

House Rock Valley within the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument.
Photo credit: Taylor McKinnon /Center for Biological Diversity

BAAJ NWAAVJO I'TAH KUKVENI — ANCESTRAL FOOTPRINTS OF THE GRAND CANYON NATIONAL MONUMENT, ARIZONA

THE PLACE:

Former President Biden [designated](#) Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument in August 2023, answering longtime calls from Tribal leaders to permanently protect more than 900,000 acres adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park. The monument safeguards sacred Indigenous cultural sites as well as remarkable archaeological and ecological features from uranium mining and other threats. Its diverse ecology includes federally protected species like California condors and many plants found nowhere else on the planet. Baaj Nwaavjo means “where tribes roam” to the Havasupai, and I'tah Kukveni means “our footprints” to the Hopi.

WHY IT'S SPECIAL:

The monument spans the ancestral homelands of several regional Tribes and builds on [efforts](#) since 2008 to permanently protect Grand Canyon's adjoining landscapes. The monument and nearby lands harbor many sensitive and endangered species, including humpback chubs, California condors, desert bighorn sheep, and Mexican spotted owls, as well as endemic plants and animals like Kaibab monkey grasshoppers, House Rock Valley chisel-toothed kangaroo rats, Grand Canyon ringlet butterflies and Tusayan rabbitbrush. Paleontological resources are found throughout the area, with fossils documented in written scientific literature for nearly 150 years.

Recent [polling](#) shows that 80% of Arizona voters support Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument.

THE STAKES:

Uranium mining around the Grand Canyon has damaged sacred sites and depleted and polluted aquifers that feed Grand Canyon's springs and streams, which provide water for the Havasupai Tribe and a rich diversity of plants and animals. Illegal efforts to shrink or repeal the monument could open the door to new uranium mines. Uranium mining on older claims, like the [Pinyon Plains](#) mine near Grand Canyon's South Rim, still threaten the area. Previous mining in the Grand Canyon region has contaminated land and water and radiation has sickened people living nearby, including on the Navajo Nation, where hundreds of abandoned uranium mines [still await cleanup](#).

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