



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Tribal leaders join President Biden for the designation of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument



PHOTO: Tribal, state, and federal officials joined U.S. President Joe Biden as he signed a proclamation protecting nearly one million acres of public land surrounding the Grand Canyon National Park.

TUSAYAN, Ariz. — On Tuesday, 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren were among several tribal leaders who joined U.S. President Joe Biden in an area near the Grand Canyon known as Red Butte, as he signed a proclamation establishing the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument in Arizona.

The designation aims to protect nearly one million acres of public lands surrounding the Grand Canyon National Park. Baaj nwaavjo (BAAHJ – NUH-WAAHV-JOH) means “where Indigenous peoples roam” in the Havasupai language, and i'tah kukveni (EE-TAH – KOOK-VENNY) means “our ancestral footprints” in the Hopi language. The name reflects the significance of the Grand Canyon area to surrounding tribes.

“As tribal leaders, it’s important that the Navajo Nation has a seat at the table when it comes to the management of this new national monument. The federal government should always be inclusive of tribal nations in the designation of our homelands. Today marks another step forward in building and strengthening the nation-to-nation relationship with the Biden-Harris Administration,” said Speaker Curley.

Prior to the signing of the proclamation, Miss Navajo Nation Valentina Clitso had the honor of singing the National Anthem in the Navajo language at the start of the ceremony.

Arizona Congressman Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), who played a vital role in securing the designation, provided opening remarks and commended the strength of tribal nations for fighting and overcoming obstacles to help secure the national monument designation.

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, and Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs also spoke during the ceremony and thanked President Biden for working together with tribal nations and for recognizing tribes as the first stewards of the lands.

The designation marks the fifth new national monument established by President Biden. According to the White House, the designation will protect sacred ancestral places and their historically and scientifically important features, while conserving public lands, protecting wildlife habitat and clean water, and supporting local economies.

In addition, the new monument protects cultural and sacred sites that are special to the Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Las Vegas Paiute Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Navajo Nation, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes.

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