

THE ANTIQUITIES ACT AND MONUMENT DESIGNATIONS

The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President of the United States the authority to create national monuments by presidential proclamation. This process was intended to be a way for the President to recognize particularly special places, like those with historic or prehistoric structures or other objects of historic or significant value, and protect them for future generations.

LEGAL CONTEXT

Importantly, the Antiquities Act was intended to protect the “smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.” Unfortunately, many Presidents have ignored that congressional direction. The largest land monument covers nearly 2.9 million acres, and more than 10 land and marine monuments exceed 1 million acres. Monument designations are not without controversy; Congress limited Presidential authority to establish monuments in Wyoming and Alaska after public outcry about massive monument designations that affected land management and local economies. Recent monument designations have been done with the negative goal of locking land users out of landscapes, rather than encouraging protection of special areas and increasing positive local outcomes.

MONUMENTS VS MULTIPLE USE

Monument designations preclude most multiple uses, fundamentally change land management objectives, and sometimes ignore local sentiment – as in the case of most recent controversial monument discussions.

Monuments are inherently restrictive of multiple uses that may be authorized on surrounding public lands, and because monuments are designated from existing public lands, a designation represents a change in use of those lands.

Public lands ranchers depend on functional, productive multiple use, so these changes often represent impacts to their conservation and management activities.



By nature, ranchers are conservationists.

They value and understand the protection of particularly special areas, and are adept at creating a functional balance of cultural and ecological considerations. The Antiquities Act should be used to protect specific, limited areas of special significance – not as a tool to lock up vast swaths of the American landscape out of a misplaced fear of future management.

PLC RECOMMENDATIONS

Public lands ranchers **DON'T** oppose monument designations. They **DO** want any future monument designations to:

- Be supported by all local stakeholders, including state governments.
- Be evaluated by Congress. Administration and care of national monuments is funded with taxpayer dollars, so Congress should have a role in evaluating the long-term fiscal impacts of monument designations.
- Recognize that grazing, as a renewable resource and effective management tool, should not be reduced following designations.

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