



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Four Corners States Regional Office

July 10, 2006

Delivered via electronic mail and overnight mail

Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
Room 8H-033
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Re: Comments on Preliminary Map of Potential Energy Corridors - Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept and fully consider these comments on behalf of The Wilderness Society. The Wilderness Society, founded in 1935, strives to deliver to future generations an unspoiled legacy of wild places. Our 250,000 members nationwide care deeply about the management of our public lands, and we appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments to the Department of Energy, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and their cooperating agencies.

My position at The Wilderness Society is to track and affect planning and management decisions at Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands that are part of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). In particular, we are concerned about preserving the special values of the new National Monuments across the Four Corners States. These Monuments are some of the best examples of "Where the West Stays Wild," and were established to preserve entire ecological, cultural, geological, and scenic landscapes. Therefore, these comments deal specifically with the proposed energy corridors that appear to affect the BLM National Monuments in Arizona and Utah. These lands are not the only areas where we have concerns, but these concerns will be addressed by The Wilderness Society and our partners under separate cover.

We submit these comments to express our specific concerns about the maps provided, and the values that could be harmed by designating an energy corridor near or within the borders of these National Monuments. The National Monuments managed by the BLM in Arizona and Utah include:

- Agua Fria (AZ);

- Grand Canyon-Parashant (AZ);
- Grand Staircase-Escalante (UT);
- Ironwood Forest (AZ);
- Sonoran Desert (AZ); and
- Vermilion Cliffs (AZ)

Our comments regarding these special public lands follow:

(1) Map scale and data do not provide sufficient information to adequately assess the effect on National Monuments

The scale and lack of data on the Preliminary Draft Maps of Potential Energy Corridors are inadequate for the public to accurately assess the exact location and effect area of the proposed corridors on the BLM National Monuments. While the June 2006 versions of the maps do identify major highways, there is little other locational information. We recommend that the next version of these preliminary maps include the Monument boundaries, and are at a sufficient scale to accurately assess the full width of the proposed corridors on various land ownership boundaries, including the Monument boundaries. Other comments from The Wilderness Society include a detailed list of information that should be made available on the maps. The agencies could use online tools and mapping technology to make this data available. To share an example, I am attaching a recent BLM map that covers a similar area as this study, but includes more locational information that better enables the public to adequately assess the impact of the proposed corridors on the ground (see attachment 1 on CD, Western Utility Group Priority Corridors with Land Use Plans, December 2002).

In addition, the maps should include other data layers that will help inform the public and make us better able to provide informed comment. Specifically, we recommend:

- The maps include the location of existing major infrastructure (and indicate the type and scale of the infrastructure), existing designated energy corridors, and other corridors under consideration. For example, in Arizona there are several major corridors being considered under different processes that will also likely affect the Monuments, including the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 Transmission Line Project (Draft EIR/EIS online at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/dpv2/dpv2.htm>).
- The maps include an explanation for the reason a particular corridor is being proposed, including for what purpose (e.g. transmitting electricity from a particular power plant to a particular market) and the width and type of corridor proposed (e.g. gas, electricity, etc). This information will help the public better understand the reason behind the location of the corridor, as well as the better understand any associated impacts, which will encourage more informed and helpful public comment.

(2) The special values at four of the National Monuments could be substantially affected by the Potential Energy Corridors

Based on the Preliminary Draft Maps of Potential Energy Corridors, it appears that Agua Fria, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Sonoran Desert, and Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments are affected. These four National Monuments were established by Presidential Proclamations issued between 1996 and 2001 under the Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorizes the President to designate National Monument status for areas possessing significant historical, scenic, and/or scientific values. The Proclamations for these Monuments identify the significant resources that merit National Monument status and call for their protection. Referred to as “objects of interest,” these resources include the landscapes of these areas, as well as numerous sensitive species, and many archaeological, geological, historic, cultural, and scenic attributes.

The Proclamations clearly state that the Monuments are created “for the purpose of protecting the objects identified above,” that “the national monument shall be the dominant reservation.” To accomplish this purpose, the Proclamation establishes specific management requirements, including prohibiting all off-road use of motorized and mechanized vehicles (except for emergency or administrative purposes) and withdrawing the Monument lands from mineral leasing and mining (subject to valid existing rights).

Pursuant to the legal authority granted by Congress in the Antiquities Act, the President designated these National Monuments for the explicit purpose of protecting and preserving identified historic and scientific objects. Accordingly, standard multiple-use principles do not apply to these Monuments, and any effort to adopt such a management approach to the detriment of historic values would be in violation of the Presidential Proclamation and the mandates of FLPMA. BLM must manage the Monuments for the protection and preservation of historic and scientific values, and only allow multiple-uses when those uses do not conflict with the directives of the Proclamations.

