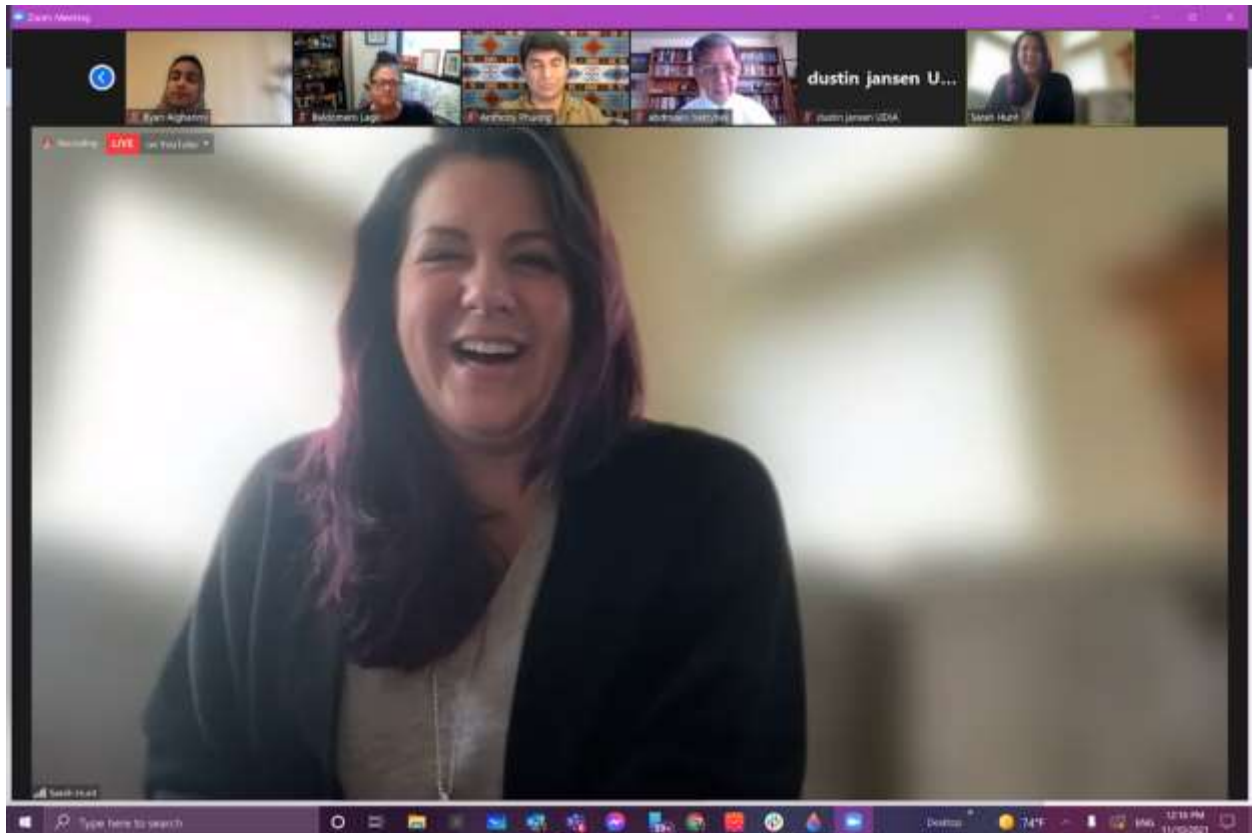


## **Bear Ears National Monument Panel Discussion**

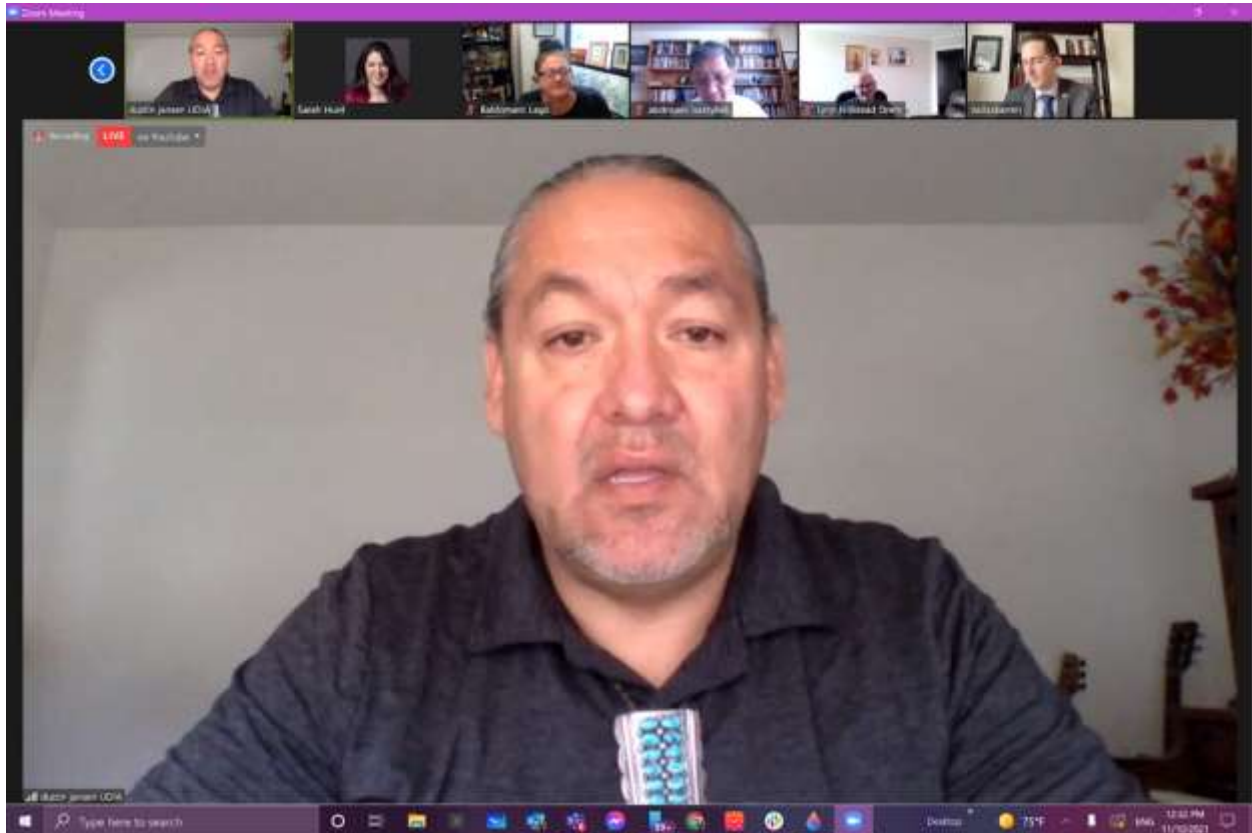
I'd like to start by stating how much I appreciated this opportunity to learn about Bear Ears National Monument and to gain a better understanding of the debate which took place at Utah Valley University on November 10, 2021. I'm also very grateful for the opportunities to study outside of the syllabus that are offered. I'm never able to attend the online meetings every Monday as I work full time. But I am so glad that I took advantage of this offering.



*Sarah Hunt is renowned for her commentary on environmental law and provided the panel with an environmentalism and public policy perspective on Bears Ears.*

I learned a lot in this short discussion. As soon as Sarah Hunt began speaking about the size of Bear Ear National Monument my interest peaked. I began to realize how little I actually knew about this landmark. Bear Ears National Monument has recently been reduced from 1.85 million acres to 200,000 acres, as a result of President Trump's decision in 2017.

This topic has been a long standing debate for many reasons. I learned today that the issue isn't necessarily the land at stake, it's control of the land. If the Federal Government owns and runs the land, they will benefit from the land. The same rings true for the State. On this land there is wealth in many forms, it's no wonder everyone wants a piece.



***Dustin Jansen speaks about Bear Ears importance for Native American communities***

To some they see the natural beauty this land has to offer. They recognize it as a place to relax and enjoy the great outdoors. For some Bear Ears is part of an environmental plan to reduce carbon emission by producing nuclear energy as Bear Ears is high in uranium. On the same topic of environmentalists, we can see the opposite opinion as well. Those wanting to conserve the natural space as it is. Perhaps the most profound and important vision is that of the Native American people.

Sadly, this may be the most important voice which is heard the least. Listening to Professor Dusty Jansen was a real eye opener. When he stated that the Declaration of Independence refers to Native Americans as “merciless Indian savages” my stomach dropped. I loved the quote he shared from Wilma Mankiller, “Public perception creates public policy.” I believe we need to focus on this idea as we move forward in all civic decisions. We are all “the people” and we all should be treated as such.

I truly learned so much and am grateful for the opportunity to listen to this panel discussion. I need to become more civically engaged

**Traci Rockwood Utah Valley University student**