Greetings Bears Ears community. The Coalition hopes that you and yours are staying safe and healthy as we transition into the Fall. This summer has been one of vast changes both globally and socially. As we all continue to adapt and manage the day-to-day challenges that have arisen in our lives, between the pandemic and social upheaval of systemic issues for people of the global majority, it has been incredible to see the resilience, compassion, and perseverance of people all around the world working together to address the impacts of these challenges. In our communities, we have seen people take great initiative to provide care and safety to those in need, even as the pandemic continues to impact Indigenous peoples — and many communities of color — at a disproportionate rate. With these realities in mind, the Coalition has made thoughtful efforts to balance the immediate needs of our Tribal communities while continuing our work to protect Bears Ears. That being said, we’ve been busy over the past few months! In this edition of our newsletter, we will update you on the progress we’ve made since the Spring. Not only have we made headway on developing our Indigenous land management plan for the 1.9 million-acre Bears Ears region, but we have continued to create new projects and grow our advocacy efforts, all while seeking ways to assist our member Tribes in their relief efforts as they work to protect their communities.

COVID-19 RELIEF FOR TRIBES: HOW TO HELP
Around the country, people are looking for ways to assist those most impacted by the pandemic, including within the Coalition Tribes. Over the past few months, Tribal community members have created multiple avenues of support to assist those most vulnerable, placing an incredible amount of amount of time, energy, and care into organizing food pantries, fundraisers, and donation drives. Our staff is grateful to have been able to participate in some of these efforts. In April, we gathered food and supplies to donate to Zuni Pueblo's Emergency Mobile Pantry; some materials were also delivered to the Hopi Tribe to aid in their relief efforts, as well.

In this time of hardship and uncertainty, a way in which we can ground ourselves in action and find peace is to provide support to others, if we have the capacity to do so. By practicing reciprocity and generosity, we can create solidarity and safety networks for those in need during this time. While there are countless resources that you can access to assist Tribes around the nation, we have listed a number of grassroots organizations that are making a huge difference within their communities in the southwest by delivering supplies, food, water, masks, sanitation materials, etc. If you are interested in contributing to these efforts or sharing the information with others, please visit our website under the tab: "COVID-19."

We hope that everyone will continue to abide by CDC guidelines, wear masks, social distance, wash hands, and stay safe to protect each other and those individuals most at-risk for infection in our communities. #ProtectOurElders

Back in May, we published an Op-ed in the Houston Chronicle titled, “Postpone vacations in already vulnerable Tribal communities to stop the spread of COVID-19.” We have continued to amplify this message and ask others to help us spread the word! Tribal Nations are still working hard to prevent any further spread of COVID-19 within their communities. We can do our part to assist governmental and grassroots efforts by avoiding popular vacation or recreation spots close to Tribal land.

Additionally, we currently discourage large gatherings in Bears Ears, as many of the normal on-the-ground visitor education efforts, by both Tribal and conservation groups, are operating at much lower capacity due to COVID-19 safety precautions. Many people are looking to escape to the outdoors right now to enjoy recreational activities, but high visitation coupled with low education outreach means that the land, sacred sites, and cultural objects are more at-risk of destruction, looting, and vandalism.
A QUICK REVIEW OF OUR INDIGENOUS LAND PLAN

To review, the Coalition Tribes are currently working together to create an Indigenous land management plan for the Bears Ears region that is informed by Traditional Knowledge of the five Tribes. We are pleased to report we have continued to make steady progress on developing the plan. This project was envisioned by the foundational group of Tribal leaders, community members, and Native advocates that sought protection of the region under national monument status in 2016. The plan will not only ensure that future land management decisions are responsive to the concerns and objectives of the five Coalition Tribes, but it will also serve as an example for other Indigenous communities around the world to envision how living, cultural landscapes can be holistically protected through Inter-Tribal collaboration. In accordance with the federal trust relationship that the U.S. holds with sovereign Tribal Governments, the eventual utilization of this living document will serve as a true recognition of Tribal Sovereignty and of the inherent rights Tribes' possess to engage in conservation and protection of how their homelands.

