

APR 21 2000

## EDITORIAL

# 131 Babbitt's Craters visit is prelude for federal land grab

Idaho's elected leaders and some Arco-area residents are feeling jumpy following Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's visit earlier this week. It's the same way chickens feel whenever a fox slips into the henhouse.

Foxes make no bones, ahem, about the purpose of their visit, and neither did Babbitt. He was here to look at the Craters of the Moon National Monument, and to size it up for possible expansion.

There's nothing wrong with simply looking, but it's what comes afterward that has Idaho leaders worried. Babbitt and his boss, President Clinton, appear determined to whomp up a legacy before they leave office. They've been

buzzing around the West, using an arcane law – the Antiquities Act of 1906 – as a magic wand to “save” tracts of land that strike their fancy.

Clinton is turning into an environmental King Midas. Everything he touches turns green.

Zzzap! Two months before the 1996 presidential election, Clinton proclaimed 2 million acres in Utah to be the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Zzzap! Last week, Clinton set aside 328,000 acres of sequoia groves in California. And Agua Fria in Arizona. And the Grand Canyon-Parashant, also in Arizona.

Zzzzz-aaaaaap!

Southern Idaho residents shouldn't be surprised if Craters of the Moon gets bigger – maybe a lot bigger – in the next few days. It's happening all around us, so it could certainly happen here, too.

Why is Clinton even aware of these places? Because he has America's environmental lobby whispering in

one ear and federal land management agencies whispering in the other. Clinton is a slave to these interests, but Al Gore would be even worse if he were to capture the White House.

The fundamental question is whether Craters of the Moon (or the Owyhee canyonlands or anything else that catches Clinton's roving eye) truly deserves additional protection.

There is a proven process for protecting areas that need protection, but it's a congressional, not a presi-

dential process. That's how the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the Sawtooth Wilderness, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and the Gospel Hump

Wilderness were created.

Providing additional protection for public lands is a process that demands the public be involved. When Congress leads the process, the public is heard. Clinton and Babbitt, intent on burnishing their legacy, can't be bothered with what the public has to say.

Using the Antiquities Act to stiff-arm the skeptics, they are doing an end run around the democratic process. America – particularly the West – deserves better.

### And another thing ...

Why is it environmental activists say one old law, the 1872 Mining Act, needs revision to make it more, er, contemporary, but the Antiquities Act of 1906 is considered a legitimate tool for presidential use? Could it be the political use of the latter fits the present administration's agenda?

Who says choosing a president is important?

*President Bill Clinton  
appears determined to  
whomp up an environmental  
legacy before leaving office.*

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# Interior Secretary will visit to discuss future of Craters of Moon management

ARCO (AP) — Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt returns to eastern Idaho's high desert on Tuesday to meet with local leaders about future management of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and possible surrounding federal land.

Just two weeks ago, President Clinton's top natural resource manager hiked in the national monument and flew over the Great Rift that stretches far beyond it, expressing interest in finding a way to increase protection of the region's unique volcanic geology.

"I had an informative, eye-opening tour of this amazing area during my last visit," Babbitt said in a statement. "I am

looking forward to a productive series of meetings during this visit."

The sessions are scheduled in Arco.

The administration has been looking for appropriate areas, especially in the West, where protection from development can be heightened under the 1906 Antiquities Act. It allows the president, without congressional approval, to establish monuments on federal land to protect objects of scientific and historic interest.

President Clinton has already put more than a million acres in Arizona and California under national monument protection this year after using the act four

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## Moon

► Continued from A1

years ago to preserve 1.9 million acres in southern Utah as the Grand Staircase-Escalante federal monument.

Babbitt, who labeled Idaho's Great Rift a world class ecosystem, has said he is about to recommend areas in southwestern Colorado and in Oregon near the California border for preservation under the law.

Opponents call the tactic a

land grab, claiming Clinton is running over local interests to establish an environmental legacy during his waning months in office.

And Republican Sen. Larry Craig has led criticism of any suggestion that further federal protections be imposed in the region.

Craig pointed out that there is little pressure on the Great Rift area that covers some 300,000 acres south of

Arco. Most is owned by the Bureau of Land Management, and cattle and sheep graze there.

