



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE



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ASSOCIATION
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February 27, 2017

Secretary Ryan Zinke
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

Access Fund, American Alpine Club, Friends of Indian Creek, Outdoor Alliance, Outdoor Industry Association, and Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (grassroots and national organizations representing hundreds of thousands of rock climbers and outdoor enthusiasts as well as hundreds of businesses) appreciate your consideration of our position on Bears Ears National Monument. We write to share our community's strong support for the Bears Ears National Monument designation, as well as our longstanding support for the Antiquities Act as a tool to protect our country's public lands.

The Bears Ears region in southeastern Utah is one of the most revered recreation destinations in the U.S. Its grandeur and beauty has a profound impact on those who spend time there rock climbing, mountain biking, paddling, hiking, hunting, fishing, and canyoneering. The rock climbing resources are especially exceptional and annually draw tens of thousands of visitors from around the world to climb at Indian Creek, Lockhart Basin, Arch/Texas Canyon, Valley of the Gods, and many other locations (see attached map).

As you know, the outdoor recreation industry supports 6.1 million jobs in the United States and generates \$646 billion in consumer spending in America, much of which is in rural economies, in large part due to America's public lands and waters. In Utah alone, outdoor recreation generates \$12 billion in consumer spending and is responsible for more than 122,000 jobs.¹ The outdoor recreation economy is fundamentally dependent on access to public lands and the environmental integrity of recreation resources. The Bears Ears National Monument contains exceptional recreation opportunities, and our coalition of Utah-based and national organizations welcomes the opportunity to partner with you to protect its designation and quantifiable economic benefits.

The outdoor recreation community is heartened by your commitment to keep public lands public for economic growth and outdoor enthusiasts of all stripes. We also appreciate your commitment to hearing from all sides regarding the Bears Ears designation, and we hope that you will work to allay concerns with this designation and safeguard the longstanding tradition of protecting public lands using the Antiquities Act.

Recently, the Antiquities Act has been threatened by some members of Congress. We understand that some lawmakers have asked you and the Trump administration to undermine this vital tool by administratively rescinding the Bears Ears National Monument instead of working through the legislative process. These threats might not take into account that the Secretary of Interior cannot "modify or revoke any withdrawal creating national monuments under the Act of June 8, 1906 [Antiquities Act]..."² While such an action would rightfully be litigated, overshadowing the positive work we hope to achieve with you as Interior Secretary, it would also inevitably put all National Monuments in jeopardy—including the eight national monuments that Theodore Roosevelt designated and have not

¹ Outdoor Industry Association (2012), *The Outdoor Recreation Economy*, Boulder, CO. Retrieved from https://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf

² Section § 204(j), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

received additional protections from Congress (Devils Tower, WY; El Morro, NM; Montezuma Castle, AZ; Gila Cliff Dwellings, NM; Tonto, AZ; Muir Woods, CA; Jewel Cave, SD; and Natural Bridges, UT).

Devils Tower National Monument is notable to the climbing community because, similar to Bears Ears National Monument, it represents a challenging, yet successful, balance between world-class climbing opportunities and the preservation of sacred land and traditions. America's national monuments provide concrete evidence that public land stakeholders can work together to overcome complex challenges. Our coalition wholeheartedly participated in the legislative process (Utah Public Lands Initiative) to find balance for the Bears Ears region. Although that process was ultimately unsuccessful, it forced a wider spectrum of ideas to be integrated into the Bears Ears National Monument proclamation, and it also fortuitously resulted in several positive relationships that would not have been possible otherwise.³

We encourage you to work with all stakeholders, including the Utah delegation, Governor Herbert, Tribal representatives, outdoor recreation industry and advocacy organizations, conservation groups and commercial interests to develop a Bears Ears National Monument management plan that addresses concerns related to Bears Ears National Monument instead of diminishing an essential law used by Presidents of both parties to protect our shared American heritage. Inadequate protection of the Bears Ears landscape will harm Utah's standing as a world-renowned outdoor recreation destination, weaken the local economy, and put sacred lands and objects at risk.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns, and we look forward to working with you to protect our public lands and help grow the recreation economy in Utah and nationwide.

