

Presidential Documents

Proclamation 11044 of July 13, 2026

Modifying the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On September 18, 1996, as part of an effort to prevent development of significant coal reserves and other resources on the Kaiparowits Plateau, President Clinton issued Proclamation 6920, which established the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (Monument) in the State of Utah, reserving approximately 1.7 million acres of Federal lands as part of the Monument, and directing that it be managed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

On December 4, 2017, exercising my authority under section 320301 of title 54, United States Code (the "Antiquities Act"), I issued Proclamation 9682 to modify the boundaries of the Monument, ensure proper management, and more closely reflect the intent of the Antiquities Act. Proclamation 9682 removed approximately 860,000 acres from the Monument. On October 8, 2021, President Biden issued Proclamation 10286, increasing the size of the Monument to approximately 1.87 million acres, the size of the Monument immediately prior to the issuance of Proclamation 9682.

The Antiquities Act authorizes the President to declare historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated on land owned or controlled by the Federal Government to be national monuments. The Antiquities Act further requires that any parcel of land reserved as part of a monument be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected. Where the President determines that the structures and objects identified by a prior monument proclamation no longer are, or never were, deserving of the Antiquities Act's protections, the Antiquities Act permits the President to remove land from the monument and return it to its prior federally managed status. Determining the appropriate protective area involves examining several factors, including the uniqueness and nature of the objects to be protected, the nature of the protection needed, the protection provided to those objects by other laws, executive department and agency resources available to manage the parcel, and whether the lands are better suited for other non-monument uses.

Proclamation 10286 suffers from several flaws that warrant its reconsideration. First, Proclamation 10286 was premised on the purported need to protect items that are not historic landmarks, historic or prehistoric structures, or objects of historic or scientific interest. This included a long list of generic topographic and geologic features such as "vast and austere landscape[s]," "sedimentary rock layers," and "bold plateaus and multihued cliffs." These generic features described in Proclamation 10286 do not become "landmarks," "structures," or "objects of historic or scientific interest" worthy of protection under the Antiquities Act simply because they are scenic.

Second, certain landmarks, structures, or objects identified in Proclamation 10286 that could, in other circumstances, have the necessary historic or scientific interest, are not unique to the Monument, and their relative commonness suggests that the specific instances of such objects found within the Monument are not of particular historic or scientific interest. Examples of these relatively common objects include cultural, paleontological, and

geological resources within the Monument that are found throughout the Four Corners region and, in some cases, throughout the American West. Accordingly, a monument reservation was neither necessary nor appropriate to protect items that are not historic landmarks, historic or prehistoric structures, or other objects of historic or scientific interest or items that may qualify as such but are sufficiently common to not warrant protection under the Antiquities Act.

Third, because Proclamation 10286 expanded the land reserved for the Monument only to protect objects of no significant historic or scientific interest, that Proclamation disregarded the Antiquities Act's requirement that the reservation of Federal lands for a national monument be confined to the "smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected." Had the reservation been properly tailored to protect only those objects warranting protection under the Antiquities Act, it would have been much smaller.

Finally, the added reservation of land was unnecessary to protect many of the objects of historic or scientific identified by Proclamation 10286, which are already subject to the enhanced protections provided under Federal laws enacted after the Antiquities Act that preserve archaeological, historic, cultural, paleontological resources as well as plants and animals, and their respective habitats. These laws, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. 470aa–470mm), National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 300101 *et seq.*), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668–668d), Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 4301 *et seq.*), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703–712), Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1976 (25 U.S.C. 3001 *et seq.*), and Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470aaa–470aaa–11), authorize the BLM to limit and condition activities on Federal lands for the protection of certain natural and cultural resources, whether they are within or outside a national monument.

For instance, the BLM manages more than 800,000 acres of the Monument as Wilderness Study Areas, which the BLM is required by law to manage so as not to impair their suitability for future congressional designation as Wilderness. As a result, many of the objects previously designated as monuments by Proclamation 10286 are already adequately protected by Federal law and do not require a reservation of land under the Antiquities Act for protection.

The Monument reservation established by Proclamation 10286 is, therefore, not confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of those objects worthy of the Antiquity Act's protection. Proper care and management can instead be provided to those objects of historic and scientific interest by a smaller and more appropriate reservation of approximately 181,541 acres comprising two units: the Canyons of the Escalante Unit and Kaiparowits Horizon Unit. Revising the boundaries of the Monument in this way will ensure that, in accordance with the Antiquities Act, the reservation is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected. Revising the Monument's boundaries to encompass approximately 181,541 acres will also account for practical limitations on the BLM's land management resources and funding, ensuring that these remain adequate to provide proper care and management for the Monument now and in the future.

