

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

May 14, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, bike, and ski on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes, we write to express our great appreciation for your thoughtful designation of new National Monuments and our strong hope that you will continue to defend the Antiquities Act, which makes these protections possible.

Over the course of more than a century, nearly every president from each political party has employed the Antiquities Act to protect treasured places on America's public lands. While the Act is dedicated to protection of areas of historic or scientific significance, protection of outdoor recreation opportunities has been among the Act's invaluable additional benefits. Among the National Monuments designated under the Act are many areas that went on to become crown jewels of the National Parks System, including the Grand Canyon and Jackson Hole (now Grand Teton National Park).

We commend your recent use of the Antiquities Act to help ensure access to outdoor recreation for a diversity of Americans, including those who live in big cities, through designation of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument in Southern California, and to protect and advance the outdoor recreation economy and important conservation values in Colorado through designation of the Browns Canyon National Monument. The San Juan Islands National Monument in Washington, designated in 2013, is another iconic designation, which offers one of the most outstanding sea kayaking experiences in the world. These designations reflect the culmination of years of painstaking work by local communities to protect the myriad values provided by these landscapes, and we thank you for your leadership in ensuring that these efforts are given the opportunity to bear fruit.

National Monuments designated under the Antiquities Act are home to truly world-class destinations for outdoor recreation. Devils Tower in Wyoming, the very first area designated under the Act, draws climbers from around the world to its unique geology and outstanding climbing. Joshua Tree in California, originally protected by the Act and redesignated as a National Park in 1994, is one of the most valued areas for rock climbing in the country. In Colorado, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison (originally a National Monument, redesignated as a National Park in 1999) offers paddlers one of the finest whitewater multiday trips in the U.S., in addition to attracting climbers to some of the longest routes in the country.

In California, Fort Ord National Monument contains more than 80 miles of trails for mountain bikers and hikers, and the area is home to the Sea Otter Classic, an event often regarded as the



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world's premiere bicycle festival, which draws more than 9,000 competitors and 55,000 spectators annually, contributing over \$19 million to the local economy.

Far from taking lands out of productive economic use, designations under the Antiquities Act are a proven economic driver for nearby communities. Studies repeatedly demonstrate that outdoor recreation opportunities, parks, and open space increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property, and that counties in the West with protected public lands like National Monuments are more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and grow more quickly than counties without public lands. A recent series of studies analyzing the economies of communities adjacent to 17 National Monuments designated since 1982 found that key economic indicators all improved or maintained following designation, and in no case did designation lead to or coincide with an economic downturn.

We thank you sincerely for your efforts at protecting and enhancing the recreational experience on America's public lands, and we support you in your efforts to defend and preserve the Antiquities Act.

Best regards,



Adam Cramer
Executive Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc:

Brady Robinson, Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
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Michael Van Abel, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
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