Protecting the Whole Bears Ears Landscape
A Call to Honor the Full Cultural and Ecological Boundaries

A report submitted by
The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

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Preface: The Coalition’s Request of the President

In October 2015, the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition—composed of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah Ouray Reservation, Hopi Nation, and Zuni Tribe—submitted a proposal to President Obama for a Bears Ears National Monument. The proposal formally recommended a landscape of 1.9 million acres to serve as the geographic reach of the national monument. We submit this report to urge, if President Obama does proclaim a national monument, that the recommended 1.9 million acre landscape be preserved fully intact.

The waves of people, in and out of government, connected with the inspirational Bears Ears movement all want this national monument to be a surpassingly great addition to the American conservation system. We all want it to stand as a monument to a wondrous part of the natural world as well as to the long and profound connection to it by Native peoples. If the boundaries remain intact, the designation of this living cultural landscape will go down in history as one of the most ecologically and socially significant decisions ever created as a matter of conservation and Indian policy.

The Coalition’s recommendation on boundaries is the result of the integrity of an extraordinary process that is rare, if not unprecedented, among national monuments. As we explain in detail in Section 3(The Extensive Research and Analysis Supporting the Proposed Boundaries), intensive work began in 2010 and continued for 6 ½ years. It is a joined enterprise of Traditional Knowledge and western sciences: It reflects the careful, dedicated, and knowledgeable work of hundreds of Native people and dozens of academics. Their work shows that the Bears Ears landscape is one discrete unit, bound together in numerous ways, and it blends perfectly with other protected federal and tribal lands. As the pages that follow will elaborate, this is an opportunity unlike any other, and we hope that President Obama will decide to capitalize upon it.
“We can still hear the songs and prayers of our ancestors on every mesa and in every canyon.”

Malcolm Lehi, Ute Mountain Ute

1. **Introduction**

   In remote southeastern Utah lies one of the most intact wild ecosystems in the contiguous United States, as well as tens of thousands of America’s best-preserved, yet unprotected, archaeological sites. Fanning up from the confluence of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers—a point long considered sacred by Native peoples of this region—stretches a landscape of deep sandstone canyons, high redrock mesas, and aspen studded mountainsides under a wide turquoise sky. Rising from the center of this 1.9 million acre swath of desert plateau looms a pair of twin buttes, visible for miles in all directions. In every language of every Native culture in the region, this horizon-defining feature translates as “Bears Ears.”

   Tucked among the folds and promontories of the Bears Ears cultural landscape rest an estimated 100,000 archaeological sites, regarded by researchers as world-class objects of scientific inquiry. Kivas, granaries, rock art panels, graves, and many more historic and prehistoric markers are scattered densely throughout this area, preserved relatively undisturbed
for centuries by the Colorado Plateau’s arid climate and rugged terrain. In recent decades, however, awareness of Bears Ears’ wealth of archaeological resources has spread faster than the pace of protection. Looting, vandalism, and grave-robbing continue to cause irreparable damage to the incredible cultural and scientific legacy within the proposed Bears Ears National Monument.

For local grassroots Native American people who have inhabited this region since time immemorial and who still utilize this landscape for ceremony and subsistence, the archaeological abundance of Bears Ears offers invaluable laboratories of in situ observation. For Tribes, such sites are quite literally the dwelling places of our Ancestors, whose spirits are still very much alive in this landscape.

The entire 1.9 million acre Bears Ears cultural landscape is densely inhabited by the stories, histories, prayers, and practices of people and place over millennia. Human beings – grandmothers, fathers, children – have been interacting with the Bears Ears ecosystem for thousands of years, during which time our Ancestors developed deeply nuanced narratives and complex protocols for regulating those interactions and stewarding these lands. A modern researcher cannot fully understand the objects of the proposed Bears Ears National Monument without seeking to understand the unbroken legacy of traditional wisdom still practiced today by grassroots Native people.