The agency does not keep count of visitors but says the area gets sparse traffic from hikers, cavers, off-road users and hunters.

But Babbitt says that threats to areas like the Great Rift too often go unrealized until it is too late to intervene.

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conducted from Hidden Springs on Tuesday, May 23.

The walks are open to the public and admission is free.

The walks will take from 1 ½ to 2 hours on moderately steep but well-maintained trails.

Comfortable walking shoes are recommended.

## Wildflower lovers given opportunity to learn

For a closer look at this year's colorful display of wildflowers, those who are interested may attend a free Wildflower Walk in the Boise Foothills hosted by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Idaho Native Plant Society.

Each Thursday evening in May, botanists will lead a Wildflower Walk from the Old Penitentiary in East Boise.

A Wildflower Walk will also be

Organizers ask that no dogs be brought.

Wildflower Walks will start at 6:30 p.m. at the Bishop's House at the Old Idaho Penitentiary.

The Hidden Springs Wildflower Walk will leave from the Hidden Springs Mercantile at 6:30 p.m. on May 23.

# Babbitt back in state to talk about Craters

Interior secretary  
to meet with area  
leaders today

The Associated Press

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terest in finding a way to increase protection of the region's unique volcanic geology.

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**Bruce Babbitt**  
Interior  
secretary

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## BABBITT

From 1B

objects of scientific and historic interest.

President Clinton has already put more than a million acres in Arizona and California under national monument protection this year after using the act four years ago to preserve 1.9 million acres in southern Utah as the Grand Staircase-Escalante federal monument.

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Opponents call the tactic a land

grab, claiming Clinton is running over local interests to establish an environmental legacy during his waning months in office.

And Republican Sen. Larry Craig has led criticism of any suggestion that further federal protections be imposed in the region.

Craig pointed out that there is little pressure on the Great Rift area that covers some 300,000 acres south of Arco.

Most is owned by the Bureau of Land Management, and cattle and sheep graze there. The agency does not keep count of visitors but says the area gets sparse traffic from hikers, cavers, off-road users and hunters.

But Babbitt says that threats to areas like the Great Rift too often go unrealized until it is too late to intervene.

# LITTLE VOICE

## Motorcyclists, environmentalists criticize Babbitt

By N.S. Nokkentved  
Times-News writer

ARCO - Idaho's congressional delegation isn't the only group feeling left out of a proposal to expand the Craters of the Moon National Monument.

Motorized recreation advocates and environmentalists said their interests and the public's interests should have been heard, as Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt developed the Craters proposal.

Babbitt visited Craters of the Moon and met with local ranchers last month and returned for a second visit earlier this month to meet again with ranchers and local officials.

Last week he released a proposed map and proposed policies for the expanded monument that would include about 300,000 of desert lava flows in the area of the Great Rift.

Babbitt praised the area's unique geology as worthy of protection, saying its greatest threat probably is from mining for building materials.

But in rare agreement with U.S. Sen. Larry Craig, environmentalists say the public so far has not been included in the formation of a proposal.

"Before any draft was proposed it should have been presented to the public...", Craig said.

Johnson, executive director of the Idaho Conservation League, said he agreed, but that doesn't mean he's opposed to expanding Craters of the Moon. Expansion would be good for the area.

"It is a phenomenal piece of Idaho, underappreciated by most Idahoans," Johnson said.

Babbitt, a geologist by training, seems to appreciate the area.

"He sees something the rest of us just drive by," Johnson said.

Babbitt said he would listen to public concerns before he would make any recommendations to President Clinton. The proposal is based on one introduced in 1989 by then-U.S. Rep. Richard Stallings. It would allow live stock grazing and hunting to continue and it would not interfere with existing private property.

The administration has been looking for appropriate areas, especially in the West, with potential for protection under the 1906 Antiquities Act. In that act, Congress gave the president authority to establish monuments on federal land to protect objects of scientific and historic interest.

Clinton has already put more than 1 million acres in Arizona and California under national monument protection this year after using the act four years ago to preserve 1.9 million acres in southern Utah as the Grand Staircase-Escalante federal mon-

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Times-News  
Twin Falls, ID

MAY 28 2000

## Babbitt

Continued from A1  
ument.

