

Western Values Project

Documents From DOI's Internal Review Of National Monuments Show That Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Has Been Beneficial And That Reduction Was Not Necessary.

As A Result Of DOI's Controversial Review Of National Monument Boundaries, Donald Trump Ordered The Shrinking Of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM). But Documents Obtained By FOIA From The Utah BLM Show That The Monument Has Been Good For Science And Utah's Economy.

- **After a controversial monument review, Donald Trump ordered Utah's GSENM to be reduced from 1.9 million acres to almost 1 million acres.** "President Trump announced his proclamations dramatically shrinking the size of the state's two massive national monuments, Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante. Taken together, Trump's orders mark the largest reversal of national monument protections in U.S. history. [...] Grand Staircase will be diminished by roughly half, from its nearly 1.9 million acres to about 1 million. The specific numbers were provided to reporters by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke prior to Trump's announcement in Salt Lake City." [NPR, [12/04/17](#)]
- **But the briefing materials prepared by the Utah BLM as a part of the monument review show monument designation has been good for Utah.** Allison Ginn, the National Conservation Lands Program Lead at the Utah BLM office, emailed a few dozen BLM staff on May 18, 2017 with an executive summary and an outline of information related to GSENM. Ginn explained that the documents were "the final information that was submitted for the DOI's data call, due yesterday." [Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

DOI's Internal Review Shows That National Monument Designation At GSENM Led To "A Wealth Of Scientific Knowledge" And Prevented Vandalism Of Cultural Sites.

The Information The Utah BLM Submitted To DOI As Part Of The National Monuments Review Says Designation Of GSENM Has Led To "a Wealth Of Scientific Knowledge." The Utah BLM Says Without Monument Designation, Fewer Scientific And Archeological Discoveries Would Have Been Made, And "more Vandalism Would Have Likely Occurred."

- **The Utah BLM says monument designation has resulted in important scientific discoveries.** “In the 20 years since Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was designated, a wealth of scientific knowledge has been discovered, with significant archaeological, paleontological, biological, ecological and geological discoveries on the Monument. The Kaiparowits Plateau contains a plethora of paleontological specimens - twelve new dinosaur species have been discovered since designation. The scientific research and discoveries were outlined and highlighted through a series of three “Learning from the Land” Symposiums, in 1997, 2006 and 2016 (Symposium folder on google drive).” [Executive Summary Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- “In the five year period prior to designation of GSENM, a total of approximately 358 cultural resource sites were documented in what was to become GSENM, or about 72 sites/year. Following designation, approximately 3,219 sites were documented, or about 161 sites/year. This increase reflects the increased funding and greater research opportunities following GSENM designation.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- **Without a national monument designation, these important discoveries wouldn’t have happened.** “Less archeological research would have occurred without the Monument Designation. Early GSENM efforts included initiating large, landscape surveys which recorded and documented hundreds of sites.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- **The Utah BLM says monument designation has led to important archeological discoveries.** “Archaeological surveys carried out to date, show extensive use of places within the monument by ancient Native American cultures and a contact point for Anasazi and Fremont cultures. The cultural resources discovered so far in the monument are outstanding in their variety of cultural affiliation, type and distribution. Hundreds of recorded sites include rock art panels, occupation sites, campsites and granaries.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- **The Utah BLM says monument designation has prevented vandalism of cultural resources.** “More vandalism would have likely occurred without Monument designation. After designation, research, inventory and educational and interpretive outreach programs increased. Between 1996 and 2006, GSENM presented more than 500 talks, classroom visits, field trips and other educational events relating to cultural resources and archeology. Education, an increased presence of staff and researchers and improved management likely led to the reduction in numbers of sites looted and rock art panels defaced.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

The Information The Utah BLM Submitted To DOI As Part Of The National Monuments Review Says GSENM's Management Plan Included "Substantial Outreach."

- **The Utah BLM says development of GSENM's management plan included appropriate outreach.** "GSENM's Monument Management Plan included substantial outreach, public scoping and comment periods according to land use planning regulations and policies." [Executive Summary Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- **And they have documentation to prove it.** "GSENM has many documents to demonstrate public engagement in land use planning processes. Please advise on the level of documentation that is requested by the Department." [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

DOI's Internal Monument Review Documents Show GSENM Has Been A Boon For Utah's Economy.

The Utah BLM Sent DOI A Report On The Economic Impacts Of GSENM That Suggests National Monument Designation Of GSENM Led To \$51 Million In Value Added And 1,024 Jobs In 2016.

