

# RED ROCK

## W I L D E R N E S S

The Newsletter of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance  
**VOLUME 43, NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 2026**

**TRUMP ILLEGALLY SLASHES GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE AND  
BEARS EARS BY 3 MILLION ACRES**



The mission of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) is the preservation of the outstanding wilderness at the heart of the Colorado Plateau, and the management of these lands in their natural state for the benefit of all Americans.

SUWA promotes local and national recognition of the region's unique character through research and public education; supports both administrative and legislative initiatives to permanently protect Colorado Plateau wild places within the National Park and National Wilderness Preservation Systems or by other protective designations where appropriate; builds support for such initiatives on both the local and national level; and provides leadership within the conservation movement through uncompromising advocacy for wilderness preservation.

SUWA is qualified as a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code. Therefore, all contributions to SUWA are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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This issue of *Redrock Wilderness* was written by the following staff and outside contributors: Steve Bloch, Scott Braden, Kelly Burnham, Rachel Carlson, Neal Clark, Travis Hammill, Diana Haro, Jenny Holmes, Hanna Larsen, Jeremy Lynch, Kya Marienfeld, Heather Rose Martinez, Landon Newell, Laura Peterson, Chris Riccardo, Grant Stevens, and Kaya Tate. It was edited and laid out by Diane Kelly. Newsletter design by Amy Westberg.

Contributions of photographs (especially of areas within the peoples' proposal for Utah wilderness) and original art (such as pen-and-ink sketches) are greatly appreciated! Please send submissions to [photos@suwa.org](mailto:photos@suwa.org) or via regular mail c/o Editor, SUWA, 425 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

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## TRANSLATING ANGER INTO SUSTAINED ACTION

Utah has once again proved to be the flash point in the fight over the future of public lands in the United States. In a shameful Oval Office signing ceremony, Utah's political leaders stood behind President Trump as he wielded a sharpie and, with two scribbled signatures, unlawfully gutted Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments. The reductions were devastating, eliminating over 3 million acres of public land from the two monuments. Our feature story (page 6) has more on these reductions.

There was no public discussion or announcement in advance. There was no public comment period. Later reporting would reveal that the five Tribes that comprise the Bears Ears Commission were not consulted. In fact, the president's proclamation terminated the commission altogether. Utah Governor Spencer Cox's public calendar did not even indicate that he was in Washington, DC.

The secrecy around the president's action is telling. Utah's leaders know that what they did is deeply unpopular with Utah voters—indeed, recent polling shows that Utahns support both national monuments by over 70%. The sneaky lead-up did not blunt the reaction. Utahns and people around the nation are justifiably outraged.

Lacking public support, the signing ceremony relied on lies and misdirection. Governor Cox fretted that something had to be done because the monuments were too big and the federal government didn't have the resources to manage them. Left unsaid was the fact that federal agencies are currently under-resourced by Congress, and that the Antiquities Act has long been used to protect large landscapes of cultural and scientific value.

The Trump administration and current Republican-led Congress have been on a crusade to strip national parks, monuments, and other public lands of protections, staff, and funding in a cynical ploy to convince Americans that the federal government shouldn't be entrusted to manage them. It's a thinly veiled dismantling of the federal public lands system for the benefit of corporations and the ultra-wealthy.

In the short term, SUWA will aggressively challenge projects and decisions that would negatively impact the monuments, but our end goal is clear: full restoration of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears. Along with our partners and Tribal nations, we will sue President Trump in federal court over his illegal actions, and I am confident we will ultimately prevail. But it will take years for the courts to correct this historic error, and any impacts on the ground will last far longer.

In the meantime, we must translate our anger and frustration into action. We must hold accountable Utah's elected leaders who stood behind the president on that awful Monday. We must build a politics of public lands where this can never happen again.

And we must not underestimate our collective power to stop the anti-public-lands agenda. We did it in 2025 when Senator Mike Lee attempted to sell off millions of acres of public land under the guise of providing affordable housing. And we did it earlier this year by stopping the Utah delegation in their attempt to revoke the management plan for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument under the Congressional Review Act (see page 11).

The last year and a half has been a bleak period for wilderness and public lands. Beyond the battle over monuments, a series of moves by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are revving up the menace of off-road vehicles by advancing terrible management decisions for Labyrinth Canyon and other wild places (see page 17). At the same time, the Trump administration is working to nullify longstanding regulations that govern ORV use on public lands.

SUWA and its members and activists in the *Protect Wild Utah* movement have never shrunk from a hard fight, no matter the odds. Utah's anti-wilderness politicians know they will be met with fierce opposition in their efforts to weaken our public lands. Our movement is powered by love and connection, not greed and grievance, and that carries a winning moral power in the long run.

My message today is one of hope: we can win with people power even in the most hostile political climates. The monuments will be restored. America's Red Rock Wilderness Act provides a compelling vision for protecting the wilderness at the heart of the Colorado Plateau and Utah's West Desert, and we will grow our national support for that vision even more in the aftermath of Trump's action. In the long run, I would not bet against the *Protect Wild Utah* movement. I'm grateful you're a part of it.

For the Redrock,



Scott Braden  
Executive Director



UTAHNS GATHER IN FRONT OF THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION TO PROTEST TRUMP'S UNLAWFUL REDUCTIONS OF GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE AND BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENTS (AT THE BEHEST OF UTAH POLITICIANS) DURING A STATEWIDE "MONUMENTAL DAY OF ACTION." © DIANE KELLY/SUWA

# TRUMP ILLEGALLY SLASHES GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE AND BEARS EARS BY 3 MILLION ACRES

Since day one of President Trump's second term in office, we've known that Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments would again be in the crosshairs, and that Trump would likely attempt another illegal national monument boundary reduction. This summer, those fears came true. On July 13, President Trump signed two executive orders slashing the monuments by a combined 3 million acres, or nearly 90% (yes, you read that right).

- **Grand Staircase-Escalante went from 1.87 million acres to about 181,500 acres.**

- **Bears Ears went from 1.36 million acres to about 121,100 acres.**

Alongside President Trump in the Oval Office that day stood Utah Governor Spencer Cox and every member of the state's congressional delegation: Senators Mike Lee and John Curtis, and Representatives Celeste Maloy, Mike Kennedy, Blake Moore, and Burgess Owens. They stood by nodding and grinning smugly as the president blatantly lied, saying of the monuments, "[You] can't do anything.

You can't go hunting. You can't go fishing. You can't do anything. You can virtually not even walk on it." To state what is obvious to most, hiking and camping are common and popular activities in both monuments, and hunting and fishing are explicitly allowed (and managed by the state).

Rather shockingly, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Kate MacGregor, who unquestionably knows better, agreed with Trump's outrageous statements. Sen. Lee, with a look of unconstrained glee, chimed in with his requisite Antiquities Act talking points. Rep. Maloy, apparently tasked with providing political cover, explained that county commissioners have for years clamored to throw off the yoke of federal control and let the locals, who surely know best on such matters, better manage these special lands.

Rep. Moore passed on adding to this dubious chorus, but Sen. Curtis, the so-called "Conservative Climate Champion," offered a reminder that Utah is horribly burdened by *so much* public land. Finally, outgoing Rep. Owens lamented the back-and-forth cuts and restorations of the monuments; then, seemingly without irony, he praised the latest cuts.



UTAH GOVERNOR SPENCER COX AND MEMBERS OF THE STATE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION APPLAUD TRUMP'S VISCERATION OF GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE AND BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENTS. BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: REP. CELESTE MALOY, REP. MIKE KENNEDY, SEN. JOHN CURTIS, SEN. MIKE LEE, GOV. SPENCER COX. © UPI/NEWSCOM

## A GIFT TO PRIVATE AND CORPORATE INTERESTS

Compared to Trump's 2017 attempted reductions, which were egregious enough, the latest executive action subtracts an additional 1 million acres, making it one of the largest wholesale rollbacks of public land protections in history. The new Bears Ears proclamation disbanded the Bears Ears Commission, ending the federal government's commitment to work directly with the five Tribes that proposed and continue to protect that monument; in its place is an advisory committee made up of fifteen members, including one member from each of the five Tribes, six members recommended by the Utah governor, and representatives from local governments.

If you've visited either of the monuments, some of your favorite places have likely been cut, including Coyote Gulch, Peek-a-Boo and Spooky slot canyons, Fiftymile Mountain, Grosvenor Arch, and the Paria-Hackberry in Grand Staircase-Escalante, and Cedar Mesa/Grand Gulch, White Canyon, Elk Ridge, Butler Wash, and Valley of the Gods in Bears Ears (see maps on pages 8-9).

