

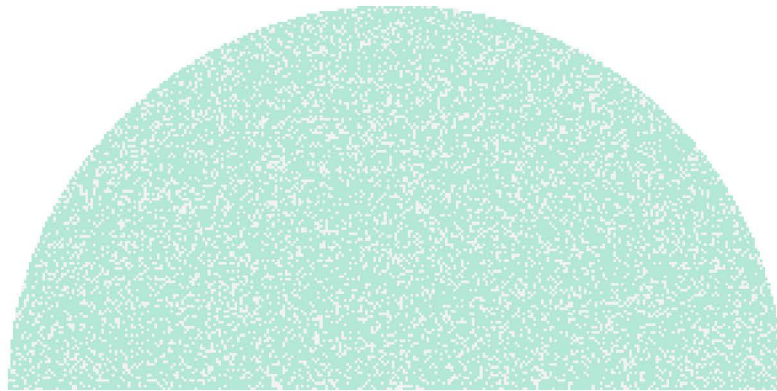
# Illuminant

An audiovisual platform that sheds light on a Native perspective of  
Bears Ears National Monument

Rikki Price    Spring 2021

# Illuminant

*A means of illuminating*



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\*This project was designed by a non-Native person. It aims to amplify Native voices, but **in no way does it speak for Native people**

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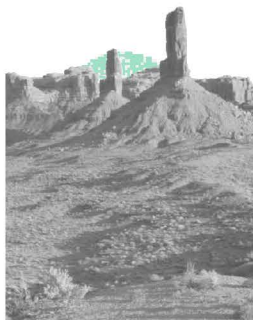
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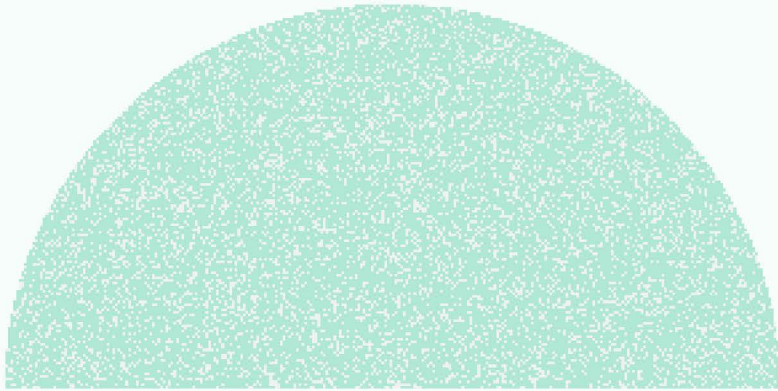
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# Problem Context

Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

Increase in Visitorship & Impact

Visitor Perspective

Bridging Visitor and Native perspective

**“We want to educate the public on **why you need to visit this landscape with a sense of respect** and an understanding of the people who lived there and who's homeland it still is.”**

*-Brandy Hurt,  
Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition*





## Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition is a group of five individual Tribes in the Bears Ears region that share various Ancestral and Spiritual connections to the landscape and the archaeological sites in the area.

The Coalition formed in an effort to protect Bears Ears, and was the driving force in its formation after proposing the monument to the Obama administration in 2016.



## Native Ties

Of the many Tribes that have connections to Bears Ears, each has unique histories and traditions that manifest differently in modern cultural practices.

Many of the details of these practices are not made public, but the Tribes ask visitors to respect the land and sites as sacred spaces none-the-less.



## Increase in Visitorship

Bears Ears National Monument is as popular as ever, with visitorship increasing drastically over the last few years. This is partially due to the national attention Bears Ears got in 2017 over the decision to shrink the monument boundaries by the Trump administration.

The monument is home to over **100,000 archaeological sites** that make it a unique attraction for visitors in combination with the surrounding landscape.

**72%** increase in visitor-ship from 2017 to 2018



## High Engagement

Along with the increase in visitorship, Bears Ears also sees a high percentage of visitors engaging directly with the land, most notably 94% of visitors reporting that their trip involved hiking. While this is fantastic for the visitors, it also means a greater opportunity for the visitors to interact with the landscape and the sites in a destructive way.

With the increased popularity of Bears Ears over the past few years combined with high engagement, concerns regarding damage to the sites have risen. On top of the archaeological impact, **vandalism of rock art and damage to structures is devastating to the communities of Native people who have Spiritual and Ancestral connections to these sites.**



## Excited, but unaware

Through an investigation of reviews from visitors to the area, it was clear that visitors were excited about the archaeological sites in the monument. It was also clear that the way the visitors view the sites is different than the way the Tribes view the sites- with the tone that they are remnants of civilizations past that have no modern cultural relevance, and using outdated terms like ‘ruins’ and ‘Anasazi’ to describe them.

Many Tribes today still regard Bears Ears as a sacred place, and it is still used for cultural practices and ceremonies.

**Would visitors regard these sites differently if they knew their modern cultural significance?**



“Absolutely amazing with the ruins”



“Ruins you wont want to miss”



“The ruins make the hike very worthwhile



“The ruins are really easy to spot and really interesting to explore”



“I found the ruins to be amazing and much better than expected.”



# Bridging the Gap

The foremost reason to educate the public on Native ties to Bears Ears as expressed by the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition is to create a deepened sense of respect for the area and the people who's homeland it still is. This respect is an end in itself, but it may also lead to other benefits for the monument and its visitors.

