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Local Groups Evaluating Options Against Mining in Sensitive Area within Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Escalante, Utah (June 20, 2018) – The threat of mineral mining within Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument has dramatically increased and the Conservation Lands Foundation, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners and Society for Vertebrate Paleontology have announced they're evaluating any and all remedies to stop it.

On June 13, 2018, Glacier Lake Resources of Vancouver, British Columbia announced the acquisition of the Colt Mesa property for hard mineral extraction. The area supports a delicate desert ecosystem and a landscape enclosed in cliff walls, rich in Triassic era fossil deposits, which is unique and was included in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument to protect it from disturbance by mining.

“Colt Mesa should be off limits for mining. As far as we and legal scholars are concerned, this land is still part of the National Monument until the legal challenge to President Trump's Proclamation last December removing nearly a million acres is decided,” said Nicole Croft, executive director of Grand Staircase Escalante Partners.

“Glacier Lake Resources claim is on land that was acquired by Congress from the State of Utah in 1998 for Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. Utah traded the land for thousands of acres of valuable mineral lands elsewhere in the state as well as a sum of \$50 million dollars. It's pure industrial greed at the expense of our community's economic and cultural heritage,” said Croft.

“Allowing mining on the exchanged lands rewards speculators with lands the American people paid for and disregards the intent of Congress to protect them as part of the Monument,” said Brian Sybert, executive director of Conservation Lands Foundation.

“It appears that the Department of Interior is focused on exploitation of national public lands without regard to the fundamental underlying and unresolved questions concerning the legality of the Trump proclamation, which is now before the court. Expediting damaging actions on sensitive lands that were in the Monument appears to be a tactic by the Administration to make an "end run" around the judicial process,” said Sybert.

The Conservation Lands Foundation, Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners and the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, represented pro bono by the law firm Covington & Burling, filed suit in

federal court in December to overturn President Trump's proclamation dismantling Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and carving it into small pieces representing about half of the area protected by the original, 21-year-old national monument.

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About Conservation Lands Foundation:

The non-profit Conservation Lands Foundation is the only organization in the country dedicated solely to protecting, restoring and expanding the National Conservation Lands so they will endure from generation to generation. The National Conservation Lands are 36 million acres of protected public lands, rivers and trails, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, that stand proudly alongside our national parks and wildlife refuges, protecting our nation's heritage and helping drive the country's \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy. www.ConservationLands.org

About Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners:

Grand Staircase Escalante Partners, the official "Friends" organization for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, is committed to preserving and protecting the vast landscape of the National Monument for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

About Society of Vertebrate Paleontology:

Founded in 1940, the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology is a diverse organization of nearly 2,200 scientists, students, artists, preparators, advocates, writers and scholars across the globe, who are dedicated to the study, discovery, interpretation and preservation of vertebrate fossils.