TWO LANDSCAPES: A SHARED STORY

In the past few years, many living landscapes like Bears Ears have lost their protection status. A landscape that holds a strong connection to Bears Ears is Grand-Staircase Escalante (GSE). The Bears Ears and GSE Monuments were reduced on the same day in 2017 by the current administration. GSE is extremely important to Native communities, including the Coalition Tribes, and it contains many unprotected cultural sites and objects. As we continue to fight for the original Bears Ears Monument to be re-established, it is important to remember that other regions share a story similar to ours; our causes are connected. In another instance, the Arctic Wildlife Refuge - an area of paramount importance to the Gwich’in and Iñupiat Indigenous communities - was opened to drilling. In seeking to heal the land, and so ourselves, we must look beyond the limits of modern day borders and seek to protect connected landscapes in their entirety.
KICKING OFF OUR 2020 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

We are excited to announce to you the beginning of our 2020 fundraising campaign! Amid the many challenges we all face during this time, our mission has not changed. We stand committed to our promise to protect the Bears Ears cultural region, so that it may become a place where we may be among our ancestors, connect with the land, and be healed. Given the current circumstances that have caused many of us to work through virtual platforms, we are taking advantage of this time to reconnect with our supporters - like you - through our many media platforms. Now until the end of the year, we will be expanding support to aid our five member Tribes in a number of projects, including building out our digital infrastructure in order to adapt to the changing needs for developing our Indigenous-informed land management plan for the 1.9 million-acre Bears Ears region.

After setting an initial goal of to raise $30,000 by the end of the year, we are humbled to announce that in the first few weeks of fundraising, we have received over **$12,000 in donations**! We would like to express our appreciation to those who have already contributed to this campaign and helped raise awareness to our organization’s cause. Your advocacy makes a difference and helps support our mission. We have received messages of solidarity from all over the nation; it is encouraging to see how the movement to protect Bears Ears for future generations remains strong, and continues to grow each and every year.

If you are unable to donate at this time but would like to contribute, please feel free to share this fundraiser with your community. We are appreciative of any and all support, especially during this difficult time.

To find out more information please visit: https://bearsearscoalition.org/donate-to-the-bears-ears-inter-tribal-coalition/
REOPENING OUR STORE

Our online shop is now officially open once again! We temporarily shut down our store in the Spring to revise our packing and shipping protocols given concerns surrounding COVID-19. This review was necessary to ensure the safety of our staff and supporters. We are excited to provide you access to Bears Ears gear with new shipping policies. We are releasing a limited collection of merchandise that include t-shirts, long-sleeves, and sticker packs. Visit our website today and get your items before they’re gone!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **September 1-5**: SLC Air Protectors are hosting an Indigenous Youth Prayer Run, in which 10 runners will complete a 330 mile relay run from Bears Ears to Warm Springs, Utah. Learn more about how you can support and join this virtual event by visiting their Facebook page.
- **September 5 (Labor Day Weekend)**: Utah Diné Bikeyah (UDB) is hosting their annual “Bears Ears Summer Gathering.” The event will be virtual this year.
- **September 30**: Deadline to submit 2020 Census
- **October 12**: Indigenous Peoples’ Day
- **November**: Native American Heritage Month
- **Tuesday, November 3**: U.S. Presidential Election. Find out more info at: vote.org

WANT MORE? STAY UPDATED!

Although we are working remotely to keep our staff and fellow associates of the five Coalition Tribes safe, we still have a lot going on! Stay in the loop on our latest posts and virtual activities by following us on social media and signing up for email updates.

- Instagram: @bearsearscoalition
- Twitter: @savebearsears
- Facebook: Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

Thank you - Elahkwa - Ahéhee’ - Tog’oik’ - Kwakwhay - Askwali