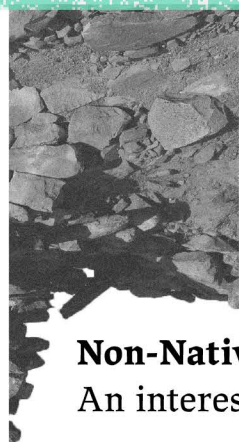
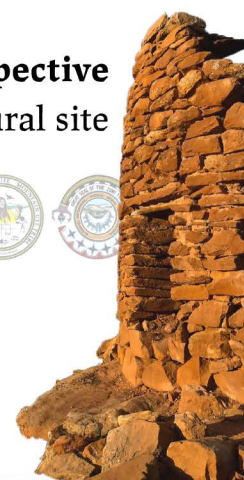
Some possible colateral benefits of increasing visitor awareness of Indigenous ties to the area include:

**Decreased likelihood of vandalism**

**Increased likelihood of stewardship and protection of land**

**Curiosity regarding cultural ties to other areas**

**Native perspective**  
An active cultural site



**Non-Native perspective**  
An interesting artifact

★★★★★  
"Very worthwhile"

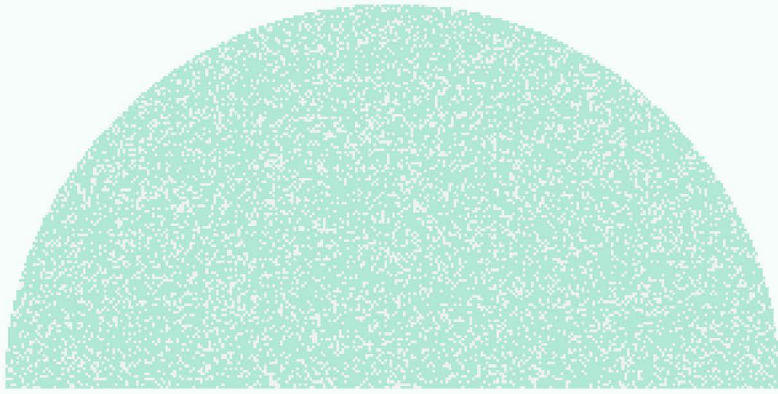
★★★★★  
"Incredible"

★★★★★  
"Spectacular ruins."

★★★★★  
"Really interesting"

★★★★★  
"Fabulous to explore"





# Site Context

Bullet Canyon Trail to Grand Gulch

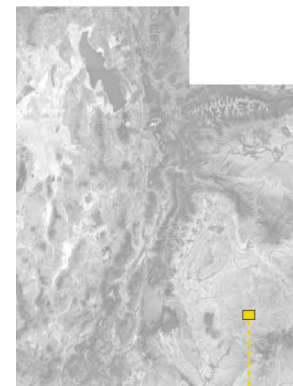
User Journey and Opportunities

# Bullet Canyon to Grand Gulch

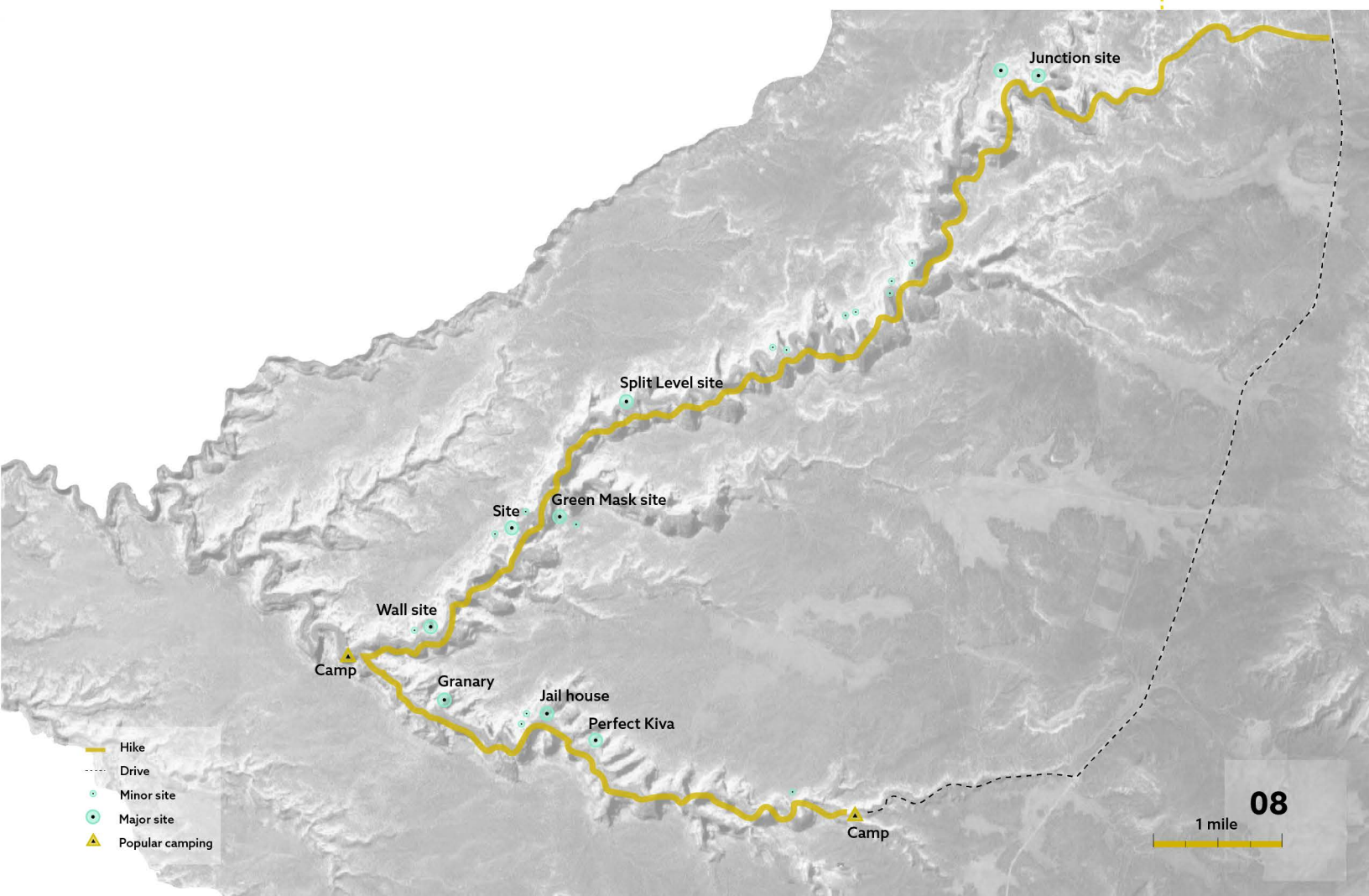
## *A backpacker's destination for archaeological sites*

