

Journal #4307

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NBC News Summer Fellows Program

Trump Prepares to Unveil a Vast Reworking of Clean Water Protections

Groups Slam Rollback of Clean-Water Protections

Budd Bay, Olympia, WN



“We learn from history that we do not learn from history.” — Georg Hegel

Listen to the Cosmic Sound of Sandstone Arches in Utah By Zoe Woodcraft

Certain sandstone arches in Utah emit a steady hum. Shown here: Metate Arch in Devil's Garden, Utah. *raphoto / iStock / Getty Images Plus* (great pic but you'll have to go to website to see.

<https://www.ecowatch.com/bears-ears-earthjustice-sound-recordings-2622465104.html>

The sound is like a low, steady rumble, soothing yet powerful. Imperceptible to the human ear, the hums of red rock arches in [Bears Ears](#) and Grand Staircase National Monuments carry with them the deep patterns of the earth's plates sparked by events like ocean currents colliding in the open Pacific that pump the ocean floor. On the surface, wind spilling over the arches amplifies the vibrations, giving voice to movements in the earth that began thousands of miles away.

Scientists like Jeff Moore have only recently discovered the arches' hum. We are one year into the legal battle to defend Bears Ears and Grand Staircase, and while we fight in the courts, life and discovery continue in these special places. Now, more than ever, the arches need our voices to protect them.

Moore, a professor at the University of Utah, has always been fascinated by what makes rocks break and move. That's how he describes his particular niche in geology, geohazards.

"The earth is teeming with these sorts of mysteries, and it's my job to uncover them," said Moore.

Hardy sandstone gives Utah its famous rock formations. Its layers can split open like an accordion and gently erode over millennia into shapes nearly impossible in earthquake country. Moore began to log the swelling and contracting of Utah's arches as temperatures rose and fell during the day. He wanted to understand their stresses, and know how long their spans will extend out over open air before inevitably collapsing.

"Most people are in awe of these geological wonders, but they don't recognize how fragile they are," said Moore. "They think rock is strong. But if you lay your hand on an arch, you get a sense that it is just hanging on. You can see the cracks ... and you quickly realize how tenuous the structure is."

Soon, Moore got to wondering if the ear would be better than the eye at measuring the arches' movements. He spent hours recording the vibrations of the rocks with seismometers the size of camping thermoses. In the lab, he sped up his recordings to make them audible to humans.

[Listen to Soundcloud clips posted at the bottom of this story. Headphones recommended.]

"It sounded like nothing I'd heard before," said Moore, adding that the arches' hum is dependent on factors like their size. "Some of the smaller arches have a higher tone, and are a little squeaky."

In several arch recordings, a mysterious tapping appears on the soundtrack. Asked about the sound, Moore laughed. "It's probably my team walking as we backed away from our equipment. It's humans scurrying from the perspective of the arch."

In late 2017, President [Trump](#) threatened to silence the arches' hum after shrinking Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments by roughly 2 million acres. Mining companies started eyeing monument lands. Earthjustice [went to court](#).

Within those evicted 2 million acres are ancient cliff dwellings and living ceremonial sites sacred to more than five Native American Tribes fighting for these lands. It's places like Valley of the Gods, where no one can travel without getting a crick in their neck staring up at red rock spires. It's dinosaur fossil beds in the Kaiparowitz Plateau of Grand Staircase, where scientists [discover new species](#) almost every year. It's the steep habitat for Utah's only native herds of cliff-happy bighorn sheep.

It's also 115 unique arches stripped of their [national monument](#) protections.

Arch Hunting in the Monuments

Jeff got to work with his research team planning expeditions in the monuments for the summer of 2018. Aamon Hatch, a local high school science teacher on break, joined. They pored over arch hunting websites where amateur geology enthusiasts share their discoveries by dropping coordinates.

"I began to call them 'the abandoned arches of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase,'" said Moore. "Grand Staircase's arches had been protected for the last 20 years. Bears Ears' arches were newly protected. Now they're left high and dry."

Determined to document as many abandoned arches as they could, the team ventured into the gutted national monuments. It was like no place Moore had been before. The Henry Mountains in Grand Staircase were the [last mountains to be mapped](#) in the lower 48. The Escalante River, which feeds into the Colorado, was one of the last rivers to be mapped. In Navajo, the range is called *Dził Bizhi' Ádiní* or "mountain whose name is missing."

Moore worries about the impact of human development near these lands—like mine blasting, or the heavy truck traffic new mining roads would bring. The arches evolved in southern Utah partly because the land experiences little seismic activity.

"I worry about them in the way you worry about something you love," he said.

