

BlueRibbon Coalition

BlueRibbon Coalition is an association of off-highway vehicle and related industry groups that promotes motorized vehicle access to public lands while using overblown and misleading rhetoric to oppose conservation efforts.

Summary: BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) is an association of off-highway vehicle (OHV) clubs and related industry groups that oppose conservation initiatives. The coalition, which also calls itself “ShareTrails,” [opposes](#) the Biden Administration’s [America the Beautiful Conservation initiative](#) that aims to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030, erroneously calling it a “clear effort to lock people out of their land.”

BRC consistently opposes conservation initiatives with extreme rhetoric, especially wilderness designations and updated land management plans, which BRC calls “[wilderness laundering](#).” BRC claims that monument designations like Bears Ears National Monument are “[blatant attacks](#).”

BRC has been explicitly [tied to the oil and gas industry](#) in the past and [still benefits](#) from the support and membership of timber, mining, and OHV industry groups.

Though membership dues make up a significant amount of BRC’s income, the group gets most of its money from grants from the OHV industry. In the past, BRC received major donations from [corporations including Exxon](#).

BRC’s current executive director previously worked for anti-public lands Utah Senator Mike Lee until 2018.

Our detailed report can be found below:

BACKGROUND:

BlueRibbon Coalition Is A 501(c)3 Nonprofit Which Advocates For OHV Recreationists And Opposes Wilderness Designations

According to 2020 Filings, BlueRibbon Coalition Inc is Registered as an Exempt 501(c)(3) Organization. [990 IRS Filings, accessed [6/2/2022](#)]

- **BlueRibbon Coalition Also Calls Itself “Sharetrails.org”** [About, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/08/24](#)]

BlueRibbon Coalition Was Established To Give Voice To Motorized Recreation Advocates In Opposition To Wilderness. [*About*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [5/19/2022](#)]

The Coalition Is Comprised Of Numerous Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation, Repair And Industry Groups Including The Kawasaki Motor Corporation, A Major OHV Manufacturer. [*Member Organizations and Businesses*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/08/24](#)]

The BlueRibbon Coalition Is An Off-Highway Vehicle Interest Group Funded By Members And "Other" Generous Contributors

In 2020, BRC Reported \$391,249 In Total Revenue, A Majority Of That Coming From "Other Contributions, Gifts, Grants And Similar Amounts." According to their 2020 990, BlueRibbon's Revenue Totaled \$391,249 in 2020. Including \$24,917 from "Federated Campaigns," \$91,492 from "Membership Dues" And \$160,372 From "All Other Contributions." [*990 IRS Filings*, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

- Revenue Also Included \$6,156 From Circulation of the Group's Sharetrails Magazine and \$108,307 From Will Proceeds. [*990 IRS Filings*, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

BlueRibbon Coalition Receives A Disproportionate Amount Of Its Revenue Via "Other Contributions, Gifts, Grants and Similar Amounts" Totaling \$246,647 in 2018 and \$200,808 in 2019. [*990 IRS Filings*, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

2020 "Other Contributions" Include An \$11,740 Grant From Yamaha, A Leading Manufacturer Of OHVs. [GlobalNewswire, posted [3/31/2021](#)]

The BlueRibbon Coalition PAC Was Registered With the Federal Election Commission Between 2001 and 2004 Reporting Receipts Totaling \$52,115. [FEC.gov, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

Of The 6 Staff Members At BRC, Only The Executive Director's Compensation Is Reported. In 2020, [Then-Executive Director Spencer Gilbert](#) Was The Only Member of Staff on The Payroll Being Compensated \$63,500 for the Year. [*990 IRS Filings*, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

Opposition To The America The Beautiful Initiative

BlueRibbon Coalition Claimed Repeatedly And Erroneously That The 30x30 Initiative Is "A Land Grab"

The BlueRibbon Coalition Claims The 30x30 Initiative is a "Clear Effort to Lock the American People Out of Their Land." "The 30x30 campaign is a major effort to lock up 30% of the nation's land by the year 2030. Anyone who has read the details of how this plan will be implemented understands it is a clear effort to lock the American people out of their land." [*Fight for Every Inch*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [5/23/2022](#)]

BRC Broadly Opposes Wilderness Designations, Calling Them The 'Most Restrictive Form Of Land Management' And Likens Them To 'Wilderness Laundering'

The Coalition Sees Wilderness Designations As "The Most Restrictive Form Of Land Management." [*Fight for Every Inch*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