Revising the boundaries will better align the use of these public lands with the public interest. The Grand Staircase-Escalante region contains several resources that are vital to our economic and national security. These resources include several critical minerals, such as chromium, cobalt, copper, iron, lead, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, silver, thorium, titanium, uranium, vanadium, zinc, and zirconium, create jobs, fuel prosperity, and are essential to important sectors of the economy of the United States, including

defense, manufacturing, and transportation. It is imperative that the United States not be dependent on foreign sources of these resources. Modifying the Monument's boundaries will help ensure that adequate domestic supplies exist, thereby reducing the threat posed by our Nation's reliance on foreign sources.

The approximately 172,641-acre Canyons of the Escalante Unit contains the heart of the lands that remain within the Monument. Carved by the Escalante River and its tributaries, this area contains objects of historic or scientific interest worthy of protection, including the 130-foot-tall Escalante Natural Bridge. This area also boasts Calf Creek Canyon, a canyon of red alcoved walls with expanses of white slickrock, and other canyons along the Escalante River that contain a high density of Fremont prehistoric sites, including pithouses, villages, and storage cysts, as well as petroglyphs and pictographs, such as the Hundred Hands pictograph panel. The canyon of the Escalante River and its tributary canyons contain one of the highest densities of rock art sites in southwestern Utah outside of Capitol Reef National Park, with sites dating from the Archaic to the Historic periods. There are also historic sites of interest in the area related to grazing and ranching, along with the Boulder Mail Trail, which was used to ferry mail between the small desert outpost towns of Escalante and Boulder beginning in 1902.

Objects of historic and scientific interest can also be found in the approximately 8,900-acre Kaiparowits Horizon Unit. A recently discovered bonebed assemblage has produced rare specimens of theropods, including one of the most complete tyrannosaurid specimens in the region and well-preserved remains of hadrosaurs, turtles, and crocodilians. The site has provided critical insights into the ancient ecosystems of the Western Interior Seaway and the rich diversity of dinosaurs, reptiles, and other vertebrates and is considered a globally important paleontological resource. Accordingly, the establishment of the Kaiparowits Horizon Unit serves not only to properly care for and manage this uniquely intact snapshot of ancient biodiversity and environmental conditions, but also to foster continued research, education, and stewardship of a singular resource for the benefit of future generations.

Accordingly, the area described above and on the accompanying map are the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of those objects identified above, which I have determined in my discretion warrant protection under the Antiquities Act. This modification of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument will maintain and protect those objects and preserve the area's cultural, scientific, and historic legacy.

WHEREAS, section 320301 of title 54, United States Code, 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 Federal Government to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land; and

WHEREAS, the Antiquities Act permits the President, in the President's discretion, to alter a prior declaration of a national monument, including by finding that objects identified in the prior declaration either are no longer deserving of the Antiquities Act's protections, or never were; and

WHEREAS, many of the items and resources identified by Proclamation 10286 are not historic landmarks, historic structures, or otherwise objects of historic or scientific interest of national importance and, therefore, should not have been declared to be national monuments under the Antiquities Act; and

WHEREAS, many of the resources and objects designated as monuments by Proclamation 10286 do not require a reservation of land to protect them because they are not unique to those areas, were not under threat of damage or destruction before designation, or are sufficiently protected by Federal law; and

WHEREAS, the reservation of land established by Proclamation 10286 was not “the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected;” and

WHEREAS, given the greater budgetary and resource constraints of the BLM than in 2017, the boundaries established by Proclamations 9682 and 10286 encompass areas too vast for the proper care and management of the objects located therein; and

WHEREAS, our Nation’s need to reduce its reliance on foreign sources of several resources vital to our economic and national security, including resources located within the Monument, is greater than it was in 2017, thereby necessitating the exclusion of lands that were retained within the Monument by Proclamation 9682; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to modify the boundaries of the Monument boundary to exclude approximately 1.69 million acres of land that I find are unnecessary for or disadvantageous to the proper care and management of the objects to be protected within the Monument; and

WHEREAS, I find that the boundaries of the Monument as described above and on the accompanying map represent the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects of historic and scientific interest identified above;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by section 320301 of title 54, United States Code, hereby proclaim that the boundaries of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument are hereby modified to include those lands owned or controlled by the Federal Government within the boundaries described on the accompanying map, which is attached to and forms a part of this proclamation. I hereby further proclaim that the modified Monument areas identified on the accompanying map shall be known as the Canyons and Escalante Unit and the Kaiparowits Horizon Unit. These reserved Federal lands encompass approximately 181,541 acres. The boundaries described on the accompanying map are confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected. Any lands reserved by Proclamations 6920, 9682, or 10286 not within the boundaries identified on the accompanying map are hereby excluded from the Monument.