Craig and other opponents call the tactic a land grab, saying Clinton is running over local interests to establish an environmental legacy during his waning months in office.

The Antiquities Act may be a blunt tool, but its the best tool the president has to protect land, Johnson said.

"If it ruffles some feathers - even mine - go forward," he said.

But motorized recreation advocates are concerned about potential restrictions in access. The proposal would limit motorized

recreation to designated roads and trails.

"We need to know what those designated roads and trails will be," said Clark Collins of the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a motorized recreation advocate group. He would like an opportunity to express the concerns of his group to Babbitt.

"They should have given us the opportunity to get involved before now," Collins said.

Times-News writer N.S. Nokkentved can be reached at 733-0931, Ext. 237, or by e-mail at niels@magicvalley.com

# Utah comes to terms with its new monument

Clinton action alters economic landscape, Western lifestyle

By Steve DiMeglio  
Gannett News Service

With the stroke of a silver pen in September 1996, President Clinton created the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument — 1.9 million acres in southern Utah peppered with colorful canyons, limestone formations and shimmering waterfalls.

A picturesque treasure? For sure. But life hasn't been the same for local residents since they awoke one morning to find a national monument in their back yard.

While saluted by many scientists and environmentalists, Clinton's monument designation sparked immediate and abundant controversy.

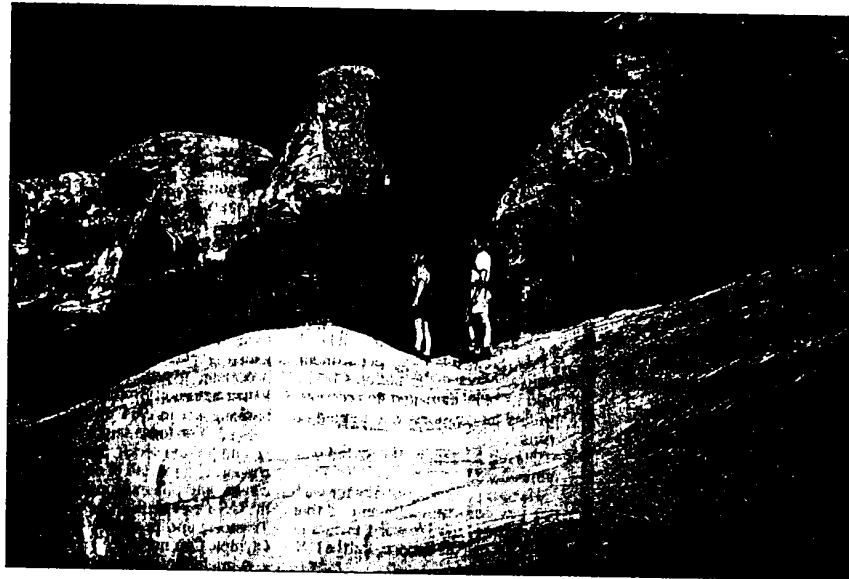
By way of the arcane 1906 Antiquities Act, Clinton designated the monument without the consultation, consent or approval of Congress, the Utah Legislature or any citizens of the state.

And it immediately ignited flames of discontent among public-land users and Westerners, many still coming to terms with the changing nature of the West.

Begrudgingly, residents have come to accept the monument and are finding ways to make a buck off of it.

"People know the monument is here to stay," said Louise Liston, a Garfield County commissioner who was once one of the monument's most vocal opponents. "They are thinking about what the monument can do for them, instead of what the monument did to them."

The action effectively ended mining and locked away potentially valuable natural resources such as oil and gas, traditional economic mainstays of rural Utah.



Hikers trek through the Canyons of the Escalante, one of three distinct regions of the 1.9 million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument in southern Utah. President Clinton declared this wide swath of Utah a national monument in 1996.

One such proposal for a huge coal mine on the southern Kaiparowits Plateau was killed by Clinton's action.

Now, one of the economic mainstays is tourism, as more people flock to see the monument and its rugged land, which features archaeological wonders of past Indian cultures, an ancient seabed, fossils of dinosaurs and shells of sea animals that lived 270 million years ago.