One might ask: what could possibly motivate the Utah congressional delegation to advocate and applaud (quite literally) the evisceration of two national monuments in their own state—monuments for which polling consistently shows overwhelming support in Utah and across the nation? Here's a clue: on September 11, the 3 million acres removed from the monuments will be vulnerable to new mining claims, oil and gas leasing, and coal and geothermal development. They will also become eligible for sale or disposal under existing federal law. Even the lands that remain "protected" will be monuments in name only, managed primarily to

- Expand motorized vehicle access and reopen some roads that were previously closed to protect cultural and natural resources.
- Increase livestock grazing and require unused grazing permits to be reissued rather than retired for habitat restoration.
- Encourage logging, infrastructure development, and other commercial uses whenever possible.

In other words, this is a naked power grab by Utah politicians who fundamentally oppose the concept of protected public lands.

*(Continued on page 10)*



© PAT BAGLEY

"Trump swung his Sharpie over documents that purport to tear nearly 3 million acres, some 90% of the total protected area, from the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments. The Grand Staircase monument won't even include the Grand Staircase anymore.

[Governor] Cox and Sen. Mike Lee couldn't stop grinning. Sen. John Curtis looked a little more sober, but still joined in the recitation of worshiping points for a president who just can't get enough adulation. We expected more of Curtis.

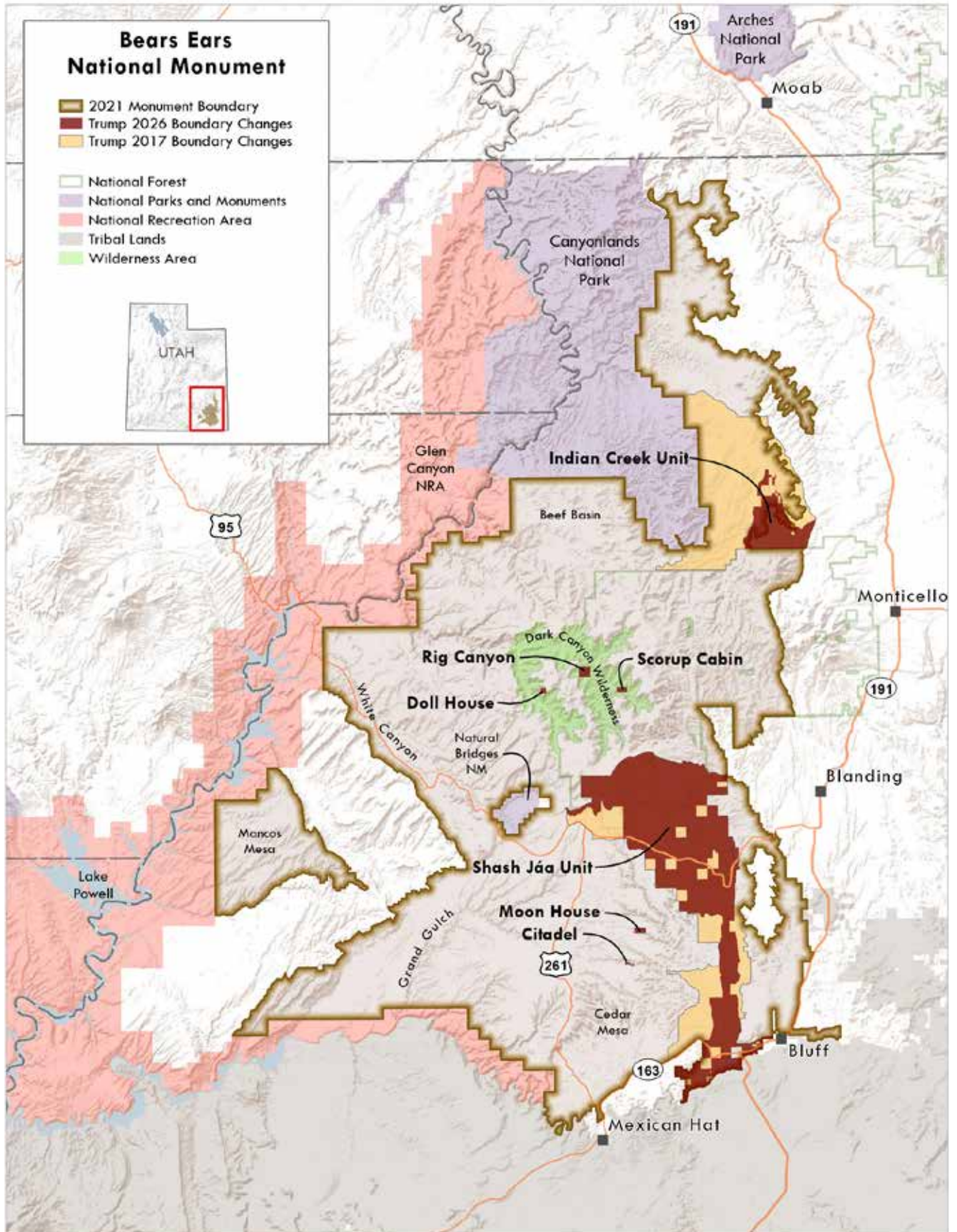
... [Trump's] claim that, under monument status, Bears Ears and GSE were off limits to hiking, fishing, hunting and other recreational uses is flat false. And if anyone from the Utah delegation dared to correct that lie, we didn't hear it.

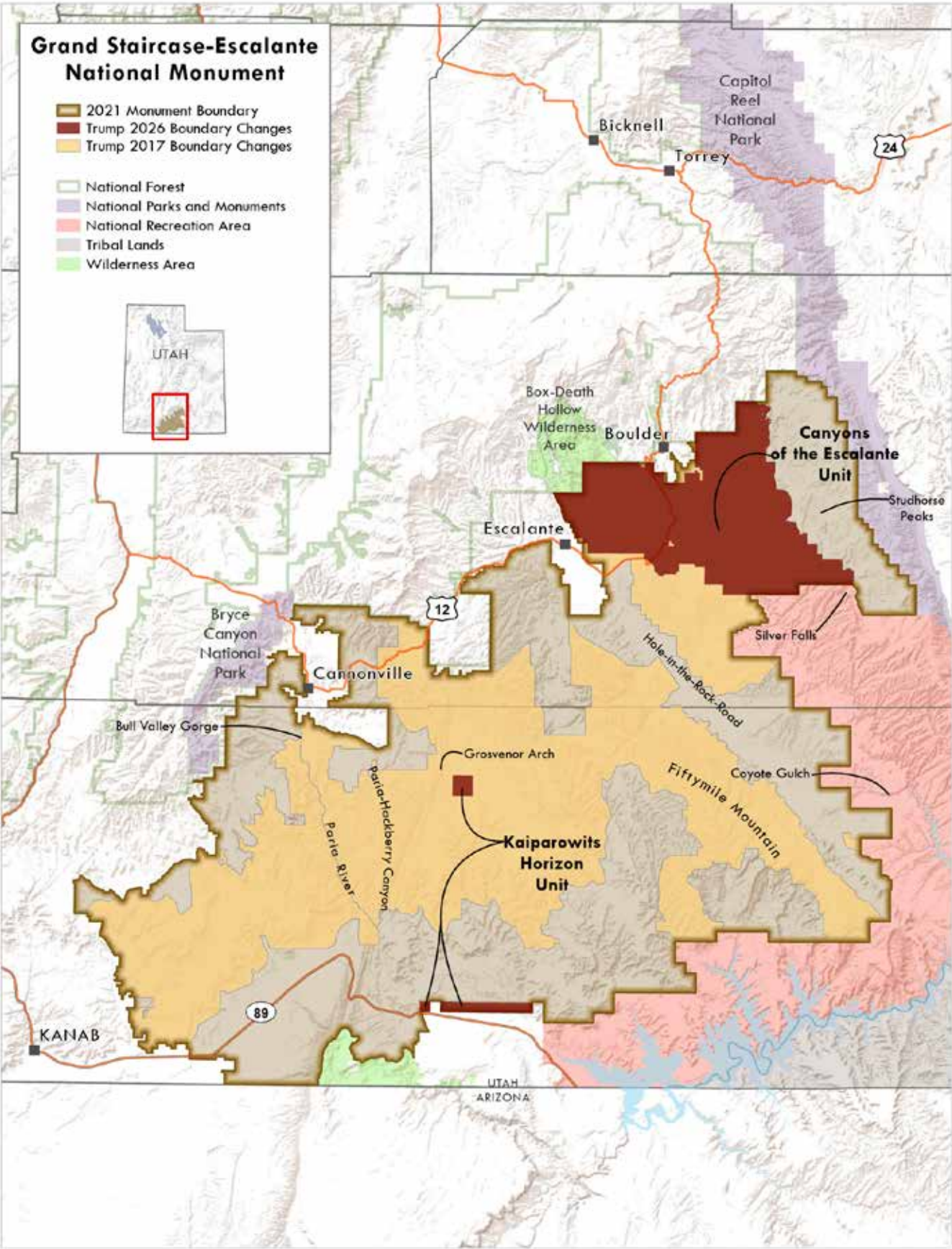
... The only reason for our elected officials to applaud this move is that they think it would be a good idea to drill more wells, dig more mines, refine more uranium, subdivide more land and sell a lot more "Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted" signs.

