Greetings! The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition hopes you, your family, and your community are staying safe and healthy during this time. No question, the normalcy of daily life has changed drastically due to the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease) throughout the world. We understand that this is an extremely difficult time for many people. We send our thoughts and well wishes to all who have been affected by this pandemic.

We continue to advocate for protection of the Bears Ears cultural landscape during this uncertain time, and we will work diligently to update you on our progress, as well as communicate to you the needs and concerns of our member Tribes as they themselves address the concerns related to COVID-19. We can all contribute to the well being of each other by simply listening and respecting the wishes of our fellow brothers and sisters. Let us all work together and move forward towards a safe and secure future.

We would like to encourage everyone to practice the Center for Disease Control (CDC)’s recommended protocols through the duration of COVID-19. The health of Tribal communities is always our first priority. Over the past few weeks, there were multiple concerning reports of increased visitation to southeast Utah since the implementation of public health measures such as self-quarantine and social distancing. This was extremely alarming to Tribal Nations and rural communities in the surrounding area due to the highly contagious nature of COVID-19. However, due to successful public education campaigns encouraging people to #StayHome, we are glad to report visitation has decreased. To continue encouraging this response, Coalition staff has outlined why "staying-in" is
Cultural and natural resources are at greater risk of destruction at this time due to high visitation in areas with low protection.

- This risk is intensified as our partners’ efforts to educate visitors and monitor damage are hindered by distancing and quarantine recommendations.
- Increased travel through Tribal and rural communities increases their risk of exposure to COVID-19 and adds stress to resources which are already strained.
- Elders hold invaluable Traditional Knowledge and are the foundation of our communities and our cultural survival. As elders have been identified as most at-risk, Tribal communities are working tirelessly to protect them from getting sick. **PROTECT OUR ELDERS.**

The COVID-19 situation has shown how one person’s actions can impact the lives of many others; this notion of interconnectedness is an Indigenous precept that has allowed for sustainability of our Nations for millenia. Help us demonstrate the strength and wisdom of this connection by practicing resiliency, patience, and empathy as we look for ways to care for one another in this challenging time.

**WELCOME NEW LEADERS**

We are excited and humbled to announce that two Tribal leaders recently joined the Bears Ears Coalition earlier this year: Mr. Hank Stevens of the Navajo Nation, representative of the Navajo Mountain Chapter, and Councilman Malcolm Lehi of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Councilman Lehi was a part of the group who worked to establish the original Bears Ears National Monument in 2016. We are grateful to have the leadership and expertise of both representatives involved in our ongoing and future projects.
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

We would like to provide you with a quick update on our land management planning process which kicked off late last year. We are glad to report that each Coalition Tribe has selected their individual subcontractor for the purpose of developing their portion of the Indigenous-informed land management plan. Each Tribe will work to complete their own piece of the plan while also collaborating with each other in this effort to create a wholly new and innovative strategy for protecting cultural landscapes.

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WE’VE BEEN VERY BUSY

Before the Coalition and its member Tribes began initiating social distancing and quarantine protocols earlier this Spring, our organization had the opportunity to engage in a number of events and opportunities to continue furthering our mission to protect the Bears Ears landscape, while supporting our partners and their efforts as well:

- Coalition Tribal leaders and staff traveled to Los Angeles, CA to meet with the Los Angeles County Museum (LACMA) to discuss a planning for a future Bears Ears exhibit. This project with LACMA aims to uplift Indigenous voices and perspectives tied to the Bears Ears region and its stories.
- Leaders and staff attended the Celebrate Cedar Mesa event hosted by our partner, Friends of Cedar Mesa, in Bluff, UT. This gathering focused on building community around protecting the cultural and natural resources of Bears Ears, as well as providing educational tips to supporters on how to visit Indigenous homelands with respect. The event featured various Native artists, Traditional-Knowledge holders, outdoor advocates, and academic speakers.
- The Coalition Cultural Subcommittee (CSC) members met together in Bears Ears with their individual subcontractors for the first time to begin collaboration on their portions of our land management plan. After agreeing on a general outline for all five Coalition Tribes to follow, CSC members will work to create a land protection plan that adheres to their Indigenous beliefs and world views.

