

NATIVE WISDOM SPEAKS AT BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

WILL AMERICA LISTEN?



BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT: 80 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Bears Ears National Monument was designated in 2016 after one of the longest, most thoroughly researched, and broadly supported National Monument campaigns in U.S. history.



In fact, the first major proposal to protect Bears Ears dates back to the 1930s, when Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes proposed a 4-million acre “Escalante National Monument” across southern Utah.

In 1961, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall instructed the National Park Service to develop a proposal for the creation of a National Park in the Canyonlands of southeastern

Utah. The original Park Service proposal envisioned a nearly 1-million acre National Park, which would have included large portions of the present-day Bears Ears National Monument. By the time President Lyndon Johnson signed the law establishing Canyonlands National Park in 1964, however, political pressure from the Utah delegation had reduced the park to less than 300,000 acres, leaving much of the Bears Ears region unprotected.

In 2010, spiritual and traditional leaders who formed Utah Diné Bikéyah began interviewing local elders in order to communicate the Navajo people’s cultural needs and land stewardship values to elected officials. An initial proposal for federal protection of the Bears Ears cultural landscape was prepared by Tribes in August 2010 and contributed to Utah Senator Bob Bennett’s effort to draft a land-use bill for San Juan County. Senator Bennett left office in January 2011 without passing legislation.

In 2013, Utah Congressmen Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz included Bears Ears in the Public Lands Initiative (PLI) bill and recognized the need for strong co-management by Tribes. The Obama administration refrained from taking executive action on Bears Ears in order to give Congress the opportunity to resolve the matter through the PLI.

In 2015, five Tribes with ancestral ties to Bears Ears — Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute, Ute Indian Tribe, Hopi Tribe, and the Pueblo of Zuni — made the historic decision to form the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, a formal partnership to advocate on a government-to-government level for the creation of Bears Ears National Monument. On October 15, the Coalition submitted a formal proposal to the Obama administration for the creation of the Monument. This marked the first time in history that Tribes petitioned a President of the United States of America to create a National Monument under the Antiquities Act.

“Bears Ears is not just a place full of trees, plants and animals. It is life and we are woven into it to protect it for it is in our nature to be the lords and protector of these lands. When we lose that connection, our connection with our culture, Mother Nature and the cosmic energy of space will be lost.”

~ Shiprock, New Mexico

In July 2016, Congressman Bishop introduced the PLI to Congress. It contained numerous poison pills, including the attempted transfer of 100,000 acres of the Ute Indian Tribe’s Uncompaghre reservation to the state of Utah for fossil fuel development. Unable to attract any co-sponsors beyond Representative Bishop and Chaffetz, the PLI failed.

On December 28, 2016, following Congress’ failure to act to protect the region, President Obama designated the Bears Ears National Monument. The Proclamation called for the inclusion of Native wisdom and collaborative management to protect the vast tribal cultural and natural resources of the 1.3 million acre Bears Ears region.

On December 4th, 2017, President Trump illegally diminished the Bears Ears National Monument by 85%, replacing it with the Indian Creek and Shash Jaa National Monuments. A vast number of cultural and natural resources were eliminated without consulting the elders whose ancestors and children will be directly harmed by this action.

On December 6th, 2017, the five Tribes of the Bears Ears Coalition and their allies sued President Trump for unlawfully shrinking Bears Ears National Monument by 85%.



Bears Ears Buttes, Abajo Mountains, Lime Ridge and Comb Ridge at sunset.
Photo by Tim Peterson, flown by LightHawk.

PRESIDENT TRUMP ELIMINATED 85% OF BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT —→

The illegal diminishment of the Bears Ears National Monument is currently being challenged in court. The reduction dishonors tribal sacred, ceremonial, natural, and medicinal resources. It is an affront to the sovereign tribal nations who worked tirelessly to protect their cultural heritage for future generations.

