

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) Resource Management Plan (RMP.) I whole-heartedly support Alternative E - the preferred alternative of the Bears Ears Commission (Commission) and the federal agencies. Please ensure that Alternative E is the final adopted plan for this national monument as it 1.) integrates more of the Tribal Land Management Plan than any other alternative, 2.) incorporates more Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge than other alternatives, 3.) provides for the use of seasonal closures to protect natural and cultural values, 4.) creates processes and committees to ensure Tribal access to BENM, and 5.) places an emphasis on increased monitoring of culturally significant species.

Having visited areas within BENM for hiking, camping, wildlife watching and stewardship projects, I deeply value this region for its ecological values, cultural sites and most importantly its past, present and future use and significance to Indigenous people.

The plan could be strengthened by the following recommendations:

1. fully incorporating Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in every section of the plan
2. honoring Tribal perspectives and concerns regarding recreation throughout the plan
3. ensuring the Commission has a formal, decision-making role in the designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
4. acknowledging and quantifying the negative impacts of current livestock grazing on cultural and ecological values and being transparent about the deleterious impacts of historic overgrazing while ensuring ongoing monitoring of rangeland health into the future
5. fully integrating impacts of climate change across every section of the plan
6. elevating the economic benefits to Tribal members primarily in the form of employment rather than focusing solely on the negative economic impacts on livestock grazing permittees.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to share my comments on this RMP that will guide the co-management of this treasured region. Alternative E is the best alternative to ensure access while protecting this sacred landscape and traditional cultural uses.

Robyn Cascade