... Trump's last attack on Utah's valued public lands was undone while he was out of office. Utahns can only hope that such restorative actions will happen again when he leaves the White House, this time for good.

And if Utah's political class can't be on the right side of that move, the least they can do is be quiet and stay out of the photos."

*(Excerpted from a July 17, 2026 Salt Lake Tribune editorial)*





"Members of the Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition strongly condemn the Trump administration's actions to virtually eliminate Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and call for the defense and protection of their ancestral lands.

... The federal government must honor its Trust and Treaty obligations to our Tribes—it is not optional, [Trump's] action is a direct strike against the federal government's duty to consult with Tribes. It also profoundly disrespects our intergenerational Traditional Knowledge by destroying a framework for Tribal co-stewardship over our ancestral lands in which we invested years of effort. Today's action cannot stand.

... Areas like Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument are known for their deep cultural connection to Nuwu holistic conservation traditions. In Southern Paiute teachings, we are taught from infancy that we are the stewards of these lands, which must be protected and preserved for future generations."

—Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition Coordinator Autumn Gillard



MONUMENTAL DAY OF ACTION, ST. GEORGE.  
© ASSOCIATED PRESS



MONUMENTAL DAY OF ACTION AT THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION IN SALT LAKE CITY. © ASSOCIATED PRESS

(Continued from page 7)

## NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE "PROTECT WILD UTAH" MOVEMENT

SUWA was ready for this moment, and we will fight for the monuments in every way we can using every tool in our toolbox for as long as necessary. Here are some examples of how we're already responding:

- A week after Trump's unlawful action, SUWA and our partners hosted a Statewide Monumental Day of Action in Utah, with over a thousand people turning out in 100-degree heat to attend events in Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo, Moab, St. George, Bluff, and Boulder.
- We will take Trump to court over these illegal reductions, as we did in 2017 (that case was not resolved by the time President Biden restored the monuments in 2021). As of publication, we're coordinating with conservation partners and Tribal nations to determine a litigation strategy based on the new proclamations.

- We're ramping up our efforts to promote America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, which would protect much of the land included in the monuments as wilderness.

- We're shining a light on the disinformation spread by Trump and the Utah congressional delegation. SUWA staff have already been quoted or interviewed in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah News Dispatch, KUER, Outdoor Life, Rocky Mountain Community Radio, and many other news outlets.

In moments like this, it's easy to feel despair, and we understand why. There are many hard days and hard fights ahead—more weeks and months that will test our resolve to do the difficult work that can feel like one step forward, two steps back. But SUWA and the *Protect Wild Utah* movement are in this for the long haul, and we have a proven track record of defending the redrock against long odds. For example, our successful defense of the Grand Staircase-Escalante man-

agement plan from a recent legislative attack by some of the same Utah politicians (see below) is significant because it means that plan will remain in place for all the lands that comprised the 2025 monument until a new one is created.

We're able to do the hard work of building powerful political support for public lands in Utah because we have so many passionate supporters like you nationwide. We'll be calling on you again soon to reach out to your members of Congress, to spread the word about threats to Utah's wild places, to join us in on-the-ground landscape protection, and more. We'll share updates as we continue to fight every day for the places we all love. SUWA has never backed down from a hard fight and we're not going to start now.

## WHY OUR RECENT CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT VICTORY MATTERS

On June 11, just a month before the monument reductions, the fast-track attempt by Senator Lee and Representative Maloy to undo the Grand Staircase-Escalante National

Monument Management Plan failed! This is a major—if now bitter-sweet—victory for the entire *Protect Wild Utah* movement, public lands advocates across the country, and most importantly, the landscape itself. Tribes and Tribal voices, faith leaders, business owners, scientists, and tens of thousands of everyday people across the country spoke with one determined voice against this extremely unpopular effort—and won. As a result, even as the boundaries of the monument have been altered, the management plan remains in place.

Here's how it all unfolded. In March, Sen. Lee and Rep. Maloy introduced joint resolutions under the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to disapprove the monument management plan. If the resolutions were to pass, the management plan—which sets the terms for how the monument is managed for recreation, camping, and outdoor access; dark night skies; grazing; and other uses in collaboration with Tribal nations—would be undone, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would be barred from issuing another management



MONUMENTAL DAY OF ACTION, ST. GEORGE.  
© ASSOCIATED PRESS

“In June 2025, the Department of the Interior stated in writing that, if it considered changes to the boundaries, management, or designation of Bears Ears National Monument, it would contact the Bears Ears Commission to schedule a meeting. While the Commission expected meaningful government-to-government consultation and the Department's written commitment to be honored before decisions affecting Bears Ears National Monument were made, no such consultation occurred. The proclamation also terminates the Bears Ears Commission, despite years of collaborative work carried out through the Commission and its government-to-government relationship with federal agencies.

The President's action not only reneges on the Department's assurances in the June 2025 letter, but is also contrary to the terms establishing the Commission in Proclamation 10285 and the Inter-Governmental Cooperative Agreement between the Commission Tribes, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service for collaborative management of the Monument.”

—From the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition Statement



MONUMENTAL DAY OF ACTION, MOAB. © ASSOCIATED PRESS

plan that is “substantially the same” in the future.

The CRA contains a provision that allows the Senate to pass a “joint resolution of disapproval” by a simple majority vote, but it must act within 60 Senate session days. Thursday, June 11, was day 60, meaning Sen. Lee’s resolution is now subject to the 60-vote filibuster. Should he bring it up for consideration, we are confident it will not pass.

For the first six months of 2026, defeating the Grand Staircase-Escalante CRA resolution was SUWA’s #1 priority. Our grassroots organizing team led efforts to reach persuadable members of Congress, fanning out across the country and working with members and supporters to hold in-district meetings with congressional staff (more about this below). We became experts in arcane

congressional procedures. We worked with the Grand Staircase-Escalante Inter-Tribal Coalition and brought Tribal leaders, grassroots activists, and local business owners to Washington, DC. We coordinated with friends in the conservation and recreation communities. SUWA’s Utah-based staff were frequent visitors to Washington, working day in and day out with our DC Team.

This victory was far from guaranteed; Republicans have used the CRA six other times during this Congress to undo land management plans and a seventh time to undo a protective mineral withdrawal at the headwaters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The odds were stacked against us, with Republicans controlling the House, the Senate, and the White House. By raising your voice in opposition to Lee and Maloy, you made a difference.

While there was no one silver bullet to defeating the CRA resolution, we firmly believe that a key element was the work of SUWA and our partner organizations, such as the Sierra Club, to galvanize the *Protect Wild Utah* movement nationwide—and especially in congressional districts where we hadn’t done that before. Whether it was attending in-district meetings, dropping off materials at congressional offices, making phone calls, joining virtual meetings, or submitting letters to the editor of local news outlets, SUWA’s Organizing Team took on a herculean task—and delivered! Below, our organizers take a moment to share reflections on the whirlwind of the past few months. Lessons learned and relationships built will carry us through the next fight.

—Grant Stevens

## REFLECTIONS FROM SUWA ORGANIZERS

### Jenny Holmes, West Coast Organizer

Starting from nearly scratch in some places meant putting in even more effort than usual to reach possible activists. Following up on a lead often started a chain of connections and conversations—and we had to be incredibly creative. For example, in just one weekend we tabled at a flea market, talked with people in a park, participated in a church service, and joined Earth Day events. Staff from different teams within SUWA helped make phone calls, and everyone in the organization identified friends, family, and acquaintances in target districts.

In the course of building a new network of people and organizations, amazing new grassroots activists have emerged. This includes people who had never been in a meeting with their member of Congress before; they were



ONCE IT WAS CLEAR THAT SEN. LEE AND REP. MALOY WERE GOING AFTER THE MONUMENT’S MANAGEMENT PLAN, SOUTHERN UTAH BUSINESS LEADERS FLEW TO WASHINGTON, DC AND URGED POLICYMAKERS TO DEFEND GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE. © SUWA



OVERPASS ACTION ACTIVISTS HELPED US GET THE MESSAGE OUT IN REP. KEVIN KILEY'S DISTRICT (CA-3).

driven to step out of their comfort zone by love for their public lands in general, or from a direct experience with the monument itself. Endurance, consistency, and persistence were common themes, from both activists and staff. I'm excited to keep working with our new activists on whatever opportunities and challenges come next!

