

## Max Mahon Roundtable on Bear Ears National Monument



### Students introduce VIP speakers at Bears Ears Roundtable

From watching the roundtable hosted by student on November 10, 2021, I have now been able to gain a greater understanding of the monument and its importance in the history of America. This event was hosted by the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU). The purpose was to bring awareness to the need for sustainable development in the mountainous area and region of Bear Ears. Speakers included the President of the Joseph Rainey Center for Public Policy, Sarah Hunt and Dustin Jansen, an expert in Native American History and Director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, as well as a member of the Navajo Nation

I thought the speakers presented upon issues well and were able to dive deep into topics at hand and provide a greater understanding to any who watched the discussion into the topics surrounding the monument. The speakers all provided information which helped to

build upon prior points in the conversation and allowed the roundtable to go smoothly, even over zoom. The idea that Biden was able to reverse President Trump's executive decision to reduce the Bears Ears National Monument by 85% is a monumental occurrence.

From the speeches, I gained understanding that the monument itself is the first national monument in the country to be established at the request of federally recognized tribes. The national monument spans a vast distance of 1.36 million acres and is an important site to Native Americans for traditional and ceremonial uses, including the collection of medicinal plants.

Prior to this roundtable, I had no understanding about the monument and came into this with no prior opinions on the issue. The unbiased approach I was able to have about this topic helped me to gain an understanding of the need for such a monument to still be around and protected by governing bodies as the area is of ancestral significance for the America, we all know of today.

To conclude I believe my research and watching the round table discussion that the Bears Ears National Monument is of substantial importance to this day and must be protected as a historical site for years to come by governing bodies.

**-Max Mahon, Student at Utah Valley University**