

<https://www.abc4.com/news/local-news/blm-proposing-increasing-permits-to-the-wave-environmentalists-say-it-ll-damage-fragile-landscape/1999751834>

## **BLM proposing increasing permits to 'The Wave'; environmentalists say it'll damage fragile landscape**

- [Katie Karalis](#)

**Posted: May 13, 2019 / 03:51 PM MDT / Updated: May 13, 2019 / 04:17 PM MDT**

KANE COUNTY (ABC4 News) - "The Wave" in Vermilion Cliffs National Monument remains one of the nation's most exclusive hiking spots, and it may see bigger crowds under a new proposal from the Bureau of Land Management.

BLM officials are [weighing increasing the daily visitor limit to as high as 96](#). Currently, staff issue only 20 daily permits through a lottery.

Over 150,000 people applied for permits to hike the trail last year, and less than 5% received them, according to federal data. BLM officials say the proposal is a way to meet some of that demand.

The six-mile round-trip hike takes visitors through banks of pink, yellow, and white Navajo sandstone formations.

"We've recognized the need to keep our treasured landscapes from being loved to death," said Michael Herder, Arizona Strip district manager for the Bureau of Land Management.

Yet environmentalists say the BLM doesn't have the resources to ensure that such heavy use is compatible with protecting the environment and public safety.

"The very thing that people are coming to see would be damaged by so much use," senior campaigner for the Center of Biological Diversity Taylor McKinnon said. "This is a harsh and fragile desert environment and a place where people have actually died by exposure."

BLM officials said they hope to maintain the natural solitude of the environment, and current use of the trail is causing only minor resource damage. Staff said no one knows yet how much additional use could be authorized before major damage occurred.

Public meetings will be held next month for residents to voice any comments or concerns about the proposal.

- June 4: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Kanab Middle School, 690 S. Cowboy Way, Kanab, Utah.
- June 5: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott Page at Lake Powell, 600 Clubhouse Drive, Page, Arizona.
- June 6: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Dixie Convention Center, 1835 South Convention Center Drive, St. George, Utah.