Traditional wisdom constitutes a profound form of stewardship that we consider to be an “object” of historic and scientific value unto itself. The value of indigenous ways of knowing and interfacing with ecosystems is increasingly recognized by western science and scholarship under the term Traditional Knowledge. Traditional Knowledge is derived from keen observations carried out and passed down over hundreds or thousands of years. It represents another way of knowing the social and ecological landscape. It is a method of scientific inquiry that is not separate from science, but invaluable to scientists in places where it remains intact – places such as Bears Ears. The proposed Bears Ears National Monument poses a unique and unprecedented opportunity to integrate Traditional Knowledge into modern land management strategies by honoring the wisdom of traditional Native ceremonial-ecological practices that have been in continuous use at Bears Ears since time immemorial.
2. The Meaning of “Objects of Historic and Scientific Interest” under the Antiquities Act

President Obama’s authority to proclaim national monuments comes from the Antiquities Act of 1906, which allows a president, “in his discretion,” to protect “objects of historic or scientific interest.” The act also provides that any national monuments “shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.” The Antiquities Act has proved to be a broad and powerful source of authority for presidents and we are not aware of any concern about President Obama’s legal authority to set aside the 1.9 million acre Bears Ears landscape as a national monument. Still, we will briefly address that issue.

The term “object” might seem, upon first glance, to suggest a very narrow presidential authority. Further, the impetus for the 1906 Antiquities Act was to protect relatively small archaeological sites, a fact that might seem to limit the potential breadth of the word “object” in the statute. The meaning of “objects of historic or scientific interest” as used in the Antiquities Act, however, has proved to be sweeping. Under court decisions and presidential proclamations, it extends, for example, to vistas, landscapes, ecosystems, grasses, medicinal plants, animals, and geologic formations. Every court challenge to presidential proclamations under the Act has been unsuccessful. Basically, the courts have found that Congress intended for presidents to have broad leeway in the short and spare Antiquities Act—thus the use of the unusually broad phrase “in his discretion” in the first sentence of the act. As a result, the Antiquities Act easily supports a wide range of objects within the proposed Bears Ears National Monument including historic structures, rock art, earthen rings and mounds, landscapes, geologic formations, plants (such as herbs, medicines, and basketry materials), animals, sacred sites, and historic use areas.

Nor does the “smallest area compatible” language in the Antiquities Act limit President Obama in proclaiming the 1.9 million acre Bears Ears landscape as a national monument. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt declared 800,000 acres of the Grand Canyon as a national monument. The United States Supreme Court upheld that action taken “in his discretion.” Later presidential proclamations have declared monuments of even greater size in Alaska, the lower 48 states, and the oceans.
“We bring to the table direct ties to the land. We don’t quite own it but we’re here as caretakers; if we can help protect that and justify where our native cultures and customs come from we can protect it in the face of new challenges.”

Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk, Ute Mountain Ute, Co-Chair, Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

3. The Extensive Research and Analysis Supporting the Proposed Boundaries

   A. The Bears Ears Landscape: The Peoples’ History

   This report seeks to explain the importance of the entirety of the 1.9 million acre Bears Ears National Monument boundary. The profound human presence that permeates the Bears Ears cultural landscape brings to life the deep meaning of “objects of historical interest.” Every object in the landscape – from the pattern on a shard of Ancestral Puebloan pottery or the opening in the forest used for the Bear Dance to the morphology of desert bighorn sheep – has been shaped and influenced by the long history of people on this landscape. The Ancestors knew well that nature is more than simply an accumulation of land, water, air, plants, and animals. They handed down a compendium of events, people, stories, songs, and ceremonies to ensure sustainable stewardship in the face of ever-shifting conditions – including a changing climate.
The data underlying this report is drawn, in part, from ethnographic research and data analysis conducted by Utah Diné Bikéyah, Round River Conservation Studies, the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, and others. The report includes both maps and narrative descriptions of the importance and significance of the five geographic regions that comprise the whole of the Bears Ears National Monument: The Confluence, White Canyon, Indian Creek, Headwaters, and Cedar Mesa.

