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The Mountain Pact is Encouraged by Movement on Potential California National Monuments

Secretary Haaland Visit to Molok Luyuk and Launch of Chuckwalla National Monument Effort

DURANGO, CO - In response to Secretary Haaland and Tracy Stone-Manning visiting Berryessa National Monument and the potential expansion area Molok Luyuk, yesterday, and the launch of a Chuckwalla National Monument effort, today, both in California, Anna Peterson, Executive Director of [The Mountain Pact](https://www.themountainpact.org), an organization that works with local elected officials in over 100 communities across the Western U.S., released the below statement:

"We are excited about the movement on possible national monuments in California over the past couple of days. We are thrilled that Secretary Haaland and Bureau of Land Management Director Tracy Stone-Manning visited [Berryessa National Monument](#) to learn about the possible expansion to include and permanently protect Molok Luyuk - lands that are sacred to the [Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation](#). The expansion of the national monument would safeguard public lands that serve as a critical wildlife corridor between the existing monument and other protected areas for imperiled wildlife and over 30 species of rare plants.

We are also excited about the launch of the [Chuckwalla National Monument](#) effort in the California desert. The proposed monument would preserve this cultural landscape by providing protections to important heritage values tied to the land such as multi-use trail systems established by Indigenous peoples, sacred sites and objects, traditional cultural places, geoglyphs, petroglyphs, pictographs, plants, and wildlife.

Permanently protecting these lands as a Chuckwalla National Monuments would also help protect vast desert ecosystems and habitat for species like the chuckwalla lizard and desert tortoise, and migration corridors for desert bighorn sheep.

We are supportive of the locally-led efforts to urge President Biden to expand Berryessa National Monument to include Molok Luyuk and for a designation of a Chuckwalla National Monument. We urge the President to add to the list of national monuments he has designated through the use of the Antiquities Act. Upcoming nation monuments he could designate include the Great Bend of the Gila in Arizona; Owyhee Canyonlands in Oregon, to expand San Gabriel Mountains National Monument in California, as well as to designate monuments that will honor the 1908 Springfield Race Riot in Illinois and the Historic Greenwood District/Black Wall Street in Tulsa."

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](https://www.themountainpact.org) 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:

The Antiquities Act

Congress passed the [Antiquities Act](#) in 1906 and since then, 18 presidents - nine Democratic and nine Republican - have established or expanded over [160 national monuments](#).

Berryessa National Monument Expansion to Include Molok Luyuk

- Molok Luyuk is Patwin for “Condor Ridge” and is a name provided by the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. Molok Luyuk is pronounced "Ma.lok Lue.yoke." Currently the area is referred to as “Walker Ridge.”
- The proposed expansion area - Molok Luyuk - is located on the eastern edge of the existing Berryessa National Monument. These BLM managed lands include oak woodlands, rocky outcroppings, meadows of wildflowers, forests of pine, and the world’s largest stand of McNab cypress.
- Molok Luyuk serves as a critical wildlife corridor between the existing monument and other protected areas for species such as tule elk, mountain lions, and black bears. It is also home to imperiled wildlife including bald and golden eagles, badgers, peregrine falcons and over 30 species of rare plants.

Chuckwalla National Monument

- The Chuckwalla National Monument effort in the California Desert is working to protect approximately 660,000 acres reaching west from the Coachella Valley region to the east near the Colorado River. Located to the south of Joshua Tree National Park and north of the Chocolate Mountains, the proposed monument stretches through the wild public lands that are primarily located south of Interstate 10.
- The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument will help ensure equitable access to nature for residents of the eastern Coachella Valley and other local communities. Some popular trails and places of interest that will be protected are Painted Canyon and Box Canyon in the Mecca Hills area, Corn Springs campground, and the Bradshaw Trail. Already, these lands are beloved for hiking, camping, picnicking, stargazing, and recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) touring on legally authorized routes.
- The lands proposed for protection include the homelands of the Iviatim, Nüwü, Pipa Aha Macav, Kwatsáan and Maara’yam peoples (Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave, Quechan, and Serrano nations).
- This effort has already garnered diverse local support, including from over a dozen current and former local elected officials; the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe; the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians; the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians; the cities of Banning, Palm Springs, and Desert Hot Springs in Riverside County and Calipatria in Imperial County; over a dozen businesses and Chambers of Commerce; as well as over 1,000 residents of the eastern Coachella Valley and neighboring areas.