One of the most popular backpacking routes in Bears Ears National Monument is Bullet Canyon to Grand Gulch and Kane Gulch. It is a destination for backpackers who are going specifically to see archaeological sites because of the density of sites along this trail.

This also makes it an excellent trail to provide an educational experience to its users, because they are likely already fascinated by the contents of the trail and would be open to learning more.

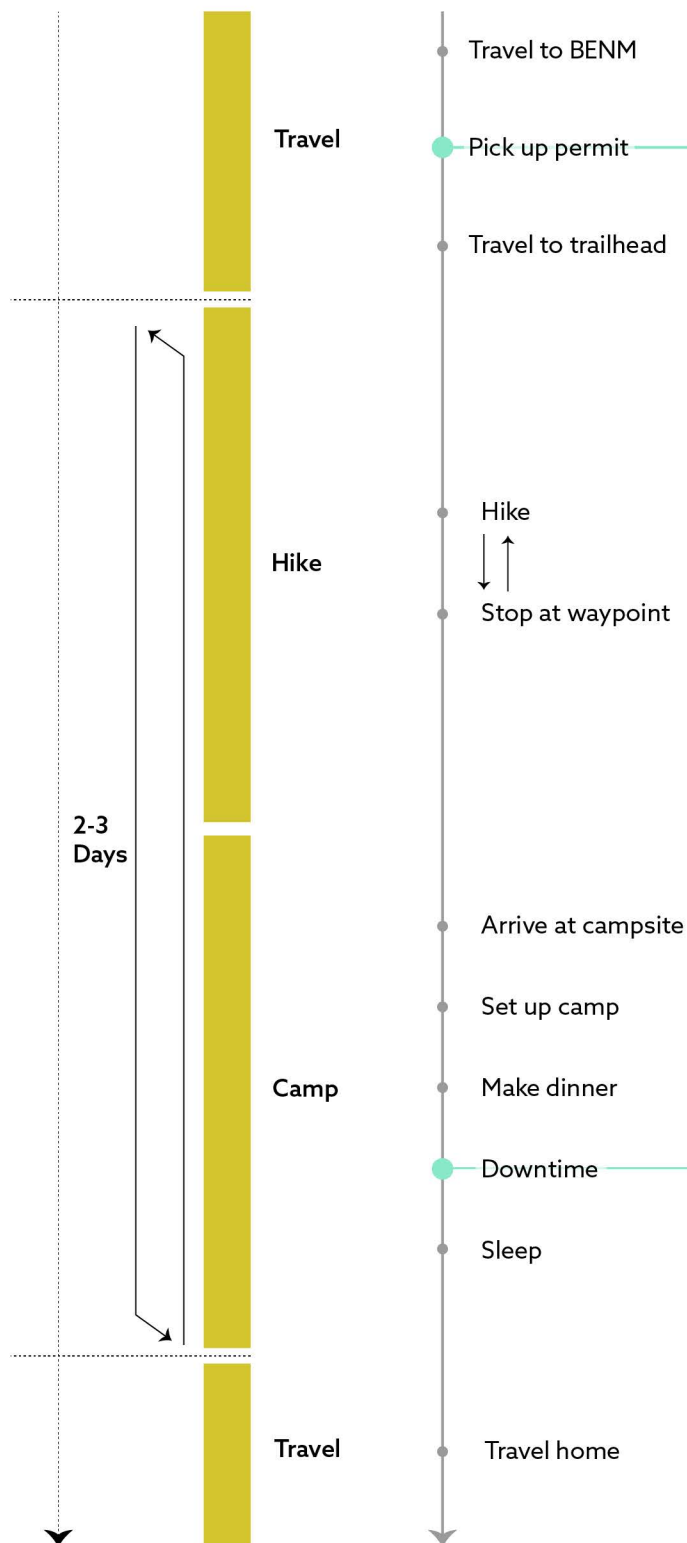


Bears Ears National Monument  
Utah



# User Journey and Opportunities

## Grand Gulch Backpacking



### Picking up a Permit

Visitors are required to obtain a permit to backpack in Grand Gulch. This can be done at the ranger station nearby and is a great opportunity to distribute physical materials to the visitors



### Evening Downtime

Usually, backpackers experience a period of downtime between getting to camp and going to sleep. This is an excellent opportunity to provide an experience to backpackers that is fun and educational.

