



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Mountain Pact Hopeful with Announcement of Possible Avi Kwa Ame National Monument Designation

DURANGO, CO -- In response to [news](#) being reported that [President Biden may designate an Avi Kwa Ame National Monument](#), Anna Peterson, Executive Director of [The Mountain Pact](#), an organization that works with hundreds of local elected officials in nearly 100 mountain communities across the Western U.S., said,

"We are thrilled that President Biden may permanently protect the Avi Kwa Ame landscape's natural, cultural, and historic values by designating it a National Monument.

This area in Southern Nevada is rich in both history, wildlife, and beauty. For years, Tribes, local elected officials, community leaders, and businesses have supported the creation of a national monument to protect this important place. We hope to see this national monument designation very soon!

National monuments are as bi-partisan as they come. Congress passed the [Antiquities Act](#) in 1906 and since then, 18 presidents - nine Democratic and nine Republican - have established or expanded [159 national monuments](#).

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 100 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.

More Information:

- See the local [Honor Avi Kwa Ame](#) coalition statement [here](#).
- Located between the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the Nevada/California border, Avi Kwa Ame, would be Nevada's 4th national monument.
- The proposed Avi Kwa Ame National Monument is at the center of Yuman creation stories and is considered sacred to ten Yuman speaking tribes (the Mohave, Hualapai, Yavapai, Havasupai, Quechan, Maricopa, Pai Pai, and Kumeyaay) as well as the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute.
- The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe sent a letter to the Nevada delegation requesting the area be protected as a national monument in September 2019.
- The Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (representing 27 tribes) and the Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona (representing 21 tribes) adopted resolutions supporting the monument in 2021.
- Avi Kwa Ame roughly translates to Spirit Mountain and the surrounding landscape. Spirit Mountain is designated a Traditional Cultural Property on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its religious and cultural importance.
- In the southern part of the proposed Monument is a section of the historic Mojave Trail/Road, originally used by Mojave and other Native Americans to transport goods from the southwest to trade with the

Chumash and other coastal tribes. This trail originated at a crossing at the Colorado River and connected numerous springs and water sources throughout the Mojave Desert that formed the backbone of the Mojave Trail.

- The area is rich in both history and beauty and home to one of the biggest Joshua tree forests in the world and some of the oldest and largest Joshua trees on the planet, some rising to more than 30 feet over 900 years.
- The largest area of high quality tortoise habitat in the State of Nevada can be found in the proposed monument, and is contiguous with a large, high-density area in California providing large-scale habitat connectivity needed to save the species.
- The proposed monument lands serve as an important migratory corridor for desert bighorn sheep. A herd of desert bighorn sheep lives on the steep, rocky slopes of the Castle Mountains and the New York Mountains.
- The area has been designated by Audubon as an “Important Birding Area” because it is important for migratory birds due to its proximity to foraging habitat, nesting habitat, and to the Colorado River, one of the most significant features in the Pacific Flyway.
- The area contains one of the highest known concentrations of golden eagles in Nevada.