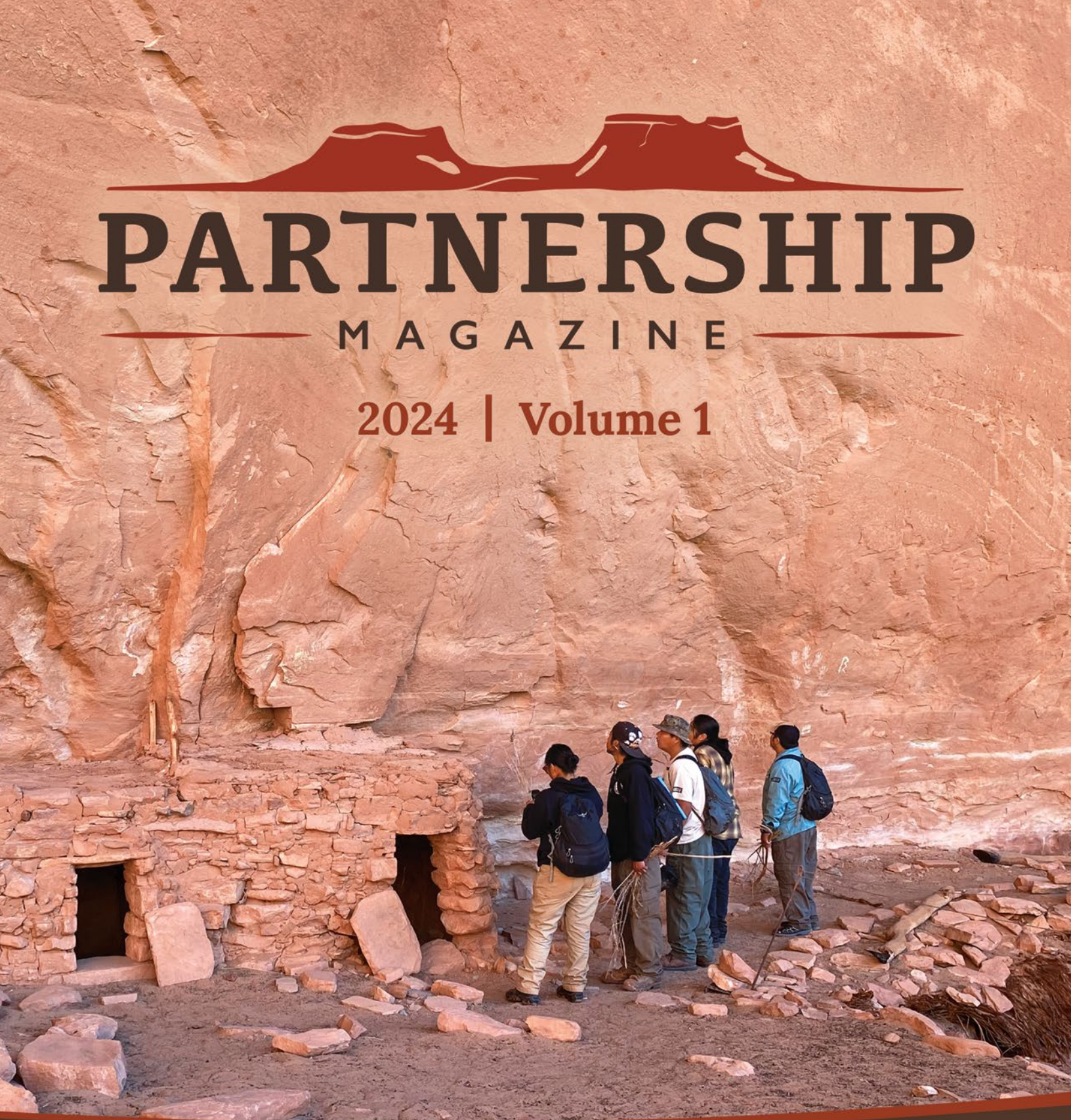




PARTNERSHIP

MAGAZINE

2024 | Volume 1



Pathways to Home

Defending Sacred
Landscapes

Ancestral Adventures at
Bears Ears Summer Camp

Visit With Respect™:
Words that Live On



A LETTER FROM Joe Neuhoof, BEP Executive Director

When I think about all the dedication of our board, staff, volunteers, and many partners, it's truly an honor and privilege to work at Bears Ears Partnership (BEP). In this inaugural issue of the annual *Partnership Magazine*, we feature the stories that bring meaning and depth to our organization.