Each of the Bears Ears regions stand as significant historic and cultural landscapes deserving of a national monument designation in its own right. Taken as a whole, these five regions interlace to tell a compelling story of ancient cultures – even reaching into the present day with dwellings established as recently as the 1920s.

Since the beginning of time, numerous indigenous cultures traveled through, inhabited, and built civilizations on these lands. The Lime Ridge Clovis site, located within the Cedar Mesa region, contains extensive evidence of Paleo-Indian occupation. The archaeological record indicates widespread use between 6000 B.C. and 100 A.D. by Archaic Peoples. The heaviest occupation of the proposed monument lands was perhaps by the Formative Period Peoples (AD 100-AD 1300). Most representative of the Formative Period peoples is a single distinct culture known as the Ancestral Puebloan or Anasazi. Today many Pueblo cultures (including the Hopi, Zuni, Cochiti, Acoma, Zia, and Jemez Pueblos) assert their connection to Ancestral Puebloans who once occupied and used the proposed monument lands in Utah. Until very recently, Navajo and Ute travelled, hunted, built hogans and wikiups, and buried their ancestors on these lands.

Today, local Native American people regularly journey to the Bears Ears landscape to continue to perform ceremonies, hunt, gather herbs, medicines, and firewood, and steward their sacred sites (see Appendix 1). The cultural practices these Tribes maintain — passed down from generation to generation — are the living counterparts to the historic and scientific objects that deserve protection.

In addition to the rich indigenous cultural legacy at Bears Ears, is the modern history of Euro-Americans who have settled and explored this region. Most notable were the Mormon pioneers who traversed the mesas and canyons via the unlikely Hole-in-the-Rock Trail to settle adjacent to the proposed monument in Bluff, Utah. Also, the Bears Ears region has become a revered destination for rock climbers, hikers, backpackers, and other outdoor enthusiasts seeking
solitude and escape from modern civilization. Visitation to the region increases every year, requiring additional resources to manage increased challenges that accompany use. Without sufficient supervision and stewardship, damage can and does result. Six major cases of mutilation and theft of ancient historic objects have been reported by the BLM in 2016 alone.

In order to protect the natural, paleontological, archaeological, historical, and sacred objects identified in this report—and so that local customs and cultures, particularly Native American traditions, are able to continue in perpetuity—this report demonstrates that the proposed 1.9-million-acre boundary is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected within the proposed Bears Ears National Monument.

“We as Native Americans are very spiritual. We’re not doing this on our own—there’s a higher power that’s with us and working with us. We have to recognize that power is with us and ask it to come and guide us. With this, let’s all work together and pray together.”

Alfred Lomahquahu, Hopi Nation, Co-Chair, Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

B. The Bears Ears Landscape: A Geographic History

Extreme topographic relief, low levels of habitat fragmentation, and high biological diversity characterizes the proposed Bears Ears National Monument landscape. The Bears Ears
region is located within San Juan County, Utah, a rural county in southern Utah with a total population of 7,389, a majority of which is Native American. The Utah portion of the Navajo reservation is 1.3 million acres (mostly lying between the San Juan River and the Arizona border) and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe also has substantial acreage in San Juan County including allotted lands inside the proposed Bears Ears boundary. In addition to the high density of cultural resources, intact ecosystems, and scenic grandeur within the proposed Bears Ears National Monument, the area is well known among destination hunters for its abundant wildlife, especially its healthy mule deer, elk, and desert big horn sheep population.

Bears Ears National Monument presents the opportunity to steward 1.9 million acres of unparalleled archaeological and biological resources alongside a wellspring of Traditional Knowledge from our distinct traditional cultures. Ultimately, Native ways of knowing may help our species come to understand that science and spirit are two ears emerging from the same skull.

“Using our oral history with the scientific findings, it is evident that our ancestors did indeed inhabit the surrounding Bears Ears area at one point in time. Our migration history, our songs and prayers that we practice today do reference that area.”

