

Journal #5956 from sdc 4.8.25

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Clifford "Kip" Davis



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The Art Deco Depot at the Heart of Wyoming's Capital

Cheyenne, Wyoming's historic Union Pacific Railroad depot, completed in 1887, was the first large-scale, post-Civil War federal project. Refurbished in 1929 to its current Art Deco aesthetic, it remains a hub of activity; the plaza plays host to various events and festivals (as well as some famous pancake breakfasts).

[ALL ABOARD →](#)

Now Public Lands Are Being Militarized for Mining

Because nothing says freedom like bulldozing the backcountry with Pentagon funding.

Turns out, the only thing standing between your favorite national forest and a host of shiny new industrial-scale lithium mines was a little paperwork.

First, they came for the trees—with an executive order making logging the default use of federal forests.

Then, they came for the land—starting by trying to nix two national monuments in California, with many more already under review.

Now, they're coming for the very earth itself.

Just Thursday, the Trump administration signed an earthshaking (literally) executive order directing federal agencies to fast-track mineral extraction on public lands. And this time, they're invoking *national defense* to do it.

If there's one thing you read today, let it be this line—straight from the order itself:

“Within 10 days of the date of this order,” it states, “the Secretary of the Interior shall identify... all Federal lands known to hold mineral deposits... [and] shall prioritize mineral production and mining related purposes as the primary land uses in these areas.”

The primary land uses. That sentence marks a fundamental shift in federal land policy. Not toward balance, or planning, or even profit—but toward extraction as the default.

If the first Trump term was about shrinking boundaries and auctioning leases, this one is about erasing the idea of public lands as anything but resource stockpiles. And now, with the Defense Production Act in play, the fight over public lands isn't just political—it's being framed as a matter of national security.

What exactly does this order do?

How fast is this happening?

And which landscapes are now on the chopping block?

Let's break it down.



What the Executive Order Actually Does (and Why It's a Big Deal)

The executive order is long—over 3,000 words—and packed with acronyms, cross-agency mandates, and language about “resilient supply chains.” But strip it down, and here’s what it really says:

Step aside. We’re mining.

The administration is justifying this under the guise of national security and economic independence. It points to the growing demand for minerals used in electric vehicles, smartphones, batteries, and wind turbines—but the actual mechanism is raw industrial policy, not climate strategy.

At the center of it all is the Defense Production Act—a Cold War-era law that gives the federal government sweeping authority to direct private industry in the name of national defense. It was originally designed for wartime mobilization. Now, it’s being used to bulldoze permitting requirements and bankroll mining operations on public lands.

The order invokes that authority, waives multiple oversight provisions, and hands significant power to the Department of Defense to finance and accelerate mineral extraction. It directs agencies—not just Interior, but also Defense, Energy, Agriculture, and the Export-Import Bank—to identify mining sites, approve leases, and inject capital at speed.

And they’re not wasting time.

- **Within 10 days:** Agencies must submit lists of all pending mineral project applications.
- **Within 20 days:** Those projects will be flagged for priority fast-tracking.
- **Within 30 days:** Federal lands with mineral reserves must be listed for leasing and commercial use.
- **Within 45 days:** Financial programs, loan mechanisms, and bid solicitations for mineral supply will be operational.

No legitimate environmental review.

No tribal consultation requirements.

No public comment periods.

Just a list of known deposits—and a directive to get shovels in the ground.

Electric vehicles may get name-dropped, but this isn't about clean energy. It's a sweeping, top-down reclassification of public lands as strategic assets in a wartime economy. The kind of dictatorial move that rewrites long-standing land use principles under the justification of "emergency."

And it's already underway.

The Zombie Law That Just Got a National Security Upgrade

This executive order doesn't create a new legal framework. It exhumes an old one—a fossil from the 19th century, pulled straight from the era of pickaxes, telegraphs, and railroads that hadn't yet reached the Pacific.

The **Mining Law of 1872**—yes, *eighteen seventy-two*—was signed by President Ulysses S. Grant to help settlers dig westward and extract gold, silver, and other "useful" minerals from public lands. It predates the automobile, the telephone, the national park system, and every modern environmental law on the books.