As you read these stories, we hope you get a sense of just how expansive our approach to this work has become, building on past notions of what it means to be a conservation or social justice organization. Our team builds bridges across cultural, socio-economic, and racial divides as we strive to define the word *Partnership* in our name and care for this sacred region.

In this issue, we highlight many of our programs, community members, and our organizational momentum. For now, I'd like to spotlight two initiatives coming in 2024:

- ♦ **Our campus expansion in Bluff is in full swing.** BEP purchased the property adjacent to the Bears Ears Education Center and demolished the abandoned motel. Our vision for the next year is to expand the recently constructed RV facilities to include several tiny homes and a bathhouse, providing much needed staff and volunteer housing and resources.
- ♦ **BEP is partnering to develop a 10-year vision for improving watershed health across the Bears Ears Landscape.** The newly formed Bears Ears Conservation Partnership (BECP) is a strong and dedicated group made up of land management agencies, Tribal representatives, NGOs, and various funders. Building on our recently-awarded National Fish & Wildlife Foundation grant, we are 100% committed to improving watershed health, including the restoration and rehabilitation of springs, seeps, streams, and the San Juan River.

This fall, **our board and staff spent several days at the Zuni Pueblo**, hosted by our Policy Director, Carleton Bowekaty, and Board Member, Christopher Lewis. The experience was personally profound and provided a deep sense of connection between Zuni Pueblo and the work we do for Bears Ears. As formative as my childhood trips to Washington D.C. to learn about the history of this country, there is another history just as vital, challenging us to learn more about ourselves and the vibrant living connections to Bears Ears. Standing next to an ancestral village, looking out at the spot where Coronado made first contact with the Southwest Pueblo people is a deep, troubling, and very personal experience. This trip reinforced our organizational momentum toward Indigenous leadership in every facet of our work. As Carleton notes in the feature story, "Pathways to Home," this is a complex place of healing, history, and connection.

Thank you for supporting our work and I hope you enjoy the stories shared in the following pages.

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Visit with Respect™: WORDS THAT LIVE ON

by Semira Crank, BEP Visit With Respect Program Director

Shínáíí hastiín (my grandpa) used to tell me, "Shíyázhí, words can live on. That's how my stories will be told to your grandbabies — even if I never meet them. Words carry that much power." And although my grandfather isn't in the physical world anymore, his words have never been truer for me.

Visit With Respect — a simple phrase, but a powerful one that resonates with the numerous people who venture into this magnificent part of the world every year. Visit With Respect (VWR) is more than just a campaign; **it's a call to action when visiting an important ecological and cultural landscape.**

As the Program Director, **the most significant opportunity in expanding the depth and reach of this campaign is in our partnership with the Bears Ears Commission.** Their collaboration has helped improve and frame VWR's messaging by incorporating Traditional Knowledge, Indigenous perspectives and insights, and the cultural significance of sacred sites into the content we create. Together, we recently updated our 19 guidelines, maintaining our original Visit With Respect messaging, while adapting it through respectful collaboration with our Indigenous partners. For example, it's important to provide educational reminders to the public about protecting sensitive biocrust and packing out their trash, but we are now able to emphasize the *why*: that the Bears Ears landscape holds deep spiritual meaning for Indigenous Tribes.

When visitors understand how cultures are connected to the land, then they'll understand why it's important to be conscious of their impact. One of my favorite things about my job is intertwining my traditions with education. It's important for me to share the cultural reasoning behind leaving an ancestral site alone when I meet visitors on a hike. I enjoy teaching a BEP Visit With Respect Ambassador to say a Navajo word for a plant or animal living within the monument so they feel closer to the land they're helping to preserve. As a young Indigenous leader, I walk a hybrid path between my Navajo culture and American society. It can be difficult at times, but this challenge fuels my determination to weave the two worlds together.

In Navajo culture, elders emphasize the importance of passing on traditions to the next generation — it's at the forefront of everything. Young Navajos are then expected to continue the traditions, language, and culture in an ever continuous, harmonious cycle — so I bring this cycle of thought into the work I do for Visit With Respect. The directors before me handed down a well-structured program, and like my Navajo culture, it's in my hands to continue the work. For me, "Visit With Respect" is more than a simple, powerful phrase — **it's a way everyone should behave when it pertains to ancestral landscapes, and encourages responsible visitation** so generations to come may also experience the all-encompassing beauty that is Bears Ears.