Octavius Seowtewa, Zuni Tribe
C. Ethnographic Mapping Methodology

In 2010, Utah Diné Bikéyah, Round River Conservation Studies, the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, and several academic experts initiated an ambitious project of ethnographic mapping, also referred to as “cultural mapping,” for the Bears Ears region. This project was designed as a primary authoritative resource for the purpose of determining the proper boundaries of the proposed Bears Ears National Monument. Spanning more than six and a half years, this cultural mapping effort including three years of thorough ethnographic research, an intensive interviewing regime, and data analysis. Personal interviews included more than seventy Native American interviewees in Utah who live adjacent to the proposed Bears Ears National Monument.

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Utah Navajo Chapter Houses were early collaborators in the process, and were later joined by the Hopi, Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribes. Many experts and consultants have contributed to this research including Mark Maryboy, former San Juan County Commissioner; Barbara Dugelby, PhD in Human Ecology; Rick Tingey, GIS Specialist; Bryan Evans, MS Land and Natural Resource Planning; Chris Lockhart, PhD in Anthropology; Kim Heinemeyer, PhD in Conservation Biology; Dennis Sizemore, MS in Wildlife Biology; Fred White, Director of the Navajo Division of Natural Resources; Alan Downer, PhD in Archaeology; and Gavin Noyes, Masters in Public Policy.

Navajo cultural interviews were conducted by Mark Maryboy, a traditionalist and former Navajo elected official fluent in English and Diné languages, with an extensive background in public land and natural resources policy. Mr. Maryboy participated in ethnographic training from Round River staff which included conducting map based, questionnaire interviews. Interviewees were selected according to the location of their home (selecting approximately equal numbers from each Native community in Utah) and their depth of traditional knowledge. Interview length depended on the traditional knowledge of each Native American participant and varied between one and ten hours.

Native American Tribes hold site-specific data from the interviews and many other sources used for the ethnographic mapping project. This report represents only a portion of existing data and all data and is compartmentalized within hydrologic units called Hydrologic...
Unit Codes (HUCs) (see Appendix 1). This allows different geographies to be compared according to the values and uses identified by individuals in the elder interviews. “Watershed selection frequencies” were derived from the original data (see Appendix 1). This data source was created using a technique that masks sensitive data provided by elders by only counting the number of times each unit of land was selected by interviewees within each response category.

Interviewees were instructed to draw points, lines, and polygons on 36”x 36” maps and the interviewer labeled each point or polygon according to type of cultural use. The result of more than 70 interviews are that every acre of public land within San Juan County was identified as important for a variety of objects. Native American decision-makers later determined the optimal (most efficient) boundary selection to represent locations, activities, and objects of greatest value within the smallest area.

Ethnographic data was captured and organized at a much finer scale than indicated in the maps in Appendix 1. The Native American Tribes own the unconsolidated data detailing responses (points, polygons, and verbal descriptions) of each individual to each question, and this report is intended to provide an overview of cultural responses. The Coalition requests the opportunity to respond to any site-specific questions that may arise as boundaries are scrutinized.

In addition to the ethnographic data, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) collects myriad information about certain species (primarily those that are hunted, or are at risk of being listed as threatened or endangered) but has little or no information about many species that are of high importance to Native American Tribes (i.e., jackrabbits, raptors, beavers, lizards, etc.). Some of this information can be derived from habitat type data, but some is simply unavailable. UDWR habitat models were created through a collaborative inter-agency process called the “Southwest Regional Gap Analysis” that predicted habitat for 820 vertebrate species across a five-state region. For each species, relationships were identified utilizing landscape vegetation types, elevation, and other variables know to determine wildlife distribution and seasonal movement within the species known range. These habitat models make several assumptions including that each identified habitat will include species occurrences within it, but no assumptions are made about the abundance of species within the region. It is not assumed that species utilize each polygon every year (but at least one year out of the past ten), and it is
assumed a species spends a portion of their life history (breeding, wintering, etc.) in the polygon, but not the entire year.

