

Approved

Promulgation authorized  
Executive Secretary  
Domestic Geographic Names

UNITED STATES  
BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

CASE BRIEF (Domestic)

**Moki Arch:** arch; on land managed by the Utah Trust Lands Administration, 2.5 mi. NNE of House Park Butte, 0.05 mi. NE of Tse Niz’oni-Stellar Arch; name refers to the “Moki marbles” common to the area and the “Moki peoples” who formerly inhabited the area; Sec 16, T32S, R19E, Salt Lake Meridian; San Juan County, Utah; 37°59’58”N, 109°50’32”W; USGS map – House Park Butte 1:24,000.

[https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesricoor?p\\_lat=37.99939&p\\_longi=-109.84235](https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesricoor?p_lat=37.99939&p_longi=-109.84235)

Proposal: new name for unnamed feature

Map: USGS House Park Butte 1:24,000

Proponent: Ronald Blekicky; Boulder, CO

Administrative area: Utah Trust Lands Administration

Previous BGN Action: None

Names associated with feature:

GNIS: No record

Local Usage: None found

Published: None found

Case Summary: The new name Moki Arch is proposed for an unnamed arch on Utah Trust Lands Administration lands in San Juan County. The proponent reports that he is not aware of any record of the arch and that the National Association of Arches and Bridges (NABS) does not record it. The arch is at the base of a cliff approximately 0.05 mi. northeast of Tse Niz’oni-Stellar Arch (BGN 2021), proposed by the same proponent.

The proponent describes the arch as “a classic weathering pot hole arch.” NABS states that [this category of arch](#) forms “when part of the wall or floor of a pothole ruptures, leaving a section of its rim suspended above the new opening. . . . A natural arch of this type can only form if the pothole is reasonably near a cliff wall.” Photos of the arch show evidence of a narrow opening between its top and the cliff above. Most pothole arch examples presented by NABS are ones with more distinct openings. The National Park Service’s website [lists examples](#) of pothole arches (“Pothole Arch Upper and Lower” and “Bean Pot Arch”) and similarly-formed cliff wall arches (“Park Avenue Arch,” “Biceps Arch,” “Visitor Center Arch”). GNIS records Pothole Arch, but none of the latter names are recorded in GNIS.

The proponent reports that the word ‘Moki’ has existed for hundreds of years. He notes that it occurs in the name of Moki Marbles, which his research shows have been used by various Native Americans in ancient tribal ceremonies. The word ‘Moki’ also appears in original maps and other printed publications from early explorers.” [A page on the Utah Geological Survey’s website](#) states, “Moqui marbles are small, brownish-black balls composed of iron oxide and sandstone that formed underground when iron minerals precipitated from flowing groundwater. They occur in many places in southern Utah either embedded in or gathered loosely into “puddles” on the ground near outcrops of Jurassic age Navajo Sandstone.

The word “Moqui” comes from the Hopi Tribe, who were previously known as the Moqui Indians, so named by the early Spaniards, until their name was officially changed to Hopi in the early 1900s. According to some online sources, there is a Hopi legend that the Hopi ancestors’ spirits return to Earth in the evenings to play marble games with these iron balls, and that in the mornings the spirits leave the marbles behind to reassure their relatives that they are happy and content.

On source states, “Moqui marbles (sometimes spelled Moki) are also known by collectors by many other names — Navajo cherries, Navajo berries, Kayenta berries, Entrada berries, Hopi marbles, Moqui balls, or Shaman stones. Geologists call them iron concretions.”

Several sources state that in the late 1800s, Dr. J. W. Fewkes made the case to change the recognized name of the Moqui (originally pronounced “mo-kwee”) Tribe to Hopi. He stated that the name was too similar to the Tribe’s word meaning “dead” or “to die,” and that the Tribe referred to itself as Hopi, generally meaning “peaceful.” Many online sources report that the Hopi Tribe finds or found the term Moqui or Moki “distasteful,” “obnoxious,” “demeaning,” or that they “keenly resented” the term. Others report that there are Navajo words that sound like “moki” that mean either “monkey” or “excrement,” and imply that Spanish explorers adopted the word from a derogatory Navajo exonym. BGN staff has not been able to verify any of these reports other than the change from “Moqui”/“Moki” to “Hopi” for the Hopi Tribe of Arizona; documentation supporting the official change is found in Smithsonian and Department of the Interior records.