#### **Kaya Tate, Southwest Organizer**

When I think back on this work, I'll tell new organizers about the group of very stubborn, humorous, and disappointed but hopeful people I worked with. I'll tell them about the activists who showed up at a congressional office demanding a meeting after months of meeting requests went unanswered. About the diverse interests, backgrounds, tempers, and personalities fighting for the monument—individuals who choose to devote an immense amount of time to the effort and did so in creative and authentic ways.

The amount of energy I saw poured into fighting for the monument was stunning and created a level of collective vigilance that allowed me to feel less alone, less intimidated, and hopeful. I will look back and remember the folks who, despite deep mistrust of their congressional members, showed up to advocate for their favorite non-human species or geologic fea-

ture, or for the sake of wild lands in general. There were many moments of quiet rage, productive cynicism, and unnoticed persistence that shaped this campaign and contributed to our eventual victory, and I'm grateful to have a few stories to remember it by.

#### **Chris Riccardo, Midwest Organizer**

For me, organizing in Omaha was a good reminder that you don't need a huge crowd to get something moving; you just need a person or two willing to say "Sign me up! I'll help." From there, people brought friends, connected us with organizations, showed up to

meetings, and found their own ways to plug in. Approaching this effort without a strong network of regional allies, it pushed me to think a little differently about where support might come from.

Some of the strongest advocates we found weren't necessarily the folks I would have expected at the start. And what I'm most excited about is that those relationships didn't end with the CRA fight—if anything, they're stronger now. The CRA may have been the reason we all met, but the connections and momentum that came out of this effort are what I'll carry forward.

#### **Rachel Carlson, Eastern Organizer**

Launching grassroots organizing efforts in areas completely fresh to SUWA felt like climbing a mountain with a blank map, but the breakthrough came down to sheer persistence, collective teamwork, and a multi-pronged approach to outreach. We hit the pavement for on-the-ground events, combed through member rosters to call every last member and supporter, reached out to existing coalitions, and cold-emailed other environmental groups. This relentless, community-first hustle broke through the initial isolation, allowing us to successfully recruit and train a passionate wave of new activists.



WHILE TABLING AT AN EARTH DAY EVENT IN AUBURN, CA, VOLUNTEER BARRY GRIMM WAS GIFTED A BUNCH OF CARROTS FROM A VENDOR AT THE ADJACENT FARMERS MARKET IN APPRECIATION OF SUWA'S WORK. © JENNY HOLMES/SUWA

It was profoundly uplifting to witness these new advocates answer the call to action, rally their own neighbors, and champion the protection of vulnerable landscapes thousands of miles away. By meeting people where they were and leaning on the broader activist network, we discovered a vibrant, ready-to-act community in corners of the country we had never even visited. The experience served as a powerful reminder that with persistent outreach and authentic connection, we can find a shared commitment to public lands and a supportive community absolutely anywhere.

**Mimi Ortega, Utah Organizer** (who joined the team in the midst of the CRA fight!)

Urgency is easy to generate. Meaning is harder. I felt the difference most when someone would share why Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument mattered to them personally. Not the policy argument, but the story. A family's annual backpacking trip. A photograph taken at a place that would be irreparably damaged if this resolution passed. Those stories reminded me that we weren't just fighting a legislative mechanism. We were defending something irreplaceable for people who would never make the evening news but whose connection to this land is as real as anything in a congressional record.

**Diana Haro, Organizing Director and *Comunidad Latina* Organizer**

The CRA campaign was, at its heart, a relationship-building victory. The organizing team scattered across the country with almost nothing to go on in some districts, and I watched them build relationships, trust, and a movement that didn't exist before this fight. What made it work was simple: on-the-ground presence and pressure. Nothing builds an audience or a relationship like showing up again and again. We also had to let go of perfect. Under the kind of timeline this fight demanded, having a rough plan on the ground was enough to start moving because momentum mattered more than polish.

I'd like to acknowledge our previous Utah organizer, Nicole Milavetz, for the incredible determination and effort she gave this fight down to her last day, cold-calling and organizing her way into districts from Montana to Virginia. I'm reminded that this movement is always bigger than any one person or moment. It's built by those who show up, do the unglamorous work, and hand something sturdier to the next person. Land, Love, & Hope was the theme of the rally we held at the Utah State Capitol in January 2025—it's those sustaining ideals and powerful organizing tools that will see us through these challenging times.



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## WONDERING WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP?

Whether you have five minutes or a few hours, there are plenty of ways to make a difference and help protect our national monuments and other public lands.

**Take action online:** Go to [suwa.org/cosponsor](https://suwa.org/cosponsor) and urge your members of Congress to support America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, then share our action link with friends, family, and colleagues.

**Table at a local event:** Collect postcards and talk with people at festivals, farmers markets, outdoor events, or community gatherings.

**Connect us with a group:** Introduce us to a hiking club, student organization, faith community, conservation group, or other organization that shares SUWA's values.

**Help arrange a congressional meeting:** Join other advocates for a virtual meeting with your senator or representative's office. We'll help prepare and guide you.

**Host a presentation:** Invite SUWA to speak with your school, club, organization, or community.

**Use your skills:** Social media sharing and tagging, writing (including writing a letter to the editor), photography, event planning, public speaking, and community outreach.

**Get connected:** Contact your regional organizer (see [suwa.org/regionalorganizers](https://suwa.org/regionalorganizers)) to help move this work forward!

GOOD  
NEWS

## HOUSE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COALITION ENDORSES RED ROCK BILL

In May, the House Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition (SEEC) announced its endorsement of 21 member-led bills that advance conservation, climate action, and environmental stewardship—and America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA) was among the measures selected for support!

Championed by SEEC member Representative Melanie Stansbury (D-NM-01), ARRWA would permanently protect more than 8 million acres of Utah's iconic redrock landscapes. The bill reflects decades of advocacy by SUWA, the Utah Wilderness Coalition, Tribal leaders, and local community members working to conserve public lands in Utah for future generations.

SEEC is a coalition of more than 100 members of the U.S. House of Representatives dedicated to advancing policies that address climate change, promote clean energy, conserve natural resources, and protect public health. Its legislative

endorsements highlight proposals that the coalition believes will help build a more sustainable and resilient future while protecting America's lands, waters, and wildlife.

ARRWA's inclusion among SEEC's priorities underscores the importance of preserving the redrock canyon country for its remarkable ecological, cultural, and recreational values. As lawmakers continue to consider policies that shape the future of America's public lands, recognition from influential caucuses like SEEC helps elevate the importance of legislature measures like ARRWA.

We are grateful to Rep. Stansbury and her staff for championing ARRWA and to the members of the SEEC for recognizing the significance of this landmark legislation. See sidebar on page 16 to learn how YOU can help build support for ARRWA in Congress.

—Travis Hammill



BULLET CANYON, CEDAR MESA. © WHIT RICHARDSON

## AMERICA'S RED ROCK WILDERNESS ACT NEEDS YOUR VOICE!

America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA) aims to permanently protect over 8 million acres of Bureau of Land Management land in Utah as federally designated wilderness. Preserving the wild character of this spectacular and world-renowned landscape would help protect Native cultural sites, keep climate-disrupting fossil fuels in the ground, and maintain a vital migration corridor for western wildlife species.

In July, ARRWA gained seven new cosponsors in the House of Representatives. This brings us up to 76 cosponsors in the House and 18 in the Senate. The latest members of Congress to endorse the legislation include Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX-37), Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL-7), Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI-6), Rep. Lori Trahan (D-MA-3), Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ-6), Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM-3), and Rep. André Carson (D-IN-7). If any of these legislators represent you, please thank them for their support.

Gains in cosponsorship are the result of persistent outreach to members of Congress from constituents like you! If your representative and/or senators have not yet signed onto the bill, please ask them to become a cosponsor today. Visit [suwa.org/cosponsor](https://suwa.org/cosponsor) to take action.

## SENATE CONFIRMS STEVE PEARCE AS BLM DIRECTOR

This spring, the Senate voted 46–43 to confirm former U.S. Representative Steve Pearce (R-NM) as the next director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the federal agency responsible for overseeing more than 245 million acres of public land across the country.