Tribes, organization, and individuals may hold additional information relevant to lands within and outside of the proposed Bears Ears National Monument that is not represented in this report or by this research. With this in mind, the Coalition is happy to discuss any questions that arise regarding the proposed monument boundaries that are not answered by this report.

D. Threats: Mining, Looting, and Off-Road Vehicles

Recently named one of the “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the 1.9 million acre Bears Ears region is a landscape at risk to degradation from mineral exploration and extraction, recreational abuse, and cultural resource vandalism and looting. Uranium mining, gravel quarrying, and tar sands development threaten to degrade lands and pollute waterways within the White Canyon, Confluence, and Cedar Mesa regions, while threats of oil, gas, and potash development exist along the eastern Bears Ears boundary, especially in the northeastern and southeastern corners. A uranium mine expansion is currently under review by the BLM in the White Canyon region, the Cedar Mesa region is in line for an oil and gas master leasing plan analysis within five years, and the School Institutional Trust Lands Administration is seeking to consolidate its developable land holdings in an area known as the Bluff Bench.

Irresponsible and illegal off-road vehicle use is causing ongoing damage to cultural and natural resources. Not only can off-road vehicle use harm cultural sites, destroy fragile desert soils, and detract from the experience of other visitors, it also provides ready access to cultural sites that correlates with an increase in vandalism and looting. New protections for the Bears Ears region will lead to better management of off-road vehicles, safeguarding important cultural sites and improving the experience of everyone who visits. As you read this, the Bears Ears region is experiencing both intentional and unintentional cultural resource vandalism and looting. At least twenty-four serious incidents have been reported in the last two years, and most cases of looting and damage go unreported and unpursued.

Because existing threats from mineral development, off-road vehicle use, and cultural resource looting are increasing, it is imperative that the most threatened regions within the
proposed 1.9 million acre Bears Ears National Monument be designated and protected for the cultural resources they contain; most specifically at risk are the White Canyon, Red Canyon, Bluff Bench, and Hatch Point areas. By acknowledging that the whole Bears Ears National Monument, is one great cultural region, management can place special emphasis on cultural and natural resource conservation as well as spiritual understanding, healing, and growth. Without bold and decisive action, this 1.9 million acre landscape will continue to be diminished one uranium mine, one oil well, one open-pit potash mine, one illegal off-road vehicle trail, and one stolen cultural artifact at a time.
4. **Regions of Bears Ears National Monument**

   **A. Confluence Region**

   “Areas where ancient sites are located are important because there still remain their spirits to protect those that are still living today and these are places where Navajos used to live long before the arrival of the white people.”

   *Clara Maryboy, Navajo Nation*

   Comprising the southwestern corner of the Bears Ears National Monument boundary, the Confluence region – a remote, dissected spit of land jutting above the converging Colorado and San Juan Rivers – has harbored residents and hindered travelers since Paleo-Indian times. Bounded by the Colorado River to the west and Lake Powell and San Juan River to the south, this area is home to significant archaeological sites that have not been subjected to thorough scientific study. In addition, the Navajo consider the confluence of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers as sacred due to its role in the emergence story of the Diné People.

   The rugged topography and wildness of this region rivals anything in the lower 48 states and therefore has, in part, resulted in the Confluence region harboring some of the least disturbed archaeological sites in the United States. As archeologist Kevin T. Jones has observed, “Many sites in the Confluence unit are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places,
perhaps many hundreds.” In particular, the Confluence region contains significantly more Archaic and early Puebloan sites than any of the other four regions of the proposed Bears Ears National Monument. These archaeological resources are substantial, delicate, and endangered. Due to the rugged terrain, these resources tend to be smaller and more scattered than in some nearby areas, yet the overall significance of the record here is substantial, and clearly deserving of protection and further investigation. The archaeological resources in the Confluence region hold an untapped wealth of knowledge for scientists and Native Americans that, with protection, can last for generations to come.
B. White Canyon Region

“The entire county is considered sacred. Where lightning strikes occur on the ground, tree, rock and cliff are considered sacred sites. Ancient sites are included, these sites they were once used as homes, shelters and hiding places during the time when Navajo were rounded up to be moved to Hweeldi.”