“Moqui” is also used to refer to the Ancestral Puebloans (formerly known as Anasazi, a term that is now seen as derogatory by today’s Puebloan Tribes) or to any ancient known or unknown indigenous cultures of the Colorado Plateau area.

Several geographic features in the region include “Moki” or “Moqui” in their names, including steps known as “Moki Stairs” or “Moki Steps” that ancient Native Americans carved into steep slopes.

In 1882, President Chester Arthur signed the “Moqui Reserve” Executive Order to “set apart for the use and occupancy of the Moqui and such other Indians as the Secretary of the Interior may see fit to settle upon.” The area now within the Hopi Reservation was labeled as “Moquis Pueblos” on Federal maps starting as early as 1876, with one 1879 General Land Office [GLO] map labeling the settlements as “Province of Tusayan.” In 1887, GLO maps started showing the label “Moqui Indian Reservation.” In 1921, GLO maps used the label “Hopi (‘Moqui’) Indian Reservation.”

An 1884 volume titled *The Snake-Dance of the Moquis of Arizona* variously reports:

- “The Moquis call themselves Hopii or Opii, a term not now in the language of every-day life, but referring in some way to the Pueblo custom of banging the hair at the level of the eyebrows. This mode of wearing the hair distinguishes them from Apaches, Utes, and Navajoes . . . .”
- “The story was given me that the name Moqui now borne by this tribe is a contraction for a whole phrase meaning the ‘dead people,’ and bestowed upon them by adjacent tribes in allusion to a former epidemic of [smallpox] which almost extirpated the seven [Hopi] Pueblos. Such a story, if true, must refer to some date beyond our history of the Moquis, who were, I am certain, styled by this name in the earliest Spanish chronicles.”
- “The name Moqui is not that by which they call themselves’ they have two names, one for ordinary use, the other for sacred or ceremonial occasions. The first is Opii, for which two interpretations were given; the first that it referred to the manner of banging the hair common to this people; the other, that it had some reference to the preparation of the bread-piki . . . which can be found in piles in every Moqui house.”

An 1890 Extra Census Bulletin titled “Moqui Pueblo Indians of Arizona and Pueblo Indians of New Mexico” reported: “The Moqui Pueblo Indians . . . call themselves . . . Ho-pi, or Ho-pi-tuh-lei-nyu-muh, meaning ‘peaceful people’. The Zuñi knew them in 1540 and prior as the A-mo-kwi. The Spaniards changed this to Moqui, or Moki. In the Moqui language moki means ‘dead’.”

A note in *American Anthropologist* (1945) reported:

Although the name Moqui Buttes persists on maps and the word ‘Moqui’ is still used by the Spanish-speaking people in the Southwest and in Mexico, the name of the tribe and reservation formerly called Moqui was long since officially changed to Hopi, strangely enough through the instigation of one man, Dr. J. W. Fewkes, and on the appeal that the name Moqui sounds like the word meaning ‘dead’ in the Hopi language and is therefore obnoxious to the natives. Hopi has by now become so firmly entrenched that it is not the purpose of this note to try to change it back to Moqui, but only to record, rather, my experiences with the name.

Dr. Fewkes was no linguist and did not claim to be. The entire expose given below was set forth to Fewkes, parts of it several times, and *all of it was agreed to by him.* [italics in original]

Forms in other Indian languages designating the Hopi tribe and exhibiting [the sound] -kw- made me suspect that the original Spanish intention was at writing *Moqüi* and not *Moqui*, and sure enough, a visit to the Hopi villages revealed to me at last that this was not only the fact of the case, but that *Móokwi* is the native tribal name, as well as that similar sounding words are the tribal name of the Hopis in certain near-by Indian languages. The chief of Walpi and several old-time Indians knew the name *Móokwi* as the native tribal name. The Spanish orthography of this had patently been *Moqüi*, more carelessly written and standardized as *Moqui*.

A corrupt Spanish pronunciation, and an English pronunciation imitating this Spanish pronunciation, based on the erroneous omission of the dieresis, sounded almost like the Hopi word *mōki*, dead (singular), he died (singular). It was the partial similarity of the Spanish corruption to this Hopi word which gave Fewkes the leverage in his argument for change . . . .

The name Hopi, on the other hand, was stated by old timers at the Hopi villages to mean Pueblo Indian—for instance, the Laguna Indians were stated to be Hopis—in contradistinction to the more warlike or roving Indians, such as the Navajos and Utes.

