

Obama's legacy: Some 24 national monuments

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The race is on to win President Barack Obama's attention as he puts some final touches on his environmental legacy.

Conservation groups, American Indian tribes and federal lawmakers are urging his administration to preserve millions of acres as national monuments. Such a designation often prevents new drilling and mining on public lands, or the construction of new roads and utility lines.

The flurry of activity is creating enthusiasm — and tensions — in several parts of the country.

Efforts are underway in Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Maine and elsewhere to get Obama to designate new national monuments. Proponents aren't just focused on land. They're also looking to greater protections for vast swaths of ocean bottom off the coasts of New England, California and Hawaii.

Obama has created or expanded 24 national monuments during his seven-and-a-half-year tenure, the most of any president. Almost nobody thinks he's done yet. Environmental groups are urging him to go big as he leaves office.

"What he's done in terms of protection has been good, but what he does next is how we measure whether his legacy is great or not," said Sharon Buccino of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Proponents of the various monument proposals know that the next administration will have other immediate priorities. Some presidents, including Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, never exercised their powers to designate national monuments through the 1906 Antiquities Act. The proponents recognize the window of opportunity could be closing for several years.

They're also aware that Obama's immediate predecessors, Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, waited almost exclusively until their final months in office to designate national monuments, so there is a chance Obama will become even more active.

That's disconcerting for many members in Congress, particularly Republicans, who say the Antiquities Act wasn't designed to bolster a president's legacy.

"Presidents are starting to abuse



In this 2015 file photo, President Barack Obama, center, talks about the designation of three new national monuments — Berryessa Snow Mountain in California, Waco Mammoth in Texas, and the Basin and Range in Nevada — in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.

A look at various national monument proposals nationally

Oregon: Keen Footwear is working with various environmental groups to designate 2.5 million acres in southeastern Oregon, an area twice the size of Yellowstone National Park, as the Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument.

Utah: A coalition of five Indian tribes is leading an effort to designate 1.9 million acres in the southeast corner of the state as the Bears Ears National Monument. The tribes say Native Americans were forcibly removed from the land and marched to reservations, but the land remains important to their heritage and should be protected from mining and what they describe as irresponsible off-road vehicle use and rampant looting. The National Congress of American Indians has also endorsed the effort, which is overwhelmingly opposed by state officials.

Arizona: Various environmental groups and Indian tribes announced the delivery in July of more than 550,000 petition signatures and comments urging the president to create a buffer zone around Grand Canyon National Park. The proposed Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument would consist of 1.7 million acres outside the park boundaries and prevent new uranium mining. The state's Chamber of Commerce said the designation would

have far-reaching consequences for public access, water rights and resource management, saying a national monument designation would only hurt, not help, the state.

Maine: A private foundation formed by Roxanne Quimby, co-founder of Burt's Bees personal care products, has proposed donating about 87,000 acres for the creation of the Maine Woods National Monument. The foundation would also provide a \$40 million endowment to support maintenance costs.

Nevada: Sen. Harry Reid has voiced his support for the creation of the Gold Butte National Monument, a 350,000-acre region of red sandstone canyons about an hour outside the Las Vegas Strip. The Gold Butte proposal includes land where cattle belonging to rancher Cliven Bundy roamed. Bundy led an armed standoff with federal officials in 2014, and environmental groups complain that Gold Butte's ecosystem has faced catastrophic damage from illegal cattle grazing and rampant use of off-road vehicles.

Massachusetts: Some in Congress are calling for the first marine national monument off the continental United States to be located about 150 miles off Cape Cod where a series of canyons and mountains are home to an array of deep sea corals species important to the survival of many fish, whales and sea turtles. The New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument would contain up to 6,173 square miles.

this authority as they leave the office. If they actually tried to do this on the first day so that Congress had some ability to respond to it, and the

people did, I'd be more comfortable about what their motives are," said GOP Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah, chairman of the House Natural

Resources Committee.

Christy Goldfuss, managing director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, won't

discuss specific national monument possibilities, but said Obama "certainly feels we have more to do to protect this planet from climate change, so we'll see how this plays out."

Bishop said lawmakers would work with the administration on additional protections for some public lands, but environmental groups and others are less willing to compromise knowing they can go to the president to get a national monument designation.

"It actually impedes the ability of bringing everyone together knowing the president has this power to create a monument whenever he wants to," Bishop said.

Goldfuss said the administration works to get extensive local feedback before making any monument determination. She and others such as Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack feed the president information, but in the end, it's his decision.

