Arches National Park, near Moab, Utah

Monument by the Obama administration. Named for two 8,700-foot buttes and, Hedden notes, among the richest archaeological districts in the country, Bears Ears is considered sacred ancestral homelands by many of the area’s Native American tribes. GCT is now in full-on defense mode because Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (also within the plateau) are under threat from U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. At press time, a

The environmental-advocacy organization was founded by a group that included then-Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, LL.B. ’65, in 1985. It seeks to safeguard the greater Grand Canyon region from destructive mining and other development, and is currently involved in the six-year battle against the proposed Grand Canyon Escalade resort and gondola (meant to take up to 10,000 visitors from the East Rim to the canyon floor each day), in support of the Native American campaign against the project, Save the Confluence. (The project is up for a vote by the Navajo Nation Council in October). GCT also joins in the long-running fight that includes Native Americans, against a massive commercial complex on the South Rim—hotels, homes, shops, restaurants—proposed by the Italian-owned Stilo Development Group USA. That would require drilling into the aquifer that supplies seeps, springs, and streams in the Grand Canyon. “They would dry up the things that support wildlife and even make it impossible for people to hike there,” Hedden says. “Water is already such a precious resource.”

GCT encompasses the entire Colorado Plateau. Its roughly 130,000 square miles sprawl across the Four Corners region and include the Colorado River and its tributaries (on which 40 million people depend for water); 55 national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas; and the territory of the Navajo Nation, which covers the lower third of the plateau, south of Moab. Projects are based primarily in northern Arizona and southern Utah. GCT was instrumental in obtaining protection for Bears Ears, a 1.35-million-acre tract located north of the Navajo Nation, designated a National Monument by the Obama administration. Named for two 8,700-foot buttes and, Hedden notes, among the richest archaeological districts in the country, Bears Ears is considered sacred ancestral homelands by many of the area’s Native American tribes. GCT is now in full-on defense mode because Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (also within the plateau) are under threat from U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. At press time, a