



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Conservationists Applaud Senator Padilla’s Proposed Legislation to Expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument**

*The expansion act includes tribal co-management and a Monument Management Plan.*

April 13, 2022, Sacramento, Calif. – Diverse environmental and community advocates are celebrating an important step toward the permanent protection of a rare and rugged Northern California landscape. Today, Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) introduced the [Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act](#) with Senator Dianne Feinstein as co sponsor. The bill would accompany [House Resolution 6366](#), introduced by Congressman John Garamendi, to expand Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

The legislation would add an adjacent 3,925 acre area to the current Monument, support tribal co-management, and change the name of the additional wildlands from “Walker Ridge” to *Molok Luyuk*—Patwin for “Condor Ridge”—a name the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation provided.

In 2015, President Obama designated Berryessa Snow Mountain a National Monument, with Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA05) introducing the original bill. The Monument, along with the proposed Molok Luyuk (Condor Ridge) addition, is culturally significant to local Native American tribes and notable for its varied habitats and wildlife, including imperiled animals. The ridge provides wildlife connectivity for many species including deer, mountain lions, and black bear.

“The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation has a long and significant connection to Walker Ridge, which is steeped in thousands of years of rich history and is profoundly meaningful to the Patwin people,” said Tribal Chairman Anthony Roberts. “This bill will preserve and maintain the area’s cultural value while ensuring the general public can continue to enjoy it.”

Currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the area currently known as Walker Ridge is home to great biodiversity including over 30 species of rare plants, ancient blue oak woodlands, rugged rock outcrops, wildflower meadows, and extensive stands of McNab cypress.

“Renowned for fascinating geology, outstanding biodiversity, profound cultural significance, and views to die for, Molok Luyuk is eminently worthy of the permanent protection that Senator Alex Padilla and Representative John Garamendi have stepped forward to propose,” said Sierra Club Redwood Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon.

For years, advocates called for lasting protection of Walker Ridge, helping to deter repeated development proposals for large-scale wind energy. The wind energy proposals persist, despite the California Energy Commission’s finding that the area had only moderate to low energy potential. In 2005 and again in 2011, California Native Plant Society submitted proposals to designate the region an Area of Critical Environmental Concern over worries that the area’s irreplaceable habitats would be permanently altered.

"This legislation is the culmination of two decades of advocacy, so we’re truly inspired to see the groundswell of support for Molok Luyuk and the meaningful engagement with the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation,” CNPS Conservation Program Director Nick Jensen said. “We thank Senators Padilla and Feinstein for their leadership in protecting Molok Luyuk and honoring its significance to our tribal partners.”

This proposed Expansion Act would provide much-needed, lasting protection for the land along with the requirement for a Monument Management Plan within one year. The legislation also would secure ongoing co-management with affected federally recognized Tribes by requiring federal agencies to consult with Tribes in the development of the management plan, subsequent management decisions, and “continued meaningful engagement” in the implementation of the plan.

"As neighbors of Molok Luyuk, we have witnessed both the beauty of, and threats to, this unique place,” said Sandra Schubert, Executive Director of Tuleyome. “This bill will safeguard Molok Luyuk, its natural beauty, wildlife, rare plants, and indigenous treasures, while respecting Tribal stewardship over the lands. We are excited that Senators Padilla and Feinstein have joined the fight to protect Molok Luyuk and look forward to working with them to pass this historic bill.”

Today, the area attracts a wide range of people who use the BLM property to hike, ride horses, cycle, birdwatch, and drive legal off-highway vehicles. Don Amador, a long-time trail recreation and resource management professional, explained that Molok Luyuk’s management plan would make it easier for the BLM to designate routes that provide connectivity to increase public access and enhance recreation opportunities for all user groups.

"Since taking office, Senator Alex Padilla has been a consistently strong champion for our nation's federal public lands," said Ryan Henson, Senior Policy Director for CalWild. “We’re deeply grateful to Senator Padilla for taking up the cause of Molok Luyuk. The ridge is a public treasure that deserves permanent protection and improved management for the benefit of all. We’re eager to work with Senator Padilla and Representative John Garamendi to get this critical measure through Congress as quickly as possible.”

The expanded Monument also would mark an important step toward helping the State of California and the Biden Administration meet the critical goal of protecting 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by the year 2030, added Elyane Stefanick, California Program Director for the Conservation Lands Foundation, in reference to California's 30x30 Initiative and the federal America the Beautiful call-to-action. "Conservation Lands Foundation supports Senator Padilla's goal to expand the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and ensure this remarkable landscape has a robust management plan," Stefanick said. "The history of public lands is complex. The addition of Molok Luyuk honors the original stewards and caretakers of these lands and will help protect the area's rich biodiversity."

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## **Available for Interview**

*Please contact Erika Brink [erika@fcpcommunications.com](mailto:erika@fcpcommunications.com) | (951) 553-3561 to request.*

- Victoria Brandon, Chapter President | Sierra Club Redwood Chapter, Lower Lake
- Maureen Forney, NorCal Leader | Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Ryan Henson, Senior Policy Director | CalWild
- Nick Jensen, PhD, Conservation Program Director | California Native Plant Society
- Margaret Meyncke, SoCal Leader | Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- Sandra Schubert, JD, MA, Executive Director | Tuleyome

Spanish-Language Interviews Also Available:

- Corina López | Great Old Broads for Wilderness

## **Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation**

*Some interviews granted upon request.*

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