

Statement of Support



On behalf of our members and supporters, the undersigned organizations support the proposal from the tribes and community of the Coachella Valley in California to designate Chuckwalla National Monument and to expand Joshua Tree National Park by designating a monument to the east of the park. This proposal would protect approximately 677,000 acres of important land.

This region is incredibly rich in biodiversity and species that would benefit from the protection of these lands include Chuckwalla lizards, desert tortoises, bighorn sheep, Sonoran pronghorns and migratory birds. Currently, there are “islands” of protected public lands in this region, including Joshua Tree National Park and designated wilderness areas. The proposed national monument and Joshua Tree National Park expansion would connect these “islands” and safeguard core habitat areas and habitat linkages. This is critical for survival of native species in the face of climate change-related habitat loss, warming temperatures and increased drought.

Lands within the proposed national monument are the traditional homeland of the Iviatim, Nüwü, Pipa Aha Macav, Kwatsáan and Maara’yam peoples (Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mojave, Quechan, and Serrano nations). We urge you to support and act upon requests for co-stewardship from tribal nations, who have been the stewards of this area since time immemorial.

Already, these lands are beloved for outdoor recreation activities like hiking, picnicking, stargazing, and recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) touring on legally authorized routes. Permanently protecting these lands is an opportunity to ensure that these places are here for current and future generations of Coachella Valley residents and visitors to experience and enjoy.

The Chuckwalla National Monument would be the largest protected area of the Colorado Desert bioregion, which is a unique climate and biological community in the California Desert. Desert lands are scientifically recognized as significant carbon sinks, capturing and storing carbon emissions underground for thousands of years. The California Desert region, spanning Riverside and surrounding counties, holds about 10% of the state’s sequestered carbon that has been captured and stored over millennia in undisturbed soils. Permanently protecting desert lands from development and other disturbances can help these carbon reserves remain in the ground and out of the atmosphere.

Finally, the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument would honor the region’s military history by protecting areas that were used for training U.S. soldiers for battle in World War II. It would also protect about 40 miles of the historic Bradshaw Trail National Back Country Byway. Originally used by Indigenous

communities, the trail became a link between Arizona gold mine camps and the California coast in the 1860s. The area also holds approximately 35 miles of the route of the historic Eagle Mountain Railroad.

This area is threatened by looming development, irresponsible recreation and the impacts of climate change. We support the tribes and coalition's campaign to convince President Biden to move swiftly in considering their proposal and to use his powers granted by the Antiquities Act to permanently protect these areas.

Sincerely,

350 Bay Area Action
Active San Gabriel Valley
Allensworth Progressive Association
Alta Peak Chapter, California Native Plant Society
Audubon CA
California Environmental Voters
California Institute for Biodiversity
California Native Plant Society
Californians for Western Wilderness
CALPIRG at UCLA
CALPIRG Students at UC Davis
CALPIRG Students at UC Riverside
CALPIRG Students at UC Santa Barbara
CALPIRG UCI
CalWild
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center for Environmental Health
Central Valley Partnership
CleanEarth4Kids.org
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Conservation Lands Foundation
Conservation Northwest
Day One
Earthworks
EcoFlight
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America Research & Policy Center

Environment California Research & Policy Center
Environmental Action
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
Friends of the Desert Mountains
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Herpetological Conservation International
HG Conservation Solutions
Hispanic Access Foundation
Kern Chapter California Native Plant Society
Latino Outdoors
League of Conservation Voters
Malibu Foundation
Mojave Desert Chapter, California Native Plant Society
Mojave Desert Land Trust
Morongo Basin Conservation Association
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Mountain Lion Foundation
National Parks Conservation Association
Nature For All
Nature For All Coalition
Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project
Outdoor Outreach
Patagonia
Pesticide Action Network
Planning and Conservation League
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
San Diego Audubon Society

Santa Cruz Climate Action Network

Save Mount Diablo

Sierra Club

Surfrider

The Mountain Pact

The Ocean Project

The Phoenix Group

The Wilderness Society

The Wildlands Conservancy

Tuleyome

Vet Voice Foundation

Western Watersheds Project

Wholly H2O