The White Canyon region is bounded by Red Canyon to the west and south, Natural Bridges National Monument and the Grand Gulch Plateau to the southeast, Woodenshoe Canyon and the upper reaches of the Abajo Mountains to the east, Beef Basin to the north, and the spectacular Cataract Canyon portion of the Colorado River to the northwest.

The White Canyon region is remote and contains abundant and significant rock art sites from all cultural periods. Archaeological sites in this area range from small and elusive, to grand and spectacular, with many considered significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The presence of early Archaic period Ancestral Puebloan sites in significant numbers – with later sites marking the presence of Utes, Paiutes, and Navajos – results in a different type of significance for the White Canyon region. This significance derives from small but intensely information-rich campsites, hunting areas, processing and gathering spots, and sacred ritual sites of the hunter-gatherers of the area. These sites tell a related yet entirely distinct story from that of the farming cultures. Importantly, the White Canyon region is revered for its many “Nahonidzho,” or “escaping places,” in protecting Utah Navajos from the traumas of the Long Walk. Here archaeologists have found artifacts from the earliest peoples to inhabit the region: the mammoth and bison hunters of the late Pleistocene ice age. These traces connote
an unbroken record of human presence spanning over 10,000 years, and include recent historic sites significant sites to Mormon and Anglo settlers who moved through the region. The White Canyon Region stands out as a prime example of the unique geology, paleontology, and ecology of the canyon country region.
C. Indian Creek Region

“These are considered places of ceremonies, these activities are practiced on a daily basis by the Diné when traveling on or along the road, offerings are made to certain plants for protection, healing or blessing.”

Richard Yanito, Navajo

Comprising the northeastern portion of the Bears Ears National Monument boundary, the Indian Creek region includes lands adjacent to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. This area includes Hatch Point, Lockhart Basin, Harts Draw, Harts Point, and Indian Creek, named because of the high number of Native American residents during the early days of American settlement.

The Indian Creek Region hosts a richness of adornment that exceeds the collection of any of the great art museums of the world. Contiguous exposures hundreds of yards long covered with scores of individual elements comprising a composition as great in size and cultural richness as the Sistine Chapel adorns the stark stone, providing a glimpse into the minds and lives of those who once walked these magnificent landscapes. Red-painted life size ghost-like figures, representing some mythical world we cannot begin to comprehend, thrill us and remind us that we are mere latecomers, visitors to this anointed place.
The Indian Creek region – which likely experiences the highest current rate of visitation in all of the Bears Ears National Monument proposal – also provides crucial habitat connectivity and a necessary buffer between Canyonlands National Park and the adjacent BLM-managed public lands currently threatened by mineral development and irresponsible motorized recreation.
D. Headwaters Region

“The Bears Ears, Blue Mountain, and La Sal are considered important historical sites as these are ancestral lands where offerings are placed.”

Dorothy Jones, Navajo

The Headwaters unit of the proposed Bears Ears National Monument is comprised of the uplands of the Abajo Mountains, Elk Ridge, Upper Dark Canyon, the Bears Ears buttes, and surrounding woodlands. The dense fir and aspen forests in the Headwaters highlands provide firewood to heat homes, as well as habitat for wild game species including elk and deer, upon which Native people have relied for subsistence for millennia. Though one does not typically associate dense forest canopy, lush understory, and snow with the redrock Colorado Plateau, in fact such biomes provide the foundational inputs of water and wildlife that animate the rocky mesas and canyons that fan out from these precipitation-netting peaks.

