

BLM And The Forest Service Shoved Through Monument Reduction Plans To Further Oil And Gas Development In National Monuments

Recourse Management Plans Flew Through BLM And USFS As The Trump Administration Seeks To Codify The Nation's Largest Reduction In Federal Lands Protection

Interior Slashed Millions Of Acres From Bears Ears And Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments As The Trump Administration Enacted The Largest Reduction Of Federal Land Protection In The Nation's History.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke Oversaw “The Largest Reduction Of Federal Protection In The Nation's History, Including An Effort To Slash The Size Of Bears Ears Monument.” Since he has been Secretary of the Interior, Zinke “has torn up Obama-era rules related to oil, gas and mineral extraction and overseen the largest reduction of federal land protection in the nation's history, including an effort to slash the size of Bears Ears National Monument.” [*New York Times*, [04/16/18](#)]

The Trump Administration Reduced Bears Ears National Monument By 85 Percent And Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument By 50 Percent. “In a speech delivered in Salt Lake City on December 4, President Trump announced his intention to sharply reduce two Utah national monuments established by his predecessors. In a move presaged by leaked government documents, Trump announced that he would reduce the 1.35-million acre Bears Ears National Monument, created by President Barack Obama in late 2016, by 85 percent. The president also said he would cut the 1.88-million acre Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, designated by President Bill Clinton in 1996, nearly in half.” [*National Geographic*, [02/02/18](#)]

On February 20, 2020, The Bureau Of Land Management And Forest Service Published A Record Of Decision Approving A New Management Plan For Certain National Monuments. “The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Canyon Country District Office and United States Forest Service (USFS) Manti-La Sal National Forest announce the availability of the Records of Decision (RODs) for the Approved Monument Management Plans (MMPs) for the Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) Indian Creek and Shash Jáa Units.” [Federal Register, 85 FR 9800, [02/20/20](#)]

Oil And Gas Industries Were “Central” To The Slashing Of The Monuments' Land Protections.

Industry's “Potential For Oil And Gas Exploration” At Bears Ears National Monument Was “Central” To The Trump Administration's Slashing Of Monument's Public Land Protections. “Even before President Trump officially opened his high-profile review last spring of federal lands protected as national monuments, the Department of Interior was focused on the potential for oil and gas exploration at a protected Utah site, internal agency documents show [...] The internal Interior Department emails and memos also show the central role that concerns over gaining access to coal reserves played in the decision by the Trump

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administration to shrink the size of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by about 47 percent, to just over 1 million acres." [*New York Times*, [03/02/18](#)]

A Uranium Lobbyist With A Client In The Bears Ears Region Lobbied The Administration To Reduce The Monument. Then He Became EPA Administrator.

The Trump administration's nominee for Deputy Administrator of the EPA is Andrew Wheeler, a lobbyist for the Canadian uranium company that opposes Bears Ears National Monument. Wheeler also advised the Trump campaign on energy issues. President Trump nominated Andrew Wheeler, a lobbyist at Faeger Baker Daniels, for the position of position Deputy Administrator of the EPA on October 5, 2017. [*New York Times*, [10/5/17](#)]

- **Andrew Wheeler also served the Trump campaign as an "energy advisor."** [*Politico*, [09/12/16](#)]
- **Andrew Wheeler was registered to lobby for the uranium company Energy Fuels in the first and second quarters of 2017.** [Senate Lobbying Report for Energy Fuels Resources, Inc., [07/20/17](#)]
- **Energy Fuels is a Canadian uranium mining and milling company with its head office in Toronto and US subsidiaries based in Lakewood, Colorado.** ["Energy Fuels 10-K," US Securities and Exchange Commission, [12/31/16](#)]

Energy Fuels has substantial business interest around Bears Ears. It owns an inactive uranium mine bordering the monument's western edge, and plans to truck uranium ore through the monument to its uranium processing mill near the monument's eastern edge once the price of uranium is high enough for that process to become profitable. EFI controls the uranium business around Bears Ears National Monument and plans to truck uranium ore across the monument, making it a "relevant stakeholder" under Trump's executive order for Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review national monuments. [*The Denver Post*, [04/06/17](#); and *E&E*, [09/08/16](#)]