In the words of our Ambassadors ...

"What sets the Ambassador Program apart is the **opportunity to interact directly with visitors at select archaeological sites** to share the concepts of the VWR Program. There's no other opportunity like this to help educate the public on the history of archaeology along with the sacred importance these locations hold for the Indigenous Tribes." — Rob Elliott

"Helping people to understand how very important it is that they **visit these special places with the respect they deserve** and what's required of us to save them is a huge job." — Theresa Ballaron Titone

"Every time I get the chance to talk with someone about BENM and what we can do to protect it, **I feel as if there is hope and we can save this amazing place.**" — Dennis Hochwender



Pathways to HOME

"Luk akky hon yam Innod: Chimikyanapkowa a:wan hon a:leye:naweh," says the Zuni knowledge holder guiding me, "hallowdinan, lo'o:we, edo:weh; We offer to our ancestors, cornmeal, turquoise, and piki bread," he states in Zuni as he offers me separate bags containing these items. Once we both have our offerings, he started his prayer. At the time, I could only follow along in my head and my heart.

This was my first visit to Bears Ears, traveling to Bluff, Utah in 2015 with Zuni Cultural Advisory Team members for a **Tribal gathering to discuss the protection efforts for Bears Ears**. I drove the delegation from Zuni in a multi-passenger van, listening to fluent Zuni being spoken. Over the next couple of days, we visited Ancestral Puebloan sites and petroglyphs, following a truck with license plate "CDR MSA" over the familiar but not unfamiliar landscape; familiar because the terrain is similar to Zuni — sandstone canyons and stunted junipers — unfamiliar because the Zuni Tribe, through time and distance, have been disconnected from this landscape.

"Lił hon Shiwinakwin luwala yemak'yana:wa," says the knowledge holder; "We will send water blessings to Zuni." We are at Cave Towers Spring, at the back near the seep, away from the pipe that people use to refill water. We dip our hands into a pool of water, wetting our hands and bringing it to our lips, dip again and touch the tops of our heads, then send handfuls of water towards the direction of Zuni, to the south, four times. We do another offering, another prayer.

We continue following the CDR MSA truck, including my cultural leader and myself, Hopi Vice-Chair and his cultural advisor, Dr. Joseph Suina from Cochiti Pueblo, and others on the same journey. Hopi Vice-chair Alfred Lomahqahu is a U.S. Marine Veteran and accompanied by "Bucky" Preston. I ask Alfred, "Who is Commander Mesa?" In military jargon, CDR is usually placed in a signature block to indicate a Commander of the respective unit. Alfred laughs and says, "I think it's supposed to be Cedar Mesa!"

Commander Mesa turned out to be Josh Ewing, the former Executive Director of Friends of Cedar Mesa (FoCM). This Tribal gathering was hosted by FoCM and additional partners, many of them referred to as the OG group at this point! The Tribes, to my recollection, included Zuni, Hopi, Hualapai Tribe, Havasupai, Navajo Nation, as well as Tribal members from other nations.

Following that initial introduction, **the Bears Ears protection efforts coalesced around the Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC): Hopi, Zuni, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute, and Ute Indian Tribe**. The BEITC worked on many levels with NGO partners, elected representatives at local, state, and national stages, and administration officials at the Department of the Interior. Most importantly, each of the Coalition Tribes hosted work sessions on their respective Tribal lands, painstakingly going over every word in the BEITC's proposal to President Obama.

Each Coalition representative shared stories of the landscape to support an amorphous boundary totaling 1.9 million acres. The idea of collaborative management was initially rejected until, through unified persistence by the BEITC, draft language establishing a Bears Ears Commission began to evolve. Eventually, **the Bears Ears National Monument was designated at 1.35 million acres** through Proclamation by President Obama, with the BEITC Tribes — under the title of the Bears Ears Commission — included as co-managers.

The success was short-lived with the reduction to BENM to two smaller monuments — at a fraction of the prior proclamation — once President Trump was elected. Despite this reduction, the BEITC

Tribes agreed to continue to advocate in the spirit of the original proposal to President Obama. The BEITC transitioned to creating a land management framework from each of the respective Coalition Tribes, covering the proposed 1.9 million acres; eventually, this framework was synthesized into the draft Bears Ears Land Management Plan.