## Insights



1

Backpackers are enthusiastic about the archaeological sites in Bears Ears National Monument



2

Backpackers usually experience a period of downtime between setting up camp and going to bed

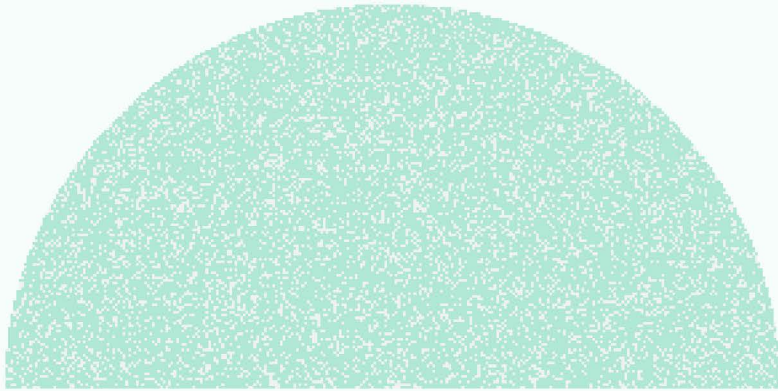


3

The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition wants to educate the public on Indigenous presence and perspective of the sites

## Opportunity

How can backpackers' evening downtime be used for a fun, educational experience that sheds light on Indigenous perspectives of their surroundings?



# Design Intervention

Illuminant Components

Projector

Episode Structure & Example

System Map

# ILLUMINANT

*A means of illuminating*



ILLUMINANT is an audio-visual platform that uses a fold-up projector and an audio player to provide a storytelling experience to backpackers, and sheds light on a Native perspective of Bears Ears

# Ultralight Illuminant Components

## Visitor-provided



### Headlamp

1-6 ounces (included in pack weight)  
Battery life 20-100 hours

The system consists of five parts- the fold-up projector, the "reels" or transparencies containing a series of photos and graphics, a preloaded audio-player, headphones, and the visitor-provided headlamp. As one of the ten essentials, headlamps are a nearly universal piece of backpacking gear.

Not counting the headlamp, the entire system weighs just **3.4 ounces**, making it compatible with even the most ultralight backpacking setups.

## BLM-provided



### Projector

1.6 ounces



### Reels

.3 oz



### Audio player

1.1 ounces



### Headphones

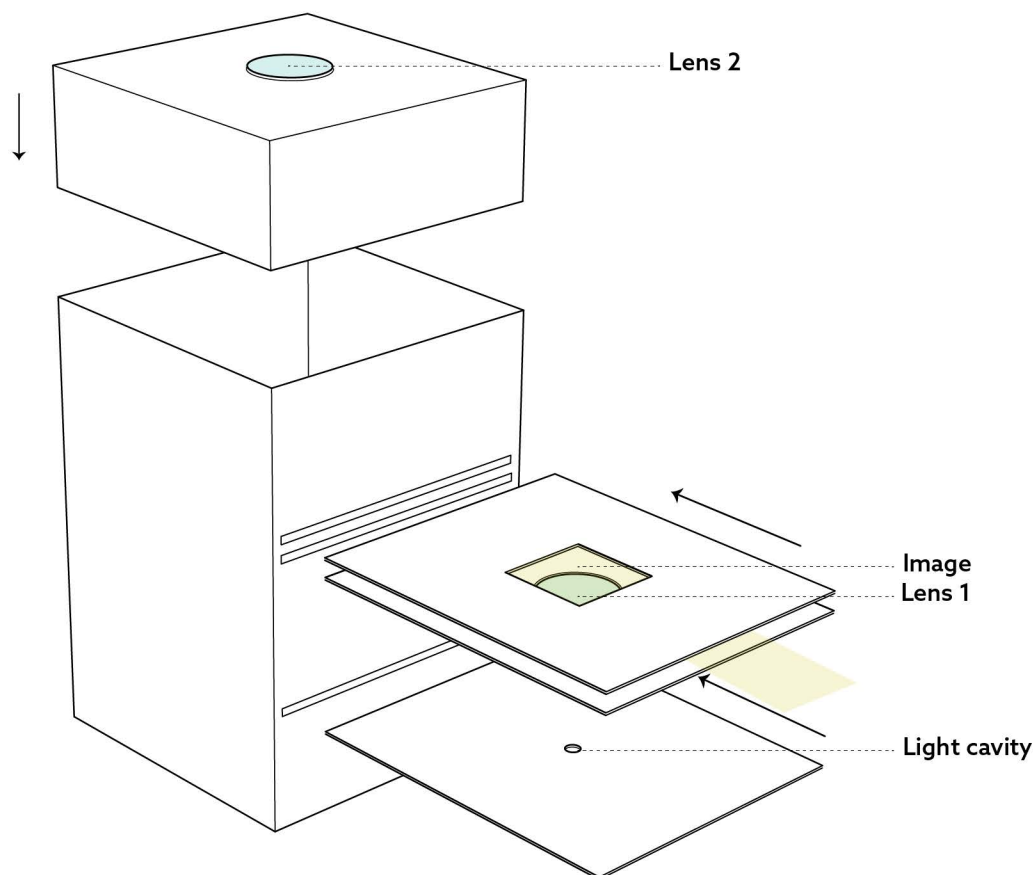
.4 ounces

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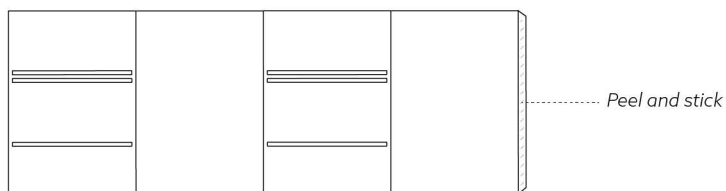
3.4 ounces