Several recent administrative and district court decisions reiterate BLM’s special legal obligation in managing national monuments, and the importance of the Presidential Proclamation’s designation of a national monument through the authority granted by the Antiquities Act. In an August 31, 2005 decision, Judge Sweitzer affirmed the decision by BLM to deny a request to graze cattle on lands acquired by the BLM and then encompassed in the area of the Monument designation. In this case, the Administrative Law Judge recognized that even though the Proclamation did not prohibit grazing, “to the extent BLM reasonably found that grazing would negatively impact objects of interest . . . , its decision to deny the grazing applications was in accordance with 43 C.F.R. 4100.0-8 [permitting grazing in land use plans].” *Id.* at __. This decision clearly states: “After the Monument was established, BLM’s primary responsibility was to manage the land within the Monument so that the objects of interest identified by the Proclamation were protected” (emphasis added).

Further, the ALJ concluded that [emphasis added]:

"After the Monument was established, BLM's primary responsibility was to manage the land within the Monument so that the objects of interest identified by the Proclamation were protected."

"Even though the Proclamation did not ban grazing on the Box O land, it still required BLM to protect the objects of interest, as identified in the Proclamation, which were present on the Box O land. Furthermore, nothing in the Proclamation requires grazing on Box O land. Accordingly, to the extent BLM reasonably found that grazing would negatively impact objects of interest . . . , its decision to deny the grazing applications was in accordance with 43 C.F.R. 4100.0-8 [permitting grazing in land use plans]."

"I agree with BLM that the multiple use mandate does not require every tract of public land to be managed for every possible use."

"More to the point, the issuance of the Proclamation, which was done in accordance with the Antiquities Act, means that the lands are no longer to be managed on a multiple use basis. . . Instead, the lands within the Monument are now to be managed primarily for the protection of the objects of interest identified in the Proclamation. Mr. Drehbol [Monument Manager] properly focused on the Proclamation, rather than the FLPMA multiple-use provisions, when he issued the grazing decisions."

This recognition of the important difference in priorities associated with management of Monument lands was echoed in a recent decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana. In confirming the potential need to increase bonding requirement on a pre-existing pipeline in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, the court focused on the fact that the new management plan prepared for the National Monument differed from the previous plan for the resource area, because it was based on study and acknowledgment of the "unique natural values of the area." Montana Wilderness Association v. Fry, 408 F.Supp. 2d 1032 (D.Mont. 2006).

Depending on their type and scale, the proposed energy corridors could substantially impact the "objects of interest" in these Monuments, which would be in opposition to their purpose. I am enclosing copies of the four Proclamations for your review of the many special values that merited Monument designation, and that the agencies are thereby required to preserve.

In Arizona and Utah, we have specific concerns about the proposed corridors affecting the following National Monuments:

- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument:** A proposed corridor appears to run along Johnson Canyon Road. This is rural road that does have some associated infrastructure, however the major utility infrastructure that could arrive with a energy corridor considered through this PEIS could substantially change the character of this backcountry route. A key phrase in the Proclamation describes the Monument as a "high, rugged, and remote region, where bold plateaus and multi-hued cliffs run for distances

that defy human perspective.” These high visual qualities (among many others) could be negatively impacted by substantial above-ground infrastructure.

- **Agua Fria National Monument**: A proposed corridor runs along I-17 and the western border of the Monument, however, it is unclear whether a portion of the corridor will overlap with the Monument boundaries. Again, substantial ground disturbance and infrastructure along these lands would be damaging to the scenic and cultural integrity of the site. This region is dense with prehistoric archaeological sites, as well as sensitive wildlife such as pronghorn. Any infrastructure should avoid disturbing these sensitive resources, as well as the cultural and scenic landscape where they exist. The proclamation describes: “the ancient ruins within the Monument, with their breathtaking vistas and spectacular petroglyphs, provide a link to the past, offering insights into the lives of the peoples who once inhabited this part of the desert southwest.” The visual intrusion of modern infrastructure would irrevocably harm this landscape, and ground disturbance could damage important cultural sites.
- **Sonoran Desert National Monument**: A proposed corridor runs along I-8 through the Monument, where I-8 currently provides a rare uninterrupted vista of the sonoran desert and its awe-inspiring saguaro forest for well over 20 miles. The infrastructure associated with a utility corridor would irreparably damage this visual experience, which the proclamation refers to as: “Individual saguaro plants are indeed magnificent, but a forest of these plants, together with the wide variety of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants that make up the forest community, is an impressive site to behold. The saguaro cactus forests within the monument are a national treasure, rivaling those within the Saguaro National Park.”
- **Vermilion Cliffs National Monument**: Although no proposed corridors appear to enter the Monument, there is one that runs to the north and northwest and could substantially impact the delicate ecology of this area, which is part of the greater Grand Canyon ecosystem. This corridor interrupts a critical migration route that was identified by the Arizona Game and Fish Department as critical for mule deer that migrate between southern Utah (Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument) and northern Arizona’s Kaibab Plateau.¹ The mule deer in this region are known for their trophy size and status.