At 9:00 a.m., eastern daylight time, on the date that is 60 days after the date of this proclamation, subject to valid existing rights, the provisions of existing withdrawals, and the requirements of applicable law, the public lands excluded from the Monument reservation shall be open to:

- (1) entry, location, selection, sale, or other disposition under the public land laws;
- (2) disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing; and
- (3) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws.

Appropriation of lands under the mining laws before the date and time of restoration is unauthorized. Any such attempted appropriation, including attempted adverse possession under 30 U.S.C. 38, shall vest no rights against the United States. Acts required to establish a location and to initiate a right of possession are governed by State law, where not in conflict with Federal law.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to revoke, modify, or affect any withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation, other than those set forth in Proclamations 6920, 9682 and 10286.

Nothing in this proclamation shall change the management of the areas designated and reserved by Proclamations 6920, 9682, and 10286 that remain part of the Monument in accordance with the terms of this proclamation, except as provided by the following nine paragraphs:

For purposes of providing for the proper care and management of the objects identified above and to facilitate multiple uses that are consistent with the care and management of those objects, the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) shall maintain a management plan for the Monument and shall promulgate such regulations for its management as he deems appropriate. The Secretary, through the BLM, shall consult with other Federal land management agencies or agency components in the local area, including the National Park Service, when developing any management plan. The Secretary shall provide for public involvement in the development of the management plan, including consultation with federally recognized Tribes and State and local governments. In developing and implementing any management plan, the Secretary shall provide opportunities, pursuant to applicable legal authorities, for shared resources, operational efficiency, and cooperation with other Federal land management agencies, State and local governments, and federally recognized Tribes. When preparing a management plan for the Monument, the Secretary shall take into account, to the maximum extent consistent with the proper care and management of the objects identified above, the importance of (1) providing appropriate access for and otherwise facilitating livestock grazing; (2) maintaining; and (3) improving public access, including for recreation and hunting; and providing educational experiences that reflect the diversity of the Monument's natural and anthropogenic features and their use throughout the region's history.

Nothing in this proclamation affects the designation, maintenance, and improvement of existing roads and trails within the Monument, which shall continue to be governed by laws and regulations other than this proclamation. The Secretary shall prepare a new transportation plan that endeavors to maximize public access in the Monument through the designation of roads and trails on which motorized and non-motorized vehicle use will be allowed as well as provide for appropriate maintenance of those roads and trails. Pending completion of that transportation plan, the Secretary may allow motorized and non-motorized vehicle use on roads and trails designated for use before the issuance of Proclamation 6920 and shall maintain roads and trails for such use.

The Secretary shall consider the effects of proposed activities, including potential road closures, on historic roads in the Monument, in accordance with the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, as appropriate.

Consistent with the proper care and management of the objects identified above, the Secretary may authorize ecological restoration and active vegetation management activities in the Monument. When engaging in management planning for the Monument, the Secretary shall consider the full range of vegetation management tools, including mechanical mastication, grazing, and new vegetation management technology that becomes available in the future. Additionally, because noxious weeds and invasive plant species increase wildfire risks, the Secretary may authorize the use of available mechanical, natural, and chemical tools for controlling the proliferation of noxious weed and invasive plant species, and all treatment plans should be developed and implemented in coordination with the Garfield and Kane Counties Weed Boards. Livestock grazing should be utilized as a primary option for mitigating noxious weeds, as well as managing fuels and vegetation.

In recognition of the enduring tradition of livestock grazing in the Monument and its historical and cultural significance to local communities, nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to affect authorizations for livestock grazing, or administration thereof, on Federal lands within the Monument. Livestock grazing within the Monument shall continue to be governed by the laws and regulations other than this Proclamation.

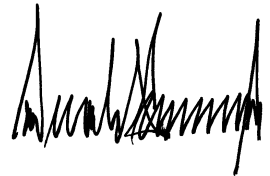
The Secretary shall endeavor to authorize traditional land uses within the Monument, such as grazing, recreation, timber management, public access, and infrastructure development, to the greatest extent possible, consistent with applicable law. Where restrictions on proposed uses are necessary to comply with applicable laws, such restrictions shall be narrowly tailored.

The Secretary shall consider livestock grazing lands in the Monument to constitute a traditional cultural place (TCP) and shall consider how proposed activities will impact that TCP in accordance with the regulation at 36 CFR Part 800, as appropriate.

