



## Rainbow Bridge Timeline

The land that comprises Rainbow Bridge National Monument was traditionally used by Navajo, Paiute, Ute, and Hopi Peoples. Prior to these tribes or nations, Ancestral Puebloans and earlier indigenous people lived in and used the area.



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- 1848 Mexico ceded much of the Southwest to the U.S. All unappropriated lands become public domain. The U.S. recognized the validity of any earlier claims by Mexico or Spain. Aboriginal titles were extinguished by conquest by either Spain, Mexico, or the U.S.; in the case of the Navajo, by all three.
  - 1884 The Navajo Reservation was created by Executive Order in what was then Utah Territory.
  - 1892 Previously set aside reservation lands west of the 110<sup>th</sup> Meridian (west of Mexican Hat, UT) were removed from the reservation and restored to public domain, including Rainbow Bridge
  - 1906 June 8, 1906, the Antiquities Act was passed into law. This authorized the President to establish a site or area of cultural or natural significance or of scientific interest as a national monument.
  - 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt established the nation's first national monument, Devil's Tower National Monument in Wyoming.
  - 1909 On August 14, 1909, The Douglas/Cummings party, guided by two Native Americans, Jim Mike and Nasja Begay reached Rainbow Bridge after 4 ½ days journey in the wilderness. This was the first official Anglo sighting of Rainbow Bridge.
  - 1910 On May 30, 1910, President William Howard Taft proclaimed Rainbow Bridge National Monument, the nations 25<sup>th</sup>. Rainbow Bridge was set aside as a scientific example of "Eccentric Stream Erosion."
  - 1913 Former President Theodore Roosevelt and author Zane Grey both visited Rainbow Bridge in separate parties. Accounts of their expeditions were published in Harpers Weekly and National Geographic.
  - 1916 The National Park Service was created with the signing of the Organic Act by President William McKinley. The administration of Rainbow Bridge National Monument was transferred to the National Park Service and John Wetherill became its first Custodian at a salary of \$1.00 per year.

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- 1924 The Richardson Brothers completed construction of Rainbow Lodge and began packing visitors into Rainbow Bridge at a cost of \$20.00 per night.
- 1933 Public law restored back to the Navajo reservation “all vacant, unreserved, and undisposed of public lands...” within the area encompassed by the 1892 legislation. (Rainbow Bridge was reserved; so it was not included in lands given back.)
- 1951 Rainbow Lodge burnt to the ground. Co-owner Barry Goldwater blamed it on “a cowboy smoking in the back room.”
- 1956 The Colorado River Storage Project Act was passed. Amongst other things, it provided for the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. The Glen Canyon Dam project would begin the next year.
- 1957 Construction of the Glen Canyon Dam began.
- 1964 Diversion tunnels of Glen Canyon Dam were closed and Lake Powell began to fill.
- 1972 Glen Canyon National Recreation Area was established.
- 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed into law. This legislation stipulated that, in addition to other National Park Service Units, Rainbow Bridge National Monument would be afforded protection on behalf of the five tribes that claim it as a sacred site.
- 1980 Lake Powell rose to full pool (3,700 feet) for the first time, impounding 46 feet of water below Rainbow Bridge.
- 1993 Rainbow Bridge General Management Plan was approved via consultation with the 5 tribes or nations that claim cultural affiliations with Rainbow Bridge (Navajo, Hopi, San Juan Southern Paiute, Kaibab Paiute, and White Mesa Ute.)
- 1996 An Executive Order was passed which would reinforce or strengthen the administrative rights of the tribes or nations mandated as participants under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.
- 2009 August 14, 2009 marks 100 years since the Anglo first discovery of Rainbow Bridge.
- 2010 May 30, 1910; The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rainbow Bridge National Monument.