Following President Biden's inauguration and into his administration, the review of national monuments — Bears Ears, in particular — became prominent. The review by the Interior's Secretary Haaland was memorable in many ways. Utah Diné Bikéyah (UDB) hosted a morning prayer at Muley Point and we had the honor and privilege of listening to a prayer song by Jonah Yellowman. We stood and viewed the canyon at Cave Towers Spring, going down to the spring itself where Hopi Vice-Chairman Clark Tenakhongva offered ceremonial smoke. Standing with Secretary Haaland at the spring with cornmeal and sharing a prayer, I turned to look one last time and saw the cornmeal sprayed across grass and moist earth.

Eventually, Bears Ears National Monument was restored to 1.36 million acres and the Bears Ears Commission was re-designated. This new journey began with the signing of Cooperative Agreements and the placement of Bears Ears National Monument signs in and around the Monument. The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service developed the Monument Management Plan with the Bears Ears Commission, utilizing the Bears Ears Land Management Framework in this process.

As Councilman and Lt. Governor for Zuni, Bears Ears protection developed and helped me in many aspects — personally, in healing with Combat PTSD, and professionally, as a Tribal leader. I finished my term on December 25, 2022.

In 2023, I became Policy Director for Bears Ears Partnership — Friends of Cedar Mesa was growing beyond Cedar Mesa! BEP's work on the ground and in advocacy communications was appreciated while I was on the BEITC; I am proud to support those efforts now as part of BEP.

Part of BEP's area of focus beyond Cedar Mesa is tentatively known as "The Lands Between" (TLB).

The Lands Between has rich Ancestral Puebloan ties to Chacoan ways of life, with similar terrain and architecture that spreads out from Chaco Canyon. BEP, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), and other partners hosted the Third Tribal Gathering for TLB on June 8, 2023. Leadership from Acoma Pueblo, Picuris, Ute Mountain Ute, and the All Pueblo Council of Governors were joined by other Tribal members from other nations to express their concerns for TLB and develop possible solutions for future protections.

BEP and NPCA hosted the Ute Mountain Ute, Hopi, and Zuni Tribes at TLB following the Tribal gathering. Each of the Tribes, in their own manner, in their own space, acknowledged their ancestral ties to sites within TLB. Councilman Malcolm Lehi expressed his desire to share this landscape with Ute youth. Hopi Vice-Chair Craig Andrews was joined by members of the Hopi Cultural Resource Advisory Task Team (CRATT), expressing their desire to learn more about the landscape. **Learn and share, share and learn; both on the landscape and at home with older and younger generations.**

Zuni leadership and CRAT members visited in December, the last visit of the season. From Sand Island to TLB, the Zuni CRAT members shared with Zuni leadership the same education I received. We offered at the San Juan River after seeing amazing petroglyphs that speak to our migration at Upper Sand Island. I sent water to Zuni, as I was taught so many years ago. We gathered willows near the riverbank, preparing for prayer sticks to each of our own individual Zuni responsibilities.

We traveled to TLB — Five Acre Pueblo, Ten Acre Pueblo, Three Kiva Pueblo, and Coal Bed Village, racing the early setting sun. *Halowdinnan, lo'o:we, edo:weh* were shared by me to go along with our prayers. Learn and share, share and learn. We all make our personal connection through this shared practice.

I am grateful to my BEP family for their support and look forward to the vision of a greater Bears Ears Partnership!



Photo, this page: Carleton (third from right) during a visit to the Manti-La Sal National Forest before the Biden restoration proclamation.

Photo, opposite page: Carleton with Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland on the landscape before the Monument's restoration.

ETHNOBOTANICAL MONITORING in Bears Ears

by Gregg Somermeyer, Site Steward & Project Coordinator



The landscape of the Colorado Plateau can be viewed as a holistic and interconnected system of natural and cultural resources.



Based on work conducted by Dr. Bruce Pavlik and others from 2019 to 2021, a number of plant species with medicinal, spiritual, nutritional and/or utilitarian value have been found at archaeological sites in Bears Ears National Monument (BENM).

Some of these remnant archeo-ecosystems appear to have persisted for centuries in the absence of nurturing or cultivation. Utilizing funding managed by Bears Ears Partnership (BEP), an innovative project to identify and monitor culturally significant plant species at archaeological sites in the Monument was initiated in 2023. This unique project is focused on protecting and preserving the cultural botanical heritage of the Monument.