He isn't wrong to worry. The Trump administration is rushing through new plans that could open roughly 700,000 acres of Grand Staircase to mining and drilling. It's a cynical strategy to speed along plans for industrial exploitation that's often worked against [public lands](#). Earthjustice attorney Heidi McIntosh is fighting to hit the brakes on those plans in court.

While Trump's executive branch is trying to outrace the courts, [Earthjustice](#) will also be defending our monuments lawsuits against the Justice Department's motion to dismiss them this month. (The weighty question of whether President Trump had the authority to dismantle Bears Ears and Grand Staircase under the Antiquities Act may well be decided, at least preliminarily, at this point.)

Moore's team ultimately found 37 arches in Grand Staircase and 78 in Bears Ears in the territory stripped out of the monuments. Though their initial project is done, Moore suspects there are many more arches in these wild lands.

"When you stand out there today, you have the feeling 'this is where the road ends,'" he said. "In between you and the mountain there are no roads. You can feel the vastness."

Headphones may be needed to hear the lowest tones in this recording of Sunset Arch.

Courtesy of University of Utah Geohazards Research Group

[Earthjustice](#) [Sunset Arch](#)

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[American Indian leaders condemn 'deplorable' actions of street outreach group at Mpls. homeless camp](#)

Natives Against Heroin accused of dividing Indian community, impeding aid.
<http://strib.mn/2G22R9N>

Today's selection -- from *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* by Marcy Norton.

Before Columbus, Europeans had neither tobacco nor chocolate. By the mid-1600s, both were the province of Europe's elite:

"If, in 1491, you had crossed the Americas north to south, visiting the far-flung communities between the sub-Arctic tundra and the southern shores of South America, one thing you would have noticed was the ubiquity of tobacco. In some places, you would have seen people sucking on dried leaves mixed with crushed seashells, while elsewhere you would have passed others inhaling snuff or puffing on corn-husk cigarettes, long-stemmed pipes, or cigars. In many places, people applied tobacco topically to treat wounds and infections or ingested tobacco concoctions to fight parasites. Despite Amerindians' diverse uses for tobacco and its wide geo-graphical distribution, I suspect you would have noticed a common element: Across the western hemisphere, people saw it as essential to their physical, social, and spiritual well-being.

"During your travels southward, at some point before you arrived in the Aztec Empire in central Mexico, you would have begun encountering chocolate consumers. In this chocolate zone, which stretched at least as far south as present-day Nicaragua and Costa Rica, people, at least the powerful ones, consumed a beverage made from the dried fermented seeds of the fruit of the *Theobroma cacao* tree. The fact that the cacao seeds ('beans') functioned as currency throughout the region would have tipped you off to its value. You might also have noticed that in this region people saw chocolate as similar in nature to blood -- both of them were liquids coursing with life-giving force. Chocolate, reddened with the spice achiote, was prescribed for hemorrhages, shared during marriage ceremonies, and offered in sacrifice to thirsty, sensuous deities. Tobacco, not infrequently, accompanied the consumption of chocolate.

"If, in the same year, you had visited Europe, you would not have encountered these two quintessential American goods, for neither existed outside of the western hemisphere. Their spread eastward was one of the consequences of the chain of events sparked by Christopher Columbus's accidental discoveries. For some, the infiltration of tobacco and chocolate by the early seventeenth century into Madrid, the seat of the Spanish Empire, defined a new epoch. In 1627, the courtier Francisco de Quevedo, a biting satirist and devotee of both goods, made an ugly joke of it. 'The devil of tobacco and the devil of chocolate,' he wrote, 'told me that they had avenged the Indies against Spain,' wreaking more harm with snuff, smoke, and chocolate drinks than the conquistadores 'Columbus and Cortés and Almagro and Pizarro' had wrought across the Atlantic. He observed how these goods had transformed his compatriots' bodies: tobacco habitués afflicted by 'snuffling and sneezing' and chocolate-indulgers with gas and dizziness. Quevedo believed these physical symptoms marked an even more disturbing metamorphosis. European tobacco and chocolate aficionados had become idolaters. In emulating the inhabitants of the New World, they had transferred their faith in Christ to these 'entrancing,' diabolical substances (which chocolate-ics 'venerated' while smokers were 'apprenticed for hell').

"Though when Quevedo wrote this passage tobacco and chocolate were only at the beginning stages of their Old World conquests, he was prescient about their path toward global dominance. A recent study found that caf-feine and nicotine are, respectively, the first and third most widely con-sumed psychoactive substances in the world. Nicotine's ranking is due, of course, to the spread of tobacco. Chocolate is not, strictly speaking, a caf-feinated substance since it contains only trace amounts of caffeine, but it is rich in caffeine's molecular relative, theobromine. Moreover, one cannot understand the triumph of coffee and tea without chocolate, for the latter was the first stimulant beverage used in Europe, and Europeans' initial experiences with chocolate informed, perhaps even precipitated, their sub-sequent adoption of these other beverages. ...