If any livestock grazing permits or leases within the Monument are voluntarily relinquished by existing holders, the Secretary shall, within 1 year, reallocate the relinquished forage, including by issuing a new permit or lease for the relevant allotment, as appropriate, unless the Secretary specifically finds that such reallocation is inconsistent with the proper care and management of the objects identified above.

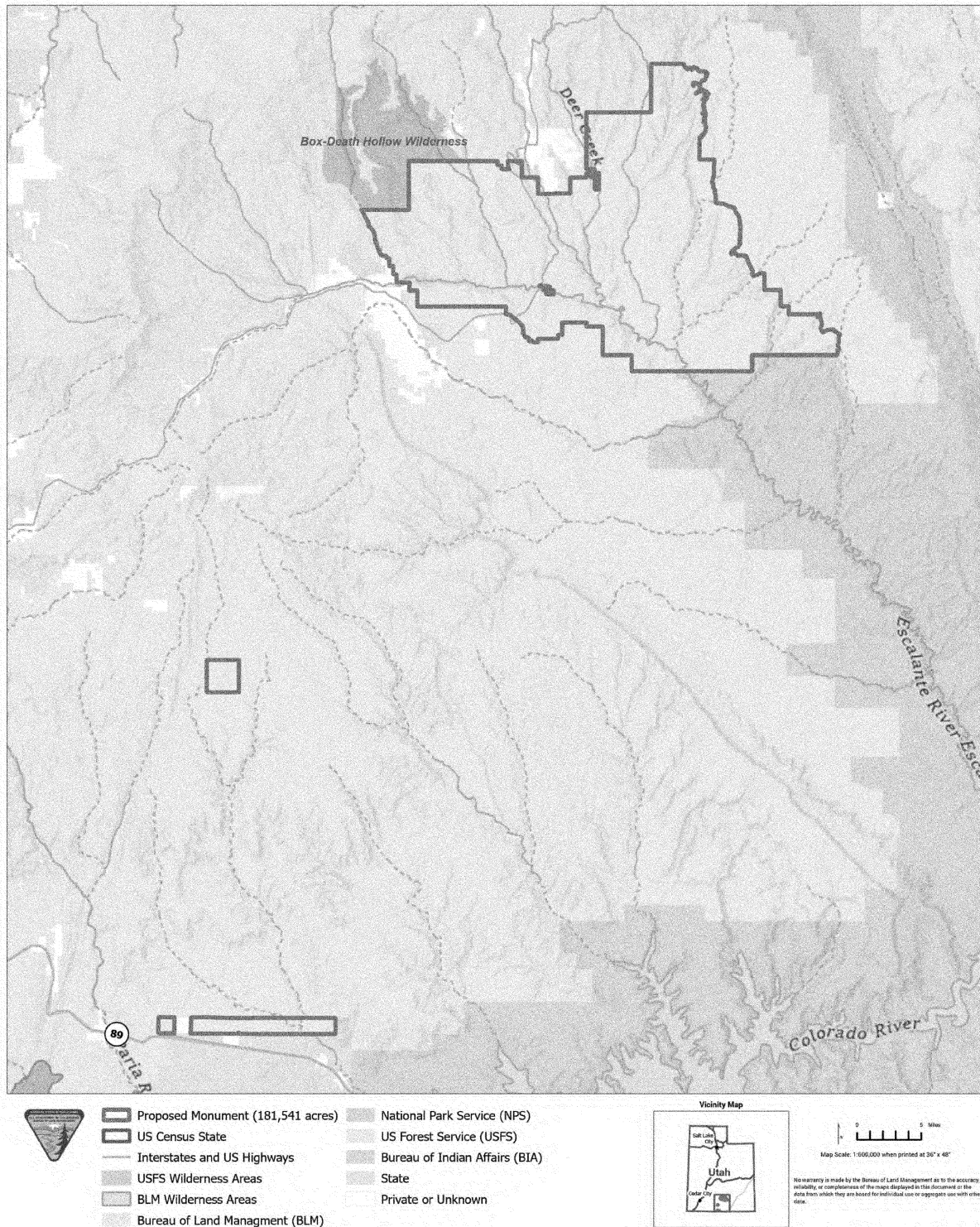
If any provision of this proclamation, including its application to a particular parcel of land, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this proclamation shall not be affected thereby. Furthermore, to the extent that any provision of Proclamations 6920, 9682, or 10286 is inconsistent with or contradicts this proclamation, the terms of this proclamation shall govern.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifty-first.



Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

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