

Montana's National Monuments Under Threat from Trump

Trump Could Eliminate Three National Monuments Totaling More Than 378,000 Acres of Montana Public Land.

In 2017, President Trump slashed the size of two National Monuments by invoking claiming he has the power to do so under the 1906 Antiquities Act. Montana is home to three National Monuments making up more than 378,000 acres of protected federal land. Under Trump, those lands are at risk of being eliminated. (*New York Times*, “Trump Slashed Size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante,” [12/4/17](#); Brookings Institute, “Trump Has the Power to Shrink National Monuments,” [12/7/17](#))

Montana's National Monuments:

National Monument	Acreage
Pompeys Pillar National Monument	51
Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument	377,346
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument	765.34
TOTAL	378,162.34

(Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Public Land Statistics 2016, Table 5-2, [p.195](#); Department of Interior, National Park Service, Land Resource Division, Listing of Acreage Summary, [9/30/17](#))

Montana's Three National Monuments Are Worth at Least \$409.3 Million.

The National Park Service controls 85 million acres of federal land. A June 2016 study by the National Park Foundation found U.S. National Parks were worth, at minimum, \$92 billion in economic value. Using this valuation, the land controlled by the National Park Service could be said to be worth \$1,082.35 per-acre. New Mexico's three National Monuments are worth at least \$409,304,008.70. (Department of Interior, National Park Service, [FAQ's](#); National Park Foundation, “Total Economic Valuation of the National Park Service Lands and Programs,” [6/30/16](#))

Montana's Sage Grouse Under Threat from Trump: None (Center for Biological Diversity, Press Release, [3/15/19](#))

Examples of Exceptions for Environmentally Dangerous Projects on Public Lands by the Trump Administration in Montana

Trump's BLM is Pushing Through Oil & Gas Leases on Montana Public Land Without Doing the Necessary Environmental Protection Research.

The *Missoula Current* reports that, in 2018, the Trump administration's BLM tried to offer 223 parcels of Montana public land but a federal court determined it had not done enough research on the environmental impact of the oil and gas development. A Great Falls U.S. District Court “told the BLM it had to conduct an environmental analysis based on a challenge of coal leases by the Western Organization of Resource Councils.” In addition, “two previous lease auctions were on

hold due to another lawsuit citing possible groundwater contamination and increased methane emissions if drilling occurred. The BLM was forced to remove 20 parcels that were in sage grouse management areas from the December 2018 lease sale due to a court injunction.” (*Missoula Current*, “Report Shows ‘Staggering’ Scope of Environmental Rollbacks by Trump Administration,” [7/19/19](#))

Trump Administration Cut Corners to Give Hecla Subsidiary Permit to Mine on U.S. Forest Service Public Land in Montana.

In October 2019, a federal judge ruled that the Trump administration “cut a number of corners when it gave the Forest Service a nod to grant yet another permit to RC Resources in August 2018.” In the ruling, the judge stated “the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service and RC Resources will have to prove in court that they properly considered the mine’s effects on threatened species, namely bull trout and grizzly bears.” RC Resources is a subsidiary of Hecla Mining Company. (*Missoula Current*, [10/17/19](#); [SEC Hecla Mining Subsidiaries](#))

- The Fish and Wildlife Service tried to claim that it “didn’t need to update a 2006 biological opinion on grizzly bears” for the “proposed mine that would tunnel beneath the Cabinet Mountains in northwest Montana.” (*Missoula Current*, [10/17/19](#))

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service “Violated the Endangered Species Act” to Approve Hecla Mining’s Rock Creek Mine in Montana.

Environmental groups also claimed, “the Fish and Wildlife Service violated the Endangered Species Act by making allowances for some bull trout to die when three sections of streams will dry up once the mine is in operation. [...] The Endangered Species Act allows the Fish and Wildlife Service to approve a certain amount of ‘take,’ or killing, of threatened or endangered species, but a specific number is usually set.” However, in this case, “the Fish and Wildlife Service just said bull trout deaths are limited to the three stream segments, without setting a limit.” (*Missoula Current*, [10/17/19](#))

Trump’s Department of the Interior Helped Cloud Peak Energy by Failing to “Adequately Consider the Potential Climate Change Effects of Expanding” Cloud Peak’s “Massive Coal Mine” Operated in Montana.

In February 2019, a federal judge ruled that Department of the Interior failed to “adequately consider the potential climate change effects of expanding [the Spring Creek] coal mine” operated by Cloud Peak Energy in southeastern Montana. In 2016, a federal judge had ordered Interior “officials to re-examine the environmental impacts.” In 2019, it was ruled that “officials from Interior’s Office of Surface Mining had again ‘failed to take a hard look at greenhouse gas emissions.’” [...] “The judge said the agency needed to consider the damages those emissions could inflict on society, as well as the human health impacts from other pollutants emitted by coal-burning power plants.” (*Montana Public Radio*, [02/12/19](#))