisture, fostering nutrients that provide seedbeds for plants that prevent erosion.

*If the Trump administration moves forward with their interests, they are taking us backward 100 years, rupturing trust once again between the federal government and Indian people.*

Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk, Former Councilwoman  
for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

*The science and facts are clear: the clean energy transition is unstoppable, fueled by American ingenuity. It's the path to clean air, real energy security and a safe climate for all. We simply don't need to despoil spectacular public lands to extract more dirty energy.*

Anne R. Kapuscinski, Chair, Board of Directors,  
Union of Concerned Scientists



# Boom!

*by Terry Tempest Williams*

What is beauty if not stillness?  
What is stillness if not sight?  
What is sight if not an awakening?  
What is an awakening if not now?

The American landscape is under assault by an administration that cares only about themselves. Working behind closed doors, they are strategically undermining environmental protections that have been in place for decades and getting away with it, in practices of secrecy, in deeds of greed, in acts of violence that are causing pain.

Like many, I have compartmentalized my state of mind in order to survive. Like most, I have also compartmentalized my state of Utah. It is a violence hidden that we all share. This is the fallout that has entered our bodies; nuclear bombs tested in the desert—Boom! These are uranium tailings left on the edges of our towns where children play—Boom! The war games played and nerve gas stored in the West Desert—Boom! These are the oil and gas lines, frack lines from Vernal to Bonanza in the Uintah Basin—Boom! This is Aneth and Montezuma Creek—the oil patches on Indian lands—Boom! Gut Bears Ears—Boom! Cut Grand Staircase-Escalante in

half—Boom! And every other wild place that is easier for me to defend than my own people and species—Boom! The coal and copper mines I watched expand as a child—Huntington and Kennecott—Boom! The oil refineries that foul the air and blacken our lungs in Salt Lake City—Boom! And the latest scar on the landscape, the tar sands mine in the Book Cliffs, closed, now hidden simply by its remoteness—Boom! Add the Cisco Desert where trains stop to settle the radioactive waste they carry on to Blanding—Boom! Move the uranium tailings from Moab to Crescent Junction, then bury it still hot in the alkaline desert, out of sight, out of mind—Boom! See the traces of human indignities on the sands near Topaz Mountain left by the Japanese Internment Camps—Boom!

President Donald J. Trump will try to eviscerate Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Monuments with his pen and poisonous policies. He will stand tall with other white men who for generations have exhumed, looted, and profited from the graves of Ancient Ones. They will tell you, Bears Ears belongs to them —Boom!

Consider Senator Orrin Hatch's words regarding the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition's support of the Bears Ears National Monument:

“The Indians, they don’t fully understand that a lot of the things that they currently take for granted on those lands, they won’t be able to do if it’s made clearly into a monument or a wilderness...” And when he was asked to give examples, the Senator said, “Just take my word for it.” This is a story, a patronizing story, a condescending story. I see politicians and Mormons discounting the Tribes once again, calling them “Lamanites,” the rebellious ones against God, dark-skinned, and cursed. That is their story. Racism is a story. The Book of Mormon is a story—Boom!

Perhaps, our greatest trauma living in the state of Utah is the religiosity of the Mormon Patriarchy that says you have no authority to speak—Women, Indians, Black People, Brown People, Gay People, Trans—it is only the chosen ones who hold the priesthood over us and council us that the only way to heaven is through them. All my life I was told I could not speak, that I had no voice, no power except through my father or husband or bishop or general authorities, and then there was the prophet—Boom! I refused to perpetuate this lie, this myth, this abuse called silence. If birds had a voice, so did I. I would tell a different story, one of beauty and abundance, not what it means to endure.

Environmental racism is the outcome of bad stories. A by-product of poverty. In Utah, yellow cake has dusted the lips of Navajo uranium workers for decades who are now sick or dead—Boom! There is no running water in Westwater, a reservation town adjacent to Blanding. Local municipalities refuse to provide Navajo families with a basic right—Boom! But we are not prejudiced—Boom! If you speak of these oversights, call them cruelties, we as Mormons are seen as having betrayed our roots and our people. These are my people. Boom! This is who I am—Boom! A white

woman of privilege born of the Covenant—I am not on the outside but inside. Boom! It is time to look in the mirror and reflect on the histories that are ours.

We are being told a treacherous story that says it is an individual’s right, our hallowed state’s right to destroy what is common to us all: the land beneath our feet, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. Our bodies and the body of the state of Utah are being violated. Our eyes are closed. Our mouths are sealed. We refuse to see or say what we know to be true: Utah is a beautiful violence.

Do we dare to see Utah for what it is—an elegant toxic landscape where the power of oppression rules by repression—our proving grounds of fear? What are we afraid of? Exposure. Boom! Our denial is our collusion. Our silence is our death sentence. The climate is changing. We have a right and responsibility to protect each other: Resistance and insistence before the law. We are slowly dying. We are ignoring the evidence. Awareness is our prayer. Beauty will prevail. Native people are showing us the way. It is time to heal these lands and each other by calling them what they are—Sacred.

May wing beats of Raven cross over us in ceremony. May we recognize our need of a collective blessing by Earth. May we ask forgiveness for our wounding of land and spirit. And may our right relationship to life be restored as we work together toward a survival shared. A story is awakening. We are part of something much larger than ourselves, an interconnected whole that stretches upward to the stars.

Coyote in the desert is howling in the darkness, calling forth the pack, lifting up the Moon.



*The Bears Ears National Monument, which President Obama dedicated to Indian people and their traditional knowledge, is something new and enduring. Our constitutional system will not allow the current President to change that. In due course, it will be settled that this wondrous landscape is a place where, forevermore, our minds, hearts, and souls will be opened to deep and profound meanings of culture, nature, humanity, staying power, and justice.*

Charles Wilkinson, Moses Lasky Professor of Law,  
University of Colorado, and Special Counsel to  
the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition

*We are not just protecting these lands  
for our people, but all people.*

Jonah Yellowman, Navajo Spiritual  
Leader and Medicine Person

Further reading:

Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition: [bearssearscoalition.org](http://bearssearscoalition.org)  
Friends of Cedar Mesa: [friendsofcedar mesa.org](http://friendsofcedar mesa.org)  
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners: [gsenm.org](http://gsenm.org)  
Grand Canyon Trust: [grandcanyontrust.org](http://grandcanyontrust.org)  
Patagonia (This is Bears Ears): [bearssears.patagonia.com](http://bearssears.patagonia.com)  
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance: [suwa.org](http://suwa.org)  
Torrey House Press, Voices for the Land: [torreyhouse.org](http://torreyhouse.org)  
Utah Diné Bikéyah: [utahdinebikeyah.org](http://utahdinebikeyah.org)

Cover:

Flying across the southern border of Bears Ears Monument, above the Raplee Monocline, Comb Ridge at our back, on route to Mexican Hat.

This project has been sponsored by a concerned citizen of the United States living in the region.

Given the importance of this issue, the authors and artist have agreed to offer the material free of charge, under copyright, for media wishing to use the material.

To request a press package email:  
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For the full document of the Presidential Proclamation—Establishment of the Bears Ears National Monument, see:  
[obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/28/proclamation-establishment-bears-ears-national-monument](http://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/28/proclamation-establishment-bears-ears-national-monument)