



Utah Diné Bikéyah

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

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Bears Ears Federal Advisory Committee - Neither “Fair” nor “Balanced”

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BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT, UTAH – Utah Diné Bikéyah and the grassroots communities it serves are disappointed by the Department of Interior’s selection of appointees to the [Bears Ears National Monument Advisory Committee](#). Most of the 15 appointments made by the Bureau of Land Management oppose the 1.35-million-acre designation of Bears Ears National Monument, and not a single early proponent of the monument made the cut, despite the Bears Ears proclamation stating that this Advisory Committee “shall consist of a fair and balanced representation of interested stakeholders.”

This week, the Bureau of Land Management announced its appointees. The appointees do not include any persons recommended by Tribes, and the racial composition of the Advisory Committee does not reflect the Native American majority in San Juan County. According to the BLM website, BLM “seeks out and values diverse input from citizens who care about the stewardship of America’s public lands,” with this management Advisory Committee, and the [Obama Bears Ears proclamation](#) states that this Committee “shall consist of a fair and balanced representation of interested stakeholders.”

“The BLM does not seem interested in implementing the Native American foundation of the Bears Ears National Monument,” said Davis Filfred, board chairman for Utah Diné Bikéyah. **“This Advisory Committee lacks Native wisdom, lacks support from sovereign Tribes, and fails to reflect the local community that most depends on protection of these lands.”**

Bears Ears National Monument was created by and is built upon the grassroots knowledge of the Hopi, Zuni, Pueblo, Diné and Ute peoples. These appointments fail to recognize tribal sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples of the Bears Ears region, and, most importantly, the prayers, songs, and ceremonies that led to this opportunity for Tribes of the Bears Ears region to sit at the table to offer their expertise on how to manage Ancestral lands.

“The majority of San Juan County supports Bears Ears, but no proponents made the cut to serve on this committee. Why do we insist on disenfranchising local Native Americans and silencing our most experienced stewards of Utah’s public lands? The BLM should dismantle this committee and start over,” added UDB Executive Director Gavin Noyes.

Here are the appointees:

- 1) Bruce Adams - San Juan County Commissioner
- 2) Ryan Benally – son of Rebecca Benally (former San Juan County Commissioner)
- 3) Alfred Ben - one of the Kayelli leaders that opposes Bears Ears
- 4) Jamie Bayles – Leader of Stewards of San Juan
- 5) Gail Johnson - Fry Canyon ranching permittee
- 6) Gordon Larsen - Cody Stewarts replacement in governor’s office over federal affairs
- 7) Jared Barrett - Owner of Wild River Expeditions
- 8) Zeb Dalton - Rancher who confronted environmentalists over gate closure
- 9) Adam Redd – Rancher
- 10) Kelly Pehrson – San Juan County Administrator
- 11) Dustin Randall - Owner of Roam adventure guide services

In October 2018, Rupert Steele, chairman for the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Nation, issued a letter of support that nominated seven qualified Native Americans to this advisory committee. These individuals are:

- 1) Willie Grayeyes – San Juan County Commissioner representing San Juan County interests
- 2) Malcolm Lehi – a Ute Mountain Ute member, grazing permittee and land owner
- 3) Honor Keeler – a Cherokee legal scholar with expertise in public lands and repatriation
- 4) Kevin Madalena – from the Pueblo of Jemez with paleontological expertise
- 5) Jonah Yellowman – a cultural, spiritual healer from Halgato Wash, Utah nominated the committee’s dispersed recreational activities
- 6) Davina Smith – nominated for public at large from Oljato Chapter, Utah
- 7) Tara Benally – nominated for public at large from Mexican Water Chapter Utah.

“The following nominations are exemplary candidates to serve on the Bears Ears National Monument Advisory Committee, as they are important people within our Native communities, who possess expertise and specialized skills and direct ties to Bears Ears National Monument,” said Steele about these seven candidates, none of whom were appointed to the committee.

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