



Utah Diné Bikéyah

*- a non-profit supporting Native Tribes working together to **Protect Bears Ears** -*

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Utah Diné Bikéyah Supports Secretarial Order on Collaborative Management with Tribes

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San Juan County, Utah

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In support of yesterday's announcement of the Secretarial Order from the Department of Interior, Utah Diné Bikéyah, a local Navajo non-profit organization in San Juan County, Utah expresses its appreciation for recognizing the important role and opportunity that exists for federally recognized Tribes to cooperatively manage public lands.

“Having had the chance to review this order, I want to commend this administration on taking an important step forward in recognizing the value of engaging Native American Tribes in the collaborative management of our shared natural heritage,” said Willie Grayeyes, Chairman of Utah Diné Bikéyah.

“Today, is a good day for Indian Country and this order will help Tribes everywhere. Secretary Jewell's order recognizes traditional knowledge as a management tool, respects our government to government relationship, and acknowledges the fact that our ancestors ‘inhabited the land that forms the present-day United States for millennia.’”

The full Secretarial order can be found [online](#). While this document does not mention the proposed Bears Ears National Monument or describe how collaborative management might be set up in southeast Utah, it does provide some insights into Cooperative Agreements and legal mandates that already exist. It also differentiates between the terms “co-management” and “collaborative management.”

Chairman Grayeyes further stated, “Collaborative management, as defined in this order, is now a tool available to all Tribes who trace cultural assets to what are now federal lands. In relation to the Bears Ears landscape, Utah Diné Bikéyah stands behind the Tribes' request for the strongest collaborative management for Bears Ears that is legally possible, and we are pleased to see important steps like this being taken nationwide.”

The Bears Ears lands in southeast Utah are the ancestral home of the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah and Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni. These five sovereign governments have united as the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition and are leading the effort to designate the region as a National Monument. Our ancestors lived, hunted, gathered, prayed, and built civilizations here. Today, local community members still use the area to gather medicinal plants and for ceremonies and hunting.

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