Pearce's confirmation is deeply concerning. Throughout his political career, he has repeatedly advocated for selling off federal public lands, opposed national monuments like Bears Ears, and consistently supported increased oil and gas development on public lands. Conservation organizations, including SUWA, opposed Pearce's confirmation, pointing out that his leadership could accelerate efforts to prioritize extractive indus-

tries over conservation, weaken protections for sensitive landscapes, and undermine the BLM's longstanding stewardship mission. In Utah, decisions made by the agency will have lasting consequences for wildlife habitat, cultural resources, recreation, and wilderness-quality lands.

Although this confirmation is a disappointing development, SUWA remains committed to defending public lands and holding the BLM accountable to its mission. We will continue working with partners, policymakers, and supporters to advocate for responsible land management and the protection of Utah's incomparable redrock country.

—Travis Hammill

## PUBLIC LANDS RULE OFFICIALLY UNDONE

In early May, the Interior Department officially announced the rescission of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Public Lands Rule. Among other things, this commonsense rule reiterated that conservation is a key component of the BLM's multiple-use mission and ensured that the agency consistently managed for that use. While not unexpected, the rule's rescission adds to the long list of troubling anti-conservation actions under the Trump administration.

Finalized under the Biden administration, the Public Lands Rule established a framework to "ensure healthy landscapes, abundant wildlife habitat, clean water, and balanced decision-making on our nation's public lands." It did not

preclude any uses on BLM-managed public lands; it merely put conservation on equal footing with grazing, mining, and energy production while promoting restoration, providing for responsible development, and conserving intact healthy landscapes. The rule was barely on the books before Trump's Interior Department took over and began efforts to undo it.

The Public Lands Rule was the product of an extensive, years-long public process with multiple in-person and online meetings and opportunities for public comment. An analysis of public comments during the rule's drafting showed that 92% expressed support.

—Grant Stevens

# THREATS FROM OFF-ROAD VEHICLES REVVING UP IN SOUTHERN UTAH

Late on a Friday evening in May, after most people had left work, President Trump announced the repeal of two critical executive orders that govern off-road vehicle (ORV) use on public lands nationwide: order 11644, signed by President Nixon in 1972, and order 11989, signed by President Carter in 1977. He also directed federal land management agencies—including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service—to rescind or revise their regulations implementing these orders, setting the stage for chaos and confusion as unchecked ORVs run wild across the nation's public lands.



A CONFLUENCE OF BAD PLANNING AND POLICIES IS EXACERBATING THE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE PROBLEM ON UTAH'S PUBLIC LANDS. © SUWA

## WHAT DID THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS DO?

For a bit of background, those executive orders were issued in response to an explosive increase in ORV use in the 1960s and '70s across public lands and the corresponding environmental damage and user conflicts. They directed federal land management agencies to develop regulations that would address the problem by “minimizing” the impacts from ORV use. This included designating ORV areas and trails to minimize damage to public land resources and wildlife as well as conflicts between different recreationists. The orders also empowered agencies to act swiftly to close areas to ORVs when they are causing or will cause considerable damage to natural and cultural resources.

For roughly 50 years, these orders helped protect streams, wildlife and their habitats, and opportunities for safe recreation by providing guidance for agencies to follow in their work

to balance motorized and non-motorized use on public lands. Each of those agencies subsequently issued regulations to implement the Nixon and Carter orders. To be clear, federal agencies didn't always (or even often) do the best job implementing these orders and regulations, but they set the benchmark for what the law required and the public should expect.

Trump's latest action marks a significant shift in public land management, one that prioritizes ORV use over all other activities and at the expense of clean water, wildlife habitat, cultural sites, and the experience of motorized and non-motorized recreationists alike.

## ORVS IN THE REDROCK

SUWA is no stranger to the problem of excessive ORV use. BLM lands and redrock country have been at the center of ORV issues for decades, and SUWA has been on the front lines the entire time. In the late 1990s and

early 2000s, we challenged extensive cross-country ORV use in wilderness study areas and the BLM's hands-off approach to ORV use across the state. More recently, SUWA successfully challenged unbalanced travel management plans that prioritized motorized recreation to the detriment of cultural sites, wildlife habitat, desert waterways, and those seeking solitude.

While motorized groups and the Trump administration like to throw around words like “access,” what they really mean is they want ORV use anywhere and everywhere regardless of the impact to natural and cultural resources or other public land visitors. Simply put, “access” should not only mean motorized access. In Utah alone, right now there are tens of thousands of miles of dirt routes and trails open to ORVs in addition to more than 130,000 acres open to cross-country ORV use (meaning vehicles can literally drive anywhere within those designated areas).

## WHAT'S COMING NEXT

Trump's actions won't make public lands more accessible but will make the outdoor experience worse for everyone. They will create confusing and unsafe conditions while at the same time leading to a loss of wildlife habitat and damage to irreplaceable cultural resources. Hikers, hunters, bikers, equestrians, and those seeking quiet time with friends and family in the outdoors will end up being overwhelmed by the dust, noise, and damage caused by unregulated ORV use.

For now, regulations implementing the two executive orders—those requiring local land managers to minimize damage from ORVs and conflicts between different public land users—remain in place, as do existing travel management plans. We expect, however, that the Trump administration will work quickly to weaken if not outright eliminate both the regulations and individual plans. SUWA will be there every step of the way, fighting to protect Utah's incredible wild places.

## TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING: ANOTHER PIECE OF THE ORV PUZZLE

Travel management plans are like blueprints that determine where ORVs are allowed on public lands. Ideally, they strike a thoughtful balance between ensuring public access and

minimizing damage to wildlife habitat, waterways, cultural sites, and wilderness-quality lands.

As you may remember from recent issues of *Redrock Wilderness*, new travel management plans for Labyrinth Canyon, the San Rafael Desert, the San Rafael Swell, and the Henry Mountains/Dirty Devil were finalized by the BLM from 2023 to 2025. While the San Rafael Swell and Henry Mountains plans were less than ideal, overall these plans took important steps to reign in ORVs. Under the Trump administration, the BLM is now "reconsidering" the Labyrinth Canyon, San Rafael Swell, and San Rafael Desert plans, and we're anticipating changes that heavily favor motorized recreation.

In late June, after years of dragging its feet, the BLM announced it was moving forward on three additional travel management plans covering approximately 816,000 acres: Trail Canyon (east of Zion National Park), Dinosaur North (near Dinosaur National Monument), and the Dolores River (northeast of Moab). Two of the plans had public comment periods that ended before this newsletter issue went to print (thanks to all who spoke up!). Subscribe to our email list at [suwa.org/stayinformed](https://suwa.org/stayinformed) for the latest updates on these planning processes and how you can get involved.

—Laura Peterson

## WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE WILDLANDS

Jim Baca, former SUWA board member, mayor of Albuquerque, New Mexico commissioner of public lands, and director of the BLM had a recent op-ed in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Speaking about Trump's latest actions promoting ORV use, he said:

"... while all of that will take time to play out—and hopefully be tied up in court until Trump vacates the Oval Office—I fear confusion and damage will come to some of the West's most treasured public lands. Land managers, the few that are left, will be unsure how to manage motorized use. ORV riders, even the ones who want to follow the rules, will be confused about where they can and can't go, leading to real world damage that takes years to heal.

I've always chuckled when people like [Senator] Lee and Blue Ribbon Coalition complain about wealthy extremists who want to "lock up" the public lands. In my experience as BLM director and New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands, it's the opposite. The big-dollar trucks, trailers and vehicles are the ones shutting out the rest of us. Their dust, noise and damage keep many at home or away from some of the best places in the West to hunt, fish or explore.

It's this tyranny of the minority that Trump—predictably—has catered to. Here's hoping it's a short time before the next administration seizes the chance to make lemonade from lemons and builds a smarter, better framework for ORVs so we can all enjoy our public lands."

## ICONIC REDROCK LANDSCAPES TARGETED FOR OIL AND GAS LEASING

The Trump administration's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing to auction off some of Utah's most remote and wild redrock country for oil and gas development. For its fourth quarter 2026 lease sale, the BLM is proposing to sell 44 oil and gas lease parcels spanning more than 74,000 acres of public land in Utah. This includes parcels in the northern Dirty Devil region and atop Horse Bench on the West Tavaputs Plateau.

These are exceptionally inappropriate places for oil and gas development. The Dirty Devil parcels are located only a few miles west of the Horseshoe Canyon unit of Canyonlands National Park, immediately north of the Dirty Devil Wilderness Study Area. This region is expansive, remote, and wild. The parcels atop Horse Bench on the West Tavaputs Plateau overlook the Desolation Canyon stretch of the Green River. To access the plateau, oil tanker trucks and other vehicles would have to pass through Utah's famed Nine Mile Canyon, renowned for its more than 10,000 unique cultural and historical sites.

### DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

For more than two decades, SUWA has successfully fought to keep fossil fuel leasing and development out of these same exact areas. The proposed parcels in the Dirty Devil region were first sold in the early 2000s under



THE BLM'S PROPOSED FOURTH QUARTER LEASE SALE INCLUDES 44 OIL AND GAS LEASE PARCELS SPANNING MORE THAN 74,000 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND IN UTAH. © RAY BLOXHAM/SUWA

the George W. Bush administration. SUWA successfully challenged that leasing decision in federal court, and the BLM was forced to pull back because it had failed to consider significant new information regarding wilderness characteristics. As a result, the leases were never developed.

Similarly, in 2011, the BLM sold parcels atop Horse Bench for oil and gas development. Though the leasing decision was upheld in that case, we later successfully challenged two subsequent drilling approvals on those parcels. Once again, the leases were never developed.

As our history shows, SUWA never backs down from a fight, and that's what the BLM will get if it continues with this poorly thought-out proposal to open wild redrock landscapes to destructive oil and gas extraction. Stay tuned for future updates as we (once again) fight to protect these special places.

—Landon Newell

## HYDROCARBON HIGHWAY THREATENS AREA RICH IN CULTURAL SITES

Without public notice or involvement, this spring the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) quietly approved a hydrocarbon highway through Utah's remote, scenic, and culturally significant Gate Canyon. Gate Canyon is a side canyon to Nine Mile Canyon, which is often referred to as "the world's longest art gallery" due to its extensive collection of rock art and cultural sites.

Proposed by Duchesne County at the behest of private oil companies, the Gate Canyon Project involves the blasting and destruction of cliff walls and other large rock features in Gate Canyon to straighten and pave a 5.3-mile dirt road that winds from Nine

Mile Canyon to the Badland Cliffs region of the southern Uinta Basin. The realigned road would allow 70-foot oil tanker trucks to travel between the oil fields in the Basin and transloading facilities in Carbon and Emery Counties.

This marks the third attempt by the county to transform Gate Canyon into an oil transportation corridor. In 2015 and 2022, the BLM received similar applications to realign and pave the road through the canyon, but those projects were abandoned amid significant public opposition. This time around, the agency hid its decision from scrutiny and rushed its analysis and approval, all in service to Trump's "Energy Dominance" agenda.

Aside from damaging and destroying cultural and historical sites, the cliff blasting and road realignment will adversely affect the threatened Mexican spotted owl, which is extremely sensitive to auditory and visual intrusions and builds its nests on cliff walls and other large rock features throughout the region. SUWA and the Center for Biological Diversity recently sent the BLM and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service notice of our intent to sue for violations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Stay tuned for updates.

—Landon Newell

GOOD  
NEWS

## SUWA APPEAL STALLS MASSIVE DEVEGETATION PROJECT

This spring, along with our partners at Western Watersheds Project and the Center for Biological Diversity, SUWA challenged the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) approval of a sweeping West Desert vegetation project authorizing various mechanical vegetation removal treatments across roughly 560,000 acres of important wildlife habitat near the Indian Peak Range, the Wah Wah Mountains, Hamlin Valley, Pine Valley, and Blue Mountain. The project includes heavy-handed methods like mastication and chaining while rushing the public with only a 15-day comment period.

After SUWA filed an appeal of the BLM's decision in May, the agency moved to vacate its own approval and reconsider the project. This underscores what should have been obvious from the start: blanket "trust us" planning is not lawful environmental review.

Once again, the BLM tried to push through a massive project without meaningful site-specific review. The agency ignored public recommendations, failed to map where treatments would occur, and offered no real analysis of impacts to wilderness-quality lands, wildlife, and native ecosystems—despite the fact that a nearly identical Hamlin Valley project had already been vacated after our previous appeal and the agency had committed to more thorough analysis on similar projects in the future.

This fight is not over. The BLM says it expects to publish a revised environmental assessment, which means it may try to merely paper over deficiencies in order to advance this large-scale cutting and burning proposal. We'll let you know if and when that happens.

—Kya Marienfeld

## AIRSTRIp DESIGNATIONS THREATEN SOLITUDE, WILDLIFE HABITAT

This spring, the BLM's Price field office issued a disappointing decision permitting aircraft takeoffs and landings at the unauthorized Keg Knoll airstrip in the Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness. A week later, the agency's Canyon Country District issued a decision designating ten backcountry airstrips in the Moab and Monticello areas, including sites in or near wilderness-quality lands, bighorn sheep habitat, the Green River corridor, and the backcountry adjacent to Bears Ears National Monument.

Though the BLM held no formal public comment process, SUWA members submitted over 2,500 comments urging the agency to remove six of the most damaging airstrips from that decision: Spring Canyon, Big Flat, Castle Creek, Nokai Dome, Piute, and Red Canyon. Reopening or formalizing these airstrips would bring chronic aircraft noise, habitat fragmentation, vegetation clearing, and mechanized intrusion into places the agency should be protecting.

SUWA filed an appeal with the Interior Department's Board of Land Appeals in late June. Recognizing the legal deficiencies in its environmental analysis, a month later the BLM asked the board to vacate its decision. This means the approval has been retracted for now, which is great news. It's unclear whether the BLM intends to reissue its decision at a future date, but we'll continue to closely track the proposal.

—Kya Marienfeld

## PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT UNRAVELS CONSERVATION MEASURES IN SAN RAFAEL SWELL

In May, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released its final environmental assessment and proposed resource management plan (RMP) amendment for the 117,000-acre San Rafael Swell Recreation Area and surrounding region. The recreation area was established as part of the 2019 John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which also designated 663,000 acres of BLM-managed wilderness in Emery County, Utah (among other things).

The Dingell Act specifically directed the BLM to develop a “comprehensive management plan” for the recreation area within five years of the bill being signed into law. In a glaring misinterpretation of the assignment, the agency has spent the past four years working on a plan amendment that (a) is not comprehensive (even by its own account) and (b) rolls back existing conservation protections for lands well beyond those designated under the Dingell Act.

The BLM’s proposed conservation rollbacks include:

- Removing wilderness management for nearly 13,000 acres of “natural areas” located outside of designated

wilderness. Natural areas are BLM-identified wilderness-quality lands managed to protect their wilderness characteristics.

- Eliminating 157,000 acres of existing “areas of critical environmental concern” (ACECs), while retaining only 4,900 acres. ACECs are areas where special management attention is required to protect important historical, cultural, or scenic values.
- Eliminating the entire 937,000-acre San Rafael Swell Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), roughly a third of which falls outside of wilderness or the recreation area. The BLM replaces the SRMA with four lesser-protected areas where recreation is integrated into other land uses such as grazing and mineral development. In doing so, the agency removed common-sense resource protections, including requirements that visitors provide their own fuelwood, use fire pans to contain fire and ash, and bring portable toilets where facilities are not available.
- Rolling back protective visual resource management and right-of-way “avoidance” and “exclusion” areas, both of



AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE BLM’S PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT FOR THE SAN RAFAEL SWELL RECREATION AREA WOULD REMOVE WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT FOR NEARLY 13,000 ACRES AND ELIMINATE 157,000 ACRES OF EXISTING “AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN.” © LESLIE SCOPES ANDERSON

## CHALLENGE TO MONUMENT RESTORATIONS SENT BACK TO DISTRICT COURT

Last month the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a long-awaited decision in litigation brought by the State of Utah and others challenging President Biden's 2021 restoration of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments. SUWA and other conservation groups intervened in these cases on behalf of the United States to support the monuments.

The upshot of the decision is that it confirmed the long-standing principle that federal courts have jurisdiction to hear challenges to presidential decisions made under the Antiquities Act. In this case, that means Utah's lawsuit will go back to district court in St. George, Utah, where we will work to make sure that it is defeated—the same fate that has befallen every single prior challenge to a president's establishment of a national monument.

By the same token, the decision also confirms that courts have jurisdiction to hear challenges when presidents exceed their authority under the Antiquities Act and *diminish* national monuments, like President Trump did in 2017 and again in July of this year. We'll be ready—if and when that comes to pass—to take him back to court.

which were in place to limit new disturbances and protect scenic values, wildlife, and other natural resources.

While we believed the BLM's approach was misguided and inconsistent with the Dingell Act from the start, we did not expect the agency to use the implementation of a public lands conservation bill as justification to remove existing protections from hundreds of thousands of acres of land not directly impacted by the bill. In June, SUWA filed a formal protest of the agency's decision with the BLM director. Pending the outcome of our protest, we will consider additional legal action if necessary.

