Why (and how) you should include public lands, tourism and Indigenous issues in your climate change coverage

K. Sophie Will
Senior National Parks Reporter, Editor
The Spectrum/USA Today/Report for America
We are on the ancestral land of the Mvskoke (Muscogee) people and the GWJdü Tsalaguwetiyi (Cherokee, East) people.
I am not indigenous and am definitely missing perspectives. The point of this is to get you to thinking about how to include indigenous perspectives and issues in your reporting and ask the experts.
Why do I care?
ALREADY IN THE NEWS

- Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments
- Great American Outdoors Act
- Keystone XL Pipeline
- Indian Boarding Schools
- Record tourism levels
- Oil and gas extraction
- Temperatures, seasons
TOUCHES NEARLY EVERY BEAT

- Business/economy
- Environment and climate change (duh)
- Social justice
- Criminal justice
- Education
- Government
- Breaking news
- Human interest
- Etc.?
Climate change is one of the most important topics we cover -- it permeates everything.

- Human-land relationship mindset
- How are you covering climate change already?
  - Focusing on land, add humans, vice versa
- For BOTH urban and rural reporters
- Ask where! Place is so important
- Water is life.
- People don’t “believe” in climate change, they just don’t understand it.
### Relationships
- Humans and land are not mutually exclusive

### Sense of place
- Always ask the question “where?”

### Whose land?
- Who has the right to make a decision about the land?

### Understand, not believe
- People don’t understand climate change, not believe

### Story ideas
- Hoping to give you several ideas/datasets!

### Solutions
- How can your reporting contribute to the conversation?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF PUBLIC LAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of the Interior, USDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-profit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservations, organizations, coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both the actual state and the state branches of federal agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counties, cities, towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen or business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tribal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservation or sacred site (co-management?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
02

RECREATION & TOURISM

Why it matters to your coverage
### EFFECTS OF TOURISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locals, transient room tax</td>
<td>Trail overuse, campfires, nearby cities, water, etc.</td>
<td>Short-term rentals v. locals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>Crowds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone changes, government regulations</td>
<td>Emissions, parking, road closures</td>
<td>Traffic, grocery stores, attractions, parking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDIGENOUS ISSUES
Why they matter to your coverage
## INDIGENOUS ISSUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whose land?</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Reservations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stolen land, reclamation?</td>
<td>Cultural and sacred sites, names, treaties, trauma</td>
<td>Is it enough? Infrastructure funding, assistance, etc., energy impacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human rights</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Good news!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water, internet access, healthcare, MMIW/P</td>
<td>Sovereignty, intergovernmental relations, tribal councils, non-federally recognized</td>
<td>Stray the focus away from just bad news</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Water
  - Use per area, per person, in what way
  - Algae, toxins (DEQ/EPA)
  - Drought, lake levels dropping

---

State funding cuts left Southern Utah waters untested for deadly algae

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 6:35 p.m. MT Aug. 20, 2020 | Updated 7:00 a.m. MT Aug. 21, 2020

How historic drought, cyanobacteria, tourism affects Utah’s national parks, wildlife

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 7:38 a.m. MT Aug. 3, 2021
Human waste (both FOIAs)
  ○ Trash AND excrement
  ○ Vandalism (petroglyphs)

---

'Worst I've ever seen': First patrol since summer, rangers find human waste in Zion

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 7:30 a.m. MT Dec. 30, 2020

When cyanobacteria reared its ugly face in Zion National Park's Virgin River in early July, rangers were forced to stop patrolling popular hike The Narrows for safety.

But this month, for the first time since Independence Day, rangers were able to recover pounds of trash and human waste left behind by the record-breaking number of visitors this season.

"All in all, I picked up 14 pounds of trash (9 pounds were human waste) and cleaned probably 1,000 handprints or etchings in less than a mile. While it was a big improvement, the landscape was still full of trash. The Narrows are a beautiful natural space. When it becomes littered, it's sad. As a ranger our job is to protect Zion for future generations, and it's sad to see the park in this state," said Ranger John.
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Vegetation
  - Invasive Species
  - Soil degradation/failure to thrive
- Wildlife
  - Roadkill (FOIA)
  - Endangered and invasive species
  - Birth and death rates of wildlife
  - Stressed and starving
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Traffic
  - Parking
  - Congestion
  - Roads and infrastructure (Mt. Carmel Tunnel)
  - Buses and shuttles
  - Rental cars
  - Regional transportation issues
  - (DOT and BTS)
Zion National Park's shuttles are falling apart, but there is no funding to replace them. Why?

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 7:54 a.m. MT Aug. 13, 2020 | Updated 6:14 p.m. MT Aug. 13, 2020

Zion National Park receives $33 million for electric shuttle buses

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 5:28 p.m. MT Feb. 2, 2021 | Updated 9:40 a.m. MT Feb. 8, 2021
Search and rescue
- Medical reasons (inexperienced hikers)
- Missing people/overdue hikers
  - Investigation reports! (FOIA)
- Suicides (FOIA)
- Costs of SAR (FOIA)
- Equipment and staffing (many are volunteer)
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Recreation
  - Bouldering, climbing, hiking, etc.
  - RVS and van life
  - Glamping v. tent camping
  - Minorities in the outdoors
  - Camping
    - Permits given
    - Campfires and wildfires
  - How many people (IRMA)
    - What type of people? (spontaneous v. planned, veterans or greenies)
State of Zion National Park address: Chief concerned about overtourism after 2021 record

