Dear members,

This week, President Trump turned against our country’s public lands by announcing a drastic – and possibly illegal – attack on national monuments in southern Utah. The president announced his plan to dramatically reduce Bears Ears National Monument and Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument. He will eliminate 84% of Bears Ears National Monument, and rescind about half of Grand-Staircase Escalante National Monument. Both monuments have significant outdoor recreation resources, including world-famous climbing, mountain biking, whitewater paddling, hiking, canyoneering, and even skiing.

If he succeeds, President Trump’s actions would be a historic attack on public lands as the largest reduction of what we had once considered permanent protections. The president’s legal authority to take the actions he announced today is extremely questionable, and a number of groups, including Native American tribes, conservation groups, and recreation groups, are evaluating or are expected to take legal action. The American Canoe Association will continue to support the efforts of our partners mounting legal challenges to these rollbacks.

The four biggest problems with the rolled back protections:

1. **Resource extraction:** Trump cut back the monuments in a way to clearly allow for extractive industries to exploit coal (in Grand Staircase-Escalante) and oil and gas (in Bears Ears).
2. **Poor land management:** Potential resource extraction is not the only issue. The new, fragmented monuments prevent landscape scale management, which makes it more difficult to protect the larger region efficiently.
3. **Outdoor recreation:** The new proclamations do not mention climbing or recreation. The original monument proclamation for Bears Ears reflected this involvement and included recognition of the importance of outdoor recreation in the area. Monuments do not necessarily protect recreation access, so by losing any mention of recreation, we are much worse off. We must now fight to maintain that ground, and to ensure public access.
4. **Public access:** Both the Bears Ears National Monument proclamation and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument proclamation provided public access for many activities, from climbing to wood and herb gathering. The revised designations put public access at risk.
For now, we wanted to take a moment to provide you with some information, and look forward to following up with more specific information on proposed legislation and a call to let congressional members know that you do not support rollbacks on monument protections. The ACA wants to help ensure future attacks are less likely, and also lay the groundwork for reestablishing monument protections for these areas.

Sincerely,

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