- **EFIs Has A Mill And A Mine In The Bears Ears Region. They Want To Grow Their Mine By 10 Times.** Energy Fuels owns the White Mesa uranium mill, which processes uranium near Bears Ears National Monument. The company is trying to enlarge its nearby Daneros Mine to more than 10 times its current size, even though the current low price of uranium is keeping the mine inactive. [*Deseret News*, [07/05/16](#); and Energy Fuels, accessed [10/05/17](#)]

Energy Fuels opposes Bears Ears National Monument because of unfounded concerns that the monument may "adversely impact" its business and "threatens the existence" of its uranium processing mill. Energy Fuels said Bears Ears National Monument "could significantly adversely impact any of our material projects and could have a material adverse impact on the Company." ["[Energy Fuels 10-K](#)," US Securities and Exchange Commission, [12/31/16](#)]

Utah Legislators Echoed EFI's Complaint In A Letter To Secretary Zinke. The Commission for the Stewardship of Public Lands, a Utah legislative committee which supports transferring federal lands to states, opposes Bears Ears National Monument in part because the commission's members believe the monument "threatens the existence" of Energy Fuels's White Mesa Mill. [Utah Commission for the Stewardship of Public Lands, [05/25/17](#)]

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Half of the material processed at Energy Fuels's White Mesa Mill is not mined uranium ore, but "alternative feed materials," which include waste material that the company obtains from superfund sites. The White Mesa Mill has license amendments that allow it to process waste from several Superfund sites, including the Midnite Mine in Washington State and "contaminated soil from a Superfund site in Maywood, NJ." [*Salt Lake Tribune*, [02/01/14](#); and *The Daily Herald*, [03/20/04](#)]

In 2015 and 2016, 47 percent of uranium processed at the White Mesa Mill originated from alternate feed materials. [US Securities and Exchange Commission, [12/31/16](#)]

Andrew Wheeler has been nominated for the number two position at EPA, which has regulatory authority of the dangerous waste storage ponds at the White Mesa Mill. Currently, EPA is reconsidering an Obama-era rule that set health and environmental standards for uranium mill waste ponds, which can pose a threat to drinking water. In January 2017, EPA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking to "re-propose" a 2015 regulation that established safety standards for "protection of the public health, safety, and environment from radiological and non-radiological hazards associated with uranium and thorium ore processing, and their associated wastes." The new, 2017 proposal would loosen the 2015 standards, eliminating the long-term monitoring provision and "dropping gross alpha particle activity from the list of constituent concentration standards." The deadline for public comment on the rule is October 16, 2017. [EPA, [01/01/17](#)]

Local Tribes Say EFI's Mill Threatens Their Water Supply. The White Mesa Community of the Ute Mountain Ute tribe has protested the White Mesa Mill's handling of its tailing ponds, claiming that the 37-year-old, 30mm-thick PVC liner that separates the hazardous uranium waste from the Navajo Aquifer threatens the tribe's drinking water because it has "documented leaks." [*Four Corners Free Press*, [07/12/17](#)]

The Reductions Were Overseen By A Coal Executive's Daughter. Now She Works For BP.

The Monument Reductions Were Overseen By The Daughter Of A Former Executive Of Coal Giant Peabody Energy. "This month, on the recommendation of his Interior secretary, President Donald Trump gutted a pair of protected national monuments in Utah, including coal-rich Grand Staircase-Escalante. The decision followed the controversial review of more than two dozen national monuments — a process that public records reveal to have been overseen by the daughter of Frederick Palmer, the former executive of coal giant Peabody Energy and a current senior fellow at the conservative Heartland Institute." [Huffington Post, [12/23/17](#)]

- **Palmer's Daughter Is Downey Magallanes Who Served As Then-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's Deputy Chief Of Staff For Policy.** Downey Magallanes, Palmer's daughter, is a 2012 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center who worked for seven years as a staffer for Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and now serves as Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's deputy chief of staff for policy. Magallanes was at Zinke's side throughout his months-long monuments review. And her personal calendar shows she had several one-on-one meetings with Zinke to discuss the review in the days before Aug. 24, when Zinke submitted his draft report to the White House." [Huffington Post, [12/23/17](#)]

Magallanes Would Leave Interior To Work For BP. "Downey Magallanes, a Department of Interior official who oversaw the Trump administration's push to shrink two national monuments in Utah last year, has reportedly left the agency and will be working for BP as part of its government affairs team." [*The Hill*, [08/28/18](#)]