

PROTECT MOLOK LUYUK

# EXPAND BERRYESSA SNOW MOUNTAIN NATIONAL MONUMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TRIBAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS CALL ON PRESIDENT BIDEN TO EXPAND BERRYESSA SNOW MOUNTAIN NATIONAL MONUMENT**

*Applaud Request by Members of California's Congressional Delegation*

**Sacramento, CA** — Today, tribal and community leaders joined U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Representative John Garamendi (D-CA) in [calling on President Biden](#) to use the Antiquities Act to expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and permanently protect Molok Luyuk (Condor Ridge). Representatives Garamendi and Mike Thompson and Senators Padilla and Dianne Feinstein led other Members of California's Congressional delegation in issuing a [letter](#) to the President and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland with this call to protect Molok Luyuk.

The expansion of Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument would safeguard public lands that are sacred to the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and that are critically important to protect in the face of a changing climate.

“Many of the plant and animal species within Molok Luyuk are traditionally important to the lifeways of the Patwin people, and we consider their protection and stewardship to be part of our sacred responsibility to the land,” **said the Tribal Council of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.** “Molok Luyuk, or Condor Ridge in the Patwin language, was home to California Condors as well as Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, and Peregrine Falcons, and provides wildlife corridors and vital habitat for other culturally important species. The recent reintroduction of the California Condor to the north of Molok Luyuk gives hope that condors will once again soar over the ridge.”

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument stretches from Napa County in the south to Mendocino County in the north, encompassing 330,780 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). President Obama designated the national monument in 2015, responding to a call from Representatives Thompson and Garamendi, then-Senator Barbara Boxer, other Members of California's Congressional delegation, and community leaders to permanently protect these lands.

“Molok Luyuk is a special and sacred place for area Tribes and for many local residents who enjoy recreation activities like hiking and mountain biking,” added **Lake County Supervisor E.J. Crandell, a member of the Robinson Rancheria Tribe**. “The natural beauty of our home also drives tourism, which is key to the economic vitality of the region. Protecting these beautiful lands would be a gift to future generations.”

The proposed expansion area is located on the eastern edge of the existing monument. These BLM managed lands include oak woodlands, rocky outcroppings, wildflower meadows, the world’s largest stand of McNab cypress, and dozens of rare plant species.

“Molok Luyuk is a rare treasure of rich cultural heritage and sacred history, diverse wildlife and rare plants, and stunning natural beauty and accessible recreational activities,” said **Sandra Schubert, Executive Director of Tuleyome**, a local conservation organization. “We are deeply grateful to our Congressional champions Reps. Garamendi and Thompson and Sens. Padilla and Feinstein for shepherding this effort. We encourage President Biden to expand the existing monument and permanently protect Molok Luyuk.”

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, which strongly supports the expansion, has a long and significant connection to Molok Luyuk, stretching back thousands of years. The ridge includes areas where religious ceremonies are practiced and sites that were central to vital trading routes. A key goal of this effort is also to establish co-management with federally recognized Tribes and to return to an Indigenous name for these lands. Molok Luyuk is Patwin for “Condor Ridge” and is a name provided by the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. Currently the area is referred to as “Walker Ridge.”

“Molok Luyuk is a ‘must protect’ area in the midst of a changing climate,” said **Mary Creasman, Chief Executive Officer, California Environmental Voters**. “These public lands serve as a critical wildlife corridor for species such as tule elk, mountain lions and bears. It’s also home to imperiled wildlife such as bald and golden eagles and many rare plants. Protecting this habitat would help preserve critically important biodiversity.”

Representatives Garamendi and Thompson and Senators Padilla and Feinstein have championed legislation ([H.R.6366/S.4080](#)) to expand the monument. H.R.6366 recently passed the House as an amendment and S.4080 was voted out of Committee in the Senate with bipartisan support. Given the urgent need to preserve these lands, Congressional and community leaders are supporting all approaches, including the President’s use of the Antiquities Act, to protect Molok Luyuk. The Antiquities Act is a 1906 law that grants presidents the ability to designate federal public lands, waters, and cultural and historical sites as national monuments to permanently conserve them.

“Nature can be such a valuable reprieve for so many, yet there continue to be deep inequities in access to the outdoors,” said **Shanna Edberg, Conservation Program Director for the Hispanic Access Foundation**. “In fact, our [research](#) found that in California, Latinos and other people of color are two times more likely to be deprived of nearby nature than white people. Protecting Molok Luyuk will help to ensure equitable access to the outdoors in a county where 22% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino.”

Not only would the proposed national monument expansion improve outdoor access for the region's residents, it would help the state of California under Governor Gavin Newsom and the Biden Administration meet their shared goals to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030.

Popular recreation activities on these lands include hiking, mountain biking, photography, camping, horseback riding, and off highway vehicle (OHV) use on designated routes. Incorporating the adjacent federally owned land into the existing national monument would also improve land management, bring additional resources for trail construction and maintenance, help improve public access, and protect sensitive wildlife, prime habitat areas, and cultural resources.

"As an avid OHV recreationist, I strongly support expanding Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument to include Molok Luyuk," said **Don Amador, Government Affairs, American Motorcyclist Association District 36**. "The permanent protection of Molok Luyuk will improve the management of these lands and increase public access to recreation opportunities. This is a win-win for our community and I add my voice in support of President Biden using the Antiquities Act to expand the monument."

"Our national monuments are a part of our country's outdoor heritage and must be passed down to future generations," said **Janessa Goldbeck, Chief Executive Officer of Vet Voice Foundation**. "Veterans advocated for the designation of Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and we're proud to call on the President to expand the monument to include Molok Luyuk."

To learn more about this effort and to sign a petition in support of the expansion of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, visit [www.expandberryessa.org](http://www.expandberryessa.org).