Bigger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined, the monument remains a remote environmental wonder that defines romantic notions of the Old West and lures tourists.

John Wayne made movies here.

Mail was still delivered by mule in the 1930s.

The changing economic landscape of the vast area is evident in Escalante, a small ranching town five hours northeast of Las Vegas and the largest town in any direction for 70 miles.

Many Escalante residents are descendants of the original pioneers who settled the West. Cattle ranching, including the traditional cattle drive, is still practiced.

But now, speculators hoping to capitalize on the tourism boom have opened shops and related businesses.

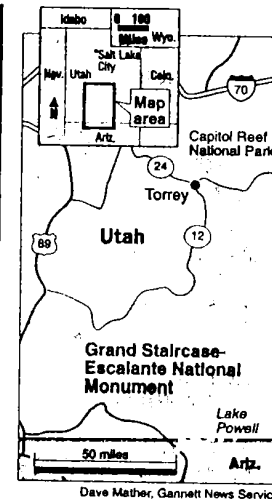
More than 50 businesses in Escalante and a handful of other small

towns throughout the monument cater directly to outdoor enthusiasts with hiking and fishing tours.

A few years after nearly 200 people left when a lumber mill closed, the town's population has jumped to nearly 1,500 from about 800 in years past.

"There's no doubt the town has changed," said Susan Touche, who lives near the monument and is a member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, a grass-roots organization of 2,500 members nationally.

"You see more new roofs on the houses, new fences, new siding, new sport utility vehicles. This is still a



lovely, pristine town many Americans would envy."

Mark Austin, owner of the nearby Boulder Mountain Lodge, moved up his lodge's expansion plans 10 years because of the spike in tourism. He'll break ground in the fall to add 10 rooms.

He said the hostility in the area since Clinton's proclamation has tempered significantly, but remains simmering.

"It's a Western thing," Austin said.

"People think it's their land, not America's land," he said. "They feel the federal government took land away from them, and that hostility has never died."

"But I'm hearing more and more people these days saying, 'I don't like how it was done, but I'm glad it was done.'"

Rep. James V. Hansen, R-Utah, who viewed the president's move as an election-year ploy to win votes

from environmentalists, still calls Clinton's designation the "biggest land grab in the nation."

He has led a move to amend the Antiquities Act to abridge the president's authority to create monuments on his own.

In September 1999, the House overwhelmingly passed a bill to amend the act to require public input and participation before the president can designate new national monuments.

A similar bill is being considered in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

But Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, as he travels through the West exploring possible national monuments, has pledged there will be no more surprises like the one at Grand Staircase-Escalante.

"What I've said to everybody in the West after Escalante is that won't happen again on my watch," Babbitt recently told a group of ranchers, outfitters and environmentalists in Montana.

"You can go to bed at night confident that your children are safe and your private land is safe."

David Getches, a law professor and natural resources expert at the University of Colorado, said controversy concerning the monument was to be expected.

"Historically, national monument designations have been used by almost every president. The history is long, and it's a history of bold action on the part of presidents," Getches said.

"They have been accompanied by a great deal of controversy. The controversy almost always dies as soon as the dust settles, and the monuments become objects of national pride."

"Even Utah seems to have gotten over that."

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From left, Art Gaffrey of the Forest Service, Eagle Scout Alexander Reed-Krase of Springville, Calif., President Clinton and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman take a trek along the Trail of 100 Giants in the Sequoia National Forest in California. In April, Clinton established a 328,000-acre Giant Sequoia National Monument to protect the centuries-old trees.

Gannett News Service

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CAPITAL PRESS

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# Babbitt urges office of special areas to manage conservation areas

By PATRICIA R. MCCOY,  
Capital Press Staff Writer

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management will create an office of special areas to coordinate management of monuments, national conservation areas and other important conservation areas.

The new National Landscape Conservation System would be a division within BLM to parallel the park and refuge system, and give BLM a way to manage lands for nontraditional purposes, said Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.

The move raised some concerns among the user industry, voiced by Sara Braasch, executive vice president of the Idaho Cattle Association.

