



United States Department of Agriculture

**Statement by
United States Department of Agriculture
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Concerning the Designation of Monuments Pursuant to the Authority Provided by the
Antiquities Act
July 27, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As an Agency under USDA, the Forest Service is responsible for managing eleven national monuments: Admiralty Island (Alaska); Misty Fiords (Alaska); Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument (Washington); Newberry Crater National Volcanic Monument (Oregon); Chimney Rock National Monument (Colorado); Browns Canyon National Monument (Colorado); San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (California); Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument (California); Sand to Snow National Monument (California); Giant Sequoia National Monument (California), and; Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National Monument (California). Four monuments (Sand to Snow, Santa Rosa and San Jacinto, Berryessa Snow Mountain, and Browns Canyon) are jointly managed with the Department of the Interior.

Monuments can be established legislatively or through Presidential proclamation consistent with the Antiquities Act. The authority granted to the President by Congress through the Antiquities Act is one of the most critical and important tools a president can use to protect special lands. When the Antiquities Act has been used by this Administration, the potential impact on current and future generations has been the key consideration, and the Administration consistently strives to take into account the interests of a wide range of stakeholders to both protect America's public lands and provide for economic development in a manner that is consistent with applicable laws and sound public policy.

Monuments administered by the Forest Service represent a range of remarkable places and resources each recognized by Congress or Presidential proclamation for their special cultural, historical and scientific values, including spectacular ancestral Puebloan structures, some of the world's largest trees, dramatic geology, and remarkable biological diversity some found nowhere else. Designation as national monuments permanently protects areas significant to our Nation's rich history and natural heritage and ensures that the special objects contained within these lands remain a benefit for all Americans.

The Forest Service manages these special areas consistent with their establishment legislation or presidential direction, pursuant to their applicable legal authorities and available funding, and in accordance with management plans developed through public input and consultation with tribal, State, and local governments. Monument boundaries proclaimed by the President are confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the cultural, historical and scientific objects to be protected.

Designations are generally subject to valid existing rights and the Secretary may authorize activities or uses consistent with the care and management of the historical, cultural, natural and scientific resources identified in the monument. In previous designations, these have included grazing, motorized and mechanized vehicle use on roads and trails designated for such use, access by members of Indian tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses, emergency response activities, and a variety of recreational uses.

The monuments managed by the Forest Service, whether designated through legislative or administrative action, build on established public support from a broad cross-section of stakeholders generally including local businesses, conservation, tribal, academic and cultural preservation communities. The monuments managed by the Forest Service provide additional opportunities for the Forest Service and local communities to work together to increase access and enhance outdoor opportunities. Monument designations contribute to the economy. According to a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation report issued in 2011, outdoor recreation, nature conservation, and historic preservation activities generate more than 9 million jobs and \$1 trillion in economic activity each year. Recreation on Forest Service-managed lands contribute \$13 billion to local economies annually.

The President is committed to continuing the responsible use of the Antiquities Act to protect the nation's unique places. Thank you for allowing this opportunity to present the views of the Administration.