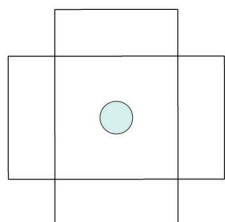
# Projector



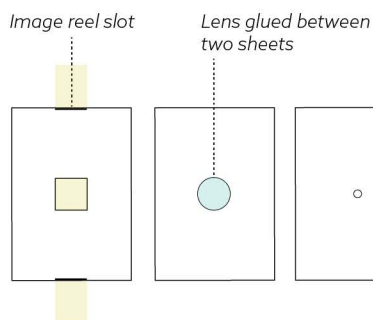
## Body



## Lid



## Inserts



## Foldable Template

In order to take on a low profile in a backpacker's already-full pack, the projector is designed as a flat, paper-board template and inserts, which can be set up and broken down for several night's use.

The kit comes with multiple reels—one for each night/episode for a specific backpacking route. The reels are pulled through the insert as an episode progresses, and as directed by the audio component of the episode.

# Episode Structure

8 Frames, 15-20 minutes



## 3/ Site context

### What visitors are expecting:

What sites were used for

Who used sites

Historical context

## 5/ Native Perspective (to be dictated by Tribes)

### Suggested themes based on BEITC resources:

Tribes are still here today

Tribes are separate and unique

Ancestral sites are sacred to many Tribes

# Example Episode

8 Frames, 18 minutes



## 3/ Site context

### Sites seen that day:

Turkey Pen site

Split-Level site

Green-Mask site

## 5/ Native Perspective (to be dictated by Tribes)

### Suggested themes based on BEITC Resources

Tribes are still here today

Tribes are separate and unique

Ancestral sites are sacred to many Tribes

# System Map

## Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition

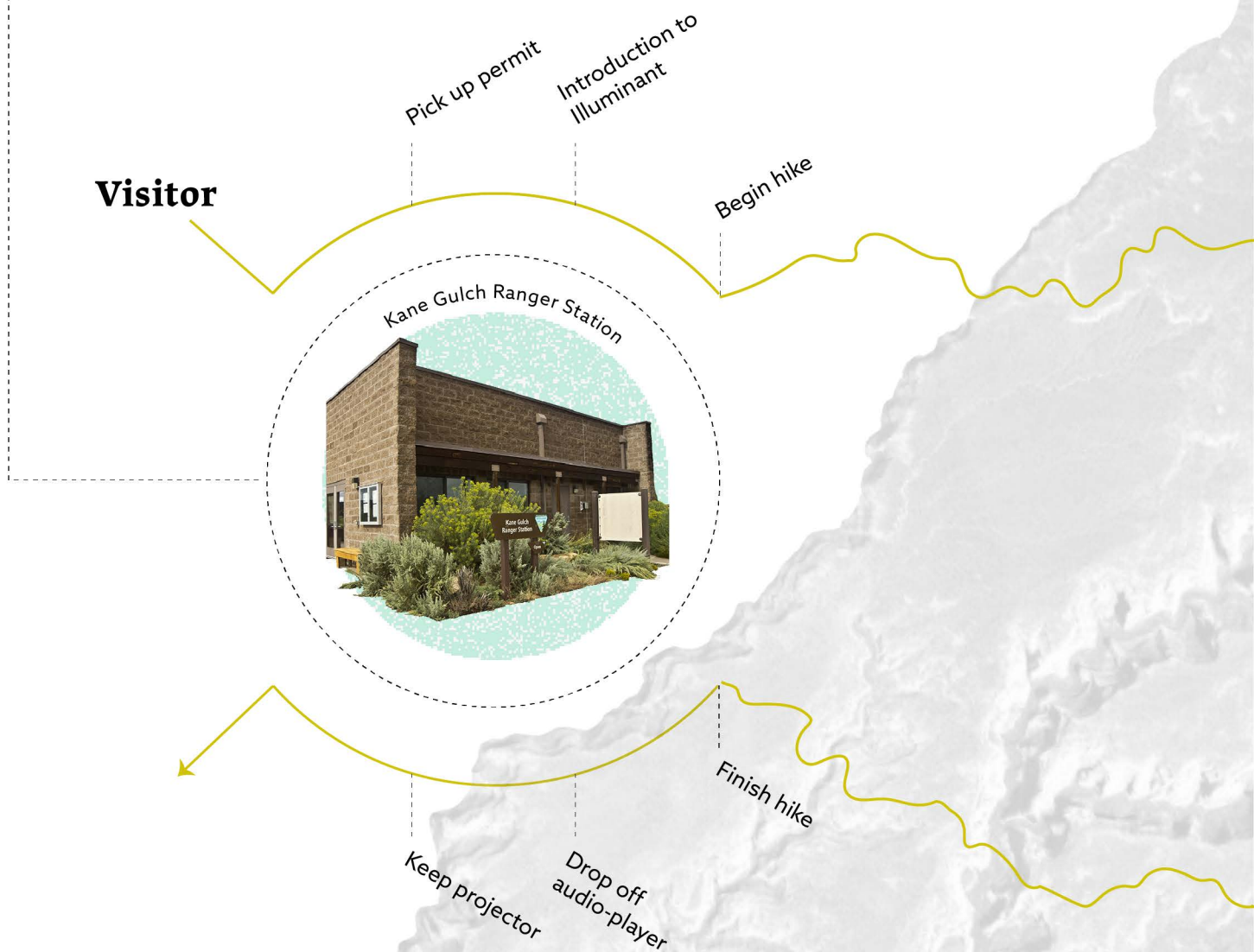
Construct narrative

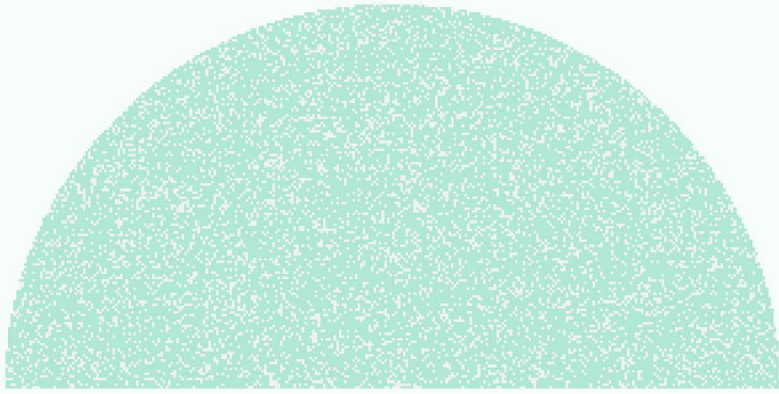
## BLM

Distribute materials  
Collect Fees