- Bears Ears National Monument is being defended by the sovereign leaders of five sovereign tribal nations — Navajo, Hopi, Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni — who all share strong historical, spiritual, and cultural ties to these public lands. Not one tribal government has expressed opposition.
- The original Bears Ears National Monument holds more than 100,000 Native American cultural and archaeological sites threatened by looters and grave robbers. The original Bears Ears National Monument contains countless contemporary historical sites of significance to members of the Mormon faith. Trump's actions place these historical, cultural, and sacred places at significant risk.
- During Interior Secretary Zinke's "review" of national monuments, 2.9 million comments were received across the U.S., 98% of which support protection. His review was not transparent, ignored years of local community engagement, failed to adequately engage the public, Native Nations, the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, or stakeholders like Utah Diné Bikéyah.

The BLM and USFS are now running an expedited planning process that does not consider formerly protected resources. The proposed timeline for management planning of only 12 months does not allow for conducting meaningful tribal consultations, gathering necessary information for environmental and cultural reviews, or allowing meaningful co-management with Tribes. The result is we have cultural and natural resources that are the responsibility of the BLM and USFS that are now exposed and left unprotected.

The expedited planning process is an irresponsible waste of time and taxpayer dollars. Litigation in the courts will determine the legality of Trump's action, and if overturned, planning will have to begin again to include the entire original 1.3 million acres.

Protecting cultural, natural, and historic resources in the Bears Ears National Monument should be the foremost objective of the BLM and USFS. Vandalism, looting, and destruction of cultural resources in the Bears Ears National Monument region have been well-documented.



The Colorado River, Lockhart Basin and Hatch Point. Photo by Tim Peterson.

“Bears Ears is my ancestral homeland; it’s where my great-great-grandfather hunted and led his people of southeastern Utah to seek refuge during the 1864 round-up of the Navajos for the Long Walk. My maternal grandparents told me several stories of the sanctuary that Bears Ears provided. They always built their homes within view of the mountain and each time I see the ears, it makes me feel safe and connected to my ancestors and family.”

~ Kirtland, New Mexico

64% OF UTAHNS SUPPORT BEARS EARS AND 2.9 M PEOPLE SPOKE OUT

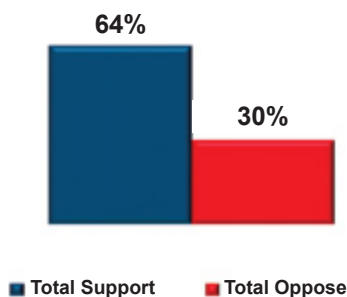
In early May of 2017, Interior Secretary Zinke visited Utah on a four-day “listening tour,” during which he spent most of his time with anti-Monument activists and politicians. During the entire four days, Secretary Zinke met with the leaders of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition for only one hour. He did not visit the predominantly pro-monument town of Bluff, Utah, or any Native American communities south of Blanding, Utah, where 60 percent of the local population resides.

On May 22, 2017, the Republican polling firm Public Opinion Strategies released a poll of Utah voters:

The survey found that by a **two-to-one margin** voters supported **Keeping the Current Number of National Monuments**.

