



Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Utah

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The battle for our monuments is not lost

The Wilderness Society and partners take legal action to reverse monument reductions

In his first year in office, the president illegally eviscerated more than two million acres from Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah—the largest elimination of protections for public lands in U.S. history.

Despite the overwhelming public support for these treasured places, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is rushing plans to open these lands to new mining claims and oil and gas drilling leases. His move to hand these vulnerable desert landscapes and sacred Native American ceremonial sites to the oil, gas and mining industries has also spurred numerous lawsuits to challenge Trump's authority to slash the size of existing national monuments.

While it may seem that no wild landscape is safe from the Trump administration and its congressional allies, the battle for our public lands is not lost. We remain optimistic that we can reverse these illegal actions in court.

“The Trump administration is ignoring widespread local communities and undoing the thoughtful participation of countless individuals that led to the creation of these national monuments,” said Jamie Williams, president of The Wilderness Society. “The Wilderness Society will stop at nothing to stand up against the Trump administration’s illegal actions in court, where the facts are on our side.”

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The Wilderness Society, thanks to generous supporters, has already filed a lawsuit to restore Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments to their rightful boundaries.

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Dear Wilderness Society Supporter,

Depending on where you live, spring has arrived or is just around the corner. Each year, we all look forward to this time of renewal and restoration, and a chance to get outside in a new season. I trust many of you will draw on the peace and beauty of the outdoors as you continue to fight with us to protect these places.

There is no denying these are perilous times for the preservation of America's unique and magnificent natural heritage. The Trump administration and anti-conservationists in Congress are pressing to do so much to undermine smart policies to conserve our public lands—many decades in the making.

But what you may not know, and what I am privileged to see from my perspective at The Wilderness Society, is the nation-wide growth of activism and support for their protection. From Alaska to Maine, Americans are standing up for the preservation—and expansion—of our wild lands and waters. I see it in countless ways: from increasing donations, to a surge of new members joining our ranks, to greater and more effective collaboration among conservation and environmental protection organizations, to an unprecedented response to the Trump administration's efforts to gut national monuments, and to a rising chorus of citizens insisting to their elected officials that our public lands must be protected.

With your activism and support, you are building a conservation movement that will endure this dark time and emerge stronger and more influential than ever before. Along the way we will suffer some setbacks, but I remain hopeful for our long-term outlook. Together, we will remind our elected officials that an overwhelming majority of Americans want our national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, and other public lands and waters protected from reckless oil and gas drilling. Together, we will defend fundamental conservation laws and regulations from being undermined or ignored. Together, we will be the tireless champions that our treasured natural heritage requires in this time of peril.

Thank you for your deep commitment, activism and support!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Williams".

Jamie Williams
President

Allies in eight national conservation groups, the \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry, and five Native American Nations have also sued to restore the protections.

These illegal attacks on public lands threaten the lifestyles of Americans across the country, and particularly those who live in the communities surrounding these monuments.

“What Trump has in store for Utah’s Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments should serve as a wake-up call to small businesses that rely on proximity to national monuments and public lands elsewhere,” said Blake Spalding, co-owner of Hell’s

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Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, Oregon

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UPDATE

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PRESIDENT:
Jamie Williams

DESIGN:
Studio Grafik

Questions or comments?
Please contact
Jamie Clark at
Jamie_Clark@tws.org



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The Wilderness Society meets all standards as set forth by the Better Business Bureau/Wise Giving Alliance.

Backbone Grill & Farm in Boulder, Utah, near Grand Staircase-Escalante. Boulder is in Garfield County, which has only 5,000 people, but received a \$78 million boost from tourism last year. “Without the monument, our businesses wouldn’t exist,” said Spalding.

Spalding’s story echoes in hundreds of western small towns dependent on well-protected, public lands to attract visitors from all over the world. Headwaters Economics, a bi-partisan research firm, has studied rural economies near national monuments since 2011. The 2017 survey again found that the protected public lands brought new jobs, higher incomes, steady business growth, and improved quality of life to rural and remote towns.

The January 2018 “Conservation in the West” report by Colorado College’s State of the Rockies Project, showed a majority of Americans in the West feel strongly that national monuments provide an important economic benefit to surrounding communities, and less than 40 percent approve of the way the Trump administration has handled issues related to public lands, water and wildlife.