"On November 6, 1669, the king of Spain, Charles II, turned seven. In honor of the event, the viceroy of Valencia threw a party at his palace. The fête occasioned the consumption of tobacco and chocolate, and reflection on the meaning of that consumption. There is good reason to think that the illustrious guests (titled grandees aplenty) convened at a set moment to enjoy fine chocolate served in expensive *jícaras*. Tobacco was present too, but, unlike chocolate, it was probably not the case that its consumption was scheduled on the agenda; rather, somewhat on the sly, during moments stolen between gaming, feasting, and dancing, men and women might dis-creetly take out their fancy tobacco boxes (silver, gold plated, inscribed with 'curious' designs) and offer some of their contents to a friend for smoking or snuffing. The festivities culminated with the awards ceremony of a poetry competition held in honor of the king. The competitors (noble-men, clergy, and lawyers among the group) had submitted verses on pre-scribed topics (e.g., write about a jovial dispute among the numbers 7, 6, and 9, representing, respectively, the age of Charles II, the day on which he was born, and the month in which he was born; describe a bullfight that took place on a rainy day). Topic number five was to 'write in praise of chocolate and vituperation of tobacco,' with the explanation that 'we can-not neglect hospitality at this party.' Two of the winning verses on this topic were published a few weeks later. A poet with a doctorate in law submitted that chocolate is 'manna,' while tobacco is a 'mania.' Chocolate prepares one for heaven, tobacco for hell. Tobacco is 'garbage,' chocolate a tasty medicine. Tobacco only feigns gallantry, while chocolate deserves its great acclaim. For his composition, a Carmelite friar offered that chocolate is 'that inspirational Ambrosia,' while tobacco turned an 'astute' man into a 'beast.' Yet, as even the poets duly recognized, tobacco was as much part of the habits of 'grandees and lords' as was chocolate. As at the banquets held in Mesoamerica, aristocratic parties such as these ensured the reciprocal exchange between symbolic and material artifacts, the power of what was said about the goods enhancing the experience of their consumption, and the latter grounding the symbolic notions.

*****8*****

Scientists Find Some Hope for Coral Reefs: The Strong May Survive

By KENDRA PIERRE-LOUIS

Global warming is ravaging coral, including at the Great Barrier Reef. But it may serve as “one enormous natural selection event,” a researcher said.

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Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear with almost any ‘how’.”

“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

“Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.”

— Viktor E. Frankl



[US returns bells taken in 1901 as war booty to Philippines](#)

US returns 3 disputed bells taken in 1901 to Philippines

Awesome Health Horse

<http://petslady.com/index.php/article/peyo-healing-horse>

Lorraine Chow

Rainbow Mountains in Vinicuna, Perú. *Megan Lough* / [UI International Programs](#) / [CC BY-ND 2.0](#)

[7 Reasons Why #Mountains Matter](#)

December 11 is [International Mountain Day](#), an annual occasion designated by the [United Nations](#) to celebrate Earth's precious mountains.

Mountains aren't just a sight to behold—they cover 22 percent of the planet's land surface and provide habitat for plants, animals and about 1 billion human beings. The vital landforms also supply critical resources such as fresh water, food and even [renewable energy](#). **Keep reading**

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## **Other Eco Shorts**

[www.ecowatch.com/oil-spill-brazil-guanabara-bay-2622947302.html](http://www.ecowatch.com/oil-spill-brazil-guanabara-bay-2622947302.html)

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**2,312** Illegal gold mining sites identified across Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Researchers say that mercury, which is used in the process of extracting gold, is polluting rivers throughout the Amazon rainforest. The contamination poses serious health risks to riverine communities as well as aquatic life. [Reuters](#)

**5** Michigan officials who will face involuntary manslaughter charges in connection to the Flint water crisis, including the state's chief medical executive Dr. Eden Wells. A judge ruled on Friday that Wells will stand trial for obstruction of justice, lying to the police, and involuntary manslaughter. Wells denies the charges. [Detroit Free Press](#)

[Bulldozers to soon plow through National Butterfly Center for Trump's border wall](#) msn.com

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**A welcome push to more aggressively fight crime on tribal lands** <http://strib.mn/2EeyNFx>