We recommend that you prepare another map with sufficient detail, and release it for a second more-informed public comment period, before moving on to design a range of alternatives.

We appreciate this opportunity to share the Wilderness Society’s concerns about how these corridors could impact the BLM National Monuments in Arizona and Utah. We recognize that long-term planning for energy transmission will conserve resources in the long run, and believe that by sharing information freely, we can ensure that this occurs while protecting the many values of our public lands. Please add me to your public notification list as this process

¹ Carrel, William K., Richard A. Ockenfels, and Raymond E. Schweinsburg. 1999. An Evaluation of Annual Migration Patterns of the Paunsaugunt Mule Deer Herd Between Utah and Arizona. *Arizona Game and Fish Department Technical Report 29*. Phoenix. 44 pages

continues, and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Ozarski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "O".

Jill Ozarski
Colorado Plateau Monuments Coordinator

Attachments:

- (1) CD, Map of Western Utility Group Priority Corridors with Land Use Plans, December 2002

- (2) Presidential Proclamations designating:
 - Agua Fria National Monument
 - Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
 - Sonoran Desert National Monument
 - Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

Western Utility Group Priority Corridors With Land Use Plans

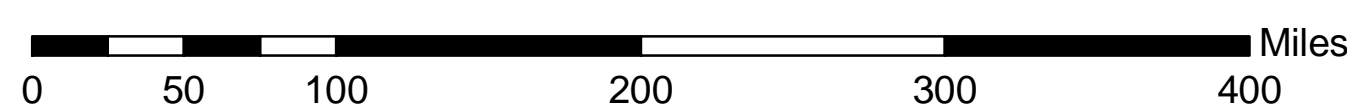


<p>U.S. Presidential Permits, Electricity (Estimated Locations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transmission lines greater than or equal to 69 KV ● Transmission lines less than 69 KV <p>Priority Level of Corridor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Priority 1: One to three years — Priority 2: Three to five years — Priority 3: Five to ten years <p>— Agency-designated Corridors</p> <p>— Existing Corridors (Western Regional Corridor Study)</p> <p>— Plan Boundaries</p> <p>— Western United States Boundaries</p>	<p>Planning/NEPA Effort Fiscal Year 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Plan (Fiscal Year 2001) ■ NCA/Monument (Fiscal Year 2001) ■ Plan Amendment (Fiscal Year 2001) <p>Planning/NEPA Effort Fiscal Year 2002</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Plan (Fiscal Year 2002) ■ NCA/Monument (Fiscal Year 2002) ■ Plan Amendment (Fiscal Year 2002) <p>Planning/NEPA Effort Fiscal Year 2003</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Plan (Fiscal Year 2003) ■ NCA/Monument (Fiscal Year 2003)
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No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data, for purposes not intended by the BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notice.

Map date: December 18, 2002

Scale 1:4,000,000



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
5001 Southgate Drive
P.O. Box 36800
Billings, MT 59107-6800
(406) 896-5319



Map prepared by the BLM Idaho State Office, Branch of Engineering and Geographic Sciences

~~Appendix A~~

Agua Fria National Monument Proclamation

Procl. 7263

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary (Grand Canyon, Arizona)

For Immediate Release, January 11, 2000

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AGUA FRIA NATIONAL MONUMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The windswept, grassy mesas and formidable canyons of Agua Fria National Monument embrace an extraordinary array of scientific and historic resources. The ancient ruins within the monument, with their breathtaking vistas and spectacular petroglyphs, provide a link to the past, offering insights into the lives of the peoples who once inhabited this part of the desert Southwest. The area's architectural features and artifacts are tangible objects that can help researchers reconstruct the human past. Such objects and, more importantly, the spatial relationships among them, provide outstanding opportunities for archeologists to study the way humans interacted with one another, neighboring groups, and with the environment that sustained them in prehistoric times.

