



# Protecting National Parks from Mining Threats – Utah

## Mining on Public Lands and National Parks in Utah

Celebrated for their scenic beauty, abundant wildlife and cultural resources, Utah's national parks—from Canyonlands and Arches to Dinosaur National Monument—are places to be protected and stewarded for future generations to experience. This is why national parks and newly designated conservation areas, such as Bears Ears National Monument, prohibit *new* mining claims within their boundaries. Yet, there are still nearly **500 places** where mining activities remain possible inside of a national park or monument in Utah.



Unlike every other public land use, the specific location of mining claims is largely left up to the claim holder's choice. This drastically limits the ability of Utah's public land managers, like the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service, to protect high value conservation areas. **It is also why 60-percent of mining claims in Utah (over 18,000 total claims) are located within 30 miles of national parks and monuments in Utah.**

While a mine claim does not guarantee an active mine will develop, it is an exceedingly easy first step; a mine claim has a nominal annual fee and few restrictions considering potential harm to surrounding landscapes or communities. As a result, the claim system directly threatens clean air and water, wildlife habitat, connectivity and cultural resources conserved by parks and monuments. In 2023, **15.6 million** people visited Utah's national park sites, contributing **\$3 billion** in economic benefit to the state. Meanwhile, mine claim holders paid less than \$10 per acre to possess public lands with a mine claim. Changes to the mining laws are essential to protect Utah's national parks, monuments and local economies.

## IMPROVING THE CLAIM SYSTEM TO PROTECT PARKS

National parks are places that bring us together even in divided times. Poll after poll shows Americans overwhelmingly support protecting national parks on both sides of the political aisle, united behind clean air, clean water, and healthy wildlife. NPCA is committed to securing bipartisan victories for the parks with commonsense mining law reform and mobilizing park supporters to protect these cherished landscapes. Now, more than ever, our parks need your help.

**For more information:**

Beau Kiklis

Associate Director

Energy and Landscape Conservation Program

[bkiklis@npca.org](mailto:bkiklis@npca.org)



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## SPOTLIGHT

### Canyonlands National Park

Rising interest in lithium extraction is driving new developments on the doorsteps of Canyonlands National Park, an area renowned for its immense outdoor recreation opportunities, serving as a hub to the local economy. This area is also where three major western rivers of the Colorado River Basin converge – the Green, Colorado, and Dolores – and supply clean water for over 40 million people in the region as it flows through several national parks and sites. A blowout at a test well occurred adjacent to the Green River on one of these claims directly threatening the river.

## UTAH'S MINING CLAIMS BY THE NUMBERS

UTAH'S MINING CLAIMS BY THE NUMBERS	
CLAIMS LOCATED ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS	492,178
CLAIMS LOCATED ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS IN UTAH	31,128
CLAIMS WITHIN 30 MILES OF UTAH'S NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS	18,567
CLAIMS INSIDE UTAH'S NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS	480