These are the places the Navajo refer to as “Nahodishgish,” or “places to be left alone” for the rejuvenation of life. Like other isolated mountain ranges of southern Utah including the La Sals and the Henry Mountains, the Abajos are verdant “sky islands” containing critical snowpack for the ecological functioning of the lower elevation redrock canyon landscapes that emblemize this region. The Headwaters region is the crucial high elevation oasis that the sacred Bears Ears buttes are perched upon.

As such, the Headwaters region is the key to life in the whole area, and has been since time immemorial. The Hopi and Zuni people know the Headwaters as the location of the most powerful medicines that have served their community. The Navajo Chief, Manuelito, was born
there. The Ute people still call the Headwaters region home, where they hold public lands
grazing permits, allotment lands, and commune with their ancestors. Ute leaders like Posey and
historic village sites and places he defended and fought for are held in high regard. Ute locations
such as Arch Canyon, Hammond Canyon, Allen Canyon, Dark Canyon, and Elk Ridge are
revered for the important role they have played in shaping Ute culture in the past and for their
importance to future generations. The Headwaters region is the fount of nourishment and central
to provisioning, sustaining, and perpetuating human lives and culture. For these reasons, the
Headwaters houses the shreds and patches of past lives that preserve the knowledge of those who
lived before. Archaeological sites are abundant and significant numbers in all environmental
zones of the Headwaters region.
E. Cedar Mesa Region

“South of Monticello, South of Blanding and South of Bears Ears, are places where Navajos used to live, these are considered important locations, sacred residential and ceremonial grounds even to this day.”

Albert Howard, Navajo

Cedar Mesa, the broad plateau stretching south and east from the Bears Ears buttes, provides an abundance of contemporary uses for local Native American residents. This unit includes the scenic Arch Canyon complex to the north and Grand Gulch to the west. Cedar Mesa’s eastern edge is bounded by Comb Ridge – a striking uplift that runs almost precisely north-south for some 40 miles within the proposed monument – with its long views and side-canyons rich with the ancient structures and art of the Ancestral Puebloans.

The close proximity of timber resources on Cedar Mesa is of central importance to Native communities as is the density and integrity of Ancestral Puebloan dwellings in this region. Sustainable and equitable management of this critical resource is a primary consideration of practical and political significance for regional residents. Cedar Mesa thus typifies the dual compelling interests that the proposed Bears Ears National Monument seeks to mediate: the necessity of modern use and access counterbalanced with the pressing need to preserve some of the most precious stores of prehistoric structures in the world.

Importantly, Cedar Mesa is home to one of Utah’s oldest known archaeological sites, the Lime Ridge Clovis site, which dates back nearly 12,000 years to the last ice age. The Lime
Ridge Clovis site is the best example of a site dating to this period in the state and region. The Hopi and Zuni Tribes hold some of the greatest potential for explaining some of the great wonders that have perplexed archaeologists who have flocked to this region for decades.
5. Conclusion

We, tribal leaders of the Coalition and our many friends, wish to extend our lasting thanks to President Obama and the many members of his Administration who have worked on responding to our proposal to protect the 1.9 million acre Bears Ears landscape. The matter has, from the beginning, been entangled in many ways with congressional consideration of the Public Lands Initiative (PLI). While we understand the Administration’s desire to wait until it could determine how and whether Congress would respond to the PLI, we now believe that the time has come where the Administration can make its decision as to creating a Bears Ears National Monument. We hope that this report will be of use to you in deciding upon one critical issue, the size of the monument.

While one may be tempted to view the boundaries put forth in the PLI as instructive for the Bears Ears National Monument, we feel this is an erroneous approach that fails to recognize the origins, driving forces, and consequences of each of these proposals.

