



Society of Vertebrate Paleontology

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THE SOCIETY OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY SUES THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FOR SHRINKING BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

McLean, Virginia. — The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) has joined a series of co-plaintiffs and is suing the Trump administration for shrinking Bears Ears National Monument. SVP is joined by Utah Diné Bikéyah; Archaeology Southwest; Conservation Lands Foundation, Inc.; Patagonia Works; The Access Fund; the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and A'Nuche, Inc. in this legal action.

The filing on September 2, 2026 comes after President Donald Trump's announcement on July 13, 2026 of the reduction of Bears Ears National Monument by approximately 91 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by approximately 90 percent. In total, nearly 3 million acres of land lost national monument protections in what became the largest cut to public lands protection in U.S. history. Our coordinated action is a continuation of that which SVP and its co-plaintiffs first lodged in 2017 when the President first shrank both monuments.

SVP, and its co-plaintiffs, assert that the President's proclamation reducing Bears Ears was illegal, and that the Antiquities Act gives a president the power to designate national monuments, not undo them.

SVP asserts that President Trump's actions violate fundamentally the foundation of Bears Ears' establishment of the Monument as President Obama sought to protect vital fossil resources and the cultural and sacred sites of the indigenous Tribes that trace their origins to Bears Ears.

Bears Ears is the first national monument created at the urging of paleontologists together with Tribal Nations, and before the proclamation, was the first national monument with a Tribal-led resource management plan. It is home to thousands paleontological sites and thousands of culturally significant and sacred sites where our Tribal Partners maintain connections to their ancestors.

SVP's history in the lands originally protected as Bears Ears National Monument goes back nearly 70 years, and numerous members of the Society currently conduct scientific fieldwork there. "The president's wholesale and thoughtless deprotection of Bears Ears shows a fundamental lack of understanding of its scientific and cultural significance and what it can teach us about the deep time history of our planet," said SVP president Stuart Sumida. "Further, it is profoundly insulting to our tribal partners and deeply disrespectful of their culture and history."

A remarkable 91% of western state voters say national monuments should retain existing boundaries. And, even in Utah, a traditionally conservative state, 75% of all voters say they want their elected representatives to prioritize conservation on public lands over energy production – the primary objective of the Trump proclamations. SVP joins Utahns and western state voters in

decrying the landgrab that undercuts science, insults indigenous Tribes, and ignores the will of the voting public.

“We need our elected representatives to stand up for the importance of science in the United States and around the world.” Sumida said. “In the United States we call on our elected representatives to codify the limitations on presidential abuse of the Antiquities Act and protect the public lands that belong to all Americans, and respect our indigenous groups that came long before the United States was even established as a country.”

About the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP)

SVP is the largest scientific organization of paleontologists in the world, with approximately 2,000 members from over 50 countries, working on every continent of the world. Among SVP's stated purposes is the advance of the science and understanding of vertebrate paleontology, and the protection of fossil resources worldwide. Members include a broad range of backgrounds, including professional paleontologists, artists, student, and youth members.