Respectfully,



Brady Robinson
Access Fund Executive Director



Phil Powers,
American Alpine Club Executive Director



Rachel Nelson
Friends of Indian Creek President



Adam Cramer
Outdoor Alliance Executive Director



Amy Roberts
Outdoor Industry Association Executive Director

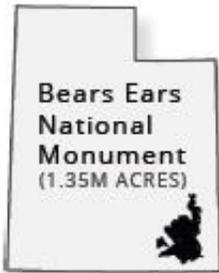


Julia Geisler
Salt Lake Climbers Alliance Executive Director

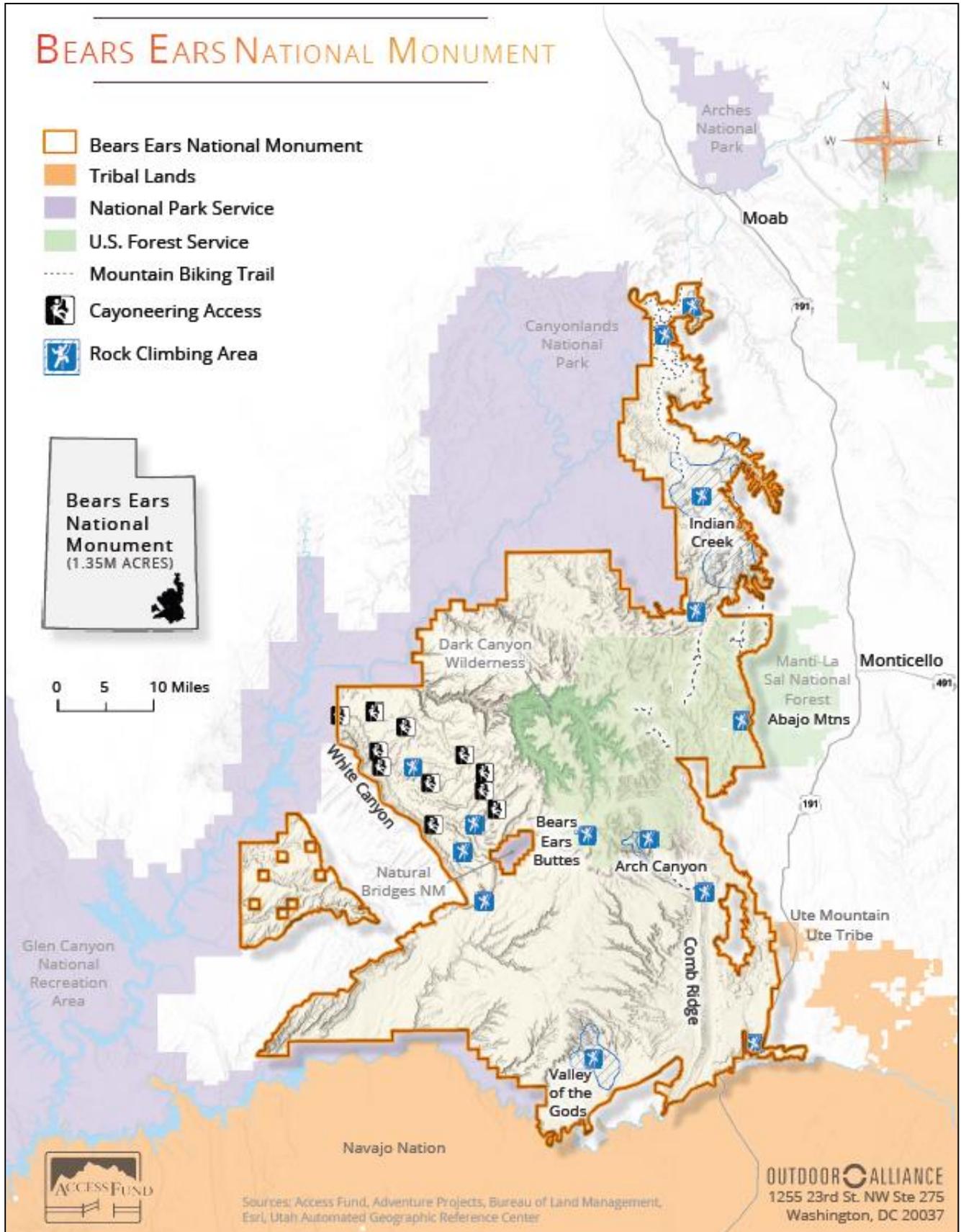
³ For example, the Inter-Tribal wrote Secretary of Interior Jewell a letter in support of the rock climbing community. See <https://www.accessfund.org/uploads/BEC-climbing-ltr-to-Sec-Jewell.pdf>

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

-  Bears Ears National Monument
-  Tribal Lands
-  National Park Service
-  U.S. Forest Service
-  Mountain Biking Trail
-  Canyoneering Access
-  Rock Climbing Area



0 5 10 Miles



Sources: Access Fund, Adventure Projects, Bureau of Land Management, Esri, Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center

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