

Congressman  
**RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 2, 2017

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## **Grijalva Joins Environmental Advocates in Calling For National Monument Protection at Ironwood Forest**

TUCSON – Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) hosted a press conference today with local environmental advocates highlighting the threat to Ironwood Forest National Monument and other national monuments across the country posed by the Trump administration. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, President Trump signed an [Executive Order](#) requiring Secretary of Interior, Ryan Zinke to review the monument statuses of 27 national monuments, including Ironwood Forest National Monument. The Order is part of broader GOP attempts to undermine the Antiquities Act, and roll back environmental protections to open up public lands to mining interests, all despite public opposition to such efforts. Ironwood Forest National Monument is one of four national monuments under review in Arizona alone. Covering more than 188,000 acres, it is home to the last remaining population of Desert Bighorn Sheep and a wide diversity of flora and fauna. A poll conducted this year found that Arizonans overwhelmingly [support](#) keeping national monument designation protections in place.

Please see attached for photos of the press conference. A video of the press conference can be viewed at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdJ4A\\_LgIFI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdJ4A_LgIFI)

**Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva**

“As is true with other national monuments that Trump has called upon his Administration to review, Ironwood Forest National Monument plays a greater economic, cultural, and environmental role than he seems to understand,” *said Rep. Grijalva*. “These places are gathering sites for people, they are home to diverse species of plants and wildlife, and they are a unique representation of the diversity found within our nation. They are not sites open to economic exploitation by mining companies and those who seek to get rich off of public lands. I can't in good conscience allow this attack on our public lands to continue knowing that millions, including many Arizonans, have already voiced their concerns on the need to protect these national treasures, not do away with them. I'm proud to stand with a strong coalition of advocates of our environment, our people and our national monuments.”

**William Thornton – Vice President, Friends of Ironwood Forest**

“As Friends of Ironwood Forest, we are appalled at the full frontal assault on our natural heritage set in motion by the president's executive order to review monuments over 100,000 acres and created since 1996,” *said William Thornton*, Vice President of Friends of Ironwood Forest. “Monuments subject to review were created by presidents from both parties. They are our public lands. They do not belong to the Interior Secretary, the president or congress. As part of the National Conservation Lands network we will devote every available resource to keep our natural heritage intact for future generations.”

**Supervisor Sharon Bronson - Pima County Board of Supervisors**

“The Ironwood National Monument remains an essential element in Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and is key to the Section 10 permit we received,” *said Supervisor Bronson*. “Eliminating the Monument or reducing its footprint will threaten both this region's economy and its ecosystem. It was a collaborative effort 10

years in the making that included and was embraced by all stakeholders: developers, investors, small local businesses, neighborhoods and environmentalists.”

**Carolyn Campbell – Executive Director, Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection**

“This monument, and the protection of our ironwood habitat, was very popular at the time of designation, not only with the citizens at public hearings but with elected officials from Pima County, Pinal County, the Tohono O’odham Nation, and others,” *said Carolyn Campbell*, Executive Director of the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection.

“And since this area became a national monument the popularity has only increased, with visitors from around the world coming to enjoy this slice of the Sonoran Desert.”

**Kevin Dahl – Senior Program Manager, National Parks Conservation Association**

“NPCA is opposed to any attempts to rescind or alter the size of any one of our country’s national monuments. And the President does not have the legal authority to do so,” *said Kevin Dahl*, Senior Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association. “National monuments like Ironwood Forest were established to protect some of our country’s most important places. These sites should be revered but instead, they are being subjected to an arbitrary review process by the Trump Administration to determine their fate. More than 2.7 million Americans submitted comments in support of protecting these places. Ironwood Forest provides habitat for desert bighorn sheep, preserves important archaeological and cultural sites, and provides a wide variety of outdoor recreation for visitors. We will continue to fight to ensure that protections stand for Ironwood Forest and all of our monuments under review.”

**Mike Quigley - Arizona State Director, The Wilderness Society**

“We are experiencing an unprecedented attack on our public lands and national monuments by special interests looking to privatize and develop our American heritage - depriving the American people of what is rightfully ours,” *said Mike Quigley*, Arizona State Director with The Wilderness Society. “Arizonans stand with our great many fellow Americans who value and cherish these lands and see them as the treasures they are. We say to the special interests and the Administration: Stop. Enough already. Keep your hands off our national monuments.”

**Sandy Bahr - Chapter Director, Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon Chapter**

“Nine presidents have used the Antiquities Act to protect a diversity of Arizona landscapes, including the Ironwood Forest National Monument, and generations of Arizonans have shown their love for these places by exploring, enjoying, and protecting them,” *said Sandy Bahr*, Chapter Director for Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter. “Ironwood Forest National Monument has these wonderful and resilient ironwood trees for which it is named, but it is also home to a small endangered cactus, the Nichol’s turk’s head cactus, that has prompted hundreds of volunteers to give up many a Saturday and Sunday to remove invasive plants to protect this cactus and other monument resources. We have a lot invested in this beautiful diverse landscape, as well as our other national monuments, and won’t allow it or them to be desecrated by the short-sightedness of this administration.”

**Vice Chairman Verlon Jose – Tohono O’odham Nation**

“We as the Tohono O’odham, as desert people, have an executive order from the Creator. We have a responsibility to care for the people and the land and the animals regardless of barriers, borders, or boundaries,” *said Vice Chairman Verlon Jose*. “That is one of our many principles and teachings as O’odham. We must and shall protect the pristine desert. I call upon the President of the United States and I call upon Secretary Zinke to consult and to take into consideration the concerns of the interested parties of the national monuments.”