WOMEN OF BEARS EARS

Globally, women have been foundational pillars to protect and uplift Indigenous communities. In commemorating March as Women’s History Month, we’d like to take a moment to honor two women working to protect the Bears Ears cultural landscape and other Indigenous ancestral homelands. Their voices and perspectives provide an important lens that allows harmony among traditional knowledge and western science.
Betsy Chapoose of Ute Indian Tribe (Uintah and Ouray Ute) is the Cultural Rights and Protection Director for the Ute Indian Tribe. She is also a member of the Coalition’s Cultural Resource Subcommittee and is helping to direct the creation of our monumental land management plan for the 1.9 million-acre Bears Ears landscape.

Talia Boyd is Todích’ii’nii (Bitter Water), born for Tó’aheidlíinii (The Water Flow Together), maternal grandfather is Tl’aaashchi’il (Red Bottom) and paternal grandfather is Tábąąhá (Water’s Edge). She is a member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation, and currently works for the Grand Canyon Trust as a Cultural Landscapes Program Manager.

We provided Betsy and Talia the space to speak freely on topics of landscape conservation and cultural resource protection. We are grateful to them for taking time to respond for this Newsletter and for providing their knowledge and wisdom to be shared with the greater public.

**Betsy Chapoose**

“A true definition of Indian spirituality and religion and ceremony is ’a way of life,’”  

Ute Indian Tribe's (UIT) responsibility is to keep, promote and sustain the cultural resources of the Ute People. UIT Cultural Rights and Protection (CR&P) defines cultural resources comprehensively. Cultural resources include plants, animals, minerals, view sheds, aesthetics, water, land formations and night skies. When evaluating impacts it is the imperceptible that should be incorporated not only the tangible aspects of these elements.

The Ute Tribe’s culture, traditions, language, values and world-views are born from their homelands. The water and the lands it flows through created an innate identity for the Ute people that it is essential to conserving their cultural patrimony. This in turn produces an intimate and insightful connection between Ute people and the cultural landscape they live in.

The landscapes are a complex of interrelated and essential places of religious and cultural significance. All the lands and elements of the environment within the Ute Tribe’s milieu are aligned. Bear’s Ears is a part of the Ute Tribe’s world view.

**Talia Boyd**

The recognition and inclusion of traditional knowledge systems are needed in land management planning, because it is nature-based, since time immemorial Indigenous peoples have found sustainable effective
solutions from generations of living with the natural world. Traditional knowledge and science recognizes the interconnectedness to the natural world and is embedded in our cosmologies, ceremonies, oral traditions, etiquette, and traditional environmental knowledge.

The incorporation of traditional knowledge systems in land management and conservation is key to developing sustainable land use plans, including the protection of continuously threatened cultural landscapes, it is an essential part of the collective knowledge base as it connects the processes and outcomes more closely to community. The Bears Ears National Monument is one cultural landscape in the Colorado Plateau that has been desecrated by extractive industries, belligerent vandalism and looting, and careless visitors. The Diné, Hopi, Ute Mountain Ute, Unitah and Ouray Ute and Zuni came together with their traditional knowledge systems to protect Bears Ears and they continue to request for the co-management of Bears Ears National Monument. Traditional knowledge and science need to be included in land management planning and Tribes need to be involved in the decision-making processes related to cultural landscapes from the identification and description of the cultural values, to the nomination, implementation, education, and long-term outcomes. Traditional knowledge systems allow an integrative approach to stewardship by maintaining stable and regenerative relationships with the natural world. It is important to recognize how results differ between consultation and involvement with Indigenous peoples—when we listen to the concerns, values, needs, priorities, and ambitions of Indigenous communities there is ample potential to bridge and shape robust working partnerships that are authentic, equitable and inclusive.

**KEEP UP WITH COALITION UPDATES!**

Sign up for email updates on our website and follow us on social media to keep up with updates from the Coalition on land management planning and other projects we are working on in the coming year to protect Bears Ears!

- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bearsearscoalition)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/savebearsears)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BearsEarscoalition)

Thank you - Elahkwa - Ahéhee’ - Tog’oiak’ - Kwakhay - Askwali
BEARS EARS: VIRTUAL TOUR

Given that all of us are staying home and away from the natural landscapes we cherish in order to protect gateway communities and essential workers at this time, we wanted to provide you with a collection of archived Bears Ears photos for electronic viewing. Although we may not be able to physically be in this sacred region right now, we still hold its beauty and significance to Indigenous peoples in reverence no matter where we find ourselves. We hope you enjoy, and we are thinking of you in these times: hang in there!