"It is all about taking the long view here and recognizing there are things of importance to future generations, and the president is in a good spot to make that determination," Goldfuss said.

Bishop's state is home to perhaps the most talked about effort, the proposed Bears Ears National Monument.

Utah's Republican-dominated Legislature overwhelming voted for a resolution opposing the monument. Republican Gov. Gary Herbert said a monument designation would bring more visitors but not necessarily more resources, leading to an increase in vandalism and environmental degradation.

Bishop wants instead additional protections for about 1.4 million acres of the Bears Ears area and opening up other lands for gas and oil exploration and recreation.

Matt Keller, the national monuments campaign director for the Wilderness Society, said he believes the prospects for a monument designation in Bears Ears are promising. Jewell's fact-finding trip to the region last month shows the administration is serious about protecting the thousands of artifacts and rock carvings documenting how Native Americans lived through the centuries.

"A big priority for them is protecting lands that are inclusive of diverse populations and tell the story of the American people a little more broadly," Keller said.

BLOOMIN' BLUES

Common cinquefoil defies scientific classification

By BRUCE BARNES
For The East Oregonian

Name: Sticky Cinquefoil
Scientific name: *Potentilla glandulosa*

This is fairly common throughout much of the west, from Southwest Canada to Mexico, and the Pacific to the Rockies. The plant's classification has been debated for the last two centuries, beginning with scientific consensus in the early 1800s when they described it as being about 15 separate plants, all slightly different, divided among two genera, *Potentilla* and *Drymocaulis*.

Eventually in the 1970s consensus came to see it as the single, somewhat variable species as named here. Then four years ago it was again split into about 15 species and varieties, all under the genus *Drymocaulis*.

I figure the dust is yet to settle on this, so I'm "sticking" with the name most people today know it as (pardon the pun).

The name *Potentilla* comes from the Latin "potens," which means powerful, referring to the medicinal qualities it was thought to have. The species name *glandulosa* refers to the glandular hairs usually found on the plant, which secrete a sticky substance at the tips.

"Cinquefoil" means five fingers, referring to many species of *Potentilla* that have leaves divided into five



Photo courtesy Bruce Barnes

Sticky Cinquefoil

leaflets.

The plant is a perennial, standing 1-2 feet high, and is usually coated with a sticky substance secreted by a dense covering of hairs.

The leaves at the base of the plant are divided into 3 to 9 leaflets arranged along a central midrib. Leaves on the stem are usually limited to 3 leaflets. The leaflets are sharply toothed along the edges.

The flowers are bright yellow, in openly spreading arrangements at the stem tops.

Each flower is about 3/4 inch wide, has five round

petals, and many yellow stamens at the center. Beneath the petals are 5 pointed sepals alternating with 5 shorter sepal-like bracts.

Indian tribes in the west used the plant for poultices to reduce swelling. Many tribes used it to make a stimulant or tonic.

Where to find: The plant should still be blooming at upper elevations in meadows and open forests. If you find what looks like the plant, check the leaves at the base to be sure, and check for the glandular hairs, which will make your fingers stinky and sticky.

BRIEFLY

More lawsuits to stop plan to spy wild horses

BEND (AP) — More advocacy groups have filed lawsuits seeking injunctions to stop researchers from surgically sterilizing more than 200 wild mares in central Oregon.

The Bulletin reports that American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign and The Cloud Foundation jointly filed a lawsuit on Monday against the Bureau of Land Management arguing that the agency had violated the groups' First Amendment rights by rejecting their request to record the procedures.

Bureau officials say they are still reviewing the latest lawsuits.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has said the research in Hines,

Oregon, would help determine whether the three methods to be studied could be safely used to control the wild horse population.

Front Range Equine Rescue and Friends of Animals have also sued the agency over the proposed sterilization.

Tribes can gather park plants under new federal rule

PHOENIX (AP) — Tribes can begin entering into agreements with the National Park Service to allow their members to pick plants on protected land under a new federal rule.

The rule announced in June by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell went into effect Thursday.

Under the rule, tribes must have a culturally significant tie to the land

that makes up a national park in order for its members to harvest foliage that grows there.

And Native Americans or Alaskan Natives must use the plants for traditional reasons, such as using a root for medicinal purposes, or branches or bark to make a basket.

There are 58 national parks in the U.S., with some covering vast expanses within proximity to some of the nation's largest Indian reservations.

Thunderstruck hosts its Xtreme Bike Show

Thunderstruck Custom Bikes will rock the block in downtown Medford when it hosts its 20th annual Xtreme Bike Show and Street Party Saturday, Aug. 20.

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