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**NORMAN, Okla.** The Native American Journalists Association is pleased to announce our continued partnership with Comcast NBCUniversal for the **NBC News Summer Fellows Program!** The NAJA/NBC News Summer Fellowship gives students real world experience and exposure to one of the world's leading News divisions, which includes NBC News, MSNBC and CNBC. NBCUniversal will offer fellows the opportunity to join one of the following NBC programs for summer 2019 as interns:

- America's #1 morning news program, The Today Show
- The top ranked evening program, Nightly News with Lester Holt
- Our primetime long form news program, Dateline
- Our 24 cable news channel, MSNBC
- Our top rated business news cable channel, CNBC
- Our digital organization including our array of digital properties


The fellows selected will receive \$16.50 an hour, plus overtime (more than 40 hours per week) for 10 weeks during the summer. NBCUniversal will offer a \$2,000 housing stipend available for candidates who reside outside a 50 mile radius from our Tri-State Area offices. Production experience is preferred, but not required.

All the internships are located in 30 Rockefeller Center, with the exception of the placements at CNBC, which are located in Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Transportation is provided to Englewood Cliffs, NJ from various location in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

The official start date of the program is Monday, June 3, 2019. If students' academic schedule impede their ability to start on this date, alternatives can be discussed.

- Must be a current NAJA member with proof of tribal affiliation
- Must be willing to live in New York City or its environs for the duration of the internship
- Must be 18 years old or older
- Must be enrolled full-time at a U.S. college or university
- Must be a sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student
- Must major in journalism or a communications discipline
- Must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above
- Must have unrestricted authorization to work in the US without holding a VISA or sponsorship
- Recent graduates will not be considered

Please go to the [online application](#) to apply



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## **Trump Prepares to Unveil a Vast Reworking of Clean Water Protections**

By CORAL DAVENPORT

The proposed new rule would chip away at wetlands safeguards put in place during the administration of President George H.W. Bush.

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## **Groups Slam Rollback of Clean-Water Protections**

**December 12, 2018 - Suzanne Potter, Public News Service (NV) [Play Audio in Browser Window](#)**

Thousands of vernal pools and seasonal waterways will lose federal protections if a new version of the "Waters of the United States" rule is finalized. (Ken Lund/Flickr)

CARSON CITY, Nev. – Negative reaction from conservation groups was swift to a Trump administration [proposal](#) on Tuesday to remove federal clean-water protections from many smaller streams and wetlands.

The Environmental Protection Agency announced a replacement for the [Waters of the United States rule](#) that would lift federal protections from water sources that are seasonal and wetlands that are not connected by a stream to a larger body of water.

Jenifer Collins, a legislative representative for the law firm Earthjustice, said the proposal ignores the basic science of hydrology.

"All water is connected," she said. "So, whether it's a small stream that only runs part of the year or a wetland that isn't directly connected to a larger body of water, they feed into the larger bodies of water that are the drinking-water sources for millions of people across the country."

Acting EPA administrator Andrew Wheeler called the original, Obama-era rule "government overreach" and said the new rule gives power back to states, reducing red tape for farmers and other landowners.

Collins said the original rule was meant to protect millions of acres of seasonal wildlife habitat, especially in arid Western states such as Nevada and California, and to keep the water supply free of pesticides and industrial runoff.

"This proposal is a prime example of the administration putting polluter profits over people," she said. "Really, it's just benefiting polluting industry, like oil and gas, and other developers."

States do have the option of requiring stricter standards within their borders. The public now has two months to comment on the proposed changes at [Regulations.gov](#). If the rule is finalized, multiple conservation groups already have vowed to take the fight to the courts.

The proposed rule changes are online at [epa.gov](#), and the original rule is at [federalregister.gov](#).

## Trump Administration Proposal Limits U.S. Clean Water Act

“This proposal is reckless. Given the problems facing our lakes, streams and wetlands from the beaches of Florida to the drinking water of Toledo, now is the time to strengthen protections for our waterways, not weaken them.” –John Devine, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council, in reference to a new proposal by the Trump administration that would weaken the federal Clean Water Act. Proponents of the proposal say it would give states and landowners more control over their water resources, but environmentalists fear the change could be detrimental to thousands of miles of waterways and wetlands. [NPR](#)

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106 percent of average Amount of snowpack in the Sierra Nevada mountains after several recent storms in California. Officials hope the above-average snowfall will aid the state’s water supply. At this time last year, snowpack measured at only 47 percent of average. [Los Angeles Times](#)

\$450 million Cost of the San-Juan Chama Project, which delivers water from the Colorado River to Albuquerque, New Mexico, through a series of dam, tunnels, and other infrastructure. Officials say that the decade-old project has cut the city’s groundwater use by nearly 70 percent, allowing the aquifer to recharge. [The Denver Post](#)