“We believe the Trump administration has no legal authority to alter or erase protections for national treasures,”

The Trump administration has signaled that assaults on at least five other national monuments and three marine monuments are imminent. The Wilderness Society stands ready to stop Trump from reducing the size of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and Gold Butte National Monument in Nevada, and from making major management changes at Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte National Monuments in New Mexico, and marine monuments in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

“We believe the Trump administration has no legal authority to alter or erase protections for national treasures,” said Williams. “This proposal will needlessly punish local, predominantly rural communities that depend on parks and public lands for outdoor recreation, sustainable jobs and economic growth. It is a theft of public lands from the American people.”



Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, New Mexico

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The January 2018 “Conservation in the West” report by Colorado College’s State of the Rockies Project was prepared by bi-partisan research firms that surveyed 400 people of both political parties in each of eight western states. The report found:

- Nearly **70 percent** want national monuments fully protected
- Only **23 percent** favored more energy production and mining on public lands
- **93 percent** said outdoor recreation is very important in the economic future of western states
- **82 percent** believe that national monuments help the economy of nearby communities
- Only **38 percent** of those surveyed approve of the way the Trump administration is handling issues related to public lands, water and wildlife
- **68 percent** believe rollback of laws that protect land, water and wildlife is a serious issue



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WILD PLACES:

Arctic Refuge caught in crosshairs of land sell-out agenda

Trump's 'energy dominance' agenda leaves no public lands unscathed. After dismantling two national monuments in Utah, lawmakers set their crosshairs on Alaska, where in December GOP members of Congress snuck a provision into the partisan tax bill that will open the breathtakingly beautiful and wild Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and mineral exploration and drilling. Conducted behind closed doors, this action upends more than 40 years of bi-partisan protections for one of the last pristine places on the planet—a treasured landscape that the indigenous Gwich'in people refer to as the "Sacred Place Where Life Begins."

This misguided legislation will sacrifice the crown jewel of the American wildlife refuge system, jeopardizing the future of the Gwich'in people. The Gwich'in have been sustained for millennia by the Porcupine Caribou Herd, whose calving grounds are precisely where Trump wants to see drilling rigs.

Claimed to offset the tax bill's enormous budget deficit, industry economists agree that the oil found beneath the Refuge's fragile coastal plain would do little to alleviate the deficit. Analysts agree that revenue projections from oil extracted from the

"This fight is not over, and we will not back down. We will continue to stand with the Gwich'in people and the vast majority of Americans to ensure that no drilling rig ever touches the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

—Jamie Williams, president of The Wilderness Society



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Oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would severely threaten the Gwich'in way of life.

Refuge are wildly exaggerated. Their skepticism is grounded in current and projected low oil prices, the Refuge's remote locale and daunting winter weather, and the hundreds of oil leases still up for grabs elsewhere in Alaska and the lower 48, which can be operated at much cheaper prices.

What we do know is that any oil production in the Refuge would entail a sprawling and expensive infrastructure of roads and pipelines for an industry with a dismal record on safety and the environment. Rather than be confined to a "small section" of the Refuge, as oil companies contend, drill sites would be scattered across the 1.5 million-acre coastal plain, greatly magnifying the industrial footprint and disturbing the iconic wildlife that have for millennia relied on this heart of the Refuge as a safe haven and breeding ground.

At stake is the preservation of a national heritage that has been called America's Serengeti, where polar bear, musk ox and other threatened wildlife and plant species flourish. This spectacular



© Peter Mather

The Gwich'in have been sustained for millennia by the Porcupine Caribou Herd, whose calving grounds are precisely where Trump wants to see drilling rigs.

and intact ecosystem also harbors 200 bird species that migrate to six continents and all 50 states. It's where the immense herd of Porcupine caribou arrives each year to give birth and raise their young.

From our founding in 1935, The Wilderness Society has sought to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for future generations and the indigenous people whose way of life is entwined with the Refuge and its wildlife.

"This fight is not over and we will not back down. We will continue to stand with the Gwich'in people and the vast majority of Americans to ensure that no drilling rig ever touches the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge," said Jamie Williams, president of The Wilderness Society. "We and our many supporters will fight in the courts, in Congress, in corporate board rooms, and wherever else the battle takes us. The Arctic Refuge is one of the last pristine, untouched places we have left, and it belongs not only to us, but to our children."

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Hot Issues



Tongass National Forest, Alaska

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THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY SUES OVER IZEMBEK ROAD DEAL

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Alaska's King Cove Corporation cut a deal on January 22 authorizing a land exchange and construction of a road through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and designated wilderness. The Wilderness Society and partner groups have filed a lawsuit challenging the deal.

