

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Meghan Kissell
571-643-3526 (cell)
Meghan@conservationlands.org



POLITICIANS TAKE AIM AT NATION'S CONSERVATION LEGACY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - June 13, 2011 - Today, the U.S. House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands reignited a debate to undermine the Antiquities Act, a critical conservation tool that has been used by presidents of both parties for over 100 years to protect national treasures like the Statue of Liberty and the Grand Canyon.

Since Congress passed the Antiquities Act in 1906, eight Republican and seven Democratic presidents have designated approximately 130 national monuments. Most recently used by President George W. Bush, the Antiquities Act has protected some of America's most well-known national parks like the Grand Canyon, Acadia, the Grand Tetons and Death Valley as well as sites of major historical importance like the African Burial Ground National Monument and the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument.

Today's hearing is the latest step in the House's anti-environmental agenda.

"The House of Representatives is attempting to dismantle our country's most important public lands laws. It has already tried to give away more than 60 million acres of wilderness quality land and roadless forests to corporate polluters, slash funding for environmental programs to historic lows, and eviscerate laws to protect our country's wildlife and keep our water and air clean. Now we are witnessing an attempt undo a century old conservation legacy that has protected places ranging from the Grand Canyon to the Statue of Liberty," stated Brian O'Donnell, Executive Director of the Conservation Lands Foundation.

"The Antiquities Act is the cornerstone of our country's conservation legacy. It would be a travesty to throw away this tool and limit our ability to care for our country's historical sites, cultural heritage and great outdoors," O'Donnell added.

"National monument status is an important way to not only recognize the significant cultural value of archaeological sites on public lands, but to guarantee their protection in perpetuity. Our cultural resources are non-renewable; they just aren't being made anymore. When they're lost, it's forever," stated Deborah Gangloff, President and CEO, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center.

In addition, a new economic study by Headwaters Economics (www.headwaterseconomics.org) have shown national monuments can play an important economic role for nearby communities by providing opportunities for economic diversification of gateway communities, increased quality of life and greater recreational opportunities that make communities attractive to new residents and new businesses.

"The designation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument [in Utah] didn't just help the economy, it is the economy. My business increased by 25% this year and we've seen similar increases since the designation. Each year, more and more people come because of the monument and the surrounding protected lands. The monument has insulated us from the outside economy and its also creating new business opportunities in this area," commented Steve Roberts, owner of Escalante Outfitters in Escalante, Utah.

#####

The Conservation Lands Foundation is the only organization dedicated solely to protecting the 28 million acres included in the National Conservation Lands. The Foundation's mission is to protect, restore and expand the National Conservation Lands through education, advocacy, and partnerships.