And somehow, it still governs hardrock mining on federal lands today.

Under this law, mining companies can:

- Stake claims on public land for a few bucks an acre.
- Pay no royalties on the minerals they extract.
- Walk away from toxic messes with minimal legal obligation to clean them up.

It's less a regulatory framework than a permission slip, written in an age when "land management" meant "take what you can carry."

The EO doesn't fix that. It builds on it. It directs the Chair of the so-called National Energy Dominance Council to work with Congress to "clarify" how waste rock, tailings, and mine waste should be handled under the 1872 law. Which, in plain English, means: clear the way to dig, dump, and move fast—no questions asked.

Rather than reform the law, the administration is reviving it—with Defense Department funding, fast-tracked permits, and a national security pretext layered on top. It's the Mining Act of 1872, back from the dead, and now wearing body armor.



The Places You Love Are on “The List”

This isn’t some abstract policy pivot. This changes what public lands are *for*.

Under this order, the default use of federally managed land—especially land with known or suspected mineral reserves—is no longer conservation, recreation, or cultural preservation. It’s extraction.

And that has immediate consequences.

The Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service oversee hundreds of millions of acres across the West—places rich in lithium, copper, uranium, and rare earth elements. Many of those areas are near or overlapping with landscapes people actually visit: hiking trails, backcountry campsites, sacred sites, wildlife corridors.

A few places that could now face immediate threat:

* **Grand Canyon, Arizona** – Rich in uranium deposits, this area has been at the center of long-running battles to stop mining operations from contaminating the Colorado River watershed and one of America’s most visited national parks.

Yellowstone, Wyoming and Montana – Gold and copper deposits just outside Yellowstone National Park, particularly around Paradise Valley and the Absaroka Range, have drawn speculators and could now become priority sites.

- **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota** – Copper-nickel deposits near this pristine freshwater wilderness could permanently damage one of the most beloved paddling destinations in America.
- **Black Hills, South Dakota** – Sacred Lakota sites now threatened by renewed interest in rare earth mining, as well as longstanding gold and uranium deposits.
- **Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest, Colorado** – Targeted for rare earth exploration, threatening recreational trails, backcountry experiences, and local water supplies.

- **Chaco Canyon region, New Mexico** – Rich in uranium and rare earth minerals, mining here would encroach upon ancestral Puebloan cultural sites and disrupt sensitive ecosystems.
- **Mount St. Helens, Washington** – The surrounding Gifford Pinchot National Forest has known copper and gold deposits, now at risk of renewed mining interest and exploration.
- **Salmon-Challis National Forest, Idaho** – Home to significant cobalt and rare earth deposits, the region includes critical salmon spawning habitats and remote recreational areas.
- **Eastern Sierra and White Mountains, California** – Lithium deposits near areas beloved for hiking, fishing, and climbing. The landscape includes ancient bristlecone pines, some of the oldest living trees on Earth.
- **Thacker Pass, Nevada** – Site of a massive lithium deposit where Indigenous Paiute communities and conservationists are already fighting proposed mines.

Now, under this order, these places could be designated as priority projects—fast-tracked for development without meaningful review.—

And let's be honest—this isn't playing out evenly. Blue states with strong environmental laws, aggressive attorneys general, and watchdog agencies aren't likely to rubber-stamp these projects. But in red states, where officials are more aligned with extractive industry and less inclined to say no to the federal government (think Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, etc), the permitting floodgates are wide open. This order may be national in scope, but the damage will be highly regional—and deeply political.

Land that was once managed under a “multiple use” mandate is being quietly rerouted toward a single use: resource extraction. With the Defense Department now coordinating leasing agreements and project funding, the pressure to greenlight industrial operations will only grow—especially in areas the administration sees as underutilized.

And it's not just wilderness areas. National forests, BLM land, even military-controlled lands that double as wildlife habitat—nothing is off-limits. Agencies have been instructed to identify as many federal sites as possible that are suitable for private mineral operations.

