

## **All Three Designations -- Q&A**

### **What is the effect of the President's proclamations?**

The President's three proclamations designate the Sand to Snow National Monument, Mojave Trails National Monument, and Castle Mountains National Monument, comprised entirely of existing federal lands. These designations direct the responsible agencies to manage these areas for the care and management of objects of scientific and historic interest identified by the proclamations. The areas generally may not be disposed of by the United States and are closed to new extractive uses such as mining and oil and gas development, subject to valid existing rights. The proclamations do not impact existing military training uses or emergency response.

### **Will the public have an opportunity to contribute to the monument management plans?**

The Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Forest Service will undertake a monument planning process for each of the three separate monuments, including opportunities for public input according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and each agency's planning regulations and policies. The agencies will cooperate and consult with state, local, and tribal governments as part of each planning process.

### **What kind of public process took place before these designations were made?**

Senator Feinstein began her work to advance conservation in the desert by enacting the 1994 California Desert Protection Act, which added 69 new Wilderness areas, established three new units of the National Park System, and provided strong protections for traditional cultural uses of the area by American Indian tribes. Following years of consensus building in the desert and across the state, Senator Feinstein introduced the California Desert Protection Act of 2009 and later the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act of 2015, to provide protection to Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains areas. In August of 2015, Senator Feinstein asked the President to consider using the Antiquities Act to designate these areas as national monuments.

At the Senator's invitation, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Michael Connor and Under Secretary of Agriculture Robert Bonnie attended a public meeting hosted by the Senator near Palm Springs, California, on October 13, 2015. With over 600 members of the public in attendance, the vast majority overwhelmingly supported designation of the area as national monuments. Stakeholders speaking in favor included local business owners, representatives from the California travel and tourism industry, recreationists, sportsmen, academics, and representatives of local faith based groups. Prior to the public meeting, Deputy Secretary Connor and Under Secretary Bonnie hosted a meeting of local Tribal leaders.

### **How does the designation affect military uses of the land and airspace?**

Nothing in the proclamation precludes low-level overflights of military aircraft, designation of new units of special use airspace, or the use or establishment of military flight training routes over the lands reserved by the proclamation, consistent with the care and management of the objects to be protected.

### **How are each of these areas treated in BLM's Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan?**

Over the past five years, Federal, state, and local partners have come together in a remarkable effort to plan for the responsible development of utility-scale renewable energy in the desert, balancing the promise of clean energy with our shared responsibility to protect the most special places and resources. As part of this effort, known as the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), the BLM has conducted a comprehensive inventory and analysis of cultural, natural and recreational resources in the California desert, drawing on the expertise of both state and Federal agencies as well as the input of local governments, tribes, communities and the public. In the preferred alternative of the Final Environmental Impact Statement of the DRECP, new conservation allocations would protect significant and intact natural habitats and cultural resources and link existing congressionally-designated National Conservation Lands. Under all action alternatives in the DRECP, the three new national monuments falls within conservation and recreation allocations.

### **Site Specific Q&A - Sand to Snow**

#### **Where is the Sand to Snow National Monument?**

The Sand to Snow National Monument is located east of Los Angeles, California, and includes Federal land in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The boundaries of the monument encompass approximately 71,000 acres within the boundaries of the San Bernardino National Forest managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and approximately 83,000 acres managed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The total acreage under Federal management is approximately 154,000 acres. A significant portion (31,000 acres) of the BLM-managed part of the monument is also currently managed as the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which is managed for the protection of its outstanding natural and scenic values as well as recreational opportunities.

#### **How do these designations compare to Sen Feinstein's legislation, both in terms of boundaries and management?**

The Sand to Snow National Monument largely follows the boundaries and management provisions reflected in Senator Feinstein's legislation, adding the Black Lava Butte area that has been proposed in the Senator's legislation as a statutory Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

#### **How does the proclamation impact water rights?**

The monument designation will not alter or affect the valid existing water rights of any party, including the United States, and does not reserve water as a matter of Federal law.