## Co-creation as Co-management

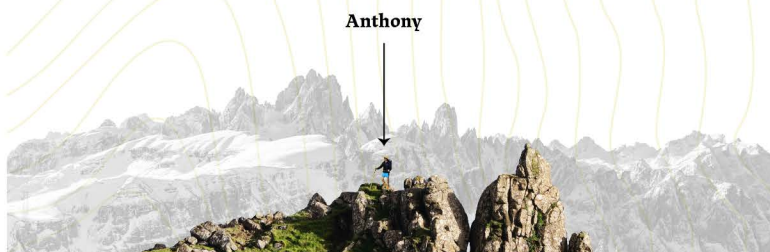
The Inter-Tribal Coalition and the BLM would work together to construct a set of narratives. The BLM would then distribute Illuminants to visitors along with their permit at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station before their hike. After finishing their hike and Illuminant experiences, the hikers would return the audio player to the ranger station for re-use, but would be allowed to keep their projectors.





# **Illuminant Experience**

# Illuminant Experience



Anthony is a teacher from Salt Lake City, and he enjoys a few backpacking trips a year in Southern Utah.



He decides to go backpacking in Bears Ears after hearing amazing things about the archaeological sites from one of his friends.



On his way to the trailhead, he stops to pick up the required backpacking permit at Kane Gulch Ranger Station. As he asks for a permit, the ranger informs him that included in the permit fee is a new educational experience created in partnership with the BEITC.



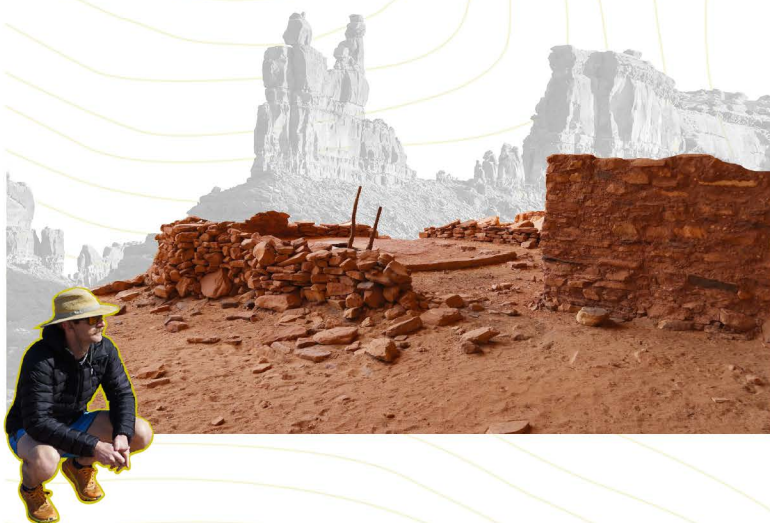
The kit consists of a small projector that folds up from a paperboard template, and an audio player that corresponds with the projector frames. He thanks the ranger and headed back to his car to finish off the drive to the trailhead.



Soon after starting his hike, Anthony begins to encounter archaeological sites. His friend was right- they're amazing! He couldn't believe that sites from civilizations so long ago are still around.