The places you hike, camp, and hold sacred are now being triaged on spreadsheets in Washington—ranked by mineral yield, not meaning.

The False Binary: Climate Tech vs. Conservation

The administration wants you to think this is a tradeoff.

That in order to build electric vehicles, batteries, and solar panels, we need to gut environmental safeguards and open public lands to industrial mining. That we can't have clean energy without

sacrifice—and that sacrifice, conveniently, should happen on federal lands far from political power centers.

But that framing is a false binary.

Yes, the energy transition requires minerals. No, it doesn't require fast-tracking extraction without oversight, gutting environmental laws, or trampling Indigenous sovereignty. And it certainly doesn't require rewriting the entire purpose of public lands.

This isn't about building a sustainable future. It's about using the language of sustainability to justify a land grab.

And like so many political decisions, it targets the thing that won't scream loudest today. It's not unlike how public education gets treated during a budget crisis—first on the chopping block, because the consequences are slow-moving and easy to ignore in the short term. The damage is deferred, and the politicians who made the call are long gone before it fully hits.

Public lands are being treated the same way. Their value isn't measured in headlines or quarterly earnings, so they're being carved up quietly under the guise of urgency.

That's not climate policy. That's deregulation dressed in green.

The Bigger Pattern: A Public Lands Playbook is Unfolding

This executive order isn't a one-off. It's the next move in a playbook that's been unfolding in plain sight.

Step back, and a pattern emerges:

- Conservation plans, scrapped.
- Oil and gas leases, expanded.
- National monuments, reduced.
- NEPA, gutted.
- Logging, fast-tracked.
- And now, mining—turbocharged by defense policy.

It's not about one ecosystem, or one policy, or even one administration. It's a full-spectrum campaign to roll back decades of environmental protections and rewrite the rules around public lands. The aim is simple: remove friction. Make it faster and easier for industry to drill, cut, and extract.

The tools are familiar: executive orders, emergency declarations, and agency memos issued late in the week. The result is a slow, grinding redefinition of what public land even means.

We saw it with the timber EO. We're seeing it again now—with even bigger implications.

This is a coordinated effort. A test of how much can be changed through the administrative state, without a single vote cast in Congress.

And if we keep treating each new directive as isolated, we'll miss the strategy entirely.

Oh—and ANWR Is Back on the Chopping Block

As if the mining free-for-all wasn't enough, the same executive order also reopens the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas leasing.

Because when you're staging an all-of-the-above extraction agenda, why stop at lithium?

This wasn't buried in a footnote. It's right there in black and white: a directive to rescind the cancellation of leases in the Arctic refuge, revive the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program, and issue all necessary permits to start drilling one of the most ecologically significant—and fiercely protected—landscapes in the country.

For decades, ANWR has been the third rail of public lands policy. Every administration talks about it. Some threaten it. Few have been reckless enough to try and flip the switch. Until now.

What's on the line? A wilderness the size of South Carolina. Calving grounds for caribou. Nesting habitat for migratory birds that cross continents. The coastal plain, sacred to the Gwich'in Nation, who call it *Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit*—"the Sacred Place Where Life Begins."

The last lease sale here was a disaster. No major oil company wanted to touch it. The sale brought in pennies on the dollar. But now, with the Defense Production Act and a red-light-green-light executive order, those lands are back in play. And this time, the goal isn't just to drill—it's to do it faster, cheaper, and with fewer people watching.

If this order is the new blueprint for federal land use, ANWR is the proof of concept: a high-profile sacrifice zone served up to industry in the name of energy dominance.

And it tells you everything you need to know about where this is going next.

Why This Playbook, Why Now

Remember when Trump asked oil executives for a cool billion? Well, they delivered, and now our public lands are paying the price.

In April 2024, Trump hosted a meeting at Mar-a-Lago with top oil and gas executives. There, he made an unprecedented request: \$1 billion in campaign contributions. In return, he promised to roll back environmental regulations and implement policies that would directly benefit the fossil fuel industry. While he didn't get the full \$1 billion, the industry responded generously. Between April and August 2024, Trump received \$14.1 million from oil and gas interests, making it his fourth-largest source of campaign funds during that period.

