

# Bear Ears National Monument

## Questions & Answers



### AT A GLANCE

Located in southeastern Utah

1,351,849 Total Acres

Forest Service  
289,000 acres

BLM  
1.06 million acres

Co-managed by the Forest Service and BLM

the most significant cultural landscapes in the United States, Bears Ears has abundant rock art, dwellings, ceremonial sites, granaries, and many other cultural resources reflecting its historical and cultural significance to a variety of Native American peoples. In the past 200 years, the area has been traversed by Mormon pioneers and subsequently settled by ranchers, miners, and homesteaders. Bears Ears provides a home to a stunning variety of plant and animal life, including endemic species that inhabit rare habitat types such as hanging gardens and tinajas.

### What is a National Monument?

The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President the authority to designate national monuments on federal land to protect objects of historic or scientific interest. The Bears Ears National Monument is the [12th national monument](#) managed by the Forest Service; it is the fifth to be managed jointly by the Forest Service and BLM. Monuments generally preserve current uses of the land, including tribal access for traditional plant and firewood gathering and for ceremonial purposes, off-highway recreation on existing routes, grazing, hunting and fishing and water and utility infrastructure.

### What types of areas and resources qualify for a national monument?

The Antiquities Act was first exercised by Republican President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 to designate Devils Tower in Wyoming. Sixteen presidents since 1906 have used the Act to protect some of America's most inspiring natural and historic features, including the Grand Canyon and the Statue of Liberty. In southeastern Utah, the mesas and canyonlands of the Bears Ears landscape have been a vital resource for thousands of years. Among

### Do the Forest Service and BLM have experience jointly managing national monuments?

The Forest Service and the BLM have shared management of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument in Southern California since 2000, as well as the Browns Canyon National Monument in Colorado and the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in northern California.



## How will the two federal agencies manage the national monument together? How will local input be incorporated?

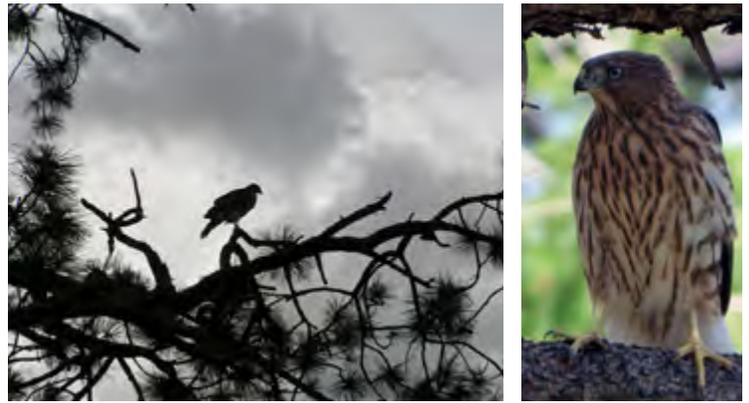
The Forest Service and BLM will jointly prepare a national monument management plan that will address the actions necessary to protect the resources identified in the monument. The plan will be developed with maximum public involvement, including tribal, local and State governments, permit holders, and other stakeholders. To ensure management decisions reflect tribal expertise and traditional and historical knowledge, a Bears Ears Commission comprised of one elected officer from each of the five tribes that formed the Inter-Tribal Coalition to support permanent protection of the Bears Ears will be established. In addition, the Forest Service and BLM will establish a Federal Advisory Committee to provide advice and information regarding the development of the management plan. National monument management plans typically address many important priorities, including:

- Enhancing recreational opportunities
- Protecting important cultural resources
- Restoring fish and wildlife habitat



## How does this relate to the current revision of the land management plan for the Manti-La Sal?

The current Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan was written in 1986. The revision process began in the summer of 2016 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2019. There are opportunities for public participation throughout the process.



The national monument overlaps with a portion of the Monticello Unit of the Manti-La Sal. The monument proclamation calls for the Forest Service together with BLM to prepare a management plan for the management of the monument specifically, also with maximum public involvement. The revision of the Manti-La Sal Forest Plan and the monument plan will be done concurrently with integration, shared resources, operational efficiency and cooperation wherever appropriate.

## Does the national monument affect existing rights-of-way, water or utility infrastructure or commercial activities?

The national monument designation does not alter or affect valid existing rights of any party and will not impact the operation, maintenance, replacements or modification of existing utilities, pipelines or telecommunications, as long as they are consistent with the care and management of the objects identified in the national monument proclamation.

## Will Tribes have access for ceremonial and other traditional uses?

Yes. It also ensures that tribes will continue to be able to collect plants, firewood, and other traditional materials within the monument.



## Will hunting, fishing, and outfitting continue?

Yes. Hunting, fishing and outfitting are popular and important activities for local communities and for recreation-oriented small businesses. The Forest Service and BLM will continue to apply the laws, regulations and policies currently used in issuing and administering permits on public lands in the national monument, consistent with the proper care and management of the national monument. The monument does not change the State of Utah's jurisdiction as it relates to fish and wildlife management.

## Will grazing and timber management continue?

Yes. Currently, livestock grazing occurs throughout most of the monument area including nine active Forest Service allotments. Existing laws, regulations and policies followed by the Forest Service and BLM in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases shall continue to apply to ensure ongoing consistency with the monument. Likewise, timber management, including for purposes of restoration and forest health, will continue pursuant to existing laws, regulations and policies, consistent with the proper care and management of the national monument.



## How does the designation impact off-highway vehicle use?

The proclamation requires the Secretaries, through the Forest Service and BLM, to prepare a transportation plan that designates the roads and trails where motorized or non-motorized mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes) vehicle use will be allowed. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use may continue on roads and OHV trails designated for their use consistent with care and management of the monument resources. Any new roads or trails designated for motorized vehicle use would be for the purposes of public safety or protection of the monument. In existing wilderness areas, motorized and mechanized transportation remain prohibited under the Wilderness Act.



## **Does the national monument designation affect private property rights inside or outside of the national monument?**

The national monument designation will not impact the rights of private landowners within or adjacent to the national monument, including existing access within the national monument boundary. In addition to the approximately 1.35 million acres of Federal lands, the Bears Ears National Monument boundary encompasses approximately 109,100 acres of land owned by the State of Utah and 12,600 acres owned by private landowners. The non-Federal lands within the national monument are not be part of the national monument unless subsequently and voluntarily acquired.

## **Are there recreation opportunities in this area?**

Bears Ears is a popular hunting, fishing, climbing, hiking and off-highway vehicle destination. Today, cyclists and motorists can follow the path of 19th-century Mormon pioneers along the rugged Hole in the Rock Trail. The Dark Canyon recreation area on the Manti-La Sal National Forest attracts hikers and backpackers and Elk Ridge and the Abajo Mountains draw hunters from across the world.



## **Does national monument designation affect the ability to suppress and manage wildfires in the proposed national monument area?**

The national monument designation will not change current tactics or impact the suppression of wildfires. All future management will continue to focus first on public and firefighter safety while taking actions to protect valuable resources. Tools like prescribed fire may be used in the national monument to address the risk of wildfire, insect infestation or disease that would imperil public safety or endanger the objects or resources protected by the national monument designation.