"As Babbitt locks up more and more of the West, he needs people to administer those lands. We have to ask if we really need all these monuments. We already heard complaints that BLM people are stuck behind desks with paperwork instead of being out in the field managing the public lands. If this is something that will take more of their time, it could be of concern," Braasch said.

"We haven't seen the proposal yet, but we'll want to study it closely."

In the past, lands designated as monuments or for other special purposes were transferred from BLM to the National Park Service or other federal agencies, Babbitt said.

"In order to guide and shape this emerging system of conservation units, we must now make some important management adjustments and changes. Ultimately new management plans should be prepared, or existing plans reviewed and updated to reflect the importance of the

conservation principles for which the place has been recognized," Babbitt said.

Setting up a special office will provide better coordination and management of such areas, and create increased public awareness of and appreciation for them. The office will report directly to the director of the BLM, but field managers will retain primary responsibility for management on the ground, the secretary said.

The new system will not have a detrimental impact on how the BLM manages its other lands. Most positions

and funding for the office will be derived by reallocating resources within the Washington, D.C., office.

BLM monuments and conservation areas will be managed in partnership with surrounding communities. The agency will not provide food, lodging or other visitor services.

The NLCS will consist of national conservation areas and monuments, and portions of wildernesses, wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, and scenic and historic trails managed by the agency.

BLM manages 2.9 million acres in four monuments:

Agua Fria and Grand Canyon-Parashant in Arizona, the California Coastal, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah. Babbitt recently recommended creating four additional monuments.

In addition, the agency manages nearly 2.25 million acres in eight national conservation areas, including the Birds of Prey NCA in Idaho, and King Range NCA in California.

The NLCS will also include the 9.5 million acre California Desert Conservation Area and the 7,400 acre Headwaters Forest Reserve in California.

IDAHO STATESMAN-BOISE, ID

DATE: SEP 04 2000

## Next president could undo monuments

By Jim Woolf  
Salt Lake Tribune

SALT LAKE CITY — The next president probably will have the power to rescind some of the new national monuments President Clinton created, an expert on public land law said.

But some doubt George W. Bush, the heir-apparent, would do that and risk alienating urban residents who generally favor protection of scenic and undeveloped lands.

"The law gives the president the power to withdraw and reserve lands as national monuments," said George Coggins, a professor at the University of Kansas School of Law. "It doesn't say anything about the power to de-withdraw an area, but it is likely that would be implicit in the law."

But it is rare that "preservationist kind of decisions" have been reversed, he noted. "None of the wilderness areas have been de-wildernessed, and maybe only one of our national parks has ever been de-parked."

A study by the National Park Service found that 10 national monuments were eliminated between 1930 and 1994, including an area with

abundant cactus in southern Arizona, caves in Montana and Wyoming and man-made crosses in New York and Colorado. In every case, Congress passed a law transferring ownership to either a state or another federal agency, such as the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management. The one national park eliminated was Sullys Hill in North Dakota. It was created in 1904 and transferred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1931.

Republican vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney on Aug. 24 mentioned the possibility of rescinding some of Clinton's monuments if he and Bush are sent to the White House.

"Of course, it's not my decision to make," Cheney said on a visit to Central Point, Ore. "It's the president-elect who has to make the decision. But I certainly expect we would review a lot of these decisions to see whether or not any action was appropriate."

The suggestion thrilled those Oregon residents upset about Clinton's recent use of the 1906 Antiquities Act to designate the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in the southern part of their state.

And it energized those Utahns still angry about Clinton's 1996 decision to designate the 1.7-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Kane and Garfield counties.

"There may finally be enough disgust with the way these things are being done to take a look at whether these monuments really meet the standards of the Antiquities Act," said Mark O. Walsh, associate director of the Utah Association of Counties.

The Antiquities Act allows presidents to create national monuments to protect areas of historic or scientific importance by simply signing a decree. There is no requirement for public input or for consultation with affected state officials or residents.

The Antiquities Act has been used for almost a century to provide initial federal protection for some of America's most beloved natural treasures, including Utah's Zion Canyon, Arizona's Grand Canyon and the craggy Teton Range in Wyoming.

Hal Rothman, an environmental historian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said, "Politically, he (Bush) has nothing to gain" by rescinding the monuments.