



# Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument Federal Overreach at Local Expense

## Designated Without Congress or Local Support

In 1996, Bill Clinton designated a Delaware-sized national monument in southern Utah without congressional approval and over the unanimous objections of local and state leaders. Knowing his decision was controversial in Utah, he chose to make the announcement from the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, more than 200 miles away in a different state.

Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument was designated out of existing public land under Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction. The monument did not create any new protected land as many believe; instead, it restricted most of the economic and recreational activity that had always been permitted there. Towns that depended on mining and ranching hollowed out, schools closed, and families moved away.

## Restricted Access and Local Burden

Despite Clinton's promises that grazing would be permitted, subsequent Democratic presidents have restricted ranching. Fencing and water development are forbidden, forcing ranches to close or relocate. Tourism numbers are limited by federal officials damaging gateway towns. Camping and public access are restricted, target shooting is banned, and 500 miles of road have been closed. By closing most of the access roads, hunting and fishing became difficult and often impossible. Active wilderness management is prohibited, leading to pinyon and juniper encroachment that degrades wildlife habitat and increases fire risk. Many locals depended for years on wood-burning stoves, but wood collection is now banned on the monument as well.

## Administrative Seesawing

In President Trump's first term, the Department of the Interior responded to concerns from locals and implemented a new Resource Management Plan that shrank the monument by 50%, restoring multiple use and again permitting recreation and economic activity. But three years later, President Biden redesignated the monument and expanded it beyond its original size--the policy in place today. This led to lost investment and fresh difficulties for southern Utahns. Congress needs to act to prevent future administrative seesawing.

## The Solution: Use the Congressional Review Act to return to the 2017 RMP

Representative Maloy and Senator Lee are introducing a CRA to reverse the Biden administration's 2021 Resource Management Plan and return to the 2017 RMP issued under President Trump with local consultation. Under the 2017 RMP, the monument was 1 million acres in size rather than the current 1.9 million. All the land remains public and under BLM jurisdiction, but multiple use, access, and grazing will be restored.