

SUPPORT LETTER FOR SANTA ANA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

To Whom It May Concern—

The Santa Ana Mountain range is our largest wild and scenic area in Orange County, Western Riverside County and Northern San Diego County, encompassing over 310,000 acres. This includes the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest (138,000 acres), Audubon Starr Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary (4000 acres), the northern portion of the historic Irvine Ranch (34,000 acres), Camp Pendleton Marine Base (125,000 acres), Santa Rosa Plateau (9000 acres) and large private inholdings (thousands of acres).

As part of the California Floristic Province (biodiversity hotspot), the Santa Ana Mountains host a diverse array of rare and threatened plant and wildlife species. It is an island refuge surrounded by a sea of urban sprawl.

Unfortunately, millions of dollars have been cut from US Forest Service budgets. Increased fire frequency, vandalism, litter, illegal off-road vehicle use, illegal shooting, illegal trail blazing, habitat removal, illegal marijuana farms, neglect, poaching, water pollution, urban sprawl and other negative impacts may bring the Santa Ana Mountains to ecological collapse.

The Cleveland National Forest is considered a non-revenue generating forest, which was set aside specifically for watershed protection. 70% of northern Orange County's water supply comes from the ground, thanks to the mountains within the national forest. Access to clean, local water will diminish, if the negative impacts continue to rise.

The US Forest Service has admitted that most of their funding comes from fire response, but they are unable to meet the increasing demands brought about by recreational use, urban sprawl and declining wildlife and plant species.

This year marks the 108th anniversary of the designation of the Cleveland National Forest by President Theodore Roosevelt and the death of the last California grizzly bear in the Santa Ana Mountains. It's been too long since we've acted to preserve our magnificent mountains.

We, therefore, support the creation a National Monument within the Santa Ana Mountains. Such a monument would prioritize conservation and recreation and help secure critical wildlife habitat and a vibrant, sustainable economy for local citizens.

Suggested names include Grizzly Bear NM, Santa Ana Mountain NM or the Southern California Chaparral NM. It is time we secure that heritage and preserve the jewel of Southern California's coastal mountain range.

Sincerely,



Director Joel Robinson
Santa Ana Mountains Wild Heritage Project
PO Box 381
Silverado, CA, 92676



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I support the effort to create a National Monument within the Santa Ana Mountain range that would include the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest and adjacent to federal and county lands.

A National Monument designation provides a positive path forward. It would forever protect the area from extractive and damaging uses, while providing a haven for wildlife, an economic boost to gateway communities, sustainable jobs and a high-quality outdoor experience for people.

In support of the monument, I recognize that:

- Outdoor recreation is a significant source of jobs and regional economic vitality.
- Permanently protecting our landscapes will help preserve our environment, economy and health. California's unique plants and animals are continually threatened by habitat loss. Increasing the area of protected open space increases their resilience and our resilience.
- Water is essential to our community's health and to state-wide health.
- Protecting the Santa Ana River, Aliso Creek, Newport Bay, San Juan Creek, San Clemente Coastal Streams, San Mateo Creek and Santa Margarita River watersheds will benefit both wildlife and the human community.
- Native plant communities such as the chaparral and oak woodlands found within the proposed monument fight climate change and sustain life. Native plants and trees absorb carbon dioxide and convert it into clean oxygen. They efficiently combat global warming, and they support a wide variety of wildlife.

Conservation is a gift to future generations and an important legacy. The establishment of a National Monument encompassing the Santa Ana Mountains will give visitors more chances to experience beauty and the wonders of the natural world for generations to come.

"Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

—President Theodore Roosevelt

In the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt, I endorse the National Monument designation.

Sincerely,



Director Joel Robinson
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