



**THE WILDLANDS**  
— CONSERVANCY —

# COTTONWOOD WASH ACQUISITION

*A Red-rock Canyon Like No Other Can Be Saved Forever*

We have only months to purchase a private property which is fundamentally important to the protection of Bears Ears National Monument. The threat of development on this land could affect access to and management and stewardship of tens of thousands of surrounding acres.



**Flowing from the Abajo Mountains to the San Juan River,** Cottonwood Wash is one of the most important drainages in Bears Ears National Monument. Used as a route of travel and trade for millennia, the canyon system has immeasurable cultural value and is home to thousands of archaeological sites. Cottonwood Wash is also a critical wildlife corridor and hosts hanging gardens with endemic plants unique to the Bears Ears area.

**At the mouth of Cottonwood Wash,** just north of Bluff, Utah, lies a critical private parcel that is surrounded on all four sides by Bears Ears National Monument. The inholding is 320 acres along two miles of soaring cliffs, intriguing side canyons and jaw-dropping vistas. Were the parcel to be developed, it would block tribal members, scientists and the general public out of a critical portion of Bears Ears National Monument. Such a disastrous loss of access would prevent ceremonies, cultural site stewardship, archaeological research and world-class recreation, including hiking, photography, and rock climbing.

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**It's for the younger generation to come and enjoy these wild, wild areas like Bears Ears, like the Cottonwood Canyon here....all these they need to remain undeveloped, to remain in their wild state and in their wild nature.**

*Arnold Clifford, Navajo Botanist*



**We envision a preserve that guarantees Indigenous and public access,** protects and restores riparian wildlife habitat, and provides educational and recreational opportunities that will support the vision the Tribes of Bears Ears have laid out for this incomparable cultural landscape. We are developing a partnership with Tribes to ensure management of this preserve is closely aligned with the greater vision for the surrounding National Monument.

**Cultural sites surround the property on all sides,** meaning the education and management we provide on this property can play a significant role in protecting these irreplaceable cultural sites. By collaborating with Tribes and land management agencies, we can ensure that stewardship of these cultural treasures is robust and coordinated.

**Here's how you can help:**

**The Wildlands Conservancy raised and invested \$200,000** to secure a purchase contract on the property. The agreement provides the Conservancy until April 2023 to raise the remaining \$2.0 million, which will cover the purchase of the land and associated water and mineral rights.

**We invite you to join us in protecting this jewel of Bears Ears,** elevating protection of cultural and natural resources, empowering tribal management collaboration, and ensuring public access.

**For more information:**

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There's no better place to put money than in protecting natural resources and green space. You can't replace this once it's torn apart or once it's built upon.

*Ann Leppanen, Bluff Mayor*



*Photos by Dave Herrero, Josh Ewing, and Lawrence Guymon*



WATCH THE VIDEO

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