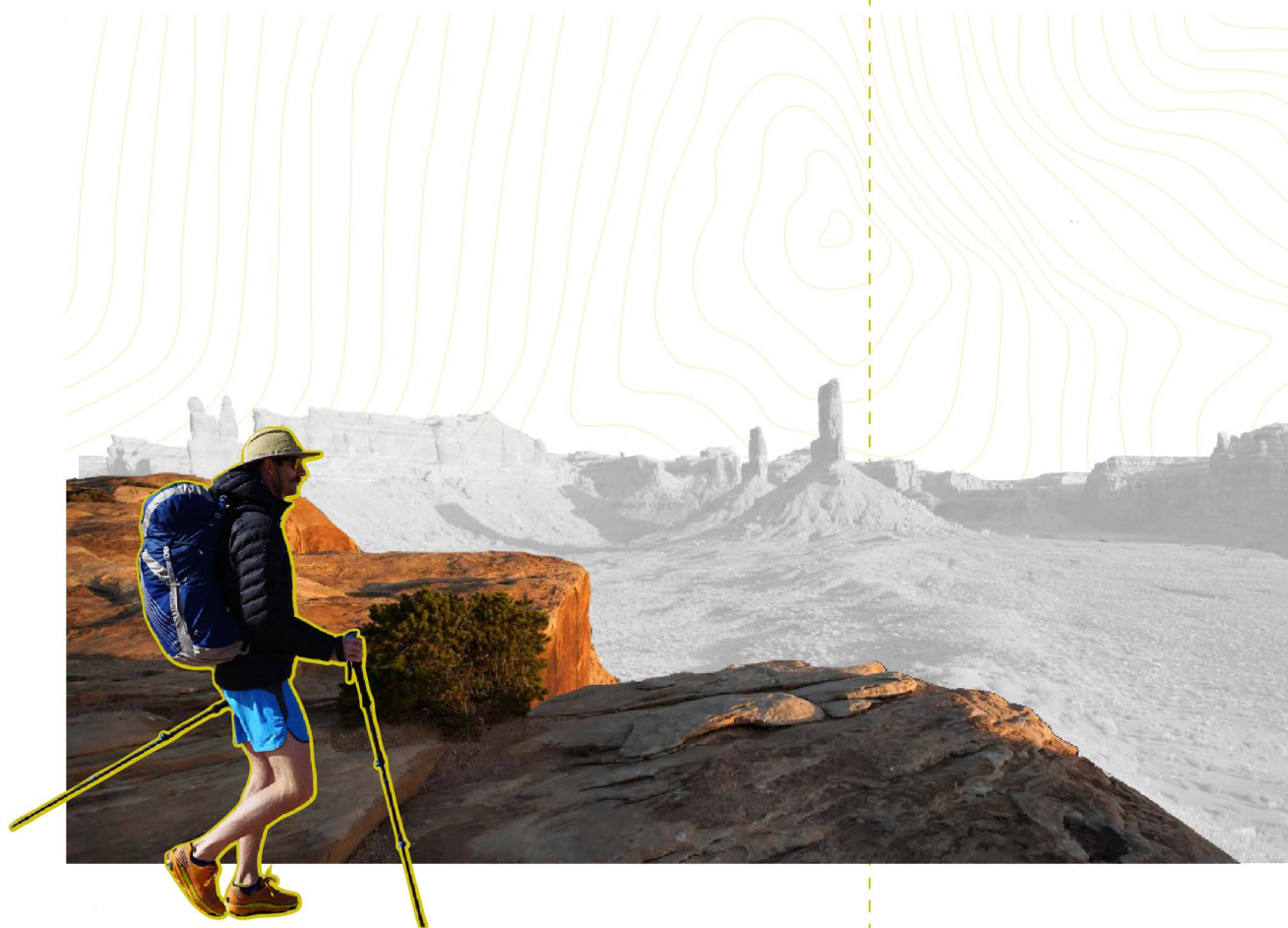
Anthony sees 3 more sites that day before reaching his campsite. He sets up camp, boils water for dinner and realizes as it's getting dark that it's only 7 o'clock- and that he has a few hours to kill before bed.



He remembers the kit the ranger gave him and decides to try it out. He sets up the projector by folding the template according to the directions, and sets it on top of his illuminated headlamp. He adjusts the lid to focus the image and presses play on the audio player.

Frame by frame, he begins to learn more about the context of the sites he saw that day, but then he begins to learn that the sites are actually still sacred to many different Tribes. He learns about the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, how they proposed the monument, and how they would like visitors like him to approach these sites.

The next day as he visits more sites along his hike, Anthony feels a greater sense of respect towards them- as sacred areas, areas that people today have ancestral and spiritual connections to.

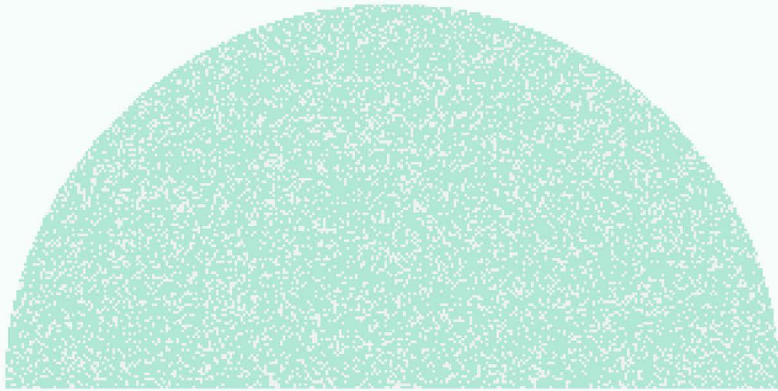


## The End. or... the Beginning?

Anthony had fun learning about the monument, but the impact doesn't stop there. With a greater understanding of the area around him, he is more likely to visit with a sense of respect, and even stop others from damaging the Ancestral sites he learned about on his trip.

On the remainder of the hike back to his car, Anthony reflects on his trip, and notices how the land around him feels more like a place full of active cultural sites rather than ancient artifacts. He feels lucky to be in such a place.