#### **How does the designation impact public access?**

The designation allows for public access, such as for hunting and fishing, which continue to be managed by the State of California.

#### **How will the BLM incorporate local input into the monument management plan?**

The proclamation retains the existing management responsibility for the lands in the respective agencies, but requires the agencies to cooperate in management planning. The proclamation requires the Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM, and the Secretary of Agriculture, through USFS, to jointly prepare a management plan for the monument. The plan will be

developed with maximum public involvement including, but not limited to, consultation with tribal, State, and local governments.

### **How does the designation impact off-highway vehicle use?**

The proclamation allows for motorized vehicle use on roads existing as of the date of the proclamation and includes exceptions for emergency or authorized administrative purposes. The proclamation also limits non-motorized mechanized vehicle use (e.g. mountain biking) to trails designated for their use, but it allows for the agencies to designate new routes. Currently, in the portions of the monument that are designated as ACECs or are part of the San Bernardino National Forest, motorized use is restricted to designated roads and trails. In existing wilderness areas, motorized and mechanized transportation is and would remain prohibited under the Wilderness Act.

###

## **Site Specific Q&A - Mojave Trails**

### **Where is the Mojave Trails National Monument?**

The Mojave Trails National Monument encompasses approximately 1.6 million acres of Federal lands currently managed by the BLM between Barstow and Needles, California. Approximately 358,000 acres within the boundary represent Wilderness areas previously established by Congress, and 84,400 acres within the boundary are currently managed by the BLM as the Cady Mountains Wilderness Study Area. Senator Feinstein described 965,000 of these acres in her legislation, and requested that the President include three additional areas (the Sacramento Mountains, the Cadiz Valley, and the southern portion of Bristol Valley), which have been included.

### **What is the effect of the President's proclamation?**

The President's proclamation designates federal lands in this area as the Mojave Trails National Monument for the care and management of objects of scientific and historic interest and to help ensure that future generations can enjoy these significant lands as they are today. The area generally may not be disposed of by the United States and is closed to new extractive uses such as mining and oil and gas development, subject to valid existing rights and limited use for road maintenance by state and local government. The proclamation allows new rights of way across the monument for certain purposes, but only if consistent with the care and management of monument objects.

### **How do these designations compare to Sen Feinstein's legislation, both in terms of boundaries and management?**

The Mojave Trails National Monument follows many of the boundaries and management provisions reflected in Senator Feinstein's legislation, adding the Cadiz Valley and Sacramento Mountains areas that have been addressed through other conservation provisions of the Senator's legislation. The President's action also includes inheld and abutting Wilderness areas previously designated by Congress for purposes of consistent and efficient management.

### **How does the designation impact public access?**

The designation preserves and enhances public access, such as for hunting and fishing, which continue to be managed by the State of California.

**How does designation impact access to transmission lines, highways/roadways, and rail corridors in the area?**

The designation explicitly does not preclude the use and maintenance of transmission and utility rights-of-way but stipulates that such uses shall be managed in a manner consistent with the care and management of monument objects. Use and maintenance of highways is not affected, including limited access to mineral materials by state and local government for purposes of road maintenance.

**How will the BLM incorporate local input into the monument management plan?**

The proclamation requires the Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM, to, within three years of monument designation, prepare and maintain a management plan for the monument. The plan will be developed with maximum public involvement including, but not limited to, consultation with tribal, State, local governments, and the BLM's Desert Advisory Council.

**How does the designation impact off-highway vehicle use?**

Motorized vehicle use is an important use within the Mojave Trails area and is a popular way to access and explore its vast and remote area. The designation allows motorized and non-motorized mechanized (e.g. mountain biking) vehicle use on roads and trails designated for their use, and otherwise restricts use except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes. Motorized vehicle use is limited to roads existing as of the date of this proclamation. The proclamation requires the BLM to prepare a transportation plan to designate roads and trails for motorized or mechanized vehicle use.