The PLI boundaries trace to a series of actions by the San Juan County Commission that displayed a kind of raw discrimination rarely seen in the actions of American governments. In 2014, in an episode detailed in Exhibit One of our original proposal, the San Juan County Commission announced a process to hear comments from local citizens on various proposals so that the Commission would have a basis for advising the Utah congressional delegation as to what action should be taken in the PLI on federal lands in San Juan County. As part of this process, Utah Diné Bikeyah (UDB) submitted a proposal. The Commission advised UDB that it would place its proposal on a county handout alongside other locally developed initiatives to allow San Juan County citizens to select their preferred PLI proposal. Surprisingly, only a few days before voting, the San Juan County Commission changed its position and informed UDB that its proposal would not appear as an official option in the San Juan County public process.

Regardless, UDB encouraged Native American citizen engagement in the process. Extraordinarily, when the comments were tallied, the UDB proposal received over 400 votes, 64% of all votes received by the county. When the time came to make a decision, however, the San Juan County Commission selected the high-development proposal, created and advocated by themselves, which had received only 2 comments of support, or less than 1%. San Juan County
submitted the development oriented proposal to the Utah delegation, which ultimately became the basis for the current PLI boundaries.

Some changes have been made to San Juan County’s recommendations since that initial proposal but, by and large, the PLI remains heavily supported by mineral development interests. The unsavory beginnings and heavy emphasis on mining interests makes the PLI proposal one that cannot nearly match the care and integrity of the Coalition’s proposed boundaries.

We are proud of how we have developed and presented, over many years, our recommendation for the proper boundaries necessary to protect the Bears Ears landscape for both past and future generations. We hope that this report gives you insight into the thorough process and careful deliberation that went into determining the proposed Bears Ears National Monument boundary. We are convinced that the proposed 1.9 million acre boundary is necessary for proper protection of cultural and natural resources, and will result in a visionary Bears Ears National Monument that will become the hallmark of cooperation and coordination between Native American tribes and the federal government in the twenty-first century. Again, we are satisfied that this matter is in good hands, and are comfortable in knowing that this Administration and this President will craft the final decision.

Alfred Lomahquahu  
Hopi Vice-Chairman  
Co-Chair, Bears Ears  
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Inter-tribal Coalition
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The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, and all who care about the Bears Ears landscape, have a tremendous debt of gratitude to Utah Diné Bikeyah. UDB established the boundaries that the Coalition has recommended. They did it with a comprehensive effort of research and community involvement that gives these boundaries their integrity. UDB also played a major role in the development of this report. Our thanks go out to Willie Grayeyes, UDB Board Chair, and the other nine members of the UDB Board who has each been responsible for communicating with and representing their own communities in Utah through this proposal over the past five years. The UDB Executive Director, Gavin Noyes, has been absolutely indispensable. His deep engagement in developing the boundaries themselves and this report has been a great service.
Appendix A - Maps- Cultural Resource Atlas
The Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition Proposed National Monument.

Proposal for Bears Ears National Monument and the Public Lands Initiative.

SAN JUAN COUNTY, UTAH

Proposed Bears Ears National Monument and the Public Lands Initiative.

Chinle Creek

Manitou Mesa

Cedar Mesa

Grand Gulch

Canyon de Chelly

Painted Desert

Chaco Canyon

Montezuma Creek

La Plata Plateau

Dominion Valley

Chinle Creek

Canyonlands National Park

Monument Valley

Blanding

Monticello

Hanksville

Moab

La Sal Mts.

Paradox

White Mesa

Blanding

Monticello

Hanksville

Moab

La Sal Mts.

Paradox

White Mesa
San Juan County, Utah

Spatial Representation of Crucial Wildlife Habitats

UDWR Identified Crucial Habitats for black bear, desert bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, and pronghorn.
Landscape Scale Departure from Vegetation Reference Condition

Vegetation Condition
- Area most similar to reference condition
- Area least similar to reference condition

Bears Ears National Monument
Paleo Sites

Palaeontological Sites in Bears Ears

Geographic Sampling of

Location of Sites

(Note: This map shows only a sampling of paleontological sites known in Bears Ears. No conclusions about overall site numbers or densities should be drawn from this data.)
Appendix B- Maps- Threats to the Bears Ears Region