



The Proposed Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument: A BAD DEAL FOR ARIZONA

Arizona currently has the most national parks and monuments of any state. Between federally-managed lands and Native American reservations held in trust by the federal government, 70 percent of Arizona land lies in the hands of the federal government. Historically, use of this public land has been dictated by a multiple use partnership established by the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984, which allows for effective management of resources and wildlife on Arizona Public Lands.

Proposal: Grand Canyon Watershed

In addition to land currently owned by the federal government in Arizona, President Obama proposed to designate an additional 1.7 million acres to add as a national monument. This area, dubbed the “Grand Canyon Watershed,” lies just north of the 1.2 million-acre Grand Canyon National Park. The proposed designation is situated on an area that is used for ranching and is largely maintained by public land ranchers.

To create this proposed monument, President Obama will rely on the 100-year-old Antiquities Act, which authorizes a President to create national monuments without any approval from Congress or the state. However, the original law states that the President should reserve “the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.” Surely this enormous 1.7-million-acre proposal falls outside these parameters.

Impact: Restricting the Local Economy

The Grand Canyon Watershed proposal would elevate 1.7 million acres of public land to monument status, allowing the federal government to establish further restrictions on the area. Although the specifics of the impacts are still unclear, we only need look to history to see the impact of these monuments on the small, family businesses that rely on public lands, as well as the local and regional economies. Put simply, when federal land is elevated to a special status, multiple use loses – every time.

For example, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah, established by President Clinton in 1996, led to four entirely closed grazing allotments and a significant drop in the per-capita income of the surrounding communities. Businesses closed, schools were shuttered, communities there have been in decline. The impacts of the proposed Grand Canyon Watershed Monument will likely follow the same pattern – imposing sizable restrictions on local businesses. When ranchers lose their grazing allotments, the entire local economy, that relies on those businesses for employment and purchasing local goods, suffers.

It’s Time to Rethink Presidential Authority to Authorize New National Monuments!



“A need to ‘fix’ current management practices [in the proposed designation area] simply doesn’t exist. Even the Center for Biological Diversity recently stated that this area already is being effectively managed, thanks to cooperation by several state and federal agencies.”

– Robert Mansell, Former Chairman
Arizona Game and Fish Commission

For more information, visit: www.publiclandscouncil.org

