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Sierra Club Celebrates Establishment of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument

Grand Canyon, AZ – Today, President Biden issued a proclamation utilizing the Antiquities Act to establish the **Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument** to protect 917,618 acres of public lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park.

In April, the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition, consisting of leaders from the Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Navajo Nation, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes, called on President Biden to establish the national monument.

Tribal Nations have been advocating for protection of the area for decades and are the original stewards of the Grand Canyon region since time immemorial. This national monument holds significant cultural and spiritual narratives and includes lands with many natural and cultural resources that are significant and sacred to Tribes. The area is home to abundant biological diversity and unique ecology, including life-giving springs and groundwater that are threatened by uranium mining. The Grand Canyon region provides important habitat for endangered species such as the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) and Brady pincushion cactus (*Pediocactus bradyi*). It is also a critical refuge and migratory corridor for hundreds of bird species and mammals.

In response, Sandy Bahr, director for the Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter, released the following statement:

"Sierra Club thanks President Biden for hearing and responding to the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition's request to establish the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. The designation of this monument will safeguard traditional use, regional groundwater and critical springs, and important cultural areas, such as the Red Butte Traditional Cultural Property, from harmful development and toxic uranium mining, making permanent a ban on mining that was enacted administratively in 2012. Today's proclamation is supported by Tribes, businesses, local community leaders, environmental protection advocates, faith leaders, hunters and anglers, and many more. President Biden has taken a historic step to safeguard the greater Grand Canyon region and to ensure that the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition has a leadership role in the management of these lands going forward as they continue their stewardship roles, which have been in place since time immemorial."

In response, Alicyn Gitlin, program manager for the Grand Canyon Chapter's Restore and Protect Grand Canyon Campaign, added the following statement:

"We're thrilled to see today's action by the President and in addition to thanking him, we want to send our heartfelt thanks to the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition for their leadership in advancing this important action. The Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument will help protect the region's waters, including the Kanab Creek drainage, from harmful uranium mining and limit development that destroys important values of the area, including protection of key wildlife habitat and corridors that connect the region and old growth ponderosa pines in the southern portion of the monument."

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About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.8 million members and supporters, thousands of whom live in the greater Grand Canyon region and throughout Arizona who are part of the Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, [visit www.sierraclub.org/arizona](http://www.sierraclub.org/arizona).