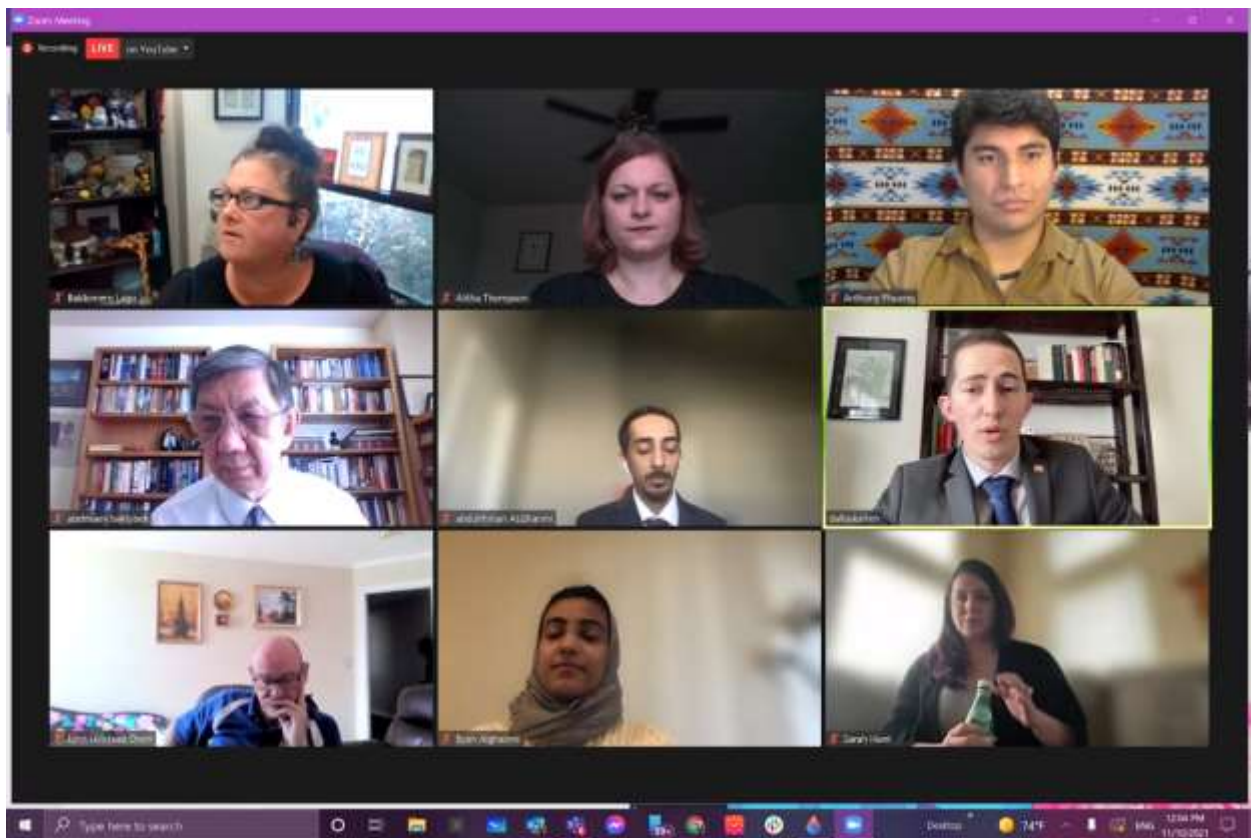


## Roundtable on Bear Ears National Monument Hosted By The Utah International Mountain Forum

Bear Ears is a 1.36-million-acre national monument. It is known to be of great spiritual significance to the native American people as well as a home to many families living on the reservation. On November 10, 2021 a group of designated speakers met in a conference regarding some of the controversies surrounding this monument. Who is affected by this land? Should it be a national park? These are some of the issues that will be addressed in this essay.



### *Participants of the roundtable on Bear Ears National Monument at Utah Valley University on November 10, 2021*

During his presidency, Barack Obama established Bear Ears a national monument. Presidents were given this right through the Antiquities Act of 1906. During the Trump presidency it was decided that the monument should be cut down to a mere 200,000 acres, clearly a significant cut. This what met with much distress from the public. Not only to the native Americans who lived on this land and used it for religious purposes, but to the groups dedicated to preserving land for future generations. Our current president, president Biden, essentially reversed Trumps cuts, allowing the land to jump back in size. All of this back and forth got people thinking: can the president even do this?

Sarah Hunt, a guest speaker during this conference, elaborated on the Antiquities Act saying the President definitely has the right to establish a national monument, but “the act is silent on whether or not he/she can redact the title or reduce the established land”. Due to this, a lawsuit has been filed against former president Trump. Dustin Jansen, another fantastic speaker, was there to shed some light on the whole situation. Informing everyone of the significance of the land and the hardships native American people have always had to go through.

As far as my personal opinion goes, I would love to learn more about the situation from other perspectives. I understand more now the complexities of trying to make something national park, however I am naïve to why we aren’t actively pushing for Bear Ears to become one. I do believe that native Americans have been fighting an uphill battle for far too long. It is no secret that there is plenty potential for growth when it comes to the way that the public view indigenous people. Dustin Jansen brought up a quote that summarizes this very well, “public perception is public opinion” he said. It is clear there is work to be done but I am glad that I had the opportunity to learn more about this specific case. Bear Ears is a place of prayer and should be protected.

**-Madison Scofield, UVU Student**