What Is a National Monument?

The Grand Canyon was first protected by the Antiquities Act of 1906. Since 1916, it has been protected by the National Park system. If the Grand Canyon Watershed were to become a national monument it would receive further protections. The authority to grant national monument status rests with the U.S. President.

A national monument designation is unlike a national park or national forest designation because national monuments do not offer a standard set of protections. Protections for national monuments are tailored to the unique needs of each monument. Significantly, protecting national monuments involves protecting objects (not areas).

How Would a National Monument Status Affect Inholdings?

State and private inholdings would not be affected by a national monument designation unless those holdings were traded or sold to the federal government. What would be included or excluded in a national monument designation depends on how the boundary would be drawn, and there are multiple proposals at this point.

How Will a National Monument Status Affect Access?

We cannot be sure how a national monument status will affect access. On one hand, it may increase the attraction of the area, promote more tourism, and create more jobs. On the other hand, more control might result in less access, and better protection of the area.
How Will a National Monument Status Affect the Value of State Lands Designated to Support Education?

Inside the proposed Grand Canyon Watershed area there are 64,000 acres of state lands. A national monument designation may reduce the value of that state land, diminishing the state’s ability to fund education. On the other hand, a national monument could potentially increase the value of that land and the revenue it could generate for education in Arizona.

Pros of Having a Grand Canyon National Monument

- We’re currently undergoing the 6th extinction of known species in the area. We need the preservation a national monument would make possible to protect forms of life that are threatened.
- The monument prohibits new mining claims, (but would not affect existing validated mining claims).
- Currently we are still operating under the mining act of 1872. There is reason to believe standards of operation for mining should be updated to reflect changes in society and technology that have occurred since 1872.
- A national monument would protect astronomy resources and the dark skies that are valuable to northern Arizona.
- There are personal and aesthetic reasons for protecting the Grand Canyon watershed. These powerful personal reasons can often get muffled in discussions that focus on technical economic and policy considerations.

Cons of Having A grand Canyon National Monument

The process of becoming a national monument lacks a mechanism for public input.

- AZ Game and Fish and several other sports and gaming organizations favor protection, but want a mechanism for protection that involves public and stakeholder input.
- The current protections for the Grand Canyon and its watershed are adequate. A national monument status adds another layer of bureaucratic process. Other national monument designations have taken about 10 years to develop new management plans. The agencies involved are already strapped in terms of resources, and this would create a new demand on these agencies.
- Active management is needed to preserve species, and drawing a boundary and restricting management may not be the best strategy for preserving species.
- This may have a negative effect on ranchers and their economic security and the economic opportunity they provide others through jobs.
- Additionally, it may limit the city of Tusayan in the way they can develop.

Overall, we could see that those who oppose and those who favor the national monument designation all care deeply about the area and surrounding communities. Participants (reasonably) disagree about the best way to do this. It was emphasized that the more people participate in the public process, the better that process will be. Thanks to all those who came out for a great discussion!