###

**Site Specific Q&A - Castle Mountains**

**Where is the Castle Mountains National Monument?**

The Castle Mountains National Monument is an approximately 20,920-acre parcel located on the California-Nevada boundary and surrounded on three sides by the Mojave National Preserve. Its boundaries include approximately 106 acres of land owned by the State of California, and approximately 18 acres of privately owned lands, but the non-Federal lands within the boundaries would not be part of the monument unless and until subsequently acquired by the Federal government.

**What is the effect of the President's proclamation?**

As stated above, the President's proclamation designates Federal lands in this area as the Castle Mountains National Monument for the care and management of objects of scientific and historic interest and to help ensure that future generations can enjoy these significant lands as they are today. The Federal lands composing the monument, which have been managed by the Bureau of Land Management, will now be managed by the National Park Service, the agency that manages the surrounding Mojave National Preserve (Preserve). As in the Preserve, the National Park Service laws and regulations will apply to preserve the resources and values of the area and provide for their enjoyment consistent with their preservation. The area generally may not be

disposed of by the United States and is closed to new extractive uses such as mining and oil and gas development, but the designation is subject to valid existing rights. The National Park Service shall work with State officials to ensure the availability of water resources, including groundwater, needed for monument purposes. The proclamation does not enlarge or diminish the State's jurisdiction with respect to fish and wildlife, or the rights of Indian tribes, nor does the proclamation restrict or preclude military overflights. Hunting is not authorized under applicable park law.

**What are the main development threats to this area?**

There is no current mining activity in the approximately 20,920-acre Castle Mountains National Monument. The monument surrounds but does not currently include an approximately 8,340 acre parcel referred to as the Castle Mountain Mine Area, consisting of BLM-managed Federal land, State land, and private land, where NewCastle Gold, Inc., a Canadian mining company, has conducted an exploration drilling program. Any new mining operations would have to be authorized in accordance with applicable Federal and State law. The proclamation directs that after any such mining and reclamation are completed, or after 10 years if no mining occurs, the Federal land in the Castle Mountain Mine Area is to be transferred to the National Park Service.

**How do these designations compare to Sen Feinstein's legislation, both in terms of boundaries and management?**

The Castle Mountains National Monument follows Senator Feinstein's proposal in S.414 closely, both in terms of boundaries and management, with only slight variation, such as a modest expansion of the Castle Mountain Mine Area to accommodate the existing route of the access road.

**How does the proclamation impact traditional ranching practices?**

There is currently no grazing within the monument. Grazing is generally prohibited in units of the National Park System without specific authorization or as necessary for a recreational or interpretive activity.

**How does the proclamation impact water rights?**

The proclamation directs the Federal land managers to work with State officials to ensure the availability of water resources, including groundwater, needed for monument purposes.

**How does the designation impact public access?**

An important part of the National Park Service's mission is to provide for enjoyment of the resources and values of the lands it manages consistent with their preservation. The National Park Service will provide opportunities for compatible outdoor recreation and will also promote an understanding of the California desert, as it does in the neighboring Mojave National Preserve. While mountain bikes and street-legal motorized vehicles can use park roads, the proclamation directs that motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road is prohibited, except for emergency and authorized administrative purposes, to protect the monument's natural and historic objects.

**How will the NPS incorporate public input into the monument management plan?**

The National Park Service will prepare a management plan, with full public involvement, within 3 years of the date of the proclamation.

**How does the designation impact off-highway vehicle use?**

Motorized vehicle use is one of the best ways to access and explore the remote area. The designation allows non-motorized and mechanized vehicle use (e.g., mountain bikes) and street-legal motorized vehicle use on park roads. Motorized and mechanized vehicle use off-road is prohibited to protect the monument's resources and values, except for emergency and authorized administrative purposes.

###