



## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Kelly Burke, (928) 606-7870, [kelly@wildarizona.org](mailto:kelly@wildarizona.org)

# **New Monument at Grand Canyon Protects Tribal Homelands, Ecological Treasures from Uranium Mining**

## ***Dedication is Turning Point in Decades-Long Effort by Tribes, Supported by Conservationists***

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — President Biden established the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument today at an early morning Proclamation signing ceremony, in a life-affirming response to the requests of tribal leaders, and to the broad and overwhelming community/public support for the tribal proposal. The dedication marks an historic turning point in a 20-year effort by the Havasupai people, the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition, and a supportive conservation community, to ensure permanent protections for this vulnerable and threatened landscape.

Using his executive authority granted by Congress in the Antiquities Act, the President recognized and provided enduring protection for the cultural and ecological values embraced in 1.1 million acres on the north and south rims of Grand Canyon, surrounding the existing Grand Canyon National Park. "This is a huge success--a legacy for those tribal leaders, communities and organizations who have worked for at least 20 years to protect these magnificent rimlands of the Grand Canyon," said Kelly Burke, Executive Director of Wild Arizona, a conservation group at the forefront of supporting the tribal-led effort.

The designation is a culmination of a long regional fight against the threats to Indigenous life and critical landscapes posed by uranium mining. Lands included form an integral part of the Colorado River's Grand Canyon watershed and comprise an area in which traditional Tribal practices, cultural knowledge, and spiritual ceremonies have taken place for millennia.

"We applaud this new Monument as a key component in protecting a highly-threatened cultural and biological link in Arizona's landscape," stated Burke, "and we wholeheartedly thank President Biden and the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition for the leadership expressed by today's action. Arizona's essential webs of life, including our natural waters, wildlife pathways and the fabric of Tribal cultures are the big winners in this designation."

In addition to protecting Indigenous values, the monument designation acknowledges the key connections between the region's unique ecosystems and the ground and surface waters it delivers from the canyon rims down to the Colorado River. That water could easily be diminished, disrupted, and contaminated by new uranium mining operations.

According to Burke, the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument also serves to help implement the administration's vision of protecting 30% of American lands and waters by 2030. She noted that prevention of further uranium mining along with tribally-engaged improved stewardship of waters and forests, will also increase climate resilience, reduce wildfire severity, limit groundwater loss to industrialization, and protect unique species like endangered California Condor and endemic and culturally important plants, from habitat loss, dewatering of springs, and toxic pollution.

The Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition consists of leadership representatives of the Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Kaibab Paiute Tribe, Las Vegas Band of 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. [Baaj Nwaavjo](#) means "where tribes roam" to the Havasupai, and [I'tah Kukveni](#) means "our ancestral footprints" for the Hopi.