



Review of Certain National Monuments Established Since 1996; Public Comment

Docket ID: DOI-2017-0002

The Redwood Empire Chapter of Trout Unlimited, a nonprofit organization with over 700 members in Northern California, is respectfully submitting these comments with respect to Executive Order 13792, issued April 26, 2017. We strongly support National Monuments and the Antiquities Act of 1906. In Northern California, one of the National Monuments affected by this order is Berryessa Snow Mountain, which covers over 330,780 acres in the southern Mendocino Range. Trout Unlimited worked for nearly a decade to support initiatives that would better protect the fish and wildlife resources of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region. We also played a lead role in communicating the support of sportsmen for this monument designation – thousands of individual sportsmen and dozens of sportsmen’s clubs, guides, and outdoor-based businesses throughout Northern California supported the campaign.

Over a century ago, Congress ensured through legislation that public lands of historic or scientific interest could be conserved as National Monuments through executive action by the President. Known as the Antiquities Act, it was signed into law by Theodore Roosevelt and has since become one of the most successful conservation tools in American history.

Typically, National Monuments do not make major changes to how public lands are managed. Rather, they help to keep public lands and traditional uses the same into the future without the threat of development that could harm fish and wildlife habitat. Because of the Antiquities Act, public lands such as Berryessa Snow Mountain will remain great places to hunt and fish for generations to come.

Each Monument is managed through a plan developed with input from public land users, state and local governments and other stakeholders, ensuring that the public has a voice in public lands management.

For more than one hundred years the Antiquities Act has been used as a bipartisan conservation tool and it is important to keep this tool available for the right times and places for its use.

For these reasons, we oppose any proposals that would weaken the Antiquities Act. We would also like to make the following points with respect to this Executive Order:

1. The Executive Order has made a significant omission, by excluding from the factors to be used in evaluating National Monument designation any reference to 43 U.S.C. 1701(a)(8), which adds the following requirement as a matter of Congressional policy:

“(8) the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use...”

2. With that in mind, the Berryessa Snow Mountain public lands offer a variety of streams and lakes that support outstanding fishing for trout, bass and other species. Trout streams include the trophy trout fishery of Putah Creek – the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's newest designated Wild Trout Water – and the headwaters of the Eel River, one of the state's finest steelhead fisheries. The Middle Fork of Stony Creek in the Snow Mountain Wilderness is also a designated Wild Trout Water, while the bass fishing in Clear Lake and Lake Berryessa is world-class.
3. Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument is largely located within Congressional District 3 (Garamendi). In that District, 2011 statistics showed that fishing generated \$112.3 million in economic output, and was responsible for 877 jobs. Even under the criteria that were included in the Executive Order, these factors need to be weighed and taken into account when evaluating the status of Berryessa Snow Mountain.

Simply put, angling depends on healthy habitat. It is our responsibility to protect our wild country on public lands so we can pass this gift on to future generations.

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