—Neal Clark

## AN UNFORTUNATE UPDATE ON THE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK ROAD

In the last issue of *Redrock Wilderness*, we reported on our lawsuit challenging Garfield County's unauthorized plans to widen, realign, and chip seal (essentially pave) the first ten miles of the Hole-in-the-Rock Road in what was, up until July 13, 2026 (see article on page 6), within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has since given the green light to the chip sealing, which the county rushed to complete before a federal judge had a chance to rule on SUWA's motion for an emergency injunction to halt the roadwork.

Surrounded by stunning wilderness-quality lands, the Hole-in-the-Rock Road runs from the junction of Highway

12, east of the town of Escalante, to the top of the cliffs above the Colorado River within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area; it provides access to popular destinations like Spooky and Peek-A-Boo slot canyons, Devil's Garden, and Coyote Gulch.

Before this newsletter went to print, President Trump drastically shrank Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by approximately 90%, removing the Hole-in-the-Rock Road and surrounding lands from the monument. Though this is a devastating development, it does not affect the status or merits of our lawsuit.

In issuing its decision, the BLM failed to analyze the environmental impacts of chip sealing the Hole-in-the-Rock Road as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, failed to take action to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation to the surrounding lands as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and failed to provide an opportunity for public involvement prior to issuing its decision as required by FLPMA and the monument management plan.

Though ten miles of roadway are now paved, this fight is far from over. Garfield County has made it clear that it hopes to extend the chip sealing all the way to the Garfield/Kane County line, if not further. SUWA will do everything we can to prevent more harm to the surrounding wilderness-quality lands. Right now, this means we are holding the BLM accountable by continuing to pursue our challenge of the agency's decision to authorize the county's work.

We'll keep you updated as the litigation progresses.

—Hanna Larsen

## NICOLE MILAVETZ LEAVES STAFF TO PUR- SUE MASTER'S DEGREE

There are some people whose presence changes the culture of an organization. Nicole Milavetz is one of those people. She arrived at SUWA during the historic spring snows of 2023, which is quite fitting since she showed up just like a storm: powerful, invigorating, and ready to change the landscape of the Organizing Team for good.

As our Utah Organizer, Nicole welcomed a new generation of activists and volunteers into our advocacy work. People who might have never imagined themselves showing up to a rally or calling out their representative on behalf of the land found themselves doing exactly that. Nicole made space for them, believed in them, and made the work feel possible.

Nicole was an exceptional organizer and community builder, and her passion for wilderness and the redrock was contagious. She was, in every sense, a force of nature: full of ideas, full of life, always moving toward the next connection, the next way to grow this movement. Nicole helped expand SUWA's community of activists and volunteers in



THOUGH WE WILL MISS NICOLE TERRIBLY, WE KNOW SHE'LL CONTINUE WORKING TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

Utah and beyond by investing in people. She understood that lasting movements are built on relationships, and she made the time to listen, connect, and encourage others to discover their own power.

Nicole was persistent when persistence was hard. She was curious in a way that made everyone around her think bigger. She was never afraid to speak her mind, ask difficult questions, and advocate fiercely for what she believed was right. That honesty, paired with real empathy, made her one of the clearest and most compassionate communicators any of us have worked alongside.

While Nicole's next adventure takes her to Georgetown University to pursue a master's degree in conservation, she remains part of this community of activists and lovers of the land that she helped strengthen. Thank you, Nicole, for every door you opened, every person you welcomed in, and every ounce of yourself you gave to Utah's wild lands.

## SUWA WELCOMES NEW UTAH ORGANIZER, MIMI ORTEGA

We're thrilled to introduce Milana "Mimi" Ortega as SUWA's newest Utah Organizer in the fight to *Protect Wild Utah*. Mimi brings both a full resume of experience and a deep sense of purpose to this role.

As a 10th generation Xicana New Mexican with a lifelong love for public lands, she's spent her career at the intersection of people, place, and policy. Her path to SUWA runs through Capitol Hill, where she coordinated public outreach and gained firsthand experience with federal land management processes while working in the office of Senator Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. From there, she went on to manage a multi-million-dollar grantmaking portfolio at the Honnold Foundation, supporting more than 50 community-based organizations across Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Her work there was grounded in trust-based partnerships that centered local leadership.

Inclusivity runs through everything Mimi does. She's helped develop equity and justice frameworks, built inclusive pathways for marginalized communities to engage in conservation, and uplifted BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) athletes and outdoor communities through her work with the Wasatch Trails Collective. That



MIMI HAS ALREADY PROVEN HERSELF INVALUABLE TO SUWA'S ORGANIZING TEAM.

commitment to centering voices too often left out of the conservation movement will powerfully enhance SUWA's work.

Now, as a resident Utahn, Mimi is eager to help grow and strengthen SUWA's network of members, volunteers, and advocates across the state. She's ready to organize public comment campaigns and build relationships with redrock activists and grassroots leaders. We can't wait for you to meet her!

## MANY THANKS TO FIELD SPECIALIST JACK HANLEY

We hired Jack Hanley as our first full-time Stewardship Coordinator in 2018, a year after he began volunteering with SUWA's Stewardship Program (he later assumed the title of Field Specialist). He quickly became a dear friend to our staff and volunteers and a beacon of positivity through dark times. Some people wear their hearts on their sleeves; Jack wears his on the tattered old uniform vest from his years with the National Park Service.

This spring, he made the difficult decision to move on from SUWA to pursue his artistic vision as a musician. We are fortunate to have walked (and raked and hammered) a while with him at our side.

Long before he joined our staff, Jack was guided by people who instilled in him a land ethic that helped shape him, our Stewardship Program, and our field volunteers. If you've ever had the pleasure of his company in wild spaces, you know that Jack is as much an element of the ecosystem he works so diligently to protect as the aspen, the red-tailed fox, or the river. To his work he brought a deep connection to the natural world—and he did so with a smile, the swing of a pickaxe, and the coordination of hundreds of passionate volunteers. He also cooked a hell of a curry.

Most importantly, Jack practiced the vision we had always imagined, bringing respect and legitimacy to our on-the-ground land protection efforts. Over his nearly eight-year tenure, he studied with land managers across Utah, adapting strategies designed for unique bioregions (such as the Alpine Zone) to entirely different conditions in the deserts of canyon country. He observed closely in order to reinvent the way we protect wilderness. And he did so with goodwill, making unexpected friends and opening doors to more essential work opportunities.

Jack has moved on from SUWA, but not from the community nor the land nor the movement. We know our friendship will endure even as the focus of his energy and creativity expands in other directions. We wish him all the best!



WHEREVER LIFE TAKES HIM, WE KNOW JACK'S HEART WILL ALWAYS BE WILD.

## MARK ALLISON JOINS SUWA BOARD

We are pleased to welcome Mark Allison to SUWA's Board of Directors. Mark joined the board in April, bringing with him decades of hard-won experience in public land conservation, grassroots organizing, and nonprofit leadership. As executive director of New Mexico Wild (formerly the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance) in Albuquerque, he leads one of the Southwest's most respected conservation organizations. Mark's career is a testament to what sustained, collaborative advocacy can achieve. Prior to becoming executive director, he held multiple leadership roles at New Mexico Wild, steadily expanding the organization's reach and impact. He is widely respected across the region for his ability to bring people together around shared conservation goals, and for his depth of knowledge on Western public lands.

Mark was instrumental in recruiting Representative Melanie Stansbury (D-NM-01) as a sponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, and he maintains close working relationships with New Mexico officials who champion public land protection. He also brings a timely and increasingly important perspective on housing policy and affordability challenges in the West. As debates over public land



MARK BRINGS VALUABLE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND A BROAD BASE OF EXPERTISE TO SUWA'S BOARD.

disposal and development pressure intensify, his ability to engage credibly on these intersecting issues adds strategic depth to our board's discussions.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mark is an avid river runner who understands, personally and professionally, why wild places matter. Please join us in welcoming Mark to the board!

## MEET CANYON KEEPERS: A NEW NAME FOR SUWA'S MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

Monthly giving provides a strong and reliable foundation that allows SUWA to focus on our most pressing work: defending against threats of public land privatization and development, fossil fuel leasing, agency mismanagement, and other forms of exploitation. It's support we can count on.

Our monthly donors have been part of SUWA's story for years. This circle of members, whose dependable contributions support our work year-round, are now called "Canyon Keepers." We wanted a name rooted in place and mission—one that gave our monthly donors their own identity within SUWA's larger network of supporters.

Becoming a Canyon Keeper is simple. It only takes a few minutes to set up, and once you do, your gift renews automatically each month. You can increase, decrease, or pause your support at any time. To welcome you to the Canyon Keepers circle, we'll send you a **limited-edition Canyon Wren canvas bag** as a token of our gratitude.