# Impact

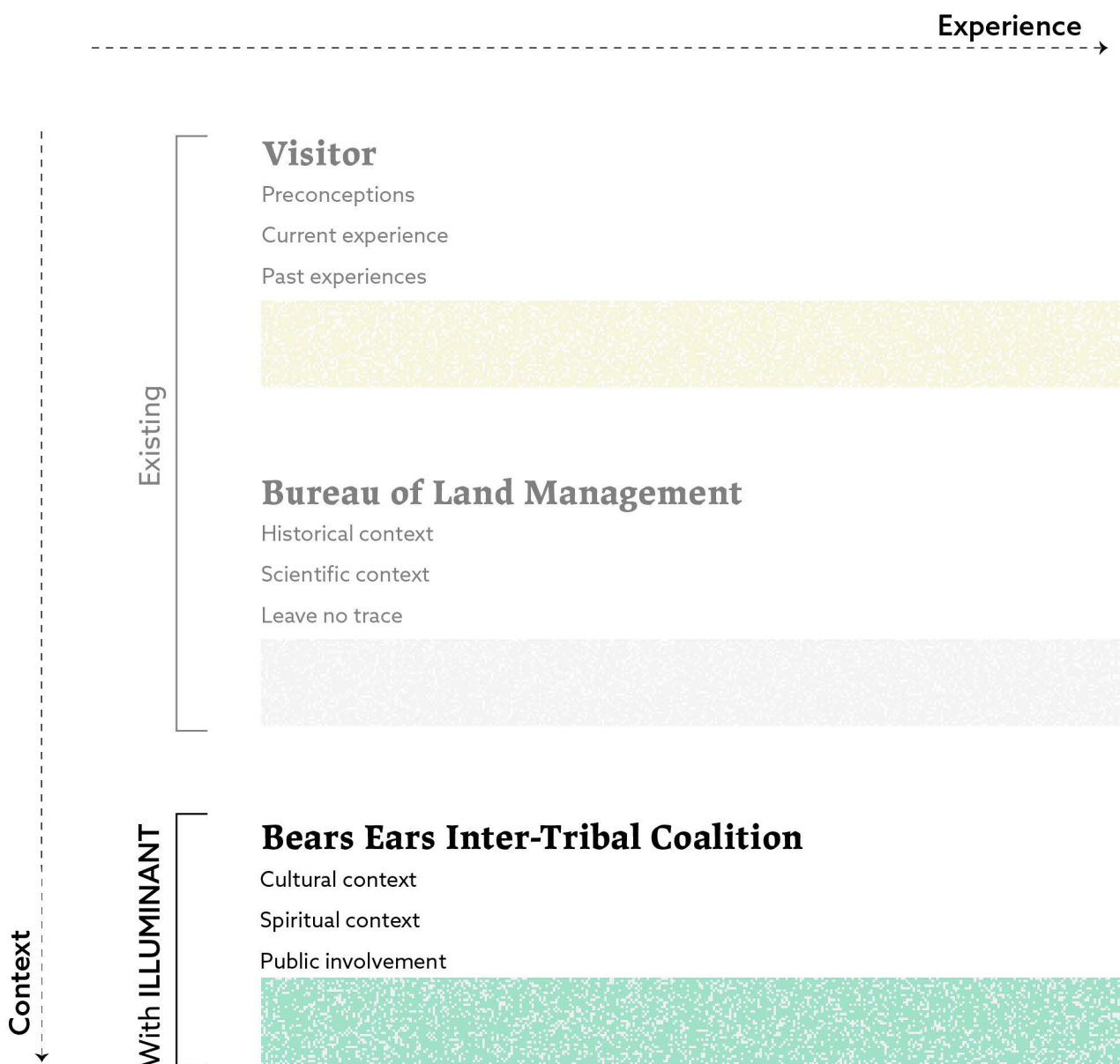
Depth of Experience

Layered Impact

# Depth of Experience

While the BLM already does a great job of introducing scientific, historical and impact context to visitors, Illuminants provide an opportunity for the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition to introduce cultural and spiritual context, which would encourage visitors to be more respectful of the sites and the monument as a whole.

Anthony's experience exemplifies the surprise and delight associated with learning new things about something one already finds interesting. This context creates a more memorable and impactful experience for the visitor, while also giving them to even more reason to treat their surroundings with respect.



# Layered Impact



## Visitors

- A fun experience
- Increased respect of land and sites
- Knowledge of Tribes and Monument



## Tribes

- Opportunity to communicate directly with visitors
- Ancestral sites and land are safer with more educated visitors

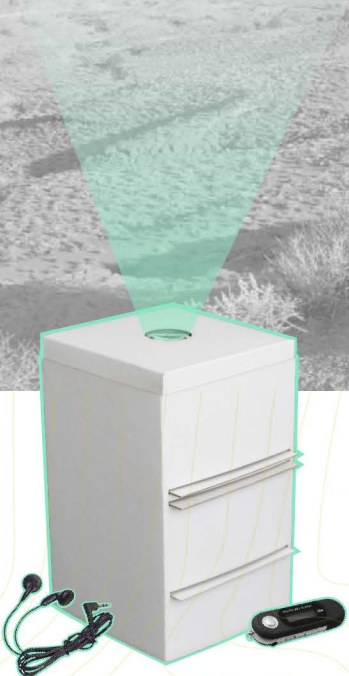


## Land & Sites

- Lower likelihood of damage & Vandalism
- More interest in visitor stewardship and protection

The distribution and use of ILLUMINANTS would ultimately benefit Tribes, visitors, and the land itself through a fun and educational audio-visual experience.

# Illuminant



## Sources

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