The white man gives two such names as Moqui and Hopi a new officialness of meaning as well as of pronunciation. All such adaptations seem to Indian speakers of the older generations to be incorrect, as they doubtless are, from the Indian language standpoint.

In 1915, the BGN decided in favor of the name Hopi Buttes for a feature in Navajo County rather than other recorded names (Blue Peaks, Moki Buttes, Moqui Buttes, and Rabbit Ear Mountain). No other details about the decision were found.

In 1970, the BGN confirmed the spelling Moqui Canyon for a feature in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA) in San Juan County, Utah.

- Memos between USGS cartographers and the BGN from 1954 to 1970 document the spelling uncertainty. In 1954, a USGS cartographer reported that the spelling “Moki” had been corrected to “Moqui” on an edition of the Mancos Mesa 1:62,500-scale quadrangle and that: “Moqui is a derogatory name for the Hopi tribes, possibly being derived by alliteration and contraction of Indian and Spanish names. In early usage ‘Moqui’ is more commonly used, and this spelling should be preserved. There has been no BGN decision on the spelling.”
- In 1959, another memo reported evidence for the spelling “Moki” stating:

“We believe that a strong case could be made for either the Moqui or Moki spelling. As both spellings are in use and additional research time is not justified, we will . . . change Moqui Canyon [back] to Moki Canyon on [these] quadrangles.”

- In 1970, USGS maps showed the name Moki Canyon, while NPS maps showed the name Moqui Canyon; a BGN decision was requested. The BGN approved the spelling Moqui Canyon based on further evidence from the NPS. A memo from the GLCA Superintendent reported: “Through common usage, the word ‘Moqui’ is no longer considered a derogatory name for the Hopi tribes. It is instead, commonly used locally to denote any prehistoric Indian culture. For example, common usage includes such things as Moqui steps, Moqui ruins, etc.” The acting NPS director also wrote “We believe the [GLCA] Superintendent has presented convincing evidence that ‘Moqui’ is no longer considered derogatory as applied to the Hopi Indians.”

In 1974, the BGN confirmed the name La Gorce Arch for a feature in GLCA in Kane County, Utah rather than a proposal from natural arch expert R. H. Vreeland to make official the local name Moqui Window.

- In 1973, Mr. Vreeland reported that the local name came from “local citizens who attached the label ‘moqui’ to many old features.”
- In 1974, the Public Information Officer from the Bureau of Reclamation’s Upper Colorado Regional Office recommended against both names and stated that “the name is considered an affront to the Hopi Indians, since ‘Moqui’ means dead.”
- In 1974, the GLCA Superintendent (not the same Superintendent who responded about Moqui Canyon, above) wrote, “The name has no particular application to this arch. The term Moqui has the local connotation of long-disappeared, early Indian inhabitants of the area.”

