

NEWS RELEASE- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UTE INDIAN TRIBE PRAISES PROTECTION OF BEARS EARS SACRED LANDSCAPE

Ft. Duchesne, UT —December 28, 2016.

Today, the Ute Indian Tribe's Business Committee celebrates the designation of the Bears Ears National Monument as an important step forward in the protection of shared cultural heritage and Tribal sovereignty.

“President Obama has demonstrated today that our Native American heritage cannot be ignored. This national monument is the right solution at the right time, and we are pleased that the President has taken this step to ensure Bears Ears will remain in as pristine a condition as possible for generations to come,” said Shaun Chapoose, Chairman of the Ute Business Committee.

Our history and our future - our Ute identity - is inextricably tied to this place. The Bear Ears sacred landscape sustains our way of life and our cultural practices. The President's National Monument designation protects not only traditional activities like collecting medicine and performing ceremonies, it protects this land from looting, indiscriminate off-road use and destructive mineral development. As recreational use of these lands increases, it is vital that visitors understand and respect our history so that we may all continue to use and enjoy these lands together.

“The President's action came in response to government-to-government discussions that honored the trust relationship between the Federal Government and Indian Country,” said Tony Small, Uncompahgre Band Representative, Ute Indian Tribe. “The plan for collaborative management of Bears Ears by the tribes and the federal government is a bold step forward, and it respects the unique connection that our people have with the land.”

With the Bears Ears National Monument designation, Public Law 5780 - The Public Land Indicative (PLI) introduced by Utah Congressman Jason Chaffets and Utah Congressman Rob Bishop will temporarily be derailed. The PLI would have taken some 100,000 acres of the Ute Indian Tribes Uncompahgre Reservation land and turn it over to the State of Utah. An additional 200,000–300,000 acres of reservation land would have been impacted by the PLI. To be reintroduced the PLI will have to go through some major changes, hopefully the Ute Indian Tribe will be included in these negotiations.

The Ute Indian Tribe is grateful to President Obama for his action today to permanently protect Bears Ears.