

The Bears Ears Digital Cultural Heritage Initiative (BEDCHI) requests funding from the Canyonlands Natural History Association (CNHA), in partnership with the US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), for the development of a multifaceted digital cultural heritage and conservation project centered on two cultural landscapes in the Manti-La Sal National Forest and Bears Ears National Monument (BENM). This project will conduct detailed 3D photogrammetric captures, develop audiovisual content featuring narratives from Navajo and Zuni cultural experts regarding the ancient and modern significance of these landscapes, and provide opportunities for tribal youth engagement in the form of two on-site workshops that will provide training on 3D capture technologies. Following the completion of on-location work, the high-fidelity 3D scans captured by project participants will be processed into two main products. The first is a series of digital assets that will serve as a resource for preservation and conservation efforts in the BENM. The 3D scans will be given to the USFS for use in their legally mandated resource management and stewardship efforts. The second is a substantial contribution of both 3D and audiovisual content to an immersive virtual reality (VR) experience accessible to tribal historic preservation offices, regional cultural institutions, visitor's centers, and the public. This VR experience will support the educational needs of a variety of stakeholders, foster public engagement with Indigenous heritage narratives, and advocate for the continued stewardship of vital cultural resources in BENM.