

In January, The Arizona Game and Fish Commission passed a resolution in support of multiple use of public lands that provides Arizona's residents and the resource with net benefits, and the Commission also resolved to continue to oppose any federal land-use designations that impact the ability of the Arizona Game and Fish Department to fulfill its public-trust responsibility to manage the State's wildlife and associated natural resources.

Arizona currently has 18 monuments, the most in the nation, and 42% of its land is under federal management and control. 77% of Arizona's lands have restrictions related to public access and recreational use. 4.5 million acres of Arizona are already designated as wilderness, the third highest figure in the nation.

Further, 5.8 million acres of our state are subject to special land use designations including National Monuments, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Conservation Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic Rivers and Wilderness Characteristics Areas. The Department's ability to conserve, manage and protect Arizona's wildlife resources is negatively impacted on all 10.3 million of these combined acres.

The 1.7 million acres of federal land that are being proposed for a new monument combined with the already designated Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, Grand Canyon- Parashant National Monument and Grand Canyon National Park, amount to an area of 6,139,878 acres. These specially designated areas are contiguous to the proposed new monument. Thus, there would be a land mass of declining public access, damaged rural economies and impacted wildlife management nearly the size of the state of Maryland located north of the Grand Canyon.

Proponents argue that these public lands proposed for monument designation are already being managed by federal agencies and that wildlife management actions and existing public uses will continue and be grandfathered. However, the reality is a Presidential Proclamation or enacted legislation may seek to preserve existing uses, new management plans must be drafted at the federal agency level, along with their layers of bureaucracy that result in project delays, increased costs, increased man hours and legal challenges that slowly choke-out the multiple-use doctrine; including the Arizona Game and Fish Department's ability to effectively manage wildlife within monuments.

In addition, when the Federal Government reserves public land for uses such as Indian reservations, military reservations, national parks, forest, or monuments, it also implicitly

reserves sufficient water to satisfy the purposes for which the land-use designation was created. Designations made either by presidential executive fiat or those made by an act of Congress have implied reserved rights. This reserve water right does not have to be quantified at the time of the Presidential Proclamation and the federal government can in effect exercise a “water grab” to meet the purposes of the land-use designation under the Antiquities Act. This could be devastating to Arizona’s water future both statewide and in nearby local communities for decades to come.

Facts are stubborn things, and despite the same exact assurances made in the past, national monument designations have historically impacted the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s mission to conserve Arizona’s diverse wildlife resources and to manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations. As an example, upon designation of the Sonoran Desert National Monument in 2001, the Bureau of Land Management was charged with developing an area management plan. The development of this plan took place over the period of 11 years during which time the Arizona Game and Fish Department experienced detrimental delays and prohibitions for critical wildlife management actions. A stark illustration of the specific impact this protracted process has had on the Department's mission can be seen in the Maricopa Mountains.

These mountains, included in Sonoran Desert National Monument, were home to at least 103 Bighorn sheep, as counted by department biologists in 1999. There were fewer than 35 counted in 2015. The Department experienced detrimental delays, outright prohibitions of necessary wildlife management actions and a crippling lack of access to the area stemming from designation of the monument. With no management plan to address these concerns, the department found it extremely difficult to provide the sustainable water sources these sheep require.

Recreational shooting, a traditional activity practiced by citizens since territorial days, is also being restricted in the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The United States District Court in Arizona has ordered the Bureau of Land Management to close 10,599 acres of the monument to recreational target shooting. The Bureau is currently developing new management actions to address recreational shooting in accordance with the court’s March 2015 ruling and permanent closure of at least some sites is anticipated. This will leave Arizona’s 269,000 hunters with fewer places to safely and responsibly engage in the practice of their hunting skills and leaves all citizens of this State with a permanently diminished capacity to exercise their constitutional right to bear arms. In the Agua Fria National Monument there are cultural artifacts that have no

more protection and no more management than when those lands were managed as multi-use lands and the budget to operate this monument is more now than prior to the designation. More taxpayer money, no more protection and certainly wildlife that is worse off is a consistent theme of monument status. It sounds great in theory, but not in actual practice.

