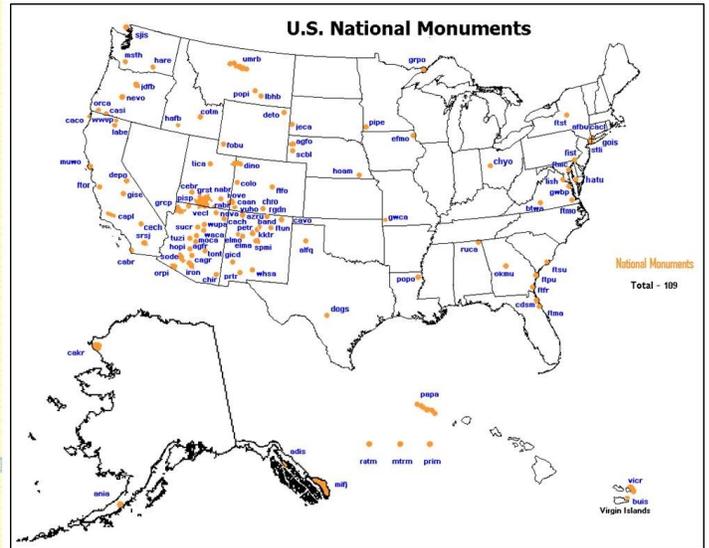


Who Really Owns Our National Parks?

Our Blue Earth - Our Blue Earth

Written by Susan DeVan



Americans may think we have complete sovereignty over National Parks, Monuments, and other places of historical or geographical value within our own borders. The truth is shocking. In 1972 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) drew up a treaty called [The Convention Concerning Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#). UNESCO's official website says, "World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located." Under Carter, Reagan, the first Bush, and Clinton, the following U.S. National and State Parks were put on the [World Heritage list](#): Mesa Verde; Yellowstone; Everglades; Grand Canyon; Redwood; Mammoth Cave; Olympic; Great Smoky Mountains; Yosemite; Hawaii Volcanoes; Carlsbad Caverns; and Kluane/Wrangell-St.Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Atsek. Also listed were these historic sites: Independence Hall; Statue of Liberty; Native American culture sites; Monticello and University of Virginia; Waterton Glacier International Peace Park.

By signing onto UNESCO's Convention in 1973 under Nixon, the U.S. agreed to manage our parks according to standards set by UNESCO, giving up sovereignty over our territory and submitting to the U.N.'s agenda. We agreed to regulate private lands surrounding the sites; receive U.N. technical and professional training; accept emergency assistance for sites deemed to be in immediate danger (by whose definition?); and propagandize other countries to designate their own sites for the list. In 1994 the Clinton administration published the [Strategic Plan for the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program](#) adapted from a U.N. treaty which this country never ratified.

By deliberate U.N. design, local or regional involvement in designation of World Heritage sites is actively discouraged. The Federal Government's Executive Branch uses the U.N. treaty to expand Sustainable Development land-control programs, taking vast chunks of land out of private use and limiting public access to it. In one case, UNESCO delegates and the U.S. Park Service attempted to stop development of a commercial enterprise on private property outside the boundaries of Yellowstone Park; their proposed solution: create a buffer zone of 150 miles in diameter around the whole park. This would mean the displacement of many thousands of ranchers, residents and businesses within the buffer zone so that the flora and fauna of the park might thrive. When animals and vegetation expand to fill the buffer zone, then what? Will Yellowstone be extended into Nebraska? The implications of this policy are absurd, but private citizens will have no recourse under law because the Federal Government can claim they cannot break a treaty with the U.N.

The U.N. decided that too many World Heritage sites were of European and Christian origin or interest, and by declaration made it a priority to list places in tropical, desert, arctic and non-Christian locations. This year the U.S. Secretary of the Interior submitted his tentative list to UNESCO for more U.S. sites: Civil Rights Movement locations; Aviation sites, Dayton, OH; Thomas Jefferson Buildings; Mount Vernon; Frank Lloyd Wright Buildings; Okefenokee; Petrified Forest, and many other points of historical and natural interest. Will the U.N. seek to create a no-man's-land around each place because we are incapable of managing our own American treasures?

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