BRC Claims Updated Management Plans Are "Wilderness Laundering" By Proposing New Areas To Designate As Wilderness. "You will find as the BLM and Forest Service update management plans, they propose areas that could potentially become wilderness. We call this wilderness laundering. There are currently management plan and travel management plan proposals in Utah, Colorado, Nevada, South Dakota, Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon and Montana with more to come. BRC is involved with these plans every step of the way. We need you to comment, to discourage the creation of these areas." [*Fight for Every Inch*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [05/23/2022](#)]

BRC Laments The Blackfoot River Watershed Will "Never Be Able To Have Roads" Once It Is Protected. "Conservation groups are pushing for 30x30 which aims to have 30% of the United State's land locked up by 2030. One way they will accomplish this is through wilderness bills throughout different states. Senator Tester in Montana has proposed the Black Foot-Clearwater Stewardship Act which will designate nearly 80,000 more acres of land as wilderness. This means this area will never be able to have roads in it once designated." [*Fight for Every Inch*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

BlueRibbon Coalition Opposed The Designation Of Bears Ears National Monument And Called The Restoration Of Its Original Boundaries A 'Blatant Attack On Utah'

The Use of the Antiquities Act At Bears Ears In Utah Is Specifically Called Out As Something The Coalition Wants To Oppose. "Recently the Biden Administration used the Antiquities Act to designate national monuments in Southern Utah. Grand

Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears are a crucial piece to the 30×30 puzzle. Utah leadership is preparing a lawsuit to fight back against these designations. You can add your voice to many others letting the Governor and Attorney General know that we support them in these efforts." [*Fight for Every Inch*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

BRC Calls The Restoration Of The Original Boundaries At Bears Ears And Grand Staircase-Escalante A "Blatant Attack On Utah." "The Biden Administration used the Antiquities Act to restore the original boundaries of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah. This undoes what the Trump Administration had previously done in shrinking these monuments. This is a blatant attack on Utah and its public lands and will result in restrictive access and management policies." [*Fight for Every Inch*, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

Ties To Anti-Public Lands Politicians And Industries

BRC Executive Director Ben Burr Worked For Anti-Conservation Senators

Executive Director Ben Burr Worked for Senators Mike Lee and Ben Sasse Between 2011 and 2018. [Legistorm, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

- **Senator Mike Lee Gave A Speech Decrying the "Executive Abuse of the Antiquities Act" In 2017, A Major Vehicle of Meeting the 30x30 Goal.** "We are here to talk about executive abuses of the Antiquities Act. All told, presidents have used this law to cordon off tens of millions of acres of public land from recreation and economic activity – and they have done this with shockingly little regard for the actual Americans who work and live near these areas." [*Executive Abuse of the Antiquities Act*, lee.senate.gov, [10/04/2017](#)]

Former BRC Executive Director Spencer Gilbert, Who Previously Worked For Politicians And The Oil & Gas Industry, Urged BRC To Engage In Political And Legal Advocacy

Former Executive Director Spencer Gilbert Has A Work History Including Positions In Legislative And Executive Offices As Well As The Oil & Gas Industry. Former Executive Director And Current Board Member Spencer Gilbert Has Gilbert has Extensive Work Experience Including Positions in the Senate, President's Office, Sanki Petroleum Technology Company and Novaturient Biosciences. [LinkedIn, accessed [02/10/24](#)]

Gilbert Called On The Coalition To Reestablish Its PAC And Grow Its Litigation Fund. During the 2021 Board Elections, Former Executive Director and Eventual Victor Spencer Gilbert Voiced Support For Establishing a BlueRibbon PAC, 501 (c)(4) and “Giant Litigation Fund.” [2021 Board Candidates, Sharetrails.org, accessed [5/23/2022](#)]

BRC Receives Funding And Membership From Timber, Mining, Oil, And Gas Corporations

A 2000 Report From U.S. PIRG Denounces The BlueRibbon Coalition As A Front For The Timber, Mining and Oil & Gas Industries. “The Blue Ribbon Coalition, one of the most active opponents of the Forest Service’s efforts to preserve large, intact areas in national forests, is closely tied to the timber, mining, and oil and gas industry, according to a report released today by U.S. PIRG... While the group’s mission statement values land stewardship and responsible use, the organization receives funding from 355 corporations including the American Forest and Paper Association, Exxon, and Sierra Forest Products.” [CommonDreams, published [06/20/20](#)]

[Sierra Forest Products](#), A Lumber Company, Remains a Member. [Member Organizations and Businesses, Sharetrails.org, accessed [02/10/24](#)]