- **The Utah BLM submitted information to DOI that shows the positive result of the monument designation.** The Utah BLM completed a draft document called "Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Economic Values and Economic Contributions" in July 2017 and sent it to Randal Bowman Kathleen Benedetto, Mike Nedd, and others. [Nikki Moore email to Randal Bowman, et al, 07/21/17]
- **The Utah BLM says monument designation has generated money and created jobs.** "Recreational visitors spend money at local businesses, and that spending can lead to economic contributions that affect regional and state economy (sic). The economic contributions occur annually, and in cases where visitation increases over time, recreation generates additional activity each year. The net economic contributions associated with recreation in 2016 are estimated to be about \$51 million in value-added and 1,024 jobs." [Attachment to Nikki Moore email to Randal Bowman, et al, 07/21/17]

DOI's Internal Review Cites Other Reports That Show Monument Designation Has Boosted Utah's Tourism Economy.

- **The Utah BLM says monument designation led to more tourists.** "Research by external parties (e.g., Headwaters Economics and Pew Trust reports) indicate that protected landscapes are a draw for visitors and do result in increased visitation to a region. Thus, it is reasonable to

conclude that visitation would be less if the lands had not been designated as a monument.”
[Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

The Utah BLM's Internal Review Shows That National Monument Designation May Not Have Stopped The Development Of The Smoky Hollow Coal Mine.

- **The Utah BLM says Andalex may not have developed its coal leases even if GSENM were never designated.** “Andalex coal leases were voluntarily sold to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at market value. At the time of designation, the Warm Springs Smoky Hollow DEIS was in progress to analyze the proposed mine. Andalex Resources may or may not have actually decided to develop the coal resources based on varying economic projections for the project, particularly the cost of transporting the coal.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

The Utah BLM Says National Monument Designation Did Not Reduce Grazing.

- **The Utah BLM says monument designation hasn't cut grazing numbers.** “Although grazing use levels have varied considerably from year to year due to factors like drought, no reductions in permitted livestock grazing use have been made as a result of the Monument designation.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- “Overall permitted livestock grazing use within the Monument is at roughly the same level now as it has been since the early 1990s. When the Monument was designated, there were 106,645 total Animal Unit Months (AUMs), with 77,400 of these active. Today, there are 106,202 total AUMs and 76,957 are active. In 1999, an adjustment in AUM levels was made to resolve riparian resources issues and address recreation conflicts.” [Executive Summary Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

In Reducing GSENM, DOI Appears To Have Ignored Positive Impacts And Cut The Monument Based On The “Highly Speculative” Possibility Of Energy Development.

Though The Utah BLM's Data Shows Substantial Benefits From Monument Designation, It Also Says GSENM Has Developable Coal And That “Absent A National Monument Designation, There Could Be Additional Opportunities For Oil And Gas Exploration.”

- **The Utah BLM acknowledged that without monument designation, more oil and gas development could occur.** “It is reasonable to conclude that absent a national monument

designation, there could be additional opportunities for oil and gas exploration, discovery and development.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]

- **The Utah BLM says some people have speculated that there are billions of dollars’ worth of coal-bed natural gas and petroleum in GSENM.** “Since there have been no discoveries upon which to base production numbers, estimates of the value of production vary widely. The UGS projected 2.6 to 10.5 trillion cubic feet (2.6 to 10.5 billion mcf) of coal-bed methane could be contained in the GSENM “Based on research in other Utah coal fields and extrapolating to the Kaiparowits field...” The UGS also projected “...550 million barrels of oil might be contained within tar sands of the monument.” In January 1997, it was speculated that total value of coal-bed natural gas and petroleum within the GSENM ranged between \$2.02 and \$18.6 billion.” [Outline Attachment to Allison Ginn email to Utah BLM staff, 05/18/17]
- **And those resources could be recoverable.** “An estimated 62.3 billion tons of original coal resources (coal beds > 1 foot thick) are contained in the Kaiparowits coal field, with an estimated 44.2 billion tons within the Monument. In 1997, the Utah Geological Survey indicated that around 11.36 billion tons of the coal in the Kaiparowits Plateau coal field are estimated recoverable. [...] The Kaiparowits Plateau coal resources in the GSENM are estimated to make up 59% of the potentially recoverable coal in Utah, as of 2015.” [Attachment to Nikki Moore email to Randal Bowman, et al, 07/21/17]
- **However, the Utah BLM says accurate numbers about energy potential in GSENM are “highly speculative.”** “The total value or amount of energy or mineral production foregone as a result of the designation cannot be determined. Although information may exist (e.g., USGS Mineral Resource Data) on past or present mineral history, mineral potential or minerals that may be prospectively valuable within and around the Monument, developing a total value or a total value as a result of the designation would be highly speculative. [...] The available information is insufficient to allow a full understanding of management tradeoffs, such as how expanding any mineral development would affect recreational visitation and cultural and natural resources. A comprehensive evaluation of trade-offs would require a significant amount of research and additional analysis.” [Attachment to Nikki Moore email to Randal Bowman, et al, 07/21/17]

The Utah Bureau of Land Management Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument FOIA Documents are available [here](#).