Proposed by: Ronald Bleicki; Boulder, CO

Submitted by: same

Prepared by: M. O’Donnell

Case ID: 5617

Reviewed by: J.Runyon

Date: 5/18/21

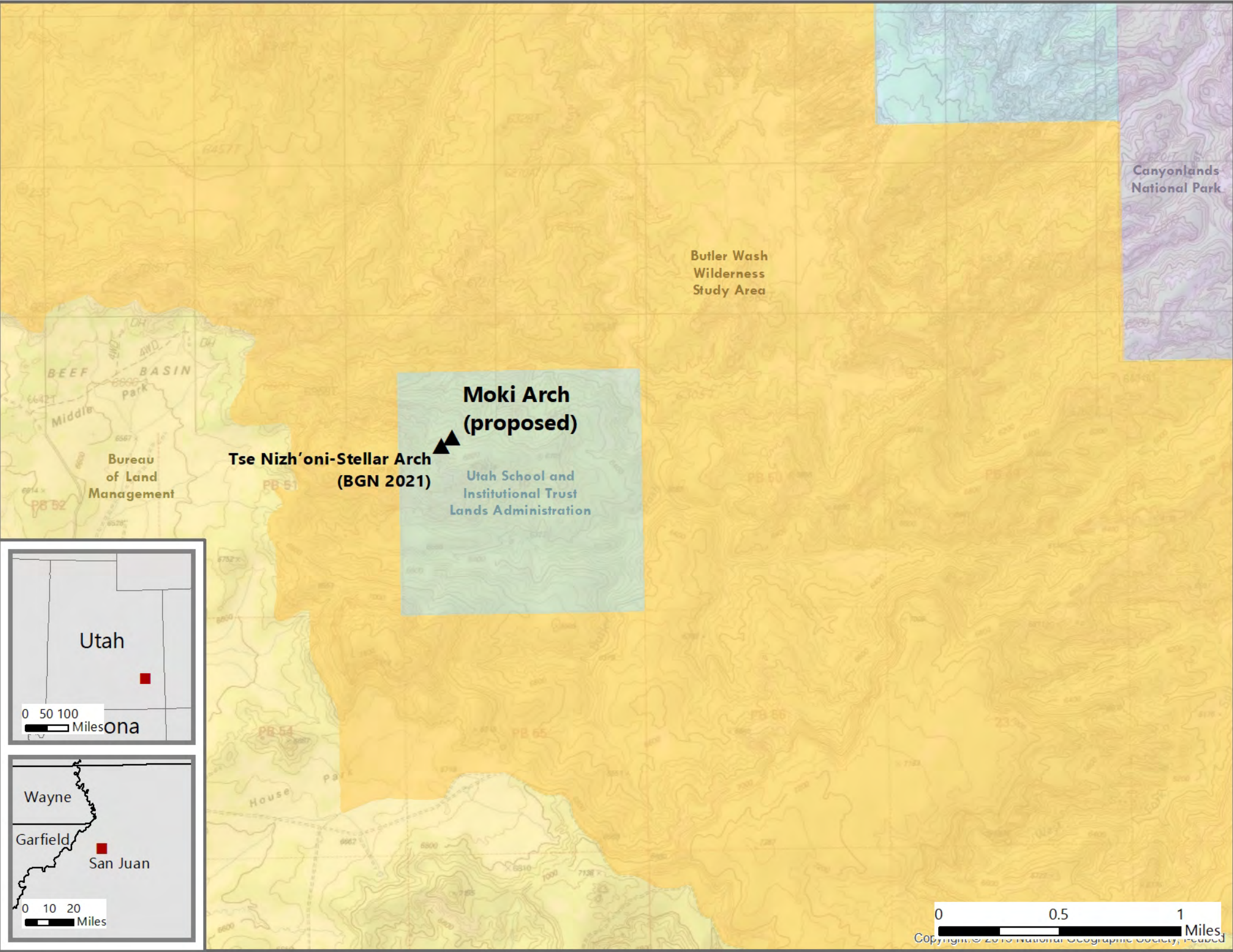
Date: same

Date: 6/25/21

Quarterly Review List: 444

Date: 7/6/21



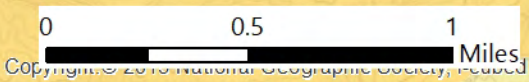
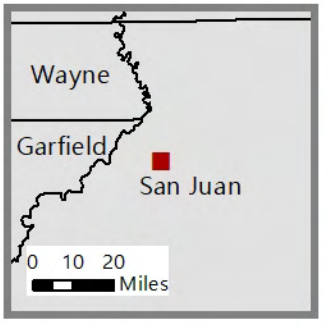
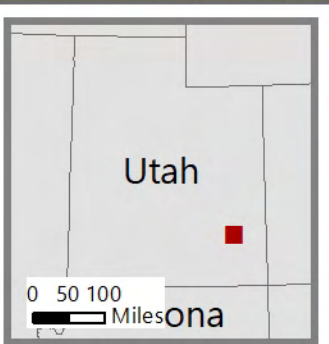


**Moki Arch  
(proposed)**  
Utah School and  
Institutional Trust  
Lands Administration

**Tse Nizh'oni-Stellar Arch  
(BGN 2021)**

Butler Wash  
Wilderness  
Study Area

Canyonlands  
National Park



**DOMESTIC GEOGRAPHIC NAME PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

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**PROPOSE NEW OR CHANGE NAME**

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**Name Proposal ID:**10180

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**Date Created:**18-MAY-21

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**Date Submitted:**18-MAY-21

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**Proposed Name:**Moki Arch

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**Action Requested:**Name an unnamed feature

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**Existing Name:**-

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**Unnamed Evidence:**

I have researched all applicable natural feature databases and know sources of information on the area. I have reviewed all of the known Arch databases being provided by various organizations and individuals. I recently received approval of a name application for an arch in the area after extensive reviews and discussion so I'm confident that this feature does not have a known name.

