**BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT**

**At a glance:**
Bears Ears NM quick facts

- **Date established:** December 28, 2016
- **Established by:** Presidential proclamation, President Barack Obama
- **Forest Service region:** 4, Intermountain Region
- **State:** Utah
- **Associated national forest(s):** Manti-LaSal
- **Total Forest Service acres:** 289,000 (approx. 1.06 million Bureau of Land Management acres)
- **Reasons designated:** to “preserve its cultural, prehistoric, and historic legacy and maintain its diverse array of natural and scientific resources, ensuring that the prehistoric, historic, and scientific values of this area remain for the benefit of all Americans.” (Presidential Proclamation, 2016)

**People and visitors**

- **Nearest metropolitan area:** Grand Junction, CO; 104 miles
- **Population within 25 miles:** 6,959
- **Population within 100 miles:** 401,501
- **Annual visitors estimate and geography:** Manti-LaSal National Forest: 295,353 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)
- **Main recreational uses:** Hunting, fishing, climbing, hiking, off-highway vehicle use

**DESCRIPTION**

Bears Ears National Monument (NM) is located in Southeast Utah, south of Moab. The monument is named for a twin pair of buttes resembling bears ears rising over 8,700 feet in elevation. The landscape surrounding its namesake buttes is a mosaic of red rock arches, canyons, grassy plateaus, and mountain peaks. Engelmann spruce and aspen grow at higher elevations, with desert flora such as yucca and prickly pear common in the canyons. Recreational highlights in the NM include rock climbing on sandstone crags in the Indian Creek area, canyoneering in Fry Canyon, plentiful opportunities for hiking, and dark skies excellent for stargazing.

Bears Ears NM is jointly managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, with the council of a tribal commission formed to ensure integration of tribal experience and traditional knowledge with management. The Bears Ears area is the ancestral grounds of several tribes and continues to be an important location for traditional uses and ceremonies. Its boundaries contain a rich archaeological record of rock art, ancient cliff dwellings, ceremonial sites, and other sites sacred to Native American Tribes.

**BACKGROUND**

The Bears Ears area is the ancestral grounds of Native Americans going back at least 12,500 years and evidence of their occupation is prevalent throughout the monument. In the early 2010’s, a coalition of five federally recognized tribes developed a proposal to protect the archaeological heritage of the area under the Antiquities Act. Due to their efforts, nearly 80 years after the first calls for protection, Bears Ears National Monument was established by President Barack Obama on December 28, 2016 through presidential proclamation.
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 3: Southwest
Region 7: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

0 500 1,000 Miles
0 1,000 2,000 Miles
0 250 500 Miles

Iconic places
USDA Forest Service land
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Google Earth
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Photo: Google Earth.
The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (NRA) is located in the northeast corner of Utah and the southwest corner of Wyoming. Explorer John Wesley Powell named the area for the fiery colors of its sandstone walls during an 1869 expedition down the Green River. The NRA is based around the Flaming Gorge Reservoir, and extends into the Uintah Mountains, hosting a mixture of climate, topography, and recreation opportunities. The reservoir is stocked with several species of fish and is well known for its fishing opportunities, as well as boating, swimming, picnicking, camping, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

The NRA hosts 43 campgrounds dispersed around approximately 360 miles of shoreline, as well as opportunities for more secluded or primitive camping. Although the area is located somewhat remotely from metropolitan areas, there are several nearby small communities that offer a variety of lodging accommodations, recreation services, and other resources to visitors.

In 1956, Congress authorized large-scale development of the Upper Colorado River Basin resources with the passage of the Colorado River Storage Project Act. In 1964, construction was completed on the Flaming Gorge Dam across the Green River, creating the Flaming Gorge Reservoir which extends 91 miles north of the dam. In 1968, the NRA was designated by Congress to “provide a highly significant water-based recreation area on lands largely in Federal ownership in the part of the United States where water is scarce... [and to] help meet the rapidly increasing needs of the American people for wholesome outdoor recreation, and preserve for them outstanding natural, historic, scenic, and recreation resources” (U.S. Congress, 1968).
USDA Forest Service land
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Region 1: Northern
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Region 3: Southwest
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Region 7: Intermountain
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Region 9: Eastern
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Photo: View of Flaming Gorge Rim coming out of Kingfisher Canyon on the Flaming Gorge Reservoir. Public domain available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/107640324@N05/13944376317/.
SAWTOOTH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:
Sawtooth NRA quick facts

Date established: August 22, 1972
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 92-400
Forest Service region: 4, Intermountain
State: Idaho
Associated national forests: Sawtooth, Challis, and Boise
Total Forest Service acres: 731,774
Reasons designated: “to assure the preservation and protection of the natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values and to provide for the enhancement of the recreational values associated therewith” (U.S. Congress, 1972)

DESCRIPTION
The Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA) is located in Central Idaho, north of Ketchum. At 756,000-acres, it is the largest of the Forest Service’s National Recreation Areas, encompassing the Sawtooth, Boulder, White Cloud, and Smoky Mountain Ranges with more than 50 peaks rising over 10,000-feet above sea level. It is also the headwaters of six of Idaho’s major rivers, including the Salmon and the Boise.

