WELCOME!

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition is a consortium of five sovereign Tribal Nations - the Hopi Tribe, the Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the Pueblo of Zuni, and the Navajo Nation - united in the effort to conserve the natural, cultural, scientific, and historical resources of the Bears Ears landscape. Our mission is to assure that the 1.9 million-acre Bears Ears ancestral region will be managed forever with the greatest cultural and environmental sensitivity. By safeguarding the Indigenous connections to this living landscape, the Coalition strives to protect Bears Ears as a place where Native individuals and communities can connect fully with the land and be healed.

We would like to take this opportunity to update you on recent Coalition activities. We thank you for your continued support and contributions to our cause!

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Coalition has strengthened its efforts to prioritize greater public education over the past year by engaging in community organizing and grassroots networking. The most recent advocacy efforts include presentations at various law schools and universities, as well as speaking on a number of panels in Tribal and conservation communities. Additionally, Tribal Leaders traveled to Washington D.C. this past March to testify before the House Committee on Natural Resources in an oversight hearing titled, Forgotten Voices: The Inadequate Review and Improper Alteration of Our National Monuments. Leaders stated their continued opposition to the illegal reduction of the original Bears Ears National Monument in 2017 and advocated for the protection of the Bears Ears landscape and its sacred resources.

In addition to advocacy efforts, we’ve initiated a pilot Native American Student internship program to provide real-world employment opportunities for Indigenous students. Our interns are provided numerous opportunities to bridge the gaps between academia, Coalition work, Indigenous issues, and the conservation community. Additionally, our interns are encouraged...
to pursue professional growth and development by engaging in various trainings, workshops, and networking. Lastly, we officially kicked off our Indigenous-led land management planning process this fall! Tribal leadership, Coalition staff, and Tribal community members will work together to create a collaborative-management plan. This plan will encompass the protection of 1.9 million acres of the Bears Ears region as originally proposed by the Coalition in 2016. The goal of the plan is to ensure that future land management decisions are responsive to the concerns and objectives of the Five Tribes. To that end, a Cultural Resource Sub-Committee (CRSC) has been created to engage the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, Tribal resource departments, cultural advisors, and traditional practitioners from each of the Five Tribes around the land management priorities for the Bears Ears region. The CRSC convenes every month to coordinate community engagement and efficiently carry out tasks as directed by Coalition leadership.

What We’ve Accomplished This Summer

During the summer, the Coalition began work on a data-driven and empirically based case study focused on conservation and responsible tourism and its economic impacts in the Bears Ears region. The findings of this study will be used by our leadership, staff, and advisors to inform the Tribal 1.9 million acre land management plan. This information will also aid in conducting outreach, education, and advocacy around the economic advantages and opportunities associated with a restored monument, while ensuring the protection of sacred sites for Native communities. In August, we were selected by The North Face for the Explore Fund grant to begin planning for our Native Conservation Corps program. This unique pilot project will provide Native youth and traditional-knowledge holders an opportunity to engage in environmentally conscious projects within the Bears Ears landscape, and allow for the creation of conservation programming informed by Indigenous values.

Standing Up for Bears Ears

In September, the All Pueblo Governors Council returned to their ancestral homelands in Bears Ears to reaffirm their enduring obligation to protect traditional cultural properties and sacred sites. In October, the Coalition was recognized for “Moral Courage in Leadership” by the Lewis Family Foundation at the Alnoba Center in New Hampshire. Additionally, the Bears Ears landscape was acknowledged as a world monument site after being named to World Monument Fund’s 2020 Watch List. Places that face serious threats to their preservation and hold great potential for increased protection were selected. We are encouraged by all the ways that people #StandForBearsEars.

Upcoming Events

November: Native American Heritage Month
November 9-16: Rock Your Mocs week
December 28th: 3rd anniversary of the Establishment of the original Bears Ears National Monument (2016)!

More newsletters to come! In the meantime, keep up to date with our work and current activities by following us on social media @bearsearscoalition, or visiting our website at bearsearscoalition.org.

Photographs courtesy of Tim Peterson.