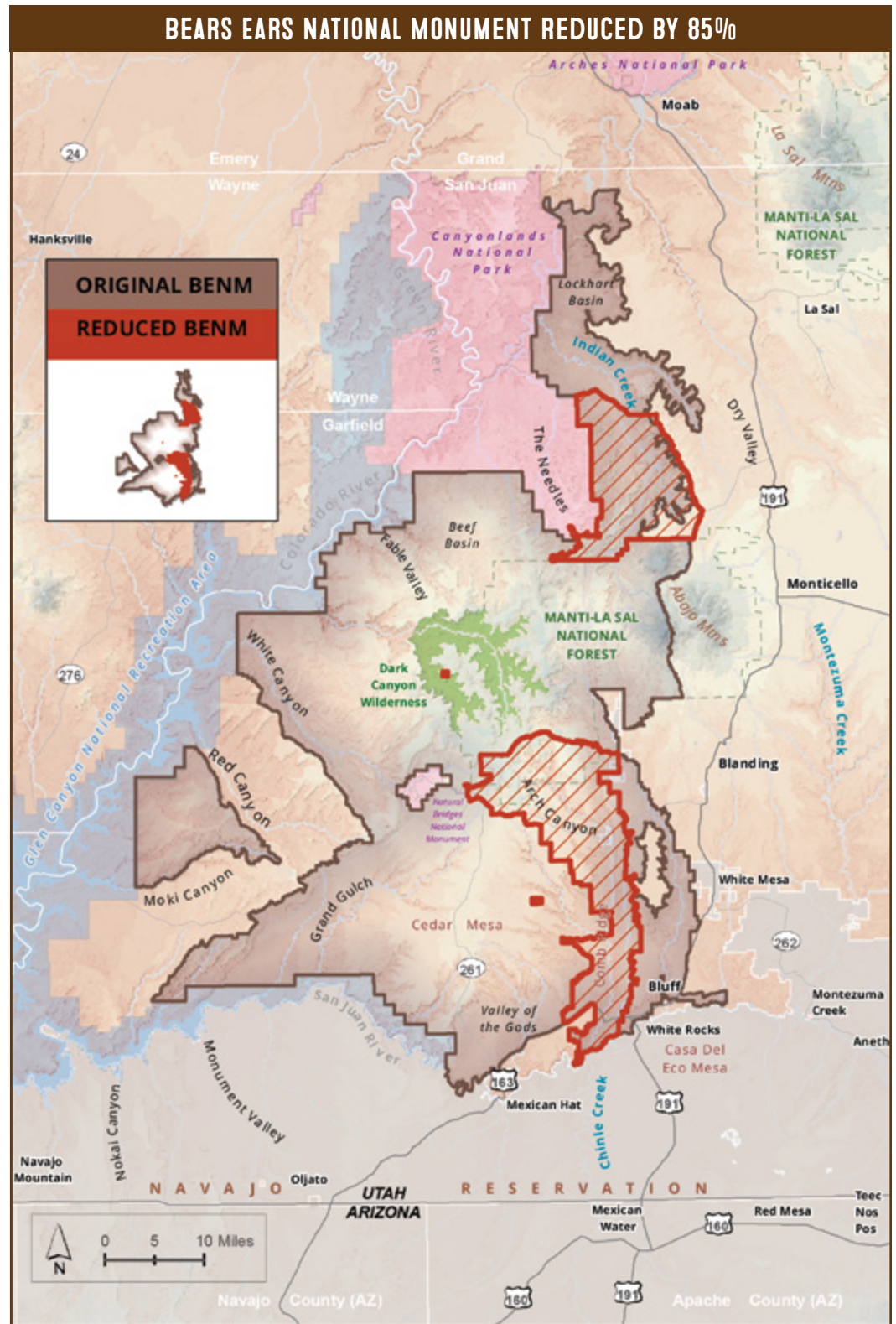
Moreover, the survey found that in a two to one margin : **Utah voters supported keeping Bears Ears National Monument at its current size.**

Support Bears Ears National Monument

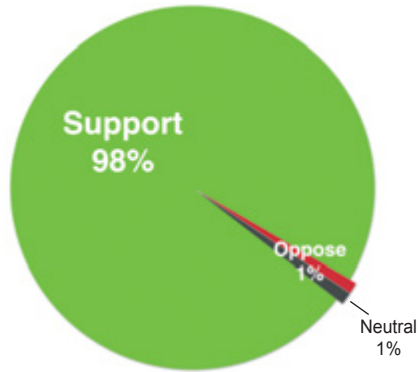


On July 10, 2017, the public comment period for all monuments under review closed. An analysis by the

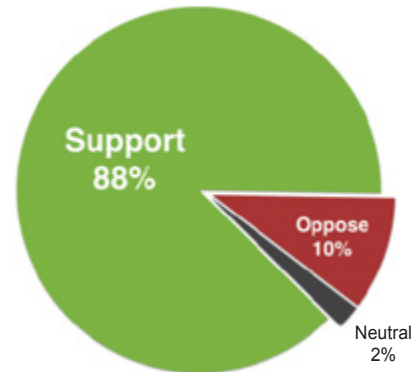
Center for Western Priorities found 55% of submitted comments specifically mentioned Bears Ears National Monument, with nearly unanimous support for keeping the monument intact. Overall, 98% of comments supported keeping or expanding National Monument designations. Among Utahns who submitted comments, 88% supported maintaining Monument status for Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.



