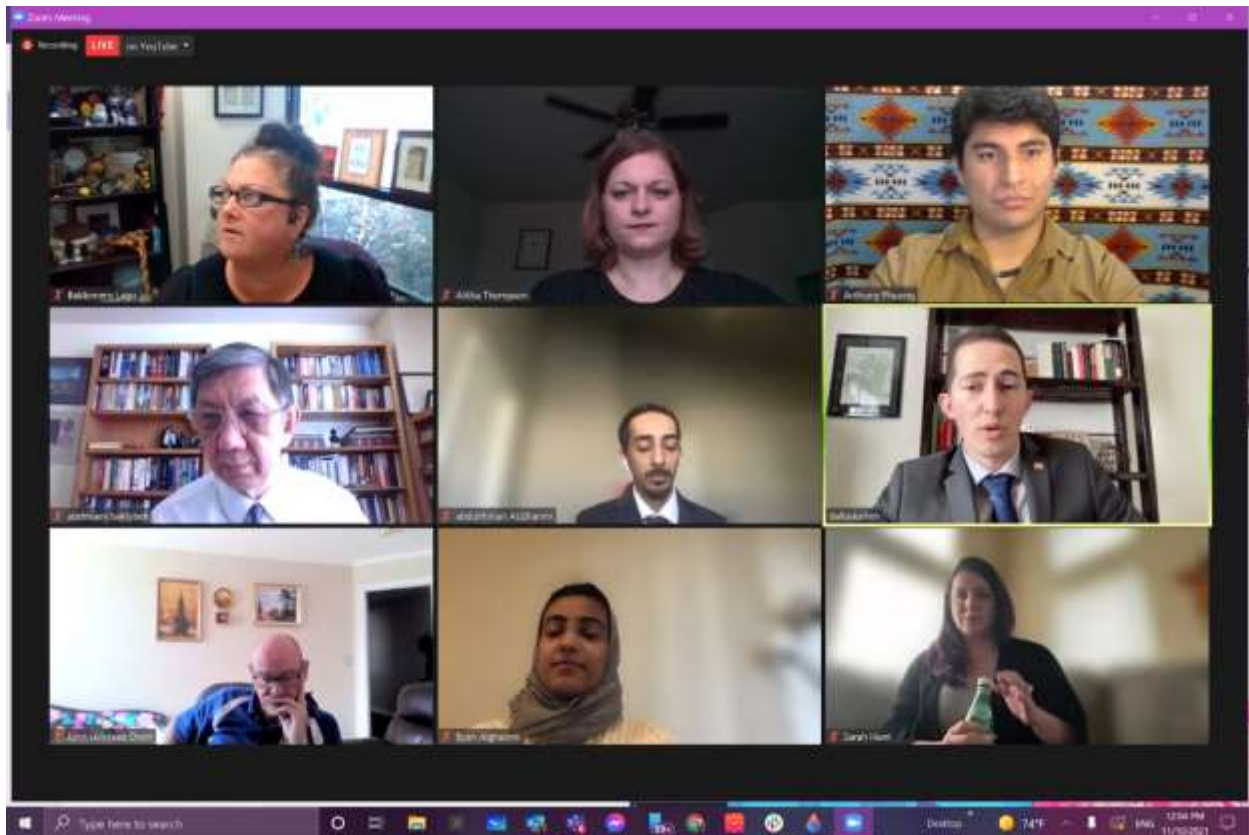


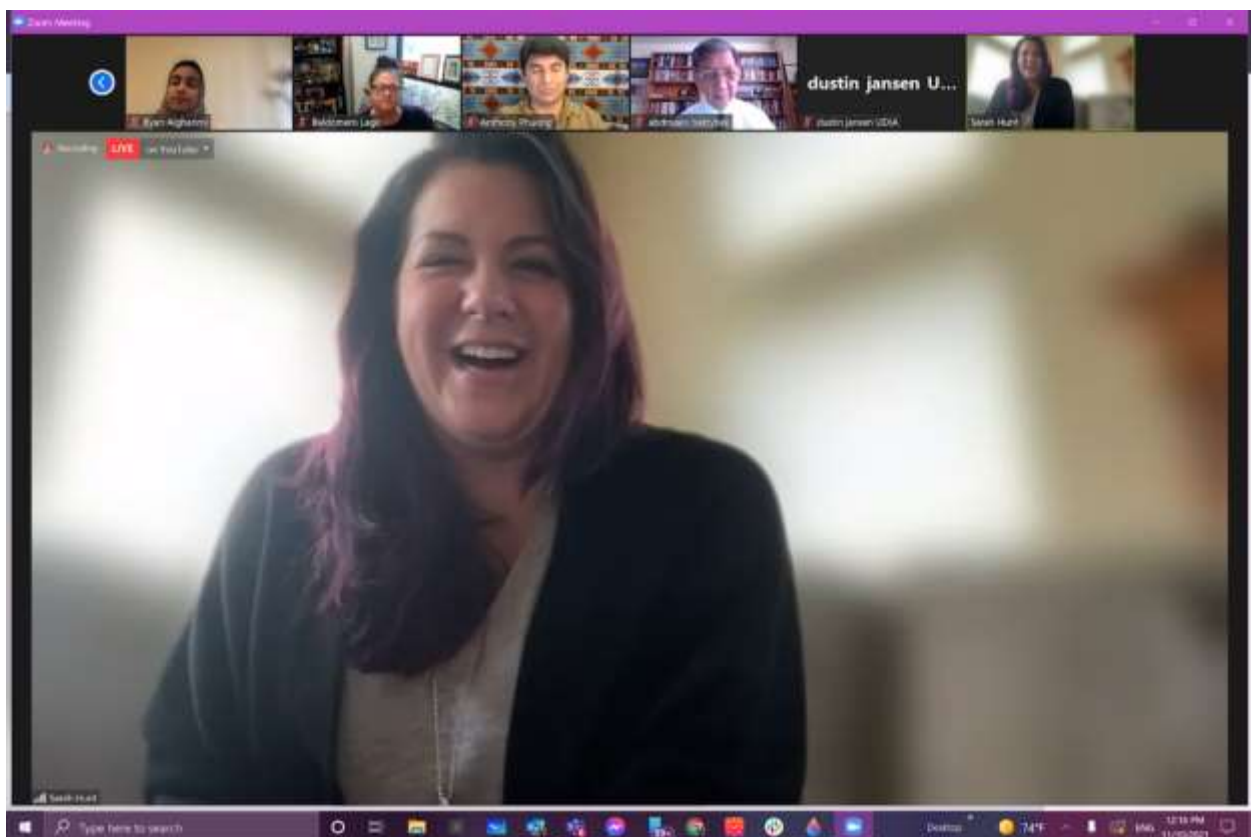
Reflective essay on Bear Ears National Monument



Participants of the Roundtable

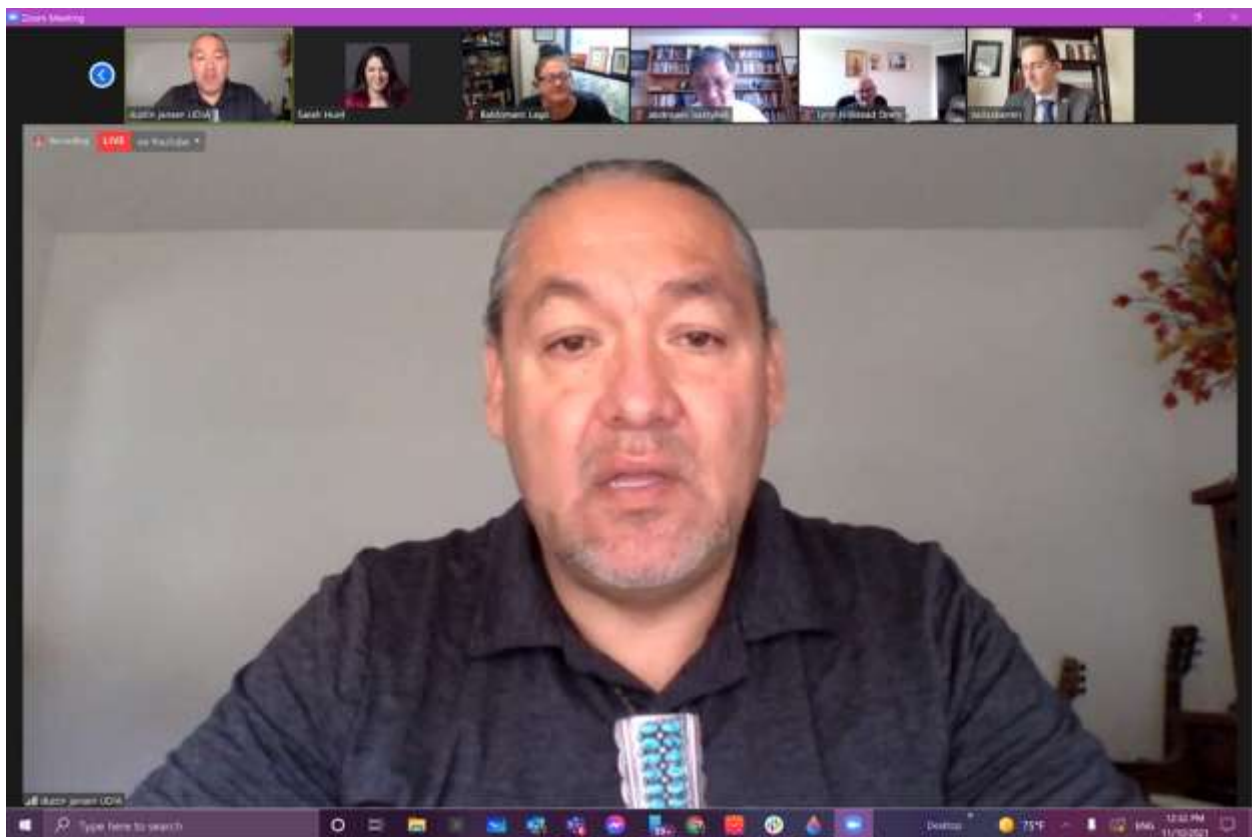
In the livestream video, “Bears Ears National Monument Roundtable Discussion” about the roundtable at Utah Valley University on November 10, 2021, the host and presenters discuss the issue of Bears Ears National Monument. I found the video interesting as it was a topic, I had little knowledge on, and it brought my attention to some important issues that occur in our state. According to the video, Bears ears national monument is 1.6 million acres of public land that was made a national monument during Obama’s presidency. Native Americans use it for collecting medicinal plants along with it holding traditional and ceremonial values to them, while tourists can also visit the site for recreation. It is currently administered by the Bureau of land management and U.S. Forest service.