Visit [suwa.org/canyonkeepers](https://suwa.org/canyonkeepers) to join Canyon Keepers today!



ARTWORK BY RILEY LUBICH (RILEYLUBICHART.COM)

## THANK YOU, SUWA BUSINESS MEMBERS!

SUWA's Business Membership Program is a great way for your small business or company to support the protection of Utah's redrock country. For an annual donation of \$150 or more, we'll print your company's name in our newsletter once a year and on our website at [suwa.org/businessmembers](https://suwa.org/businessmembers). At higher levels of support we offer additional benefits, such as a featured spot in our monthly e-newsletter.

For more information, please contact us at [membership@suwa.org](mailto:membership@suwa.org) or (801) 486-3161. Listed below are businesses from Utah and across the country that currently support Utah wilderness through SUWA's Business Membership Program.

### KAYENTA MEMBERS

(\$1,000+)

Bret Webster Images, UT  
Bruce Spring, MD, CA  
Caffe Ibis Coffee Roasting Co, UT  
Charles Cramer Photography, CA

Chris Brown Photography, CO  
Four Corners OBGYN, CO  
Novakinetics Aerosystems Inc., AZ  
Holiday River Expeditions, UT

Malach Consulting, LLC, UT  
Mosaic Realty LLC, CO  
Powderhound Marketing, NV  
Stone Forest Inc, NM

### WINGATE MEMBERS

(\$500-\$999)

Fisher Brewing Company, LLC, UT  
Glenn Randall Writing and  
Photography, CO

Lizzie Wenger Art, UT

Northstar Canoes, MN  
State 45, IN

### MOENKOPI MEMBERS

(\$150-\$499)

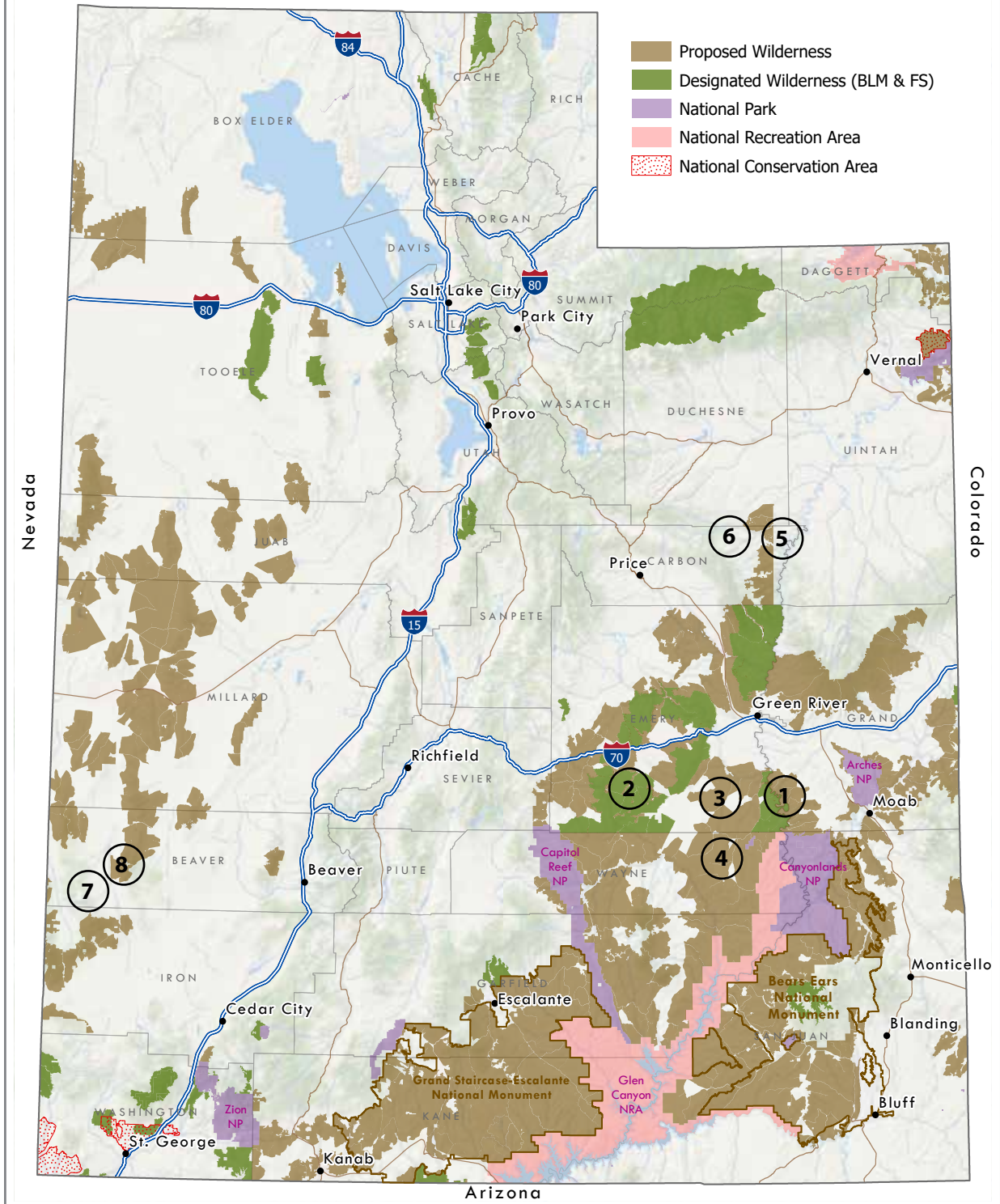
Andrew Farley, UT  
Arches Retreat, UT  
Brian Buroker Photography, UT  
Clayhaus Photography, UT  
Consulting Psychologists, AZ  
Da Vinci Painting, WA  
Escape Goats, UT  
Githens Properties, LLC, CO  
Gospel Flat Farm, CA  
J Edward Hansford DDS, CO

James Tuthill LLC, WY  
Kroesche Schindler LLP, CA  
Law Offices of David Gibans, CO  
Matheson Design, OR  
Maui Mountain Coffee Farm, HI  
McGrath + McKenna Design Group, CO  
Phillips Gallery, UT  
Pinnacle Peak Eye Care, AZ  
Resonance Printing Solutions, UT  
The Group Real Estate, LLC, UT

William Stone Photography, RI  
Words & Photographs by Stephen  
Trimble, UT  
Workspace Installations LLC, CT  
ZAK Construction, OR

# America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

A People's Wilderness Proposal for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lands in Utah



- |                             |                       |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ① Labyrinth Canyon (p. 18)  | ④ Dirty Devil (p. 19) | ⑦ Indian Peak Range (p. 20) |
| ② San Rafael Swell (p. 18)  | ⑤ Horse Bench (p. 19) | ⑧ Wah Wah Mountains (p. 20) |
| ③ San Rafael Desert (p. 18) | ⑥ Gate Canyon (p. 19) |                             |



@protectwildutah.bsky.social



/protectwildutah



/SouthernUtahWildernessAlliance

## CELEBRATE UTAH'S WILD PLACES WITH OUR NEW SUMMER TEES AND STICKER PACKS!

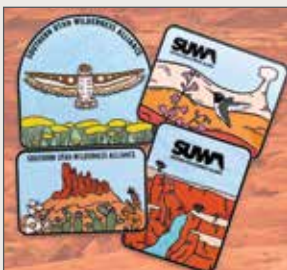
### “Moonflower” T-Shirts Showcasing Local Art

A new shirt has hit SUWA's shop! SUWA has partnered with Salt Lake City based artist Lizzie Wenger to feature her “Moonflower” artwork depicting the landscape of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument along the Burr Trail. Printed on 100% Comfort Colors cotton tees, this ivory colored shirt is available for \$25 in both a classic and boxy cropped style.

Collaborating with Lizzie has been a joy. She views painting as an act of storytelling and is particularly interested in engaging her community with art and the outdoors. Her work beautifully captures the vibrancy of Utah's redrock country and is another reminder of the value of protecting these wild places. Visit [suwa.org/shop](https://suwa.org/shop) to get your shirts today! Available while supplies last.



CLASSIC STYLE MOONFLOWER TEE



### Unique Staff-Designed, Redrock-Inspired Stickers

Each of our four new stickers features a different wild landscape: the Bridger Jacks in Bears Ears National Monument, the towering corridors of the Colorado River, toadstool hoodoos and black chinned hummingbirds in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and a burrowing owl hovering over rabbitbrush in the West Desert. Designed by SUWA staffer Kelly Burnham. Get a pack of all four for just \$10 at [suwa.org/shop](https://suwa.org/shop).

