



For America's Heritage

## Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

June 15, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

On behalf of the Arizona Chapter of the Public Lands Foundation, I am writing you concerning the Presidential Executive Order on the Review of Designations under the Antiquities Act issued on April 26, 2017. These reviews are to address whether the sizes and classification of the designated lands meet the requirements and original objectives of the Antiquities Act; how these designations have affected land uses in the context of multiple use management under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act; and related concerns of State, local, and tribal governments in regard to economic development and other matters.

The Public Lands Foundation (PLF) is a non-profit national organization that advocates for the retention of public lands in public hands, professionally and sustainably managed for responsible common use and enjoyment. The PLF supports the use of the Antiquities Act by Presidents in the past, and in the future, to help conserve and manage valuable natural and cultural resources on the public lands, including the establishment of National Monuments. Our PLF chapter strongly supports the continued existence, current boundaries, and effective management of the four National Monuments in Arizona identified for review that include public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These are the Grand Canyon-Parashant, Vermilion Cliffs, Sonoran Desert, and Ironwood Forest National Monuments.

These diverse areas encompass important natural and cultural resources having exceptional scientific, environmental, cultural, scenic, and economic values that are well worthy of special protection and focused management. These values are interconnected within natural and cultural landscapes that benefit from a landscape-scale approach to resource management. We believe the National Monuments in Arizona unquestionably meet the requirements and original objectives of the Antiquities Act.

Prior to being established as National Monuments, many of these important resources, such as prehistoric archaeological sites, were being damaged or destroyed by vandalism and other activities. Monument status has enhanced the BLM's efforts to protect, manage, and study these areas and has also generated public partnerships and support from nearby communities. In the 16 or more years since their designations, new information has only served to reinforce the status of the National Monuments as treasured areas within Arizona that continue to merit special management attention.



At the same time, the Monuments have retained many aspects of multiple use, allowing for continued hunting, other recreational activities, livestock grazing, maintenance of existing pipelines and transmission lines, and other activities. These areas are largely lacking in oil, gas, or coal reserves and are outside the locations determined by the BLM to be most suitable for the development of renewable energy facilities.

Monument designations prompted the creation of new public-private partnerships with non-profit organizations, universities and museums, and community organizations. These partnerships have supported significant scientific studies and provided opportunities for the public and local communities to contribute through volunteer service. Non-profit organizations created to support and advocate for the Monuments include Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument, Friends of the Ironwood Forest, and Friends of the Cliffs.

Nearby communities have reaped social and economic benefits through recreation and heritage tourism, as an increased number of visitors to the National Monuments have patronized local businesses. Such economic benefits reflect, in part, the BLM's policy to locate visitor contact stations and interpretive exhibits in adjacent communities, rather than in the Monuments themselves.

Since their designations, the National Monuments in Arizona have become integrated into the social and economic fabric of local communities. These areas are administered by the BLM under Resource Management Plans that were developed with considerable public input and participation. In addition, the Monuments are within the traditional cultural areas of at least 20 federally recognized Indian tribes, who have expressed strong support for the protection of natural, cultural, and traditional values of these areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of National Monument designations. We are proud to support the existence of the four Arizona units identified for review in their current configurations, as well as the provision of adequate staff and resources to effectively protect and manage these national treasures for the benefit of the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Beau McClure". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Beau McClure, President, Arizona Chapter