"Sadly, the Trump administration is charging ahead with the effort to build an unnecessary road through this extraordinary wilderness area because it fits their agenda of selling off or trading America's public lands for development," said Nicole Whittington-Evans, Alaska regional director for The Wilderness Society.

Izembek's lagoons contain one of the largest eelgrass beds in the world, providing food and habitat for fish and crabs that feed migratory birds from multiple continents.

AMERICA'S FORESTS AT RISK

Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski wasted no time cutting to the chase this year in seeking to allow more logging in our national forests. Just as fossil fuel allies have attempted to chip away at the Antiquities Act through the national monuments 'review,' and the Wilderness Act by authorizing a road through Izembek Wildlife Refuge, they are now targeting the National Forest Roadless Rule. Senator Murkowski is attempting to besiege the rule through the must-pass spending bill. And recently, the state of Alaska asked for an exemption to the rule in the Tongass National Forest.

The Wilderness Society is working hard to remind people that the very thing that makes our national forests such an important part of our public lands system is the uninterrupted beauty of vast areas free of roads.

ZINKE OPENS NATION'S COAST TO OFFSHORE DRILLING

As the new year began, the Trump administration announced it would allow offshore drilling for oil and gas in virtually all of America's coastal waters, including the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific that were previously designated as off limits to development to protect sensitive marine ecosystems. This move allows oil companies access to waters off the coast of California for the first time in decades. This decision poses a grave threat to thousands of miles of sensitive shorelines. To pave the way for more drilling, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is preparing to revise a sound, science-based, five-year offshore oil and gas leasing program that was completed during the Obama administration. The Wilderness Society remains committed to preventing the Trump administration from leaving America's coasts at the mercy of dirty and dangerous oil-drilling operations, and will be fighting them all the way.

Gene and Linda Sentz



If anyone can focus on the long view when the going gets tough in public land conservation, it's Gene and Linda Sentz of Choteau, Montana. Having spent the better part of their lifetimes advocating for—and securing—lasting protection of the Rocky Mountain Front alongside countless other friends, neighbors and conservation partners, they know that success is achievable with hard work and decades of perseverance.

In fact, the epic battle to save the Front—where rolling plains collide with sheer peaks—began over 40 years ago. A forestry major from West Virginia, Gene started working out of Choteau as a seasonal forest service employee, outfitter and school teacher, while Linda began her long career as a nurse. In 1977, a community meeting revealed that the U.S. Forest Service intended to issue leases for oil and gas development up and down the Front. “I had to act,” Gene recalls. “This stretch of wild country on

the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness is my favorite place in the world.” He quietly spearheaded the creation of a community-led coalition known as the Friends of the Rocky Mountain Front. The group resolved to fight back against those leases, and they won.

Motivated to overcome continued threats to the Front, the Friends eventually joined forces with The Wilderness Society in the mid-1990s to craft legislation to secure full protection for this iconic landscape, which is considered to be one of the nation's most productive wildlife habitats. The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act was passed in 2014, permanently protecting 275,000 acres along the Front from future development.

As Gene humbly insists, “Linda and I are just two of many, many Montanans who have invested so much energy in this issue.” But Jennifer Ferenstein,

our Rocky Mountain Front Outreach Coordinator, goes further: “Without Gene and Linda and their tireless dedication, respectful advocacy and intimate knowledge of the landscape, there would never have been an opportunity for folks to come together to protect the Front.”

Now retired, the Sentzes regularly volunteer at their local food pantry and are advocates for low income community residents. Together, they continue to share insights about their activism with other groups, discuss public land conservation with college students, write to their elected officials, and introduce newcomers to the grandeur of the Rocky Mountain Front—which remains intact thanks to the enduring collaborative effort they inspired.

“I had to act... This stretch of wild country on the edge of the Bob Marshall Wilderness is my favorite place in the world.”

—Gene Sentz

It's safe to say that Bob Marshall, the namesake of the vast wilderness they love so much, would be proud to know that Gene and Linda are part of our legacy society, the Robert Marshall Council, having included The Wilderness Society in their estate plans. It's a commitment that will ensure the future of our irreplaceable wildlands for the next generation.



The Wilderness Society
1615 M St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
www.wilderness.org
1-800-THE-WILD

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