The monument contains one of the most significant systems of late prehistoric sites in the American Southwest. Between A.D. 1250 and 1450, its pueblo communities were populated by up to several thousand people. During this time, many dwelling locations in the Southwest were abandoned and groups became aggregated in a relatively small number of densely populated areas. The monument encompasses one of the best examples of these areas, containing important archeological evidence that is crucial to understanding the cultural, social, and economic processes that accompanied this period of significant change.

At least 450 prehistoric sites are known to exist within the monument and there are likely many more. There are at least four major settlements within the area, including Pueblo La Plata, Pueblo Pato, the Baby Canyon Ruin group, and the Lousy Canyon group. These consist of clusters of stone-masonry pueblos, some containing at least 100 rooms. These settlements are typically situated at the edges of steep canyons, and offer a panorama of ruins, distinctive rock art panels, and visually spectacular settings.

Many intact petroglyph sites within the monument contain rock art symbols pecked into the surfaces of boulders and cliff faces. The sites range from single designs on boulders to cliffs covered with hundreds of geometric and abstract symbols. Some of the most impressive sites are associated with major pueblos, such as Pueblo Pato.

The monument holds an extraordinary record of prehistoric agricultural features, including extensive terraces bounded by lines of rocks and other types of landscape modifications. The agricultural areas, as well as other sites, reflect the skills of ancient residents at producing and obtaining food supplies sufficient to sustain a population of several thousand people.

The monument also contains historic sites representing early Anglo-American history through the 19th century, including remnants of Basque sheep camps, historic mining features, and military activities.

In addition to its rich record of human history, the monument contains other objects of scientific interest. This expansive mosaic of semi-desert grassland, cut by ribbons of valuable riparian forest, is an outstanding biological resource. The diversity of vegetative communities, topographical features, and relative availability of water provide habitat for a wide array of sensitive wildlife species, including the lowland leopard frog, the Mexican garter snake, the common black hawk, and the desert tortoise. Other wildlife is abundant and diverse, including pronghorn, mule deer, and white-tail deer. Javelina, mountain lions, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and neotropical migratory birds also inhabit the area. Elk and black bear are present, but less abundant. Four species of native fish, including the longfin dace, the Gila mountain sucker, the Gila chub, and the speckled dace, exist in the Agua Fria River and its tributaries.

Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

WHEREAS it appears that it would be in the public interest to reserve such lands as a national monument to be known as the Agua Fria National Monument:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431), do proclaim that there are hereby set apart and reserved as the Agua Fria National Monument, for the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the map entitled "Agua Fria National Monument" attached to and forming a part of this proclamation. The Federal land and interests in land reserved consist of approximately 71,100 acres, which is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

For the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road will be prohibited, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Arizona with respect to fish and wildlife management.

The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights.

All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws, including but not limited to withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument. Lands and interests in lands within the proposed monument not owned by the United States shall be reserved as a part of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States.

There is hereby reserved, as of the date of this proclamation and subject to valid existing rights, a quantity of water sufficient to fulfill the purposes for which this monument is established. Nothing in this reservation shall be construed as a relinquishment or reduction of any water use or rights reserved or appropriated by the United States on or before the date of this proclamation.

The Secretary of the Interior shall manage the monument through the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to applicable legal authorities, to implement the purposes of this proclamation.

Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to revoke any existing withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation; however, the national monument shall be the dominant reservation.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Establishment of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by the President of the United States of America
September 18, 1996
A PROCLAMATION

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's vast and austere landscape embraces a spectacular array of scientific and historic resources. This high, rugged, and remote region, where bold plateaus and multi-hued cliffs run for distances that defy human perspective, was the last place in the continental United States to be mapped. Even today, this unspoiled natural area remains a frontier, a quality that greatly enhances the monument's value for scientific study. The monument has a long and dignified human history; it is a place where one can see how nature shapes human endeavors in the American West, where distance and aridity have been pitted against our dreams and courage. The monument presents exemplary opportunities for geologists, paleontologists, archeologists, historians, and biologists.