Public comment analysis Trump/Zinke national monuments review



Utah resident comment analysis Trump/Zinke national monuments review



THREATS TO BEARS EARS

Tribes strongly advised Secretary Zinke and the President not to slam the door on the generous offer to share our stewardship knowledge with our fellow Americans. As Native people and sovereign nations, we deserve a voice in public land management. The Trump administration's attempt to reduce the size of the Bears Ears National Monument is illegal and is being challenged by the tribes in court.

Bears Ears National Monument recognizes and utilizes Native American history and traditional knowledge. It is a step forward in the relationship between the United States and Native American tribes on our shared path to healing.

In the region of the Bears Ears National Monument, looting, grave robbing, and vandalism threatened to erase thousands of years of shared American history. Native communities have passed knowledge of plants, animals, land, and human history from generation to generation since time immemorial. To protect the sensitive nature of these spaces, Native people have never shared much of this information publicly or privately.

Native American grass-root communities and sovereign tribal governments worked in tandem within the federal government to gain Monument designation for the Bears Ears region. They celebrated on December 28, 2016, when their hard work and good faith efforts were realized in the designation of Bears Ears National Monument.

Attempting to modify the boundary of Bears Ears National Monument not only reduces protections for burial sites, ancestral ruins, and medicinal plants, but it also diminishes the healing power of this designation for all Americans. Secretary Zinke never even met with local Native Americans to learn what resources we care about or where they are located, nor has President Trump ever been to the Bears Ears National Monument to meet with Indigenous Peoples and tribes.

Recently, plant biologists at the University of Utah have identified potato starches on ancestral artifacts dating from at least 11,000 years ago. The starches belong to what Native people call "Wild" or "Indian" potatoes. These potatoes are a continued part of Native American diets. The University of Utah researchers, in collaboration with Utah Diné Bikéyah, are now looking to traditional knowledge holders for answers of cultivation, usage, and migration of the potato. Bears Ears National Monument is a place that protects this living history — a place that fosters the blending of Western science and traditional knowledge to create healing and understanding for all Americans.

Learn more about ongoing cultivation of Tribes' ancient potato: <https://goo.gl/MEmXAi>

Documents leaked to the New York Times in March, 2018 reveal that uranium mining companies played a direct role in advising the Trump administration on exact locations of where to remove protections to serve their interests.



Photo by Tim Peterson.



Photo by Tim Peterson.



Photo by Tim Peterson.



Photo by Angelo Baca.

SOVEREIGN TRIBAL NATIONS AND LOCAL TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS SUPPORT BEARS EARS →

BEARS EARS INTER-TRIBAL COALITION

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition formed in 2015 when five Tribes – Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Zuni, Hopi, and Navajo – came together to call on President Obama to protect our ancestral homelands by designating Bears Ears National Monument. This historic Coalition is defending the Monument through litigation, education, and inter-tribal relationship building.