The Sawtooth NRA was sculpted by glaciers, leaving behind a landscape of glacial cirques, granite spires and jagged ridges, mountain meadows, and at least 300 high elevation alpine lakes. The diverse landscapes provide habitats for hundreds of species, including wolves, wolverines, mountain goats, native cutthroat and bull trout, and moose. Three scenic byways converge in Stanley nearby the NRA. The area provides summer and winter recreation opportunities, with over 700 miles of trails, 78 miles of groomed ski trails, and over 3,000 miles of streams and rivers where visitors can raft and fish.

BACKGROUND
There were several attempts to designate the country surrounding the Sawtooth Mountains as a National Park beginning in 1911, but none were successful. In the 1960’s, a proposed strip mine on the northeast flank of Castle Peak brought together a group of passionate scientists, fishermen, and other concerned citizens to create a campaign protesting the mine, ultimately founding the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council. In August of 1972, the council triumphed with the designation of the NRA by Congress, effectively removing the land from mineral entry while allowing ranchers to continue utilizing the area. The Sawtooth NRA was officially established as a way to preserve not only the scenic and recreational value but also the way of life of ranchers in the area.

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Boise, ID; 85 miles
Population within 25 miles: 22,268
Population within 100 miles: 974,743
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Sawtooth National Recreation Area: 302,703 estimated annual visits (2015, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Camping, hiking, backpacking, fishing, boating and canoeing, rafting, observing nature, photography, bicycling
Iconic places

USDA Forest Service Regions

Urban areas

Interstates

Region 1: Northern
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Photo: Baron Pass in the Sawtooths NRA. Credit: Autumn Ellison.
**Spring Mountains National Recreation Area**

**At a glance:**

**Spring Mountains NRA quick facts**

**Date established:** August 4, 1993  
**Established by:** Congressional designation, Public Law 103-63  
**Forest Service region:** 4, Intermountain  
**State:** Nevada  
**Associated national forest:** Humboldt-Toiyabe  
**Total Forest Service acres:** 316,698  
**Reasons designated:** to “(1) preserve scenic, scientific, historic, cultural, natural, wilderness, watershed, riparian, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and other values contributing to public enjoyment and biological diversity in the Spring Mountains of Nevada; (2) ensure appropriate conservation and management of natural and recreation resources in the Spring Mountains; and (3) provide for the development of public recreation opportunities in the Spring Mountains for the enjoyment of present and future generations.” (U.S. Congress, 1993)

**People and visitors**

**Nearest metropolitan area:** Las Vegas, NV; 23 miles  
**Population within 25 miles:** 1,874,658  
**Population within 100 miles:** 2,287,779  
**Annual visitors estimate and geography:** Spring Mountains National Recreation Area: 563,458 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)  
**Main recreational uses:** Bicycling, camping, hiking, backpacking, picnicking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing, sledding, tubing

**Description**

The Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA) is a long, linear, north-south range of mountains located just 30 minutes west from downtown Las Vegas, adjacent to the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. These snow-capped peaks offer a refuge from the surrounding Mojave Desert and the city, with an astounding array of biodiversity found within its many climate and vegetation zones. The NRA is home to over fifty sensitive animal and plant species found nowhere else on earth. Rising in elevation from 4,000-feet, the landscape quickly transitions from desert scrub through juniper and ponderosa pine woodlands, aspen-white fir forest, and stands of bristlecone pines up to the alpine tundra of Mount Charleston’s 11,916-foot summit. Common wildlife found within the towering crags, deep canyons, and steep slopes of the NRA include mule deer, bighorn sheep, elk, mountain lions, broad tailed hummingbirds, and Steller’s jays. The Spring Mountains are named for the large amount of springs lying within the range, with the largest concentration being found on the eastern side of the mountains.

**Background**

The Spring Mountains were first recognized for their uniqueness in 1906 when, under the authority of the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, President Theodore Roosevelt designated the southern portion of the mountain range as the Charleston Forest Reserve. Following this designation, the reserve was combined with and transferred between national forests, eventually landing within the Toiyabe Forest.

In the 1930’s, the Civilian Conservation Corps played an instrumental role in developing the Spring Mountains, building many of the roads and campgrounds still standing within the NRA. Additional land was added to the Reserve in 1989 and the Spring Mountains NRA was officially designated by Congress in 1993.
First snow in 2012 in the Spring Mountains NRA. Photo by Michael Balen, December 2012. Credit: USDA Forest Service. Public domain. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/107640324@N05/11951346644/in/album-72157639368480523/.