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**Locally Used:**No

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**Locally Used Years:**-

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**Local Conflict:**No

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**Local Conflict Detail:**-

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**Additional Details:**-

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**FEATURE INFORMATION**

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**GNIS Feature ID:**-

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**Feature class:**ARCH

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**Descriptive information:**

The arch is a classic weathering pot hole arch located in the area of Ruin Park in or near the Bears Ears national monument. It is also in close proximity to the recently approved Tse Nizh'oni-Stellar Arch. There is significant staining on the walls behind the arch. It is approximately 6828 ft above sea level near Butler Wash and I believe the GPS coordinates are 37°99939°N, 109°84235°W

**Meaning or significance:**

The work "Moki" has existed for hundreds of years. It has been referred to as Moki Marbles by the ancient Mokies people and my research has shown that the Moki Marbles t have been used by various native Americans in ancient tribal ceremonies. The word "Moki" also appears in original maps and other printed publications from early explorers.

**Commemorative:**

No

**Biographical information:**

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**Supporting materials:**

Yes

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

Filename	Comments
Moki arch Resized.jpg	This is a photograph of the arch take last year.
Moki arch GPS.jpg	GPS Coordinates and image from iPhone

**STATES AND COUNTIES**

State Name	County Name
Utah	San Juan

**GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES**

Obtained From	Describe Other	Lat Deg	Min	Sec		Long Deg	Min	Sec		Decimal Lat	Decimal Long	Details
Geographic Information System	37.99939°N 109.84235°W	1	1	1	S	1	1	1	E	-	-	Please see uploaded image with GPS coordinates.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS**

Administrative Area Type	Administrative Area Name	Details
National Monument, Memorial, or Historical Landmark	The arch lies in an area just outside Bears Ears National Monument on Federal land	Bears Ears National Monument

**MAPS AND DOCUMENTS WITH NAME**

Source Type	Details	Source Date
Digital File	IPhone	2019
Photograph	IPhone	2019

**OTHER (VARIANT) NAMES AND THEIR SOURCE**

No information entered.

**AUTHORITIES**

No information entered.

**SUBMITTERS AND PREPARERS**

Role	Last Name	First Name	Phone	Email Address	Physical Address	City	State	Zip	Company	Title
PREPARER	blekicki	ronald	3036413617	rblekicki@yahoo.com	6388 Clearview road	boulder	CO	80303	-	-

DGNP Guest



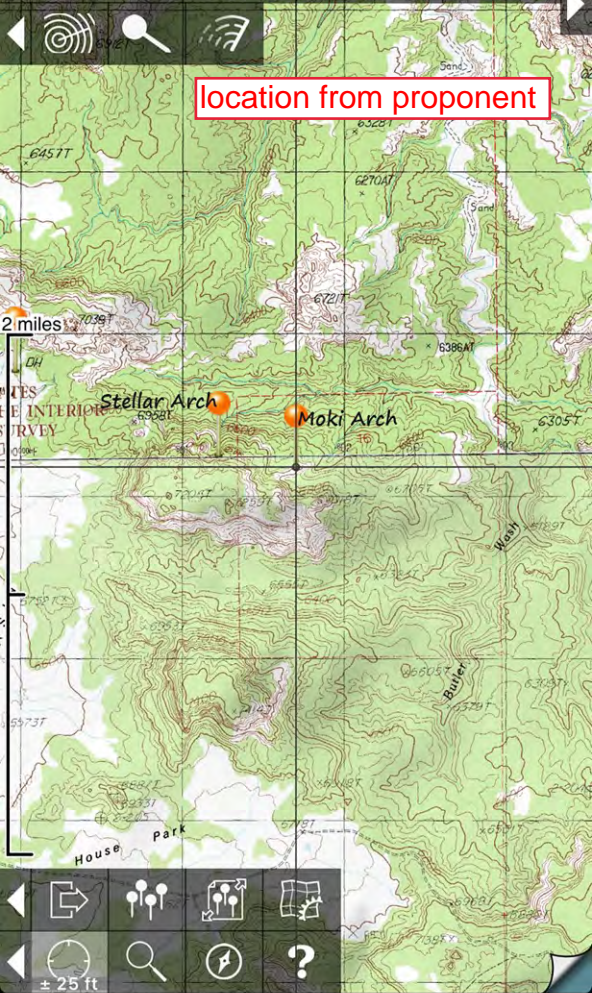
photo from proponent





WGS84 37.99939°N 109.84235°W ~6826 ft

location from proponent



Navigation and zoom controls including icons for back, forward, pan, zoom in, zoom out, and a question mark.

± 25 ft