This wasn't a casual request; it was a calculated exchange. Trump's relationship with oil, gas, and mining industries isn't just coincidental—it's payback. Executives like Harold Hamm, CEO of Continental Resources, who donated over \$1.6 million, and Kelcy Warren, CEO of Energy Transfer, who donated nearly \$6 million, had a lot to gain. In exchange for these donations, Trump guaranteed policies that would clear the path for more drilling, expand fossil fuel leases, and undo environmental protections. The message was clear: you back me, and I'll back you.

These donations weren't the only sign of the fossil fuel industry's influence. Trump made sure to put allies in key positions, like Chris Wright, a known fossil fuel advocate, appointed as Energy Secretary. And let's not forget Harold Hamm, who shaped Trump's energy policy. This is all part of a strategy to push the U.S. to "energy dominance"—at any cost, and to hell with the environment.

And now, we see the consequences. This executive order is a direct payoff to these industries—an all-you-can-mine buffet for the very people who've been funneling money into Trump's campaign. It's not just about securing minerals; it's about opening the floodgates for extraction and allowing private companies to exploit federal lands, all with minimal oversight.

Nationalism and Energy Dominance: A Convenient Cover

Don't let them fool you. This isn't about clean energy. It's not about the green revolution we've been promised. No, this is about energy dominance. Trump's version of a "green revolution" isn't about wind farms or solar panels. It's about turning the U.S. into an energy superpower—and doing whatever it takes to achieve that. Energy independence is the shiny slogan, but the real goal is to secure control of the resources that power the globe, from lithium to uranium. It's geopolitics disguised as a mining boom, and it's designed to elevate America's status at the cost of the land beneath our feet.

Political Theater: Public Lands as the Stage

Public lands are symbolic. They represent something bigger than just acres of trees or barren deserts. They stand for shared values—conservation, heritage, and access. Taking them down a

peg isn't just an environmental decision—it's a way to send a message. A message to his base that says, "I'm in charge, and I'm taking what you value most." Public lands were never meant to be auctioned off for short-term profit, but here we are. The administration is reshaping them to serve an extractive and militaristic agenda, and the rest of us are left watching as the curtain falls.

The Man Doesn't Respect the Land, Parks, or the Environment

Let's call it like it is: Trump doesn't care about parks. He doesn't respect the natural world. National parks, forests, and wilderness areas are nothing more than obstacles to him—land waiting to be exploited. In his view, the earth is a commodity, and public lands are just unmined resources. The natural environment isn't something to preserve. It's a problem to be solved, a thing to be used. That's not an oversight—it's his policy. His approach is one of exploitation, and it has been from the start.

What You Can Do: Take Action Now

This isn't just a policy shift—it's a crisis of values. If we let this happen quietly, we're complicit.

1. **Contact your local representatives** and loudly tell them you oppose the fast-tracking of mining on public lands. Your voice matters more than ever in the fight to preserve what little protection these places have left. Call, email, or show up to town halls. This is major and it's more effective than people understand. Start with one call - it takes five minutes.
2. **Support Environmental Groups:** Organizations like the Center for Biological Diversity, Earthjustice, Wilderness Society, NPCA, NRDC, to name a few are on the frontlines fighting these battles in court and in the halls of government. Your donations can help fund the legal challenges that could stop this order in its tracks.
3. **Stay Informed and Spread the Word:** Share this article, and others like it, on social media. The more people know about what's happening to our lands, the more pressure we can put on the powers that be. This isn't just a fight for today—it's for the future of public lands, wildlife, and our shared heritage.

We're standing at a crossroads. These lands are part of our legacy, and they deserve protection, not exploitation. If we don't fight now, we'll be looking at the destruction of some of the most beautiful, sacred places left in this country. Don't let that happen.

