

September 22, 2015

Subject: Request for National Monument status for lands in the California Desert

Dear MBCA Members and Supporters,

We've kept you informed over the past months regarding Senator Diane Feinstein's efforts to secure greater conservation protection for lands in the California desert. Senator Feinstein has moved forward with a request to President Obama to use the Antiquities Act to proclaim three new national monuments: **Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails and Castle Mountains**. The request includes the Morongo Basin's Black Lava Butte and Flat Top Mesa as an addition to Sand to Snow. It also includes the Cadiz Valley and Sacramento Mountains additions to Mojave Trails.

These lands deserve designations that recognize their scenic, ecological, cultural and economic importance. Monument status will secure the connective tissue in the California desert that serves as wildlife corridors between protected landscapes like our national parks. This will provide critical habitat for a healthy desert ecosystem. The lands' unparalleled scenery make tourism and recreation an essential part of the region's economy. Monument status will raise the profile of the California desert as a destination for recreational tourism.

It is crucial now that residents of the Morongo Basin, as local stakeholders, act **quickly** to demonstrate strong support for this important initiative that is on the immediate horizon! For more information about each of the proposed Monuments and awesome photographs – visit Campaign for California Desert's [website](#).

MBCA and our conservation partners in the Basin urge you:

1. Add your name to this [petition](#). Pass it on to your friends and neighbors!

2. Write a letter to President Obama. Use [this letter](#) as a template or generate your own. Mention why the desert is important to you. Identify yourself as a business owner, professional, visitor, artist, outdoor enthusiast, or as you wish.

Time is critical in the next week or ASAP...

* Print the letter with your original (not printed) signature & send to:
April Sall, PO Box 8, Pioneertown, CA. 92268
(April will collect the letters for presentation to Senator Feinstein.)

SEND YOUR LETTER OR ATTEND A LETTER WRITING EVENT!

The Campaign for the California Desert hosting "Mixer For the Monuments"

"Learn about the proposals to protect Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, & Castle Mountains & support public lands in California's desert with April Sall's update"

Date/Time: Saturday, September 26th, 5:00 – 7:00PM

Location: Route 62 Vintage Marketplace – 55635 29 Palms Hwy, Yucca Valley

MDLT's CA Desert National Monuments Support Party & Movie Screening

Join the Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT) & the National Parks Conservation Association for letter writing to targeted elected officials & updates about the effort to create the Mojave Trails, Castle Mountains, & Sand to Snow National Monuments. Two new short films will be screened about these areas created by The Wildlands Conservancy. Light snacks and beverages provided.

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 29th, 6:00-8:00PM

Location: MDLT Gateway Headquarters, 60124 29 Palms Hwy, Joshua Tree, CA

RSVP: Lesley Hughes, Lesley@mojavedesertlandtrust.org, 760-366-5440

Thanks for your taking a few minutes to write a letter to show the Basin's support for the Monuments! Remember: *It takes a Basin!*

Sincerely,
Sarah Kennington, President

Your 2015 MBCA Board

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www.mbconservation.org

*MBCA advocates for a healthy desert environment
that nurtures our rural character, cultural wealth,
and economic well-being.*

SUGGESTED LETTER ENDORSING MONUMENT DESIGNATION

2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The California desert is some of the most pristine and unique land in the country. From painted mountains to archaeological treasures, world-famous wildflowers to herds of bighorn sheep, Americans have long been drawn to its stark beauty. That is why I support the designation of the Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains national monuments and urge you to act now to permanently protect these special areas in the California desert—one of the richest and most intact landscapes in North America.

Each of the proposed national monuments contain exceptional characteristics that deserve to be protected. Mojave Trails is the connective tissue linking Mojave National Preserve to Joshua Tree National Park and existing Wilderness Areas, providing vital habitat for sensitive wildlife, and unspoiled desert vistas. It contains irreplaceable archeological and cultural sites including sacred Native American trails and trade routes. It includes the longest undeveloped stretch of historic Route 66, the scenic lava flows of Amboy Crater—North America’s youngest volcano, the trilobite fossil beds of the Marble Mountains, the perennial river in Afton Canyon, and many unique geologic formations. Mojave Trails also represents the largest land gift in American history, with over 200,000 private acres donated to the federal government for conservation in perpetuity.

Sand to Snow protects some of the most diverse habitat in the country, linking the San Geronio Wilderness to Joshua Tree National Park and the San Bernardino National Forest. Rising dramatically from the Sonoran Desert floor to Southern California's tallest alpine peak, this monument is one of the most critical wildlife corridors in Southern California. The inclusions of Black Lava Butte and Flat Top Mesa protect stunning cultural sites and rare species. Sand to Snow is home to the most botanically diverse mountains in the contiguous U.S., a 23-mile stretch of the famed Pacific Crest Trail, and the majestic Whitewater River—a beloved feature for local and national communities.

Castle Mountain protects some of the finest Joshua tree, pinon pine, and juniper forests in the entire California Desert Conservation Area. It encompasses native desert grassland, features stunning vistas of California and Nevada desert mountain ranges, including Nevada’s Spirit Mountain, which is revered by southwestern Native American tribes and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Beneath the shadow of Hart Peak are rich Native American archaeological sites and the historic gold mining ghost town of Hart. Additionally, Castle Mountain offers unparalleled opportunities to study wildlife movements, it is home to sensitive bat species, and it is a target location for the reintroduction of pronghorn, the second fastest species of land mammal in the world.

Establishment of these national monuments will enhance recreation and tourism in the region, bringing economic benefits and jobs to surrounding communities. They will benefit public health by enhancing opportunities for outdoor access and recreation. They will preserve the vibrant but fragile desert ecosystem. They will provide peace and respite for our honored veterans, who have sacrificed so much for this land that we love. They will protect our culture and history from Native Americans to Homesteaders, General Patton’s World War II training sites to western migration along Route 66, America’s storied Mother Road.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to protect some of the most spectacular and diverse stretches of intact desert in California, and we must not wait. The local community has worked for nearly a decade to preserve these iconic landscapes. It is time for this region to gain the protection it deserves. I urge you to designate the Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains national monuments.

Sincerely,

CC: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Representative Paul Cook
Representative Raul Ruiz
Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director, White House Council on Environmental