The project team includes Utah Cultural Site Stewardship (UCSS) Program site stewards and coordinators, Bureau of Land Management and United States

Forest Service archaeologists, Navajo and Hopi ethnobotanists, and BEP staff. Eight cultural sites were selected for initial monitoring with input from federal land managers and UCSS coordinators. In the spring and summer of 2023, Arnold Clifford (Diné) and Max Taylor (Hopi) conducted independent ethnobotanical surveys of the sites and selected several species at each site for continued monitoring. Arnold and Max will also assist in training a select team of UCSS site stewards to begin regular monitoring of the eight sites beginning in the spring of 2024. The resulting findings, data and recommendations from the project will be transmitted to Utah SHPO and shared with relevant stakeholders including the BLM, USFS and tribal entities. If proven successful, the ethnobotanical monitoring program could be expanded beyond BENM into other parts of the Four Corners Region in subsequent years.

ANCESTRAL ADVENTURES at Bears Ears Summer Camp

by Louis Williams, Owner &
Guide at Ancient Wayves
& BEP Board Member



In the summer of 2023, Ancient Wayves had the privilege of leading a group of local teenagers on an adventure on the San Juan River and a hike in Bears Ears National Monument. This was the first Bears Ears Summer Camp held, and it was a *blast*!

The San Juan River and Bears Ears region are ancestral homelands of the Indigenous Tribes who inhabit this area, and **many who attended the camp had Indigenous roots connecting them to the region.** Our Indigenous guides aimed to provide a memorable experience for this group of teens, which involved learning about the cultural history and connecting with the landscape. A number of these teens had not experienced an adventure on the river or hiked in the Monument, which made this Summer Camp extra special.

We call the river and its surrounding landscapes our "outdoor classroom." It was an honor to take the group to this classroom to learn about the different plants and wildlife that coexist with them in the region.



Ancient Wayves believes it is very important for the youth to know their ancestral homelands and to connect with those places. That connection is vital for their spiritual growth. As Indigenous guides in the region, we know that importance and push to shed light on the goodness of the great outdoors.

EDUCATION

is our Common Ground



by Sarah Burak,
BEP Education Director



2023 was an exciting year for our education center and program. We saw growth in outreach, engagement, and an expansion of our partnerships throughout the region.

We are proud to announce the **completion of Phase II of the development of our outdoor classroom** at the Bears Ears Education Center (BEEC) — a two-year collaboration with the University of Utah Field Studio that has culminated in a geology and paleontology exhibit, an interactive Visit With Respect (VWR) exhibit, and beautiful tables and benches. This project not only received the Collaborate Practice Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, but has made our courtyard an inviting space to explore and learn more about the area and VWR principles.

"Learning outside with students is one of my favorite things to do. It is fun to spend time outdoors, but also very engaging for the students. Watching them apply what they have learned in the classroom, while utilizing all of their senses, is very fulfilling. After field trips, it's obvious their respect and appreciation for nature has grown." — Dianna, BENM Contact Representative, BLM

Inside the BEEC, we are working with Tribal representatives to create an **exhibit about the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition**, in which each of the Coalition Tribes will have a panel discussing their connection to Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) and its importance to them. This is a vital undertaking, and we are working hard to ensure that the final product reflects the Traditional Indigenous Knowledge shared with us by the Tribes.

We have even **expanded our educational programming, beyond the BEEC** — working with the Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service, and Edge of the Cedars State Park, we facilitated field trips for local elementary school students. Third, fourth, and fifth graders from Bluff and Montezuma Creek Elementary Schools joined us for hikes and learning stations in the Manti LaSal Forest of BENM — they even got to meet a turkey! In 2024, we are looking forward to expanding the reach of these field trips to include fourth graders from Monument Valley and Monticello with funding from the Everyone Kid Outdoors grant.

Renewing our focus on volunteer engagement and projects, we are **working with agency partners to increase the number of volunteer opportunities** in BENM, particularly through citizen science sessions like bird and butterfly counts and dark sky monitoring. These projects will help establish a baseline understanding of the flora and fauna in the Monument, assisting land managers in making informed decisions for the future.

We are excited for the opportunities before us.