The land was re-established to its original boundaries during Biden's presidency when Trump made an executive decision to reduce the land by 85%. The host also mentions that the local state legislature would rather it be under local jurisdiction to prevent more alterations by executive decision. This point was a little hard for me to understand as I don't have much background information on national monuments and while I can see that under local jurisdiction the president cannot go back and forth on the decision of the amount of land is considered part of the monument, I still didn't really get what possible changes to the maintenance of land could happen if it was solely under state legislature.



Sarah Hunt provided the panel with an environmentalism and public policy perspective on Bears Ears.

Sarah Hunt does introduce the topic of energy and the 5 million in revenue that will go to the federal government instead of the state government and how the loss of revenue can be difficult on those rural communities. However, I found myself unsure in how the relationship between the federal government and state government interacts in this case. Regardless, I found her points to be valuable in regard to how we would have to bring clean energy about, and the possibility of creating legislation on the decisions the Executive branch can make on national monuments such as removing or reducing land. I also liked her comment on approaching these topics with humility and listening to local communities as those are the people who will be experiencing all these decisions firsthand.



Dustin Jansen speaks about Bear Ears importance for Native American communities

Speaker Dustin Jansen elaborated a little more on Sarah Hunt's point on what decisions the executive can make in regard to the Antiquities Act and rescinding

or reducing land. I appreciated that the speakers were able to build off each other's points and provide more clarity to the topics they discussed. Another point I thought was interesting that Dustin Jansen brought up was the promises and agreements made with the U.S government are made with Native Americans not necessarily as a race but as another sovereign nation. I found it interesting because while reading the Fact Sheet on this topic, it states "Restoring the Monument's boundaries and conditions restores its integrity, upholds efforts to honor the federal trust responsibility to Tribal Nations, and conserves these lands and waters for future generations" (White House.gov).

Considering the US government has not always treated native Americans with respect or upheld its agreements with the tribal nations, I find it to be a huge importance that the country does so now, and that's why I found that aspect of this issue important. I also enjoyed the point on land-based religion and seeing religious sites as not only manmade structures, but sites "created by the creator themselves". It was a perspective I have not considered before as my cultural background doesn't necessarily have that land-based religion. Plus, in my own personal values I think there is a lot of worth in allowing people to nurture the spiritual side of themselves and nourishing their own communities through practicing culture.

In this class, I particularly remember the points brought up in our textbooks that state government should be made for the people; and seeing both the aspect of land as a money maker for the state but also the religious purpose it brings to Native Americans is a responsibility our leaders must take into account when

making these decisions. Otherwise, I find it to be a failure of their responsibilities. There is also the consideration of protecting the historical value of these sites and the recreational use for tourists. Ultimately, I can see why there is discussion on this topic, as I was able to start to develop some of my own opinions, and I still struggle to weigh the pros and cons of state vs federal control of these lands. Ultimately, I learned from the video, and it was a fascinating topic I wouldn't have known about otherwise.

Solange Dapaa, Utah Valley University student

Works Cited <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/07/fact-sheet-president-biden-restores-protections-for-three-national-monuments-and-renews-american-leadership-to-steward-lands-waters-and-cultural-resources>