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On July 13, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke announced that Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho and Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington are no longer under review by the Department of the Interior (DOI). The announcement of another unaltered monument, the Canyons of the Ancients in Colorado, came days later.

The DOI announced on May 11 it would be conducting a review of 27 National Monuments created since 1996 that are larger than 100,000 acres or the Secretary deems were made without sufficient public input, pursuant to an executive order issued by President Trump in April of this year. AGI submitted written comments to the Secretary detailing the geologic significance of several National Monuments under review, including Craters of the Moon and Hanford Reach National Monuments.

Craters of the Moon boasts a high density of diverse and well-preserved volcanic features, the youngest of which formed just 2,100 years ago. Also at Craters of the Moon, the Great Rift has exposed fissures, lava fields, lava tubes, craters, and cinder cones of immense scientific interest. The White Bluffs at Hanford Reach contain a sedimentary sequence of Ice Age floods, which may be the largest known floods to have every occurred on the Earth, as well as late Miocene fossils of the Ringold Formation.

On July 21, Secretary Zinke announced that he would not recommend any alterations to Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado. Canyons of the Ancients is home to the densest concentration of archaeological sites in the United States, as well as the McElmo Dome, which contains one of the largest geological carbon dioxide reservoirs in the United States.

Secretary Zinke released an interim report on June 12 providing his preliminary recommendations for the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, in which he suggested reducing the monument by an unspecified amount. As of the end of July, Zinke has not announced his recommendations for any of the other monuments on the list.

Sources: Department of the Interior, E&E News, Office of the Federal Register, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