The monument is a geologic treasure of clearly exposed stratigraphy and structures. The sedimentary rock layers are relatively undeformed and unobscured by vegetation, offering a clear view to understanding the processes of the earth's formation. A wide variety of formations, some in brilliant colors, have been exposed by millennia of erosion. The monument contains significant portions of a vast geologic stairway, named the Grand Staircase by pioneering geologist Clarence Dutton, which rises 5,500 feet to the rim of Bryce Canyon in an unbroken sequence of great cliffs and plateaus. The monument includes the rugged canyon country of the upper Paria Canyon system, major components of the White and Vermilion Cliffs and associated benches, and the Kaiparowits Plateau. That Plateau encompasses about 1,600 square miles of sedimentary rock and consists of successive south-to-north ascending plateaus or benches, deeply cut by steep-walled canyons. Naturally burning coal seams have scorched the tops of the Burning Hills brick-red. Another prominent geological feature of the plateau is the East Kaibab Monocline, known as the Cockscomb. The monument also includes the spectacular Circle Cliffs and part of the Waterpocket Fold, the inclusion of which completes the protection of this geologic feature begun with the establishment of Capitol Reef National Monument in 1938 (Proclamation No. 2246, 50 Stat. 1856). The monument holds many arches and natural bridges, including the 130-foot-high Escalante Natural Bridge, with a 100 foot span, and Grosvenor Arch, a rare "double arch." The upper Escalante Canyons, in the northeastern reaches of the monument, are distinctive: in addition to several major arches and natural bridges, vivid geological features are laid bare in narrow, serpentine canyons, where erosion has exposed sandstone and shale deposits in shades of red, maroon, chocolate, tan, gray, and white. Such diverse objects make the monument outstanding for purposes of geologic study.

The monument includes world class paleontological sites. The Circle Cliffs reveal remarkable specimens of petrified wood, such as large unbroken logs exceeding 30 feet in length. The thickness, continuity and broad temporal distribution of the Kaiparowits Plateau's stratigraphy provide

significant opportunities to study the paleontology of the late Cretaceous Era. Extremely significant fossils, including marine and brackish water mollusks, turtles, crocodylians, lizards, dinosaurs, fishes, and mammals, have been recovered from the Dakota, Tropic Shale and Wahweap Formations, and the Tibbet Canyon, Smoky Hollow and John Henry members of the Straight Cliffs Formation. Within the monument, these formations have produced the only evidence in our hemisphere of terrestrial vertebrate fauna, including mammals, of the Cenomanian-Santonian ages. This sequence of rocks, including the overlying Wahweap and Kaiparowits formations, contains one of the best and most continuous records of Late Cretaceous terrestrial life in the world.

Archeological inventories carried out to date show extensive use of places within the monument by ancient Native American cultures. The area was a contact point for the Anasazi and Fremont cultures, and the evidence of this mingling provides a significant opportunity for archeological study. The cultural resources discovered so far in the monument are outstanding in their variety of cultural affiliation, type and distribution. Hundreds of recorded sites include rock art panels, occupation sites, campsites and granaries. Many more undocumented sites that exist within the monument are of significant scientific and historic value worthy of preservation for future study.

The monument is rich in human history. In addition to occupations by the Anasazi and Fremont cultures, the area has been used by modern tribal groups, including the Southern Paiute and Navajo. John Wesley Powell's expedition did initial mapping and scientific field work in the area in 1872. Early Mormon pioneers left many historic objects, including trails, inscriptions, ghost towns such as the Old Paria townsite, rock houses, and cowboy line camps, and built and traversed the renowned Hole-in-the-Rock Trail as part of their epic colonization efforts. Sixty miles of the Trail lie within the monument, as does Dance Hall Rock, used by intrepid Mormon pioneers and now a National Historic Site.

Spanning five life zones from low-lying desert to coniferous forest, with scarce and scattered water sources, the monument is an outstanding biological resource. Remoteness, limited travel corridors and low visitation have all helped to preserve intact the monument's important ecological values. The blending of warm and cold desert floras, along with the high number of endemic species, place this area in the heart of perhaps the richest floristic region in the Intermountain West. It contains an abundance of unique, isolated communities such as hanging gardens, tinajas, and rock crevice, canyon bottom, and dunal pocket communities, which have provided refugia for many ancient plant species for millennia. Geologic uplift with minimal deformation and subsequent downcutting by streams have exposed large expanses of a variety of geologic strata, each with unique

physical and chemical characteristics. These strata are the parent material for a spectacular array of unusual and diverse soils that support many different vegetative communities and numerous types of endemic plants and their pollinators. This presents an extraordinary opportunity to study plant speciation and community dynamics independent of climatic variables. The monument contains an extraordinary number of areas of relict vegetation, many of which have existed since the Pleistocene, where natural processes continue unaltered by man. These include relict grasslands, of which No Mans Mesa is an outstanding example, and pinon-juniper communities containing trees up to 1,400 years old. As witnesses to the past, these relict areas establish a baseline against which to measure changes in community dynamics and biogeochemical cycles in areas impacted by human activity. Most of the ecological communities contained in the monument have low resistance to, and slow recovery from, disturbance. Fragile cryptobiotic crusts, themselves of significant biological interest, play a critical role throughout the monument, stabilizing the highly erodible desert soils and providing nutrients to plants. An abundance of packrat middens provides insight into the vegetation and climate of the past 25,000 years and furnishes context for studies of evolution and climate change. The wildlife of the monument is characterized by a diversity of species. The monument varies greatly in elevation and topography and is in a climatic zone where northern and southern habitat species intermingle. Mountain lion, bear, and desert bighorn sheep roam the monument. Over 200 species of birds, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons, are found within the area. Wildlife, including neotropical birds, concentrate around the Paria and Escalante Rivers and other riparian corridors within the monument.

Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431), do proclaim that there are hereby set apart and reserved as the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, for the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the document entitled "Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument" attached to and forming a part of this proclamation. The Federal land and interests in land reserved

consist of approximately 1.7 million acres, which is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from entry, location, selection, sale, leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument. Lands and interests in lands not owned by the United States shall be reserved as a part of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States.

The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to diminish the responsibility and authority of the State of Utah for management of fish and wildlife, including regulation of hunting and fishing, on Federal lands within the monument.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to affect existing permits or leases for, or levels of, livestock grazing on Federal lands within the monument; existing grazing uses shall continue to be governed by applicable laws and regulations other than this proclamation.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to revoke any existing withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation; however, the national monument shall be the dominant reservation.

The Secretary of the Interior shall manage the monument through the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to applicable legal authorities, to implement the purposes of this proclamation. The Secretary of the Interior shall prepare, within 3 years of this date, a management plan for this monument, and shall promulgate such regulations for its management as he deems appropriate. This proclamation does not reserve water as a matter of Federal law. I direct the Secretary to address in the management plan the extent to which water is necessary for the proper care and management of the objects of this monument and the extent to which further action may be necessary pursuant to Federal or State law to assure the availability of water.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

Sonoran Desert National Monument Proclamation

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release, January 17, 2001
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SONORAN DESERT NATIONAL
MONUMENT
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Sonoran Desert National Monument is a magnificent example of untrammelled Sonoran desert landscape. The area encompasses a functioning desert ecosystem with an extraordinary array of biological, scientific, and historic resources. The most biologically diverse of the North American deserts, the monument consists of distinct mountain ranges separated by wide valleys, and includes large saguaro cactus forest communities that provide excellent habitat for a wide range of wildlife species.

The monument's biological resources include a spectacular diversity of plant and animal species. The higher peaks include unique woodland assemblages, while the lower elevation lands offer one of the most structurally complex examples of palo verde/mixed cacti association in the Sonoran Desert. The dense stands of leguminous trees and cacti are dominated by saguaros, palo-verde trees, ironwood, prickly pear, and cholla. Important natural water holes, known as tinajas, exist throughout the monument. The endangered acuna pineapple cactus is also found in the monument.

The most striking aspect of the plant communities within the monument are the abundant saguaro cactus forests. The saguaro is a signature plant of the Sonoran Desert. Individual saguaro plants are indeed magnificent, but a forest of these plants, together with the wide variety of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants that make up the forest community, is an impressive site to behold. The saguaro cactus forests within the monument are a national treasure, rivaling those within the Saguaro National Park.

The rich diversity, density, and distribution of plants in the Sand Tank Mountains area of the monument is especially striking and can be attributed to the management regime in place since the area was withdrawn for military purposes in 1941. In particular, while some public access to the area is allowed, no livestock grazing has occurred for nearly 50 years. To extend the extraordinary diversity and overall ecological health of the Sand Tanks Mountains area, land adjacent and with biological resources similar to the area withdrawn for military purposes should be subject to a similar management regime to the fullest extent possible.

The monument contains an abundance of packrat middens, allowing for scientific analysis of plant species and climates in past eras. Scientific analysis of the midden shows that the area received far more precipitation 20,000 years ago, and slowly became more arid. Vegetation for the area changed from juniper-oak-pine woodland to the vegetation found today in the Sonoran Desert, although a few plants from the more mesic period, including the Kofa Mountain barberry, Arizona rosewood, and junipers, remain on higher elevations of north-facing slopes.

The lower elevations and flatter areas of the monument contain the creosote-bursage plant community. This plant community thrives in the open expanses between the mountain ranges, and connects the other plant communities together. Rare patches of desert grassland can also be found throughout the monument, especially in the Sand Tank Mountains area. The washes in the area support a much denser vegetation community than the surrounding desert, including mesquite, ironwood, paloverde, desert honeysuckle, chuperosa, and desert willow, as well as a variety of herbaceous plants. This vegetation offers the dense cover bird species need for successful nesting, foraging, and escape, and birds heavily use the washes during migration.

