



## Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition Celebrates Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument Designation

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RED BUTTE, AZ -The Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition celebrates President Biden traveling to Red Butte today to designate the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. In anticipation of his official declaration, we thank President Biden, Secretary Haaland, and Secretary Vilsack for hearing our voices and protecting 917,618 acres of our ancestral homelands and our water sources that flow into the Colorado River, preserving them for future generations. We thank Representative Grijalva for his leadership over many years, and Senator Sinema for supporting our monument proposal.

We are representatives of Tribes with deep and timeless connections to the lands of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. We trace our ancestry here,

and many of our ancestors are buried here. We have stewarded these lands since time immemorial and we are still here.

The Grand Canyon region is sacred to each of us; it is a place where we see and understand our history. It is vital to our future as an eternal home and source of spiritual sustenance. Although many of our people were unjustly removed from these lands, our connections to this place and our responsibility to protect it remains strong.

Many of us have worked for decades to safeguard our Grand Canyon homelands from desecration at the hands of extractive, harmful operations like uranium mining, and today, with the designation of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, we see these lands permanently protected at last.

We thank the president for listening to our voices and protecting our homelands, now and forever into the future, for all our children and grandchildren.

“The Colorado River Indian Tribes has a timeless religious and deep economic connection to the Colorado River, which is inextricably connected to the lands of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. We thank President Biden and his administration for taking this vital step forward to protect the health of the Colorado River, the surrounding lands, and the irreplaceable cultural resources. This designation honors the tribal connections to the surrounding lands and the value of tribal stewardship in protecting the waters that flow through the Grand Canyon down to our reservation.” – **Amelia Flores, Chairwoman for the Colorado River Indian Tribe**

“The Havasupai Tribe celebrates this historic moment in time, but we also pause for a moment to honor our tribal ancestors who started this journey long ago. Many Havasupai tribal leaders have carried this battle on their shoulders over the decades and we are the fortunate ones to experience this unprecedented time in which our historic lands, water, sacred objects, and sites now hold the power and protection, which they rightfully deserve, under the supreme law of the land by the stroke of President Biden’s pen. President Biden’s action today will solidify our Tribe’s existence on, under, and over this land forever. Although there is still more work to do, we will sleep easier tonight knowing that our water, sacred sites, and plant medicines are more protected, and that our ancestors’ tears are finally tears of happiness.” – **Thomas Siyuja Sr., Chairman for the Havasupai Tribe**

**The Hopi Tribe released the following statement:**

“Life continues here at Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni. Hopi would like to recognize all those in support of protecting itah tutskwa (ancestral land) and preserving sacred places. Hisat Sinom (ancestors) have left us connected to songs, dances, and ceremonies since time immemorial. As stewards of the land we will continue to safeguard the future for generations to come.”

“The Las Vegas Paiute Tribe is very pleased to witness the ongoing efforts to protect sacred ancestral Tribal homelands. We celebrate, with all of Indian Country, this significant development in recognition of the importance of Native history.” - **Deryn Pete, Las Vegas Paiute Chairwoman**

“This is a great day today witnessing our Tribal Nations coming together in the protection and unity of our voices, speaking on behalf of our traditional ancestral homelands of the Grand Canyon; our Holy Lands.” – **Greg Anderson, Chairman for the Moapa Band of Paiutes**

“The Grand Canyon is too important to not protect. And yet there are hundreds of mining claims, and several active uranium mines in the proposed monument area that threaten to poison the landscape and destroy this sacred land. We know from firsthand experience the damage that can be caused by yellow dirt contaminating our water and poisoning our animals and our children. We are thankful to President Biden and the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition for their efforts in pushing this initiative to protect our people from the adverse effects of uranium mining.” – **Navajo Nation President Nygren**

“The Grand Canyon is our ancestral lands. It is where we come from and when the Creator calls us home this is where we will go. My grandpa, the late Edrick Bushhead of the Shivwits Band often talked about the Grand Canyon and the spiritual connection between the Southern Paiutes and the land. He told stories about the sacred ceremonies that took place here, the hunts, the gathering of medicinal plants, and the Indigenous people who lived on the land. He said this land has spiritual importance to our people and if you are lost or confused this is the place to pray, meditate, sing songs and talk to the land. It will help keep you balanced and in harmony. Thank you, President Biden for listening to the voices of our indigenous people and finally protecting our ancestral homeland. Thanks to everyone who worked diligently to bring this to light. Our land will now be preserved, and our sacred areas and sites protected. Ai Yuk, Thank you.” – **Corrina Bow, Chairwoman for the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah**

**The Pueblo of Zuni released the following statement:**

“The Grand Canyon is the place of emergence of the A:shiwí (Zuni People). Since time immemorial we have maintained deep religious and cultural ties to Kuh’nin Akkwenne (Grand Canyon), shaping generations of A:shiwí identity and sense of belonging within our cultural landscape. The fingerprints of our ancestors are evident in Kuh’nin Akkwenne, from the petroglyphs etched onto the rock to the old homes where they lived. Today, we continue to revere this sacred site through song, prayer, and pilgrimage, thereby ensuring Kuh’nin Akkwenne’s continued significance to our people. Through the designation of the Grand Canyon as a national monument, we continue in ancestor’s footsteps of stewardship responsibilities of this important area, from protecting the lowliest of insects to the humans that rely on the life-giving waters.”

“The San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe is honored and grateful that President Biden has chosen to listen to tribes and designate our homelands as a national monument. We have been here for centuries, and are pleased to now have these sacred sites and waters protected today and into the future.” – **Johnny Lehi Jr., President of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe**

“Ai’uck (Thank You) President Biden, Secretary Haaland and Secretary Vilsack.....for hearing our voices on the importance of protecting and preserving our ancestral homelands and for supporting our tribal efforts to designate the Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni as a National Monument.” – **Hope Silvas, Chairwoman for the Shivwits Band of Paiutes**

“The Yavapai-Apache Nation joins with the Tribes represented by the Grand Canyon Tribal Leaders Coalition, and with all Arizona Tribes, in calling on the Administration to protect the spiritual, cultural, and historical connection of the Tribes to the lands of the proposed Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument.” – **Tanya Lewis, Chairwoman for the Yavapai-Apache Nation**

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***Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition***

*Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Tribe*

*of Paiutes, Moapa Band of Paiute Indians, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Shivwits Band of  
Paiutes, Navajo Nation, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, Zuni Tribe,  
and Colorado River Indian Tribes.*