Monument designations have also resulted in arbitrary road closures and restrictions on outdoor multi-recreational opportunities, amounting to a significant intrusion on the Arizona Game and Fish Department's overall wildlife management authorities. Often, these closures and restrictions are deemed necessary as cost saving measures resulting from an inability of the National Park System to deal with its \$11.9 billion backlog of deferred maintenance, \$329 million of which is attributed to the existing 1.2 million acres of the Grand Canyon National Park alone. Adding 1.7 million acres to this already overextended National Park Service risks the health and safety of land, wildlife and visitors. This lesson is a simple one. A wise person does not build an addition on to their home if the foundation of the current structure is crumbling. Only our federal government and certain extremists would think this is a wise notion. That is a primary reason the Arizona Game and Fish Commission opposes this proposed monument, any other proposed monument and all special land use designations that impede the Department's ability to fulfill its mission in service to the people of Arizona and its wildlife.

Let us also recognize what the intentions of the proponents of this proposed monument truly are. Despite their claims that the proposed monument won't impact current uses (then our collective question should be, why then propose it at all?) their intention is to emasculate the multi-use doctrine, which was the center piece of public lands management for generations. This system afforded our nation the best recreational, wildlife and local economic opportunity on public lands in the history of the world. Those who want to reduce access, reduce recreation, reduce historical rural economic activity know that these designations are the quickest route to achieve their objectives. These same proponents who often use the courtroom and cumbersome processes as a weapon to stop the activities associated with the multi-use doctrine do not hold the same beliefs when pushing their own agenda to have the President use an authority granted in the Antiquities Act that clearly stipulates very conservatively that a designation shall constitute "the smallest amount of land possible to protect the artifact."

The Antiquities Act was passed in 1906 to protect historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest. After 1906 many Congressional Acts (NEPA-1969, FLPMA-1976, ESA-1973, and most importantly the National Historic

Preservation Act-1966) were enacted into law and executed by federal agencies already under management control of these sites, as is the case today. In short, to designate a National Monument or other land-use designation on land already being managed by a federal agency is an admission of the failure of the Agency or the Acts passed by Congress and simply adds another layer of bureaucracy.

Regarding the monument that we discuss today, the proponents never offered to do a full NEPA process before launching their proposal. They have not offered to pay for a rural based economic impact study and the proponents have never demanded an independent assessment of any artifacts to be protected; nor a review of the historic and cultural uses of this land. Let's be clear, it is a political agenda, not a wildlife, recreational or a rural community agenda.

In conclusion, Arizona has had enough public land that have seen declining access; declining ability to manage wildlife and declining ability to maintain the heritage and history of those who came to Arizona to build families and lives in rural Arizona. Arizonans have witnessed massive and cataclysmic wild fires across our federal lands over the past two decades because of a lack of proactive habitat management. This unfortunately, will be the destiny of the North Kiabab if a monument is established. Simply and sadly stated, the President is being asked to use the stroke of a pen, but it will also certainly serve as the strike of the match.

It is past due that the Congress limit the authority of the nation's executive to take the people's land and hang a sign that says "off limits" and "no access"-especially without a public process and in the last hidden hours of an administration. Teddy Roosevelt, who actually visited and interacted with the lands and the wildlife that roam the proposed monument, already had set them aside as a Game Preserve. He afforded them a designation that turned the area into the wonderful, multi-use lands that have served the people of Arizona and its wildlife, which is held in trust, for all future generations. Teddy Roosevelt, a hunter and conservationist, supported the multiple use doctrine and Congress appropriately and publically established a multi-use national forest and the Grand Canyon National Park. This President should respect the work done by his predecessor and recognize there is a right way and a wrong way to go about this critical issue. I pray the President will choose the right and honorable way. Thank you to Congressman Gosar for his willingness to work towards open, honest and transparent decisions about our public lands.