We will continue to provide visitor services and Monument information, as well as presentations and demonstrations at the BEEC, all while working to create new exhibits. We are also working to expand our learning opportunities for students at all schools in San Juan County, including star parties for students and their families. In partnership with the Town of Bluff, we are continuing in our efforts to become a designated Dark Sky Community by assisting in light monitoring and data recording, as well as providing educational events and materials. *We hope you'll stop by the Bears Ears Education Center next time you're in Bluff to check out our work!*



"It is important to teach children about nature, and what better way to do that by breathing crisp mountain air with the sun on their faces and the scent of pine and sage filling their noses to awaken their curiosity." — Jeremy, BENM Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM



by Ruben Pacheco, Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition Communications & Partnerships Director



DEFENDING SACRED LANDSCAPES: A Transformative Approach to the Management of Bears Ears



A **Western paradigm** may look upon ancient structures through a lens of archeology, and colloquially refer to them as "ruins." It sees the Bears Ears cultural landscape as if it's something to be researched, from the outside looking in, and it sees it as something separate from itself; as if peering in through a window. A **Native paradigm** sees ancient structures and it relates to them as if they are the homes of ancestors. Rather than seeing the cultural landscape through a window, it sees a reflection of itself; as if looking into a mirror.

The five Tribes of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition relate to the landscape with the understanding that the ancestors' spirits are still here and these sites are alive — spiritually, culturally, and metaphysically. **This sacred landscape helps trace the footprints of our ancestors, it tells our stories, and is embedded in our cultural memories and teachings.** That's why five Tribes came together to protect this landscape from acts of desecration.

The Ute Mountain Ute, the Ute Indian, Zuni, and Hopi Tribes, and the Navajo Nation have advocated, in an official capacity, for the creation of Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) since 2015. With the support of Tribal, grassroots, philanthropic, and partner organizations, President Obama acted on the Tribes' request and created the BENM in 2016. Recognizing that Bears Ears is a sacred landscape and that the five Tribes consider the entire region a part of their ancestral homelands, President Obama's (and later, President Biden's) Proclamation recognized the Tribes as collaborative managers by creating the Bears Ears Commission (BEC).

In 2022, the aforementioned five Tribal nations entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to further define the respective governments' expectations for collaborative management. Over the past 21 months, the BLM, the USFS, and the BEC have worked together to create a draft management plan for the BENM.

As land management partners, the agencies have incorporated the Tribes' traditional knowledge and created a novel draft Resource Management Plan, a first-of-its-kind for a National Monument.

The groundbreaking draft plan marks a shift in federal-Tribal relations, representing a more inclusive approach to public lands management. It is the first instance where an Inter-Tribal Coalition has presented their own management plan, informed by traditional and historical knowledge. Although the Tribes contributed to the entire draft plan, Alternative E best aligns with Tribal values and the original intent behind the creation of the BENM.

The Coalition Tribes' accomplishments are extraordinary, and we are honored to work with a diversity of stakeholders. We are indebted to our conservation and grassroots partners, like Bears Ears Partnership, Utah Diné Bikeyah, Grand Canyon Trust, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, and many other organizations who have supported the collaborative management process at Bears Ears.

Help us honor Tribal perspectives by supporting our work, following us on social media, subscribing to our newsletter, and becoming involved in the Bears Ears movement. **To learn more about the Tribes' plan for Bears Ears**, including information about how to provide a public comment on the draft Resource Management Plan for Bears Ears National Monument, **visit BearsEarsCoalition.org**

Collaborative CONSERVATION

by Britt Hornsby, BEP Field Director



We've had an exciting and productive time over my seven years as Field Director at Bears Ears Partnership (BEP), and we're busy working to continue and improve.

No matter the broader challenges to the Bears Ears landscape, we have continued to build partnerships, employ and engage Indigenous youth, and complete meaningful and significant conservation and preservation projects within the Monument. I'd like to share three projects that represent the future of the programs I lead at BEP.



Ryan Pelizzoni,
BEP Field Manager

"Some of my fondest field memories come out of a backcountry hitch in Grand Gulch in late fall. The days were short, the nights long and cold. We were working on a site condition assessment, the first time doing this kind of work with ALCC. The hike in was tough and the packs were heavy — this did not stop us all from packing extra food for a potluck. Over the meal, we talked of the importance of the work and the amazing setting. It was on this same hitch that I could always tell if the crew was awake by the presence of laughter."

