http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/utah-mountains-s5.jpg

The largest elimination of protected areas in U.S. history will not stop there.

MADISON – Today, President Donald Trump announced the largest elimination of protected areas in U.S. history – more than 2 million acres of Utah public lands protected as National Monuments by the American Antiquities Act. Trump's assault on America's public lands and waters will have serious consequences for the region's cultural, scientific, and natural resources and begins a precedent that could impact public lands nationwide, including in Wisconsin.

The actions announced today are the single largest sell out of public lands and waters in our nation's history, reducing Bears Ears National Monument by 83 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument by 48 percent. This callous decision opens up millions of acres of land and priceless cultural sites, archaeological resources, wildlife areas, and recreation opportunities to destructive development.

This action, which oversteps the President's legal authority, goes against the overwhelming wishes of the public – 98 percent of the more than 2.8 million comments sent to the Department of the Interior during a public comment period opposed changes – and shows that no public lands or waters are safe from this administration.

Executive Director Kerry Schumann – who is also on the Board of Directors of Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance – issued this statement:

"Having visited some of these places that are on the chopping block, I can attest to the incredibly unique landscapes and abundance of cultural and archaeological sites within these National Monuments. But just as importantly, this attack – made largely on behalf of the fossil fuel industry – won't stop at Utah's border. The Trump Administration has indicated their actions are only the first phase of their attack on America's national monuments and protected areas. Here in Wisconsin, the radical pro-polluter agenda of the Walker Administration and some members of the legislature will be emboldened by what is in all likelihood an illegal maneuver that will not hold up in court. As protections for Wisconsin's natural resources, water, wetlands, and public health are being eliminated one after the other, the protection of our public lands must remain a top priority at the state and national level."

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Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to electing conservation leaders, holding decision makers accountable, and encouraging lawmakers to champion conservation policies that effectively protect Wisconsin's public health and natural resources.

You can follow legislation impacting natural resources on our Conservation Vote Tracker, a real-time accountability tool that provides you with a complete picture of what conservation issues are in play and how legislators are performing:
http://conservationvoters.org/vote-tracker/