

★ **Bears Ears: Views from a Sacred Land****Stephen E. Strom**

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Bears Ears National Monument has been in the news of late as the Trump administration sought to dramatically scale back its protected acreage. *Bears Ears: Views from a Sacred Land* is a visual and literary introduction to this singular landscape, with a thorough textual tour of its social and geological history alongside Strom's dazzling color photographs and a prayer-poem by Joy Harjo.

The monument derives its name from twin buttes that resemble two pointy ears poking out from the desert horizon. Strom's panoramic, aerial, and other sharp photographs capture alluring and complex patterns in the rocky landscape in different seasons and lighting. From the subtle pastel striations in the sedimentary rock to dramatic sunset shadows and snow-tipped canyons and mountains, it's a vibrant photographic portrait of a remote, almost otherworldly geography.

Capping the photographic survey is Strom's lyrical essay about how this unique place exhibits many aspects of Earth's formation and provides "a visible record of deep time." The former research astronomer brilliantly decodes billions of eons in the development of the solar system and the terrestrial crust, oceans, atmosphere, and life forms, all of which are documented in various parts of Bears Ears.

Included are photographs of ancient pictographs, petroglyphs, and structures from the one hundred thousand archaeological and sacred sites studding Bears Ears. In President Obama's 2016 national monument designation, he established the first collaborative land management system between the federal government and an intertribal coalition, whose Native American ancestors had inhabited these lands over two millennia. This precedent-setting move is controversial among Utah's current crop of politicians and many Anglo-Mormon residents, though, and Bears Ears' future is now in litigation. This book importantly documents what could be lost to us all in this magnificent but endangered region.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (March/April 2018)

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