Until next time, Will, More Than Just Parks

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Women in Native American Poetry at the Nevada Museum of Art

Highlighting the profound significance of Native American poetry and its importance within the broader context of American literature, celebrate National Poetry Month with celebrated Native American poets, Nizhoni Widehat and Nila Northsun, in a conversation moderated by Stacey Montooth, Executive Director of the Nevada Department of Native American Affairs.

Free for Tribal Community Members.

Image: Judith Lowry The Race for Fire, 2001 Collection of the Maidu Museum and and Historic Site, Roseville, CA

April 10, 2025 6 – 7 pm \$15 General \$10 Members \$13 Student [Register](#)

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National Opportunities

[\\$10,000 Grants Boost Resident-Driven Community Planning](#)

Community Heart & Soul is a resident-driven process that engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it.

[Efforts Advancing Brain Health Supported](#)

The Lundbeck US Charitable Fund, a corporate giving initiative of the pharmaceutical company Lundbeck, supports organizations in the U.S. who are dedicated to advancing brain health

[Funds Promote Legal Services in California and Nationally](#)

The Bigglesworth Family Foundation provides funding in the area of legal services, striving to enhance access to underserved and underrepresented communities and break the cycle of poverty.

[Grants Enhance Local Cycling Projects in the U.S. and Canada](#)

Devinci's Community Grant Program provides funding to cycling organizations in the United States and Canada for local cycling-related projects within their communities.

Regional Opportunities

[Support Available for Organizations in CA, FL, PA, and TX](#)

The mission of the Foxwynd Foundation is to assist communities in need by enhancing access to key pillars of human dignity and potential.

[Giving Program Benefits Railroad Communities in the West and Midwest](#)

The Union Pacific Community Ties Giving Program provides small and medium-sized Local Grants to local organizations across Union Pacific's footprint, primarily in the western and midwestern United States.

[Programs for the LGBTQ+ Community Funded in the Northeast](#)

The Leonard-Litz LGBTQ+ Foundation supports organizations in the northeast United States that are improving the lives of the LGBTQ+ community through life-affirming services.

[Grants Address Social Determinants of Health in Oklahoma](#)

BlueCross BlueShield of Oklahoma's Blue Impact Grants support nonprofit organizations working to improve the health and wellness of Oklahomans by addressing social determinants of health.

Federal Opportunities

[Government Policy Update](#)

GrantStation is closely monitoring recent federal actions and their impact on the nonprofit sector.

[This article tracks ongoing developments](#), providing links to source materials. We will update the article at least once a week, and in cases of significant developments, we will provide updates as quickly as possible

- **Center for Expanding Leadership and Opportunity and Allstate Foundation: College Service Grants** (U.S. national)
Churchill Downs Corporate Social Responsibility (U.S. local: northeast, midwest, and south)
Access Communications Children's Fund (Canada: Saskatchewan)
L'Oréal Fund for Women (global)

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**[Democrats call for halt of military academy book purge](#)**

Leading Democrats on the House Armed Services Committee are demanding the Navy “immediately” put a stop to the removal of books from the service’s academy library after officials pulled hundreds of titles promoting diversity, equity and inclusion from the collection.  
[Read more...](#)

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~from Katie Couric:

Love letters: With President Trump threatening to decimate libraries across the country, Americans are speaking out. Just in time for National Library Week, we had [authors sound off on why libraries are important to them](#).

Last Branding
A Celebration of Life for
Clifford "Kip" Davis



April 12, 1937 - April 7, 2025

Calling All Cattlemen: 9:00AM

Outside of Nixon Gym

WE INVITE ALL CATTLEMEN TO JOIN US IN A SPECIAL MOMENT OF RESPECT BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS. AS A PART OF KIP'S FINAL BRANDING, WE ARE ASKING FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO BRING THEIR BRANDS TO PAY TRIBUTE TO HIM FOR ONE LAST FINAL ROUND-UP.

Celebration of Life: Wednesday, April 9, 2025 - 10:00AM

Location: Nixon Gym - Burial to follow at Nixon Cemetery

*Dinner provided and will be served following the burial.
Drink and dessert donations are kindly appreciated.*