Bears Ears Conservation Partnership (BEP)

Since I came on as Field Director, we have been heavily focused on protecting and preserving cultural sites throughout Bears Ears National Monument (BENM), primarily on emergency restorative work for sites that have been damaged by visitation. With over twenty significant cultural sites protected through our efforts, we now have the space to broaden our approach to conservation across the landscape. With support from the Catalyst Fund, BEP is pulling together our partners to form the BECP, a new initiative to organize conservation goals and plans across agencies and partners. To advance this work, at the end of 2023, BEP was awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for \$370,000 over three years to accomplish much needed spring and stream restoration projects on USFS lands in BENM. We are coordinating with the Manti-La Sal National Forest to begin implementation of these projects with Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps crews in 2024.

Sand Island

For the past three years, we have been working closely with World Monuments Fund (WMF), Bureau of Land Management, and Tribal partners to **develop much needed visitor services** at the Sand Island Upper Panel. The Upper Panel is a well-known rock imagery site, but lacks the infrastructure needed to thoroughly protect the site and highlight the cultural importance of this incredible panel. We have hosted many Tribal partners at Sand Island to receive guidance on planning and design, and we are currently completing a series of ethnographic studies with Living Heritage Anthropology. We are in the final stages of preliminary planning and anticipate breaking ground on this exciting project in early fall of 2024.

Muley Point

We are also working closely with Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA) and World Monuments Fund to **address the visitor service needs** at Muley Point, an increasingly popular viewpoint on the west side of Cedar Mesa. As visitation to this location increases, the area has seen graffiti, creation or reopening of undesignated routes, many undesignated fire pits, as well as general trash and human waste. We are currently working to formalize our partnership with GCNRA and WMF and will begin the design phase of the project this year.



OUR IMPACT IS GREATER TOGETHER:

A Shared Perspective from ALCC

by Kevin Coeeyate,
ALCC Program Manager



The essence of conservation work begins with an understanding of the connection between people and land. Through this perspective, trails, riverways, and canyon walls become more than recreational ventures; the evidence and history of people inhabiting and utilizing arid lands and harsh canyon curves are seen all throughout the greater Bears Ears area.

Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps (ALCC) was established in 2008 to connect Indigenous youth to conservation efforts happening across the nation. The Ancestral Lands initiative has since grown bigger than imagined and strives to be a beacon of hope and a pathway to success for aspiring youth in Indigenous communities. Community members from the Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Zuni, Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, and Pueblo of Isleta, just to name a few, have the unique experience to come together and become stewards of the land. Having the opportunity to walk the ancestral pathways brings a valued sense of reconnection to a long ago past. Cultural belief and Traditional Knowledge, for some participants, affirms a reality that may only have been referenced in songs and prayers.

In 2021, Bears Ears Partnership (BEP) funded a Historic Preservation crew from the ALCC Zuni office to work alongside staff from the Woods Canyon Archeological Consultants group to help stabilize the River House site. While at River House, the preservation crew conducted a familiar task of mixing mud or mortar to fill voids or place stones in existing walls. As they worked an 8-day work week, they reminisced on the project location and how it tied into their "Emergence Story," as their ancestors journeyed from the Grand Canyon area and all throughout the Southwest region in search of "home."

"Petroglyphs, pictographs, pottery shards, and other remnants are indicators or clues that the Zuni ancestors traveled through and established dwellings in Bears Ears," according to Zuni Cultural Advisory Team leader Octavius Seowtewa, who was also invited by BEP to help educate ALCC crews and BEP staff alike on the cultural significance of Bears Ears to the A:shiwi or Zuni People.

To help pass time, Corps participants often sing, laugh, pray, and provide offerings to both the land and the existing energy. Language and culture practices are once again introduced to the land and acknowledgements and affirmations are often felt through unexpected rain drizzles or the occasional gobble from a flock of turkeys nearby. And through a familiar landscape of juniper and red clay, many ALCC participants feel at "home" in Bears Ears.



Through collaboration and intentional project focus, we can see a reconnection of ancestral paths during on-the-ground efforts of ALCC participants.

Professionals in their respective fields — from archeologists to the passionate rock climber — have a chance to exchange knowledge and inspire youth from ALCC, while crew members gain a deeper understanding of their own histories through the land. With this continued collaboration, the canyon curves once again pulse with purpose and promise; with each offering to the land through work, food, prayer, and even laughter, we make a promise and commitment to take care of the land.

