

UTAH INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN FORUM

INFORMATIONAL MEMO RE:
BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

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Bears Ears is 1.36 million acres of public lands administered jointly between the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service in San Juan County in Southeast Utah. This area is important to Native Americans for traditional and ceremonial uses, including the collection of medicinal plants, while tourists visit Bears Ears for recreational purposes. The surrounding land is rich in natural resources.

On October 8th, 2021, President Joseph Biden, through executive order, restored Bears Ears National Monument, which was originally established by President Obama in 2016. President Biden affirmed it is “the first national monument in the country to be established at the request of federally recognized Tribes...a sacred homeland to hundreds of generations of Native Peoples.” President Biden reversed President Trump’s executive decision to reduce the Bears Ears National Monument by 85%. President Trump at that time asserted that “The Antiquities Act does not give the Federal Government unlimited power to lock up millions of acres of land and water, and it’s time we ended this abusive practice.”

Utah Governor Spencer Cox and the state’s congressional members expressed concern that the monument should be promulgated through legislative means rather than executive action to avoid frequent alterations by subsequent Presidents. Additionally, the entire Utah congressional delegation and Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes have opposed the move, wishing to maintain local jurisdiction.

The event, with distinguished presenters such as Sarah E. Hunt, CEO & President of the Joseph Rainey Center for Public Policy, and UVU Assistant Professor of American Indian Affairs and Director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, Dustin Jansen, will contribute to the ongoing discussion and the development of a sustainable long-term solution on this important issue. The UIMF anticipates hosting future events that will also feature student leaders proposing their solutions to this issue.

Mr. Dallas Karren, UIMF President