



Utah Diné Bikéyah

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

www.utahdinebikyah.org
info@utahdinebikyah.org
(385) 202-4954

FB @UtahDineBikeyah | Twitter @UtahDineBikeyah | Instagram @ProtectBearsEars

Tribes, Native American People Celebrate President Obama's Proclamation of Bears Ears National Monument

For Immediate Release: Dec 28, 2016

Contact – Gavin Noyes: (801) 521-7398

Willie Grayeyes: (505) 516-9724

Mark Maryboy: (435) 630 -7488

Cynthia Wilson: (435) 327-0041

Utah Dine Bikeyah, in collaboration with the five Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, is honored to learn that earlier today President Barack Obama designated Bears Ears National Monument—the first National Monument to celebrate Native American living cultural traditions.

UDB received word today that President Obama has exercised his Congressionally delegated authority under the Antiquities Act to permanently protect 1.35 million acres of the Bears Ears proposal in southeastern Utah. We welcome this proclamation.

President Obama's action comes in response to the historic request of Native American people, led by the five Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition: Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, and the Ute Tribe of the Uinta Ouray Reservation. Thirty regional Tribes passed formal resolutions of support for Bears Ears National Monument, as did the National Congress of American Indians, representing more than 300 Tribes across the United States. In addition, more than 225,000 individuals wrote letters and signed petitions calling on President Obama to heed the call of sovereign tribal nations and designate America's most significant unprotected cultural landscape as a National Monument.

Today's victory marks the first time in history that Native American Tribes have called for and succeeded in protecting their sacred ancestral homelands through National Monument designation by a President of the United States of America. In this way, Bears Ears National Monument represents the first truly Native American National Monument in U.S. history.

Bears Ears National Monument is the result of years of grassroots community organizing by local Native American people and government-to-government leadership by sovereign tribal nations. Tribes have united in the effort to protect the 100,000+ archaeological and cultural sites

within the Bears Ears region from rampant looting, grave-robbing and vandalism, while preventing further extractive development on lands that we rely on to this day for physical and spiritual sustenance. Monument designation ensures that future generations of all people will be able to return to Bears Ears for healing, renewal, prayer, and to visit the resting places of our ancestors, whose spirits are still very much alive in this landscape.

This designation is both durable and defensible, as it reflects the will of a majority of Utahns as well as the wish of peoples who have lived here since time immemorial. UDB and our allies applaud this action by President Obama, and we thank the Administration and agencies for collaborating with our sovereign tribal nations and listening to the voices of Native American people. We look forward to helping craft a land management plan for the first National Monument to be collaboratively managed by Tribes.

Our thanks go out to the tens of thousands of supporters who continue to stand with Bears Ears and what it means to all U.S. citizens. We thank President Obama for this courageous and historic act. And we give thanks to the Creator for this place of healing, which is now protected for current and future generations, forever.

###

Quote sheet

Willie Grayeyes – UDB Board Chairman

“I am deeply delighted that the Bears Ears National Monument is now one of the nation’s greatest treasures for all people and future generations to enjoy. I would also like to express my appreciation to President Obama for hearing our voice and listening to the grassroots people, the unity of tribal governments, and all other supporters who stood by us on this powerful path to healing.”

Peterson Zah – Former Navajo Nation President

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we extend our deepest appreciation to President Obama and his administration for making the Bears Ears National Monument a reality. The President's designation is a testament to the will of sovereign Indian nations, as well as the hard work of our people on the ground who worked tirelessly years ago leading up today. It was their vision, determination, and purpose rooted in our traditional ways that contributed greatly to today’s shared accomplishment. This is a dynamic National Monument ready for greatness. We have much to look forward to.”

Jonah Yellowman – UDB Board Member & spiritual advisor, Navajo medicine man

“Thank you great Creator. Thank you to all the supporters and for all the prayers that have been sent. Thank you everyone that stood by us for the land that we love.

This is history-making. The plants and the animals, all beings celebrate the protection of Bears Ears National Monument. Our ancestors are looking down upon us, grateful. It’s so

important that we stay with our stories, our practices, and our ceremonial ways of being. We will continue the practices and teach our little ones. They will learn this land, our prayers, and our songs. There is hope out ahead for the younger generations. Thank you, President Obama, for listening to our prayers and protecting our Bears Ears.”

Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk – Ute Mountain Ute tribal member & former tribal Councilwoman, former Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition Co-Chair

“We all share gratitude for the courage of President Obama embracing this moment to change history rather than than repeat history. We want to continue to see healing through better relationships and clear communication, with tribal entities recognized as sovereign voices. All of us, Native and non-Native, want to be solemn participants at the table as we strive for solutions. We have spoken about protecting what this place was to our ancestors, and we will continue to share that in preparation for the next seven generations.

Today we celebrate the designation of Bears Ears National Monument, and we look forward to crafting a collaborative management plan that honors tribal connections to these lands. Thank you, President Obama, for acting to protect our sacred ancestral homelands.”

Octavius Seowtewa – Zuni Cultural Resources Advisory Committee Chairman & Zuni Medicine Society leader

“Zuni Pueblo and Native people across the country celebrate President Obama's proclamation of Bears Ears National Monument. Mormon history, the Constitution and laws, and white man's history are written on paper. Our history—the Native history—is written in stone on canyon walls. We celebrate knowing our history at Bears Ears will be protected for future generations, forever.”

Mark Maryboy – UDB Board Member, former San Juan County Commissioner & Utah’s first Native American elected official, former Navajo Nation Council Delegate

“As human beings we are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the environment, including Mother Earth, the air, water, sunlight, which are the basic Elements of life. The abundance of Mother Earth’s resources are becoming scarce today and the encroachment on Mother Earth is becoming more fierce. The natural beauty of Mother Earth is at stake and because of this our responsibility to care for and preserve what is left is of the utmost importance.

This is why designating Bears Ears as a national monument is crucial. Like the spirit of our ancestors at Bears Ears, we want our future generations to see and enjoy the natural beauty of Mother Earth. These are the reasons why we extend tremendous gratitude to President Obama for designating Bears Ears as a national monument and honoring Mother Earth and her spirit to thrive.”

Davis Filfred – 23rd Navajo Nation Council Delegate (representing Aneth, Mexican Water, Red Mesa, Teec Nos Pos, & Tolikan), Navajo Nation official spokesperson for government-to-government relations with the State of Utah

“I am so grateful to President Obama for using the Antiquities Act to protect Bears Ears National Monument. This is history in the making and I am so thankful to be a part of it. This is about all the Natives coming together. We want preservation for our mama bear. Mama bear is going to be saved forever. She is not going to be sliced to pieces. She gets to keep all the minerals and royalties for herself.”

Sunny Dooley – Revered Navajo storyteller

“Thank you, President Obama! Thanks to you and all of the people who supported this tremendous effort, Bears Ears National Monument will remain a place of prayer, protection and healing for future generations. You have honored our collective ancestry and our living Native cultures. Thank you for acknowledging our practices of sacredness, strength and sustainability, and for standing with us. Ahéhee’, President Obama!”

Forrest Cuch – Former Director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, Uinta Ouray Ute tribal member

“Thank you President Obama for stopping Governor Herbert and his cronies from once again exerting their disastrous development-at-all-costs policy toward Bears Ears. Moving forward, Tribes will finally have a seat at the planning table regarding their ancestral lands.”

Eric Descheenie – Representative-Elect Arizona House of Representatives (LD7)

“Rarely does tribal traditional knowledge and the healing powers of such wisdom spill over into national politics so much as to inspire thousands of people from a myriad of backgrounds. So many people from many walks of life, professions, religious traditions, and industry have championed our truth to the White House to achieve Bears Ears National Monument. I'm proud of our beautiful movement and all the people behind it. Let indigenous truth inform humanity more and more. Our homelands appreciate it.”

Dorothy Redhorse – UDB Board Member, nonprofit and community leader for over 30 years

“We heard the voices, songs and drums of our ancestors at the Bear’s Ears. We continue to see the permanent writings of our ancestors on the walls of canyons, mesas, and boulders. Permanent protection of the Bear’s Ears means future generations will continue to experience healing described by persons who left in state of tranquility after their visits.”

Malcolm Lehi – UDB Board Member, Ute Mountain Ute tribal member & former tribal Councilman (White Mesa, UT)

“Thank you Mr. President. This designation means we will have more involvement in decision making, and management will finally include our history and our Native wisdom as Ute people.”

Kevin Jones – Former State Archaeologist, State of Utah

“A thousand years of exposure to nature did little to erode the beauty and integrity of the antiquities of the Bears Ears; a hundred years of modern construction and thoughtless

vandalism has wrought havoc and destruction. Thank you to the tribes for fighting to save this land. And thank you President Obama for boldly stepping in on behalf of us today, and for those who will live a thousand years from now, to protect the treasures of Bears Ears.”

www.utahdinebikeyah.org



info@utahdinebikeyah.org