'Glamping' proposal meets resistance at Kolob Mountain outside Zion National Park
Illegal camping near Zion National Park poses fire danger, but agencies aren't stopping it

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News

Published 8:01 a.m. MT July 1, 2021 | Updated 11:11 a.m. MT July 1, 2021
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Economies
  - Labor shortage
  - Housing
  - Hotels/Airbnb
  - Restaurants
  - Shops
  - Events and festivals
  - Ghost towns/dispersal
  - Lack of international visitors

'Stop kicking us out': Employees near Zion homeless amid housing shortage, tourism surge

K. Sophie Will, St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 9:00 AM EDT Oct. 12, 2021 | Updated 1:19 PM EDT Oct. 13, 2021

COVID-19 kept international travel from Utah's national parks, hurting local businesses

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 6:00 a.m. MT Dec. 21, 2020 | Updated 10:37 a.m. MT Dec. 26, 2020
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Staff
  - Instability
  - Mental health (mask mandates, harassment)
  - Housing
  - Transient Room Tax
  - Guides and tours, may not provide all

Zion shuttle drivers quit over verbal abuse over masks, Bryce Canyon shuttles de-escalated

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 7:29 a.m. MT July 26, 2021

View Comments
• Locals
  ○ Jurisdictional issues
  ○ Indigenous v. homesteaders v. newcomers v. tourists
  ○ Farming or old businesses
  ○ Grow or die
  ○ Whose land is it anyway?

'Vast, and vastly divided: Local Utah residents struggle with Grand Staircase-Escalante, Bears Ears'

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 7:10 a.m. MT March 24, 2021 | Updated 11:00 a.m. MT March 26, 2021

Chat with a local guide, author about Bears Ears National Monument
The Spectrum sits down with Morgan Siegrist, a local guide and author, about Bears Ears National Monument from the perspective of a Utah native. Plus, our editors answer your questions on the monument.

News
'Sky's the limit': Utah man builds million-dollar hang gliding park

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 12:01 p.m. MT Oct. 6, 2020 | Updated 1:48 p.m. MT Oct. 8, 2020

View Comments
Planning Commissions/Land Use Authorities
- Zone changes
- Applications for glamping or development
- Grant applications (also tourism offices)
  - Follow the money!
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Skies
  - Dark sky communities
  - Air quality
    - Vehicle emissions
    - Nearby refineries or cities
Orphaned oil wells
Temperatures, weather, seasons
Disasters and FEMA
Boundary maps
Archaeology and paleontology

NEWS

BLM cancels sale of Moab land poised for oil drilling
K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 1:06 p.m. MT Aug. 11, 2020 | Updated 11:07 p.m. MT Aug. 11, 2020

NEWS

Caught in a flash flood in Zion National Park: What to do when a monsoon hits
K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 2:05 p.m. MT July 14, 2021
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Trails
  - Overuse of trails/trampling
  - Cost of repair/rehabilitation
- Human waste
- Economies
  - Transient room tax, economy
  - Tourism offices
- Housing
  - Short term rentals
  - Housing for employees
  - Locals
DATASETS/STORY IDEAS

- Treaties/boundary lines
- Original name changed, purpose changed
- Sacredness taken away, destruction of sacred sites
- Internet access
- Health
- Economy: Navajo coal plant
- Missing persons
- Covering of tribal councils and/or administrations
- Protests
- Whose history are we telling
- Happy things too! Not just all bad news
- Use Google Scholar for data and leads and SciLine to get for quick experts!
Stories of violence shared with Utah's Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women Task Force

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 8:14 a.m. MT Nov. 24, 2020

On the ground at the Panguitch Indian Boarding School where 12 Paiute children likely died

K. Sophie Will
St. George Spectrum & Daily News
Published 5:38 a.m. MT Sept. 2, 2021 | Updated 10:43 a.m. MT Sept. 2, 2021
The Four Pillars of Solutions Journalism

1. A solutions story focuses on a RESPONSE to a social problem — and how that response has worked or why it hasn’t.

2. The best solutions reporting distills the lessons that makes the response relevant and accessible to others. In other words, it offers INSIGHT.

3. Solutions journalism looks for EVIDENCE — data or qualitative results that show effectiveness (or lack thereof). Solutions stories are up front with audiences about that evidence — what it tells us and what it doesn’t. A particularly innovative response can be a good story even without much evidence — but the reporter has to be transparent about the lack, and about why the response is newsworthy anyway.

4. Solutions stories reveal a response’s shortcomings. No response is perfect, and some work well for one community but may fail in others. A responsible reporter covers what doesn’t work about it, and places the response in context. Reporting on LIMITATIONS, in other words, is essential.
SOLUTIONS

- Timed ticketed entry
- Lotteries
- Permits
- Licenses
- Reservations/Conservations and funds
- Education
- Coalitions and task forces
- Lobbying

- Grants
- Follow through
  - What does success look like for you?
- Shuttles and electric vehicles, regional transportation
- Applications for developments
- Dispersal
- Empowering locals, tribes
- Capacities
THANKS!

Do you have any questions?
ksophiewill@gmail.com; kswill@thespectrum.com
617-888-0900 (Also Signal + WhatsApp)
ksophiewill.com

@ksophiewill

AUDIO RECORDING OF THE SESSION:
https://otter.ai/u/FpKMXMrHQY5S36S3DT_2edCydBY