History was written to highlight a "long-ago people of the land" who were written off as "extinct" I feel **we are in the works of rewriting history to highlight to future generations proof of how we took care of the land** amidst the environmental, political, and global challenges and the steps we took to restore justice, rehabilitate ecosystems, and a build a good community of support, solidifying the notion that "Our Impact is Greater Together." *Elahkwa — Thank You.*



A REMARKABLE TIME OF Growth & Progress

by David Nimkin,
President of BEP Board of Directors

In just the last 18 months, we have continued to celebrate and defend the re-establishment of the boundaries for Bears Ears National Monument (BENM) while evolving our organization from Friends of Cedar Mesa to Bears Ears Partnership.

This is a change that reflects a renewed focus on building strong relationships among Tribal partners, public land managers and a broad, supportive network of donors, volunteers and advocates. It also reflects our strategic priority to protect and build respect for the cultural and natural landscapes for the greater Bears Ears region.

In addition to our focus on the Monument Management Planning process, our expanded capacity has helped us **further develop our programs in education, interpretation initiatives and our field and cultural site conservation work.** We are working closely with allies on a Tribal-led initiative to advance durable protections for "The Lands Between" — a region of profound cultural significance that is at risk. And we are prepared, as always, to advocate for this special landscape.

Credit for this growth and progress is shared among so very many of our partners, but the heavy lifting is borne by an incredible staff. They have grown, they have matured, and they approach the critical tasks of their work with a level of care, dedication and sensitivity that is necessary for success.

The Bears Ears Partnership Board of Directors, in conjunction with our staff, have helped to frame our strategic priorities. We have instituted a plan for succession for Board Members that establishes term limits and three members have retired (*sort of*) from the board. A big thanks to Marcia Simonis, Steve Simpson, and the former and founding board President, Vaughn Hadenfeldt. Our success and sustained progress is due in no small part to your contributions.

In the words of our incoming Board Members ...

"I'm so happy to be joining the Board of this influential organization and look forward to what the future holds." — *Hillary Hoffmann*

"I worked with the Partnership (formerly Friends of Cedar Mesa) when we initiated the Intertribal Bear Ears Coalition. And I was delighted when Joe called to ask if I was interested in being a Board Member. I'm very grateful for the work BEP does." — *Alfred Lomahquahu*

"I believe as we step forward as Board Members, we are building a more just and equitable future that requires acknowledging the injustices of the past and present. I am committed to supporting and advocating the cultural and natural landscapes of the greater Bears Ears region. This is our shared journey towards a future where the rights and contributions of all are recognized and celebrated." — *Davina Smith*

We rely on our network of donors to make our work possible; please consider making a contribution. You can also join other supporters this year in considering BEP in your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA or including BEP in your will, trust, or other tax-deferred giving vehicle to leave a lasting legacy. **Visit BearsEarsPartnership.org/donate-now to find out more.**



Visit with Respect™

To join and learn more about the VWR campaign, visit BearsEarsPartnership.org/visit-with-respect

or scan the QR code with your smartphone to learn more on our website.



As visitors to the greater Bears Ears region, **it is our responsibility to protect its cultural and natural resources.** This is both out of respect to the region's Tribes and Pueblos, and for all visitors who come next. Over the past ten years, heightened attention and interest in the area have rapidly increased visitation, causing concern that the landscape is at great risk of being "loved to death."

In response to the increase in visitation, we developed the **Visit With Respect (VWR) campaign** to encourage responsible visitation and to curb the degradation of this living landscape.



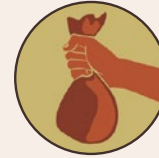
Remember That Ancestral Landscapes Are Sacred



View Sites from a Distance



Don't Touch Rock Imagery or Make Your Own



Pack Out Your Poop



Stay on Designated Roads



Historic Artifacts Aren't Trash



Steer Clear of Ancestral Structures



Use Rubber-Tipped Poles



Leave Fossils & Bones Undisturbed



Guide Children through Sites



Dogs & Archaeology Don't Mix



Use a Fire Pan



GPS Reveals Too Much



Enjoy Cultural Sites Without Ropes



Refrain from Grinding Ancestral Slicks



Stay on Established Trails



Pay Your Fees



Avoid Building Cairns



Leave Cultural Belongings Where They Are



Camp & Eat Away from Archaeology


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