Sonoran Desert National Monument

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The diverse plant communities present in the monument support a wide variety of wildlife, including the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, a robust population of desert bighorn sheep, especially in the Maricopa Mountains area, and other mammalian species such as mule deer, javelina, mountain lion, gray fox, and bobcat. Bat species within the monument include the endangered lesser long-nosed bat, the California leaf-nosed bat, and the cave myotis. Over 200 species of birds are found in the monument, including 59 species known to nest in the Vekol Valley area. Numerous species of raptors and owls inhabit the monument, including the elf owl and the western screech owl. The monument also supports a diverse array of reptiles and amphibians, including the Sonoran desert tortoise and the red-backed whiptail. The Bureau of Land Management has designated approximately 25,000 acres of land in the Maricopa Mountains area as critical habitat for the desert tortoise. The Vekol Valley and Sand Tank Mountain areas contain especially diverse and robust populations of amphibians. During summer rainfall events, thousands of Sonoran green toads in the Vekol Valley can be heard moving around and calling out.

The monument also contains many significant archaeological and historic sites, including rock art sites, lithic quarries, and scattered artifacts. Vekol Wash is believed to have been an important prehistoric travel and trade corridor between the Hohokam and tribes located in what is now Mexico. Signs of large villages and permanent habitat sites occur throughout the area, and particularly along the bajadas of the Table Top Mountains. Occupants of these villages were the ancestors of today's O'odham, Quechan, Cocopah, Maricopa, and other tribes. The monument also contains a much used trail corridor 23 miles long in which are found remnants of several important historic trails, including the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, the Mormon Battalion Trail, and the Butterfield Overland Stage Route.

Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431), authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

WHEREAS, it appears that it would be in the public interest to reserve such lands as a national monument to be known as the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

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 NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431), do proclaim that there are hereby set apart and reserved as the Sonoran Desert National Monument, for the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, all lands and interest in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the map entitled "Sonoran Desert National Monument" attached to and forming a part of this proclamation. The Federal land and interests in land reserved consist of approximately 486,149 acres, which is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

For the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road will be prohibited, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes. Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Arizona with respect to fish and wildlife management.

The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights.

All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, including but not limited to withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument. Lands and interests in lands within the monument not owned by the United States shall be reserved as a part of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States.

This proclamation does not reserve water as a matter of Federal law nor relinquish any water rights held by the Federal Government existing on this date. The Federal land management agencies shall work with appropriate State authorities to ensure that water resources needed for monument purposes are available.

The Secretary of the Interior shall manage the monument through the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to applicable legal authorities, to implement the purposes of this proclamation. That portion identified as Area A on the map, however, shall be managed under the management arrangement established by section 3 of Public Law No. 99-606, 100 Stat. 3460-61, until November 6, 2001, at which time, pursuant to section 5(a) of Public Law No. 99-606, 100 Stat. 3462-63, the military withdrawal terminates. At that time, the Secretary of the Interior shall assume management responsibility for Area A through the Bureau of Land Management.

The Secretary of the Interior shall prepare a management plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects identified in this proclamation. Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument; provided, however, that grazing permits on Federal lands within the monument south of Interstate Highway 8 shall not be renewed at the end of their current term; and provided further, that grazing on Federal lands north of Interstate 8 shall be allowed to continue only to the extent that the Bureau of Land Management determines that grazing is compatible with the paramount purpose of protecting the objects identified in this proclamation.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to revoke any existing withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation; however, the national monument shall be the dominant reservation.

Nothing in this proclamation shall preclude low level overflights of military aircraft, the designation of new units of special use airspace, or the use or establishment of military flight training routes over the lands included in this proclamation.

In order to protect the public during operations at the adjacent Barry M. Goldwater Range, and to continue management practices that have resulted in an exceptionally well preserved natural resource, the current procedures for public access to the portion of the monument depicted as Area A on the attached map shall remain in full force and effect, except to the extent that the United States Air Force agrees to different procedures which the Bureau of Land Management determines are compatible with the protection of the objects identified in this proclamation.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON



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~~VERMILION CLIFFS~~

**VERMILION CLIFFS NATIONAL MONUMENT
PROCLAMATION (#7374)**

Establishment of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (#7374)**By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

Amid the sandstone slickrock, brilliant cliffs, and rolling sandy plateaus of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument lie outstanding objects of scientific and historic interest. Despite its arid climate and rugged isolation, the monument contains a wide variety of biological objects and has a long and rich human history. Full of natural splendor and a sense of solitude, this area remains remote and unspoiled, qualities that are essential to the protection of the scientific and historic objects it contains.

