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Friends of Four of Arizona's National Monuments Denounce Trump's Executive Order *Lend Support for the Antiquities Act*

Phoenix (May 2, 2017) — Friends of four of Arizona's National Monuments are raising concerns about President Trump's recent Executive Order targeting national monuments designated under the Antiquities Act since 1996 and are calling for congressional review.

[Friends of the Ironwood Forest National Monument](#), [Agua Fria National Monument](#), [Sonoran Desert National Monument](#) and [Vermilion Cliffs National Monument](#) each stood united in condemning the Order on the day it was signed, and join together again this week to reinforce their support for the preservation of public lands and take a strong stand against the executive action.

"It's important that we stand united and call upon our elected leaders at the national, state and local levels to take the action necessary to preserve our nation's cultural heritage and natural resources," says Sarah Striker, President of the Friends of Agua Fria National Monument. Agua Fria's designation is critical to protecting the thousands of cultural heritage sites in the Perry Mesa National Register District as well as irreplaceable habitats for threatened species. "As the land manager for [Agua Fria](#) and other National Monuments, the Bureau of Land Management has facilitated mixed uses—from scientific research and camping to hiking, hunting, mining and cattle grazing—and established a balance reflecting the priorities of the local communities that would be highly unlikely without federal protections," says Striker.

"These four National Monuments represent the cultural and biological diversity of Arizona stretching back nearly ten thousand years. In the case of [Ironwood Forest](#), a review should only strengthen our case for designation. Since it became a National Monument in 2000, additional discoveries indicate a local native lineage stretching twice as far into the past as we had previously thought," says Tom Hannagan, Board President for Friends of Ironwood Forest.

Thom Hulen, Board Member and former Executive Director for Friends of Sonoran Desert National Monument claims the Order stands to adversely impact the area's natural beauty, as well as hinder its economic growth if the lands are opened to speculation by extractive industries. "The economic impact of public lands is significant. When areas achieve the designations that [Sonoran Desert National Monument](#) and others have, there's a long-term, net positive impact on the surrounding communities. Many of these are rural communities that rely upon income generated by tourism of these sites and see great community and economic value in their preservation," says Hulen.

This morning, [the House Committee on Natural Resources is holding an oversight hearing that began at 10:00 am EST](#) on the Consequences of Executive Branch overreach of the Antiquities Act.

The groups in question say the Order, which was signed by Trump on April 26, undermines the work of countless individuals and organizations that, over the course of generations, achieved hard-won victories and preserved the area's unique natural heritage.

There is overwhelming public support for the protection of federal lands. According to a 2014 Hart Research poll, more than 90% of Americans supported Presidential proposals to protect public lands and waters. Figures released April 25, 2017 by the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) detail the ways in which the outdoor industry is helping drive our western economies. This includes \$887 billion in economic activity, each year, generated by outdoor recreation supporting more than 7.6 million jobs.

Numerous nonpartisan studies have shown that communities located near monuments and other protected lands have stronger economies, and that the outdoor and recreational opportunities they provide increase residents' quality of life, making areas near these monuments more attractive to new residents, entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Since it was signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, the Antiquities Act has been used on a bipartisan basis by sixteen U.S. Presidents to protect America's most iconic natural, cultural and historic places, including: the Statue of Liberty, Fort Sumter, White Sands National Monument and Muir Woods.

About Friends of Ironwood Forest National Monument

Friends of Ironwood Forest is a local non-profit organization that works for the permanent protection of the biological, geological, archaeological, and historical resources and values for which the Ironwood Forest National Monument was established. They accomplish their mission by providing resources such as volunteers, expertise, public outreach, education, and advocacy on behalf of the Ironwood Forest National Monument.

About Ironwood Forest National Monument

The 129,000-acre Ironwood Forest National Monument in southern Arizona was designated in 2000 by President Bill Clinton to protect unique natural, geologic and cultural values. Its namesake ironwood tree is among the region's oldest-growing trees. Several endangered species live in the monument, including Nichols Turk's head cactuses, lesser long-nosed bats and cactus ferruginous pygmy owls. The monument's population of desert bighorn sheep is the last viable native population in the Tucson basin.

About Friends of Agua Fria National Monument

Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument treasure the monument and want to be sure that its important and sensitive resources are sufficiently protected. In these days of limited funding and resources, the group plays an important role in assisting the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with critical support for monument activities. They organize outings and perform service projects on the monument, such as monitoring trails and cultural resources, removing non-native plant species, performing trash pickups, and recording rock art. They also act as stewards and advocates for the monument, working to ensure that it receives the highest level of protection possible.

About Agua Fria National Monument

The AFNM is located in southeastern Yavapai County, Arizona, and contains 70,900 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands and 1,444 acres of private land. The AFNM Resource Management Plan (RMP) was created in conjunction with planning for the

Bradshaw Harquahala Planning Area. The decisions in the approved RMP only apply to the BLM-administered lands within the AFNM. Popular sites within the Agua Fria National Monument include the Agua Fria River, Badger Springs, and Pueblo La Plata.

About Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument

Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument was formed in 2009 to provide the citizens of the United States with a voice in how the Sonoran Desert National Monument is managed. The Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument is an independent non-profit organization that works with the Bureau of Land Management, other agencies and non-profit organizations to protect the natural and cultural resources of the monument and defend against external activities that may adversely affect the monument.

About Sonoran Desert National Monument

Sonoran Desert National Monument is south of Goodyear and Buckeye and east of Gila Bend, Arizona. Created by Presidential proclamation on January 17, 2001, the 496,400 acres (200,886 ha) monument is managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management as part of the National Conservation Lands.

About Friends of the Cliffs

Friends of The Cliffs was organized as a grassroots, community based organization formed to promote and protect the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument objects and resources. They are dedicated to policies and practices that respect the land, the natural resources and wildlife which make up the National Monument and all public lands. Their goal is to enhance the connection of people to the land ensuring a future of well-managed and valued public lands.

About Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

Amid the sandstone slickrock, brilliant cliffs, and rolling sandy plateaus of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument lie outstanding objects of scientific and historic interest. Full of natural splendor and a sense of solitude, this area remains remote and unspoiled. Its centerpiece is the majestic Paria Plateau, a grand terrace lying between two great geologic structures, the East Kaibab and the Echo Cliffs monoclines. The Vermilion Cliffs, which lie along the southern edge of the Paria Plateau, rise 3,000 feet in a spectacular escarpment capped with sandstone underlain by multicolored, actively eroding, dissected layers of shale and sandstone.