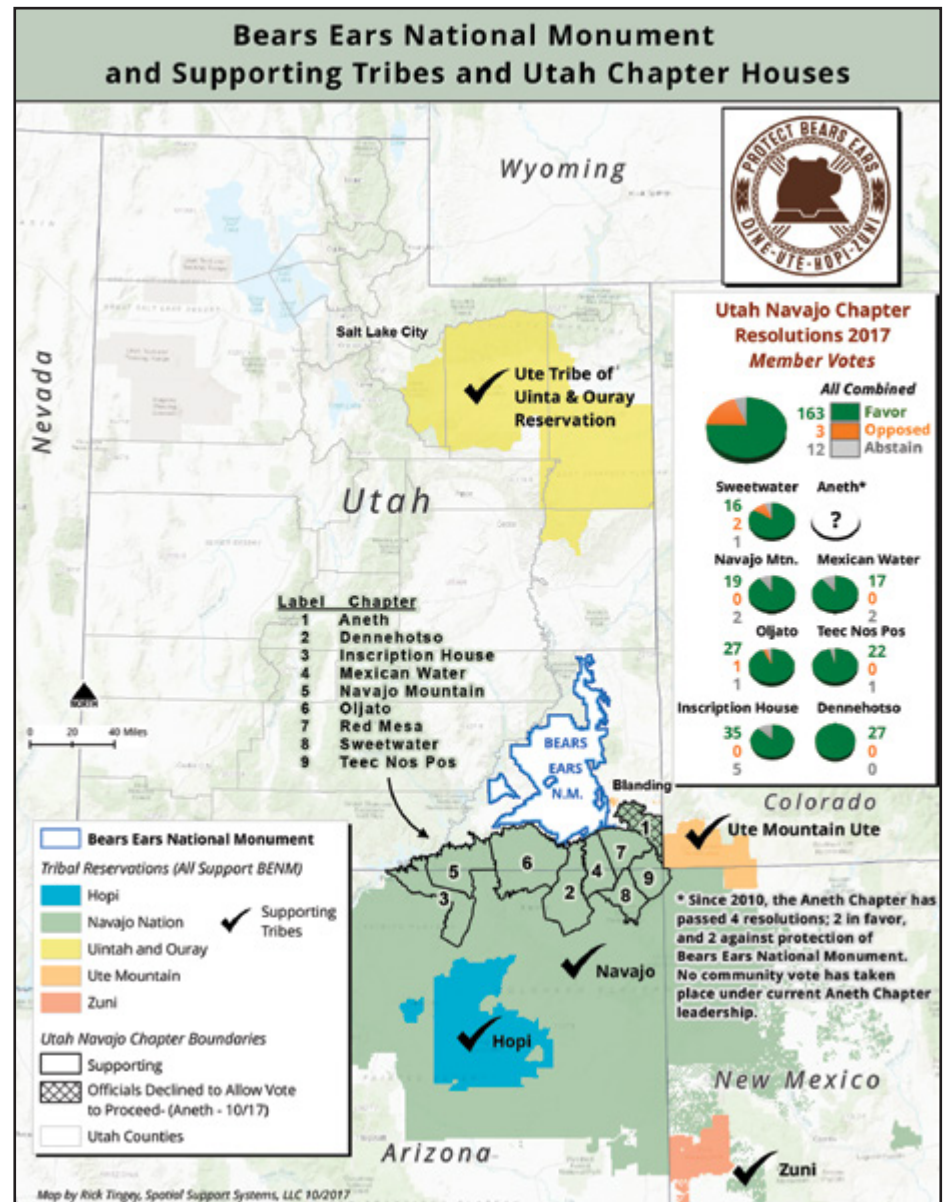


Bears Ears Tribal Commissioners James Adakai, Carleton Bowekaty, Alfred Lomahquahu, Shaun Chapoose, and Terry Knight. Photo by Tim Peterson.

UTAH DINÉ BIKÉYAH

Since 2010, Utah Diné Bikéyah has assisted Native American communities with Indigenous conservation advocacy through ethnographic mapping and community organizing. It was through these grassroots efforts and the leadership of the sovereign nations of the Inter-Tribal Coalition that a proposal was submitted to President Obama to establish the Bears Ears National Monument. In 2016, President Obama recognized the importance of the vast cultural and natural resources of the area and designated the 1.35 M acre Bears Ears National Monument.

Utah Dine Bikeyah established itself in 2012 and became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2014. It is guided by an all Native American Board of Directors and seeks to establish a model for land stewardship and collaborative management, which will assist Indigenous peoples nationally and internationally to develop their own collaborative management plans around other sacred places. We believe that Bears Ears can serve as a model for healing the earth and its people by looking to Indigenous leaders and traditional stewardship practices as the way forward. Initial findings suggest that Indigenous stewardship models may share commonality and applicability with other cultures and practices across the globe.



COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT PLANNING - TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS IMPORTANCE



Cultural Site above Cedar Mesa. Photo by Tim Peterson.

The Bears Ears Tribal Coalition is in the process of crafting a new model for a federal land management plan informed by and aligned with traditional Indigenous knowledge. As the original inhabitants of the Bears Ears cultural landscape, Tribes possess many thousands of years of stewardship expertise. In fact, Native cultures have evolved in tandem with the Bears Ears cultural landscape. Now, this vast body of Native wisdom is actively shaping the way public lands are managed for all Americans.

Native American Tribes have inhabited, utilized, and stewarded the Bears Ears cultural landscape since time immemorial. Over countless generations, Tribes developed profoundly sophisticated understandings of our surrounding environment – the land, plants, animals, and weather patterns that we continue to rely on for physical and spiritual sustenance. Native people have learned to read the landscape because our very survival depended on understanding its subtle shifts and signals. In this way, our Ancestors were scientists in every sense of the word. Through songs, stories, and precise oral transmissions, our peoples have recorded and conveyed this essential information across centuries. Native people today still possess these immeasurable stores of knowledge, carefully guarded and passed down from generation to generation. We know which plants can save a life, and where to find them, and how to harvest them. We know which prayer songs belong to each being, and we acknowledge every one as family. We know how to give and receive gifts from the world around us in order to maintain balance.

In sharing our traditional knowledge of Bears Ears, Tribes are offering the American people a remarkable gift. Tribes stand ready to teach the world how to listen to this sacred ancestral landscape and visit with respect. In so doing, Tribes may also

“As Tribes, we will gather ourselves together to continue the fight to save our lands for the future of not just Native people, but all people who connect with these lands. Bears Ears National Monument is more than just mere federal land to us, as it may be to many other stakeholders – it is a living landscape; it has a pulse. Bears Ears is a fulfillment of our duty to preserve our cultures and our ancestral lands, and its designation was the result of a long, deliberative process to fight for our ancestors as well as access for contemporary use of the lands by our Tribal members.”

~ Shaun Chapoose, Ute Indian Tribe
Business Committee member and Bears
Ears Tribal Commissioner

offer key insights about living sustainably in a warming world. After all, no one knows better how to survive in the rugged, arid landscape of Bears Ears than those of us who have dwelled here since the beginning of time. **Now, Tribes are preparing to teach America how to care for this place for the next 10,000 years — a gift invited through law in the Bears Ears National Monument Proclamation.**



Photo by Tim Peterson



Row of small photos by Utah Diné Bikéyah

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Article 11 asserts that “Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.”

In 2016, this goal was realized at Bears Ears by local Indigenous people and their parent Tribes who requested National Monument status to preserve Native cultures and sacred lands.

Despite this success, state and federal governments undermined protections secured by the five tribes. It appears that the Trump administration spent more time consulting with mining corporations than the Native American people whose culture is at stake in the removal of protection from 1.1 million acres of lands. The past cannot be undone, but we can create a future in which the earth rests in the wisdom, foresight, and traditions of Indigenous peoples of the world.

Please support Tribes and local Native American communities with the following actions:

- Stand in solidarity with the 5 Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition and our allies
- Request that the United States government honor and respect the original Bears Ears National Monument designation and collaborative management structure
- Send letters of support asking that Tribes be allowed to share Native wisdom and thousands of years of stewardship knowledge across these sacred lands through equal and respectful government-to-government engagement to: info@utahdinebikeyah.org
- Build strong alliances and partnerships with tribal leaders, elders, traditional knowledge holders and native non-profit organizations in the United States and abroad
- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and subscribe to our E-Newsletter: www.utahdinebikeyah.org



For more information contact Utah Diné Bikéyah at: (385) 202-4954, info@utahdinebikeyah.org