The monument is a geological treasure. Its centerpiece is the majestic Paria Plateau, a grand terrace lying between two great geologic structures, the East Kaibab and the Echo Cliffs monoclines. The Vermilion Cliffs, which lie along the southern edge of the Paria Plateau, rise 3,000 feet in a spectacular escarpment capped with sandstone underlain by multicolored, actively eroding, dissected layers of shale and sandstone. The stunning Paria River Canyon winds along the east side of the plateau to the Colorado River. Erosion of the sedimentary rocks in this 2,500 foot deep canyon has produced a variety of geologic objects and associated landscape features such as amphitheaters, arches, and massive sandstone walls.

In the northwest portion of the monument lies Coyote Buttes, a geologically spectacular area where crossbeds of the Navajo Sandstone exhibit colorful banding in surreal hues of yellow, orange, pink, and red caused by the precipitation of manganese, iron, and other oxides. Thin veins or fins of calcite cut across the sandstone, adding another dimension to the landscape.

Humans have explored and lived on the plateau and surrounding canyons for thousands of years, since the earliest known hunters and gatherers crossed the area 12,000 or more years ago. Some of the earliest rock art in the Southwest can be found in the monument. High densities of Ancestral Puebloan sites can also be found, including remnants of large and small villages, some with intact standing walls, fieldhouses, trails, granaries, burials, and camps.

The monument was a crossroad for many historic expeditions. In 1776, the Dominguez-Escalante expedition of Spanish explorers traversed the monument in search of a safe crossing of the Colorado River. After a first attempt at crossing the Colorado near the mouth of the Paria River failed, the explorers traveled up the Paria Canyon in the monument until finding a steep hillside they could negotiate with horses. This took them out of the Paria Canyon to the east and up into the Ferry Swale area, after which they achieved their goal at the Crossing of the Fathers east of the monument. Antonio Armijo's 1829 Mexican trading expedition followed the Dominguez route on the way from Santa Fe to Los Angeles.

Later, Mormon exploring parties led by Jacob Hamblin crossed south of the Vermilion Cliffs on missionary expeditions to the Hopi villages. Mormon pioneer John D. Lee established Lee's Ferry on the Colorado River just south of the monument in 1871. This paved the way for homesteads in the monument, still visible in remnants of historic ranch structures and associated objects that tell the stories of early settlement. The route taken by the Mormon explorers along the base of the Paria Plateau would later become known as the Old Arizona Road or Honeymoon Trail. After the temple in St. George, Utah was completed in 1877, the Honeymoon Trail was used by Mormon couples who had already been

married by civil authorities in the Arizona settlements, but also made the arduous trip to St. George to have their marriages solemnized in the temple. The settlement of the monument area by Mormon pioneers overlapped with another historic exploration by John Wesley Powell, who passed through the monument during his scientific surveys of 1871.

The monument contains outstanding biological objects that have been preserved by remoteness and limited travel corridors. The monument's vegetation is a unique combination of cold desert flora and warm desert grassland, and includes one threatened species, Welsh's milkweed. This unusual plant, known only in Utah and Arizona, colonizes and stabilizes shifting sand dunes, but is crowded out once other vegetation encroaches.

Despite sporadic rainfall and widely scattered ephemeral water sources, the monument supports a variety of wildlife species. At least twenty species of raptors have been documented in the monument, as well as a variety of reptiles and amphibians. California condors have been reintroduced into the monument in an effort to establish another wild population of this highly endangered species. Desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mountain lion, and other mammals roam the canyons and plateaus. The Paria River supports sensitive native fish, including the flannelmouth sucker and the speckled dace.

Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

WHEREAS it appears that it would be in the public interest to reserve such lands as a national monument to be known as the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431), do proclaim that there are hereby set apart and reserved as the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, for the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the map entitled "Vermilion Cliffs National Monument" attached to and forming a part of this proclamation.

The Federal land and interests in land reserved consist of approximately 293,000 acres, which is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

All Federal lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, including but not limited to withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument. For the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, the Secretary shall prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes.

Lands and interests in lands within the proposed monument not owned by the United States shall be reserved as a part of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States.

The Secretary of the Interior shall manage the monument through the Bureau of Land Management, pursuant to applicable legal authorities, to implement the purposes of this proclamation.

The Secretary of the Interior shall prepare a transportation plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects identified in this proclamation.

The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Arizona with respect to fish and wildlife management.

This proclamation does not reserve water as a matter of Federal law.

Nothing in this reservation shall be construed as a relinquishment or reduction of any water use or rights reserved or appropriated by the United States on or before the date of this proclamation. The Secretary shall work with appropriate State authorities to ensure that any water resources needed for monument purposes are available. Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to revoke any existing withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation; however, the national monument shall be the dominant reservation. Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON