

Trump's Disregard for Public Lands and Outdoor Heritage: Releases Management Plan for Illegally Reduced Bears Ears National Monument in Utah

After Widespread Pushback, Trump Releases Management Plan After Historic and Illegal Reductions to Public Land Protections. Ignoring Courts and Public Outcry

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The Trump administration [released](#) a management plan for the illegally reduced areas of Bears Ears National Monument in Utah today. With Congressional recess right around the corner, the timed release of the proposed management plans and Final Environmental Impact Statement has been called into [question](#) by members of the House Natural Resources Committee. Trump's illegal reduction of Bears Ears is still being [challenged](#) in federal court.

“The release of this management plan days before Congress leaves for a month is dubious at best and reckless at worst. The Trump administration continues to prove its utter disregard of our public lands and outdoor heritage through its strong-armed attempts to illegally shrink this sacred and culturally-critical place. There is a lack of respect for the law, the courts, and the mass public concern that illegally shrinking Bears Ears has evoked. Stealing land away from the public in order to reward their special interest allies seems to be the only priority of this administration,” said **Chris Saeger, the Executive Director of the Western Values Project.**

On December 4, 2017, President Trump [announced](#) his plan to illegally reduce the size of Bears Ears National Monument, along with the Grand Staircase Escalante – the largest elimination of public land protections in American history. Since then, [conservation](#) groups and [tribes](#) have sued the administration, arguing that President Trump didn't have the authority to reduce the size of the monuments. Cases are still pending in federal court – making Trump's management plan announcement a move to undermine the court's decision-making authority.

Secretary of the Interior [David Bernhardt](#), a former mega-lobbyist for extractive industries, [strongly supported](#) the illegal reduction of the two national monuments. Previous [analysis](#) by the *New York Times* found that oil was central in the decision to shrink Bears Ears, despite then-Secretary Ryan Zinke's repeated claims that it was not. Previous Western Values Project [analysis](#) has documented that many of the areas taken out of Bears Ears National Monument are rich in oil, gas and uranium reserves.

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