

The News Review

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Is it Time to “Dumb Down”
Your Electronics? Pg. 7



Forecast
High 34 / Low 20
Cloudy

Land Use Dispute Continues to Stir Controversy

In December of last year, then-president Barack Obama created the 1.3 Million-acre Bears Ears National Monument in a barren patch of southern Utah.

His executive order triggered reactions of joy and outrage from more than just the expected corners. Like other recent political debates, the topic of public land use has drawn criticism from many sides, locally and nationally. Complaints of hijacking and non-representation can be heard on both ends of the political spectrum, from the Governor's office all the way down to local hiking meetups.

Years before Obama's declaration under the Antiquities Act, the Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition met with Utah representatives to negotiate a land protection deal. That deal, according to Utah Representative Jason Chaffetz, represented a balanced solution which, he told Fox News, the President destroyed when he “cherry picked provisions of the Public Lands Initiative and disregarded the economic development.” In the same article, Utah Attorney Sean Reyes said his office is planning a lawsuit over the president's creation of the monument.

However, conservationist Terry Tempest Williams calls the Republican cry against the “midnight monument” dishonest. In her December 20 Salt Lake Tribune Op-ed, she points out that the Intertribal Coalition submitted their monument proposal to President Obama after years of unsuccessful negotiation with local leaders. In spite of what she calls extensive local support and cooperation from conservation groups, Williams claims Republicans Bishop and Chaffetz “ceased all pretense of collaboration” in late 2014.

But the backlash has extended beyond just politicians. Pro-conservation corporate leaders from REI, Black Diamond, and Patagonia began speaking out against the Republican plan to have President Trump rescind the monument's creation. In January, Patagonia

founder, Yvon Chouinard's issued an open letter to Governor Herbert expressing his disbelief that an area so enriched by outdoor industries wouldn't “bend over backwards to make us feel welcome.”

“We do not support any movement to convert our sacred lands to a monument that will ultimately be controlled by bureaucrats unfamiliar with our history and traditional ways.”

— Rebecca M. Benally

But that letter, and other appeals from corporations did not yield the desired results. After a February call with Governor Herbert, Emerald Expositions, the company that owns the Outdoor Retailer show announced it would no longer be returning to Utah because of a lack of local support for conservation. During the call, executives from Emerald and Patagonia asked Herbert to offer some show of support for the Monument to satisfy their retailers. Ultimately Herbert declined, saying, “If you're giving me an ultimatum here on the phone, then the answer is, I guess, we're going to have to part ways.”

The Outdoor Retailer show is estimated to contribute about \$45 million dollars to the Utah economy, but Herbert's office later called Emerald's decision “offensive” and said it reflected “gross ingratitude.”

In San Juan County, locals who live near Bear's Ears have a far different perspective than the Emerald executives. The decision to create a monument means the removal of their local control. Residents could be denied access or charged for access to lands they've historically

enjoyed without federal oversight. Rebecca M Benally, San Juan County's Commissioner wrote in an April 2016 Op-ed, “We do not support any movement to convert our sacred lands to a monument that will ultimately be controlled by bureaucrats unfamiliar with our history and traditional ways.” Though Benally is a Navajo, she believes groups like the Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition are “deep pocketed environmental groups” that don't represent locals.

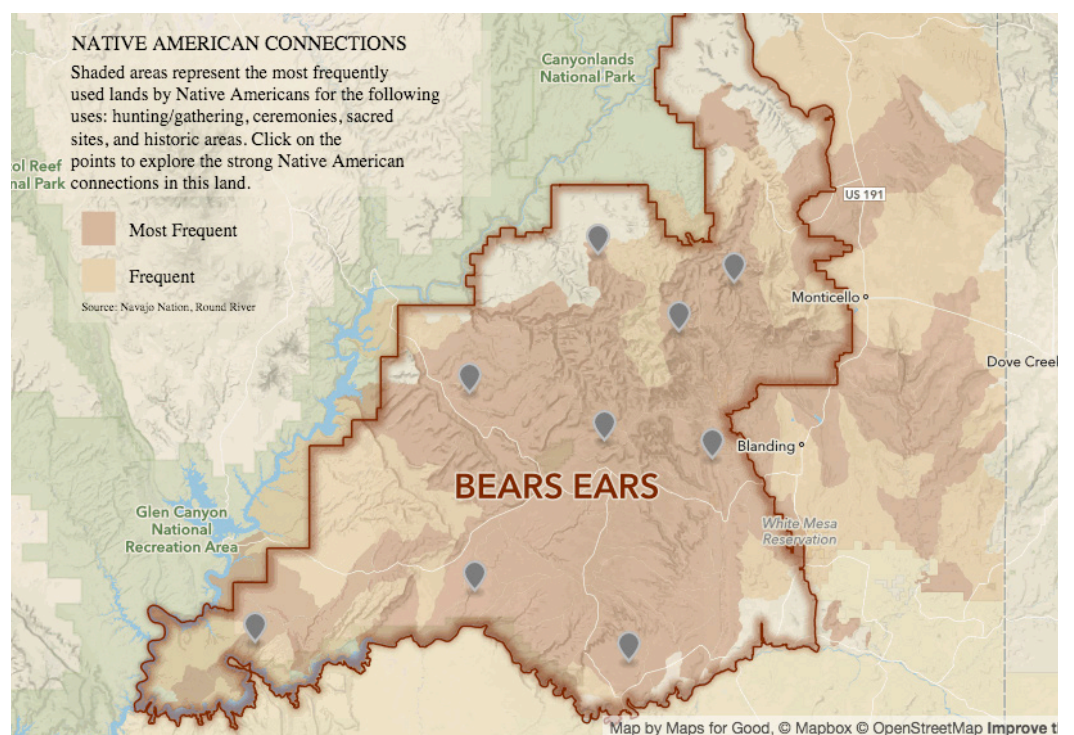
Watching the public argument over Bears Ears has also inspired some unlikely citizens to step into the political realm—if only to let their voices be heard. Marcus Jaeger, a Salt Lake area outdoorsman and web designer, attended the February Senate panel hearing on the rescission bill. It was his first time at the Capitol, and he says he found the experience disheartening. “Before the hearing, Jaeger was surprised to see Senate committee members joke and visit with the three anti-monument speakers that represented private interest groups. His surprise turned to anger when Senate Chairwoman Margaret Dayton, R-Orem, opened the proceed-

While the Salt Lake Tribune reported over 300 people attended the hearing, mostly in support of the monument, the Senate committee terminated public comments thirty minutes early and voted 5-2 to send the resolution to the Senate floor. Jaeger describes his experience at the hearing as maddening but says, “It opened my eyes to how little the local politicians care about representing their constituents.”

“Utah's politicians absolutely do not represent the people.”

— Marcus Jaeger

The fate of the Bears Ears Monument remains an open question, and the sting of the loss of Outdoor Retailer won't hit local businesses until next year. But for Jaeger, Bears Ears was a wake-up call to take more political action about the issues important to him. Since that evening, he's reached out to several conservation groups to volunteer his time and talents. Most importantly, he says, he plans to attend more Senate hearings in future.



ings with a threat to remove anyone in the crowd who wasn't quiet. But, “No one had been rowdy,” Yager says. “They just treated us like school children.”

The full audio recording of Governor Herbert's call with Outdoor Retailer executives can be heard [here](#).