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Frequently Asked Questions

At a glance:

- ▶ Near Los Angeles within the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests
- ▶ 346,177 acres (342,175 Angeles; 4,002 San Bernardino)
- ▶ Managed by the U.S. Forest Service



Photo: Sun Glistens over Morris Dam

What is a national monument?

A national monument is a designation given to a protected area of federal land. National monuments encompass landscapes and objects of beauty, diversity, and historic and scientific interest ranging from rugged California coastlines to vividly-hued desert canyons to precious cultural and archeological sites.

There are 110 national monuments across the country managed by the National Park Service, Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management. The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument is the eighth under Forest Service management. A national monument designation prompts a new management plan that is developed with public input.

What authority does the President have to designate national monuments?

The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President authority to designate national monuments in order to protect “objects of historic or scientific interest.” While most national monuments are established by the President, Congress has also established national monuments to protect natural and historic features.

Does the local community support the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument designation?

This monument designation is built on more than a decade of public support and advocacy for permanent protection of the mountains and for enhancing the area’s recreational opportunities. There is broad support for the designation throughout the business, tourism, environmental justice, conservation, academic and cultural preservation communities.

Over the past decade, elected officials have initiated and Congress has approved two studies of the area to assess the way the open space should be protected and managed in the future and to determine how to achieve additional recognition, resources and special designation to enhance recreational opportunities for the area.



Why does the San Gabriel Mountains area warrant designation as a national monument?

Designation as a national monument recognizes the area's important geological, ecological, historic, scientific and recreational resources.

The monument's history is rich. In addition to important Native American and European sites and features, this monument has an equally impressive array of 20th and 21st century scientific and cultural achievements. There are more than 600 archaeological sites within the monument, including several rock art and cupules features, the concentration of which is unique to southern California. Notably, two Native American rock art sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo: Mt. Wilson Observatory

The monument area also has a strong scientific history. Mount Wilson Observatory is internationally known as the place where notable scientists such as Edwin Hubble and Albert Einstein conducted research or visited. Established in 1933, the San Dimas Experimental Forest is the only such forest in southern California and has a long history as a research site in the fields of hydrology and ecology.

The rivers of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument not only provide drinking water, but are also areas of high ecological significance, supporting rare populations of native fish, animals and plants. The monument is also home to iconic species including the California condor, California spotted owl, Nelson's bighorn sheep and 1,000- year-old limber pines.

Vegetation communities, including chaparral and oak woodland, represent a portion of the rare Mediterranean ecosystem found in only 3 percent of the world. The monument also provides suitable habitat for 52 Forest Service Sensitive Plants and as many as 300 California-endemic species, including Pierson's lupine and San Gabriel bedstraw, that grow only in the San Gabriel range.

In addition to the enormous wildland and watershed conservation values, a major benefit of creating a national monument. Through development of the management plan we will seek opportunities to enhance recreation access, interpretation, and environmental education. The monument area includes four designated wildernesses as well as national recreation/scenic trails.

The San Gabriel Mountains area, specifically the Angeles National Forest, provides open space and some of the drinking water for Los Angeles County.

Will the Forest Service manage the monument?

Yes. Through the planning and development of a specific management plan, the agency will capitalize on the opportunity to further protect the resources and engage in watershed conservation while creating new and innovative ways to reconnect one of the largest U.S. urban areas to the great outdoors. As always, the Forest Service is interested in moving forward on proposed land use initiatives with the feedback and support of the nearby communities.

What information was considered in setting the boundaries of the monument?

The boundary decision is based upon the desire to highlight the area for visitation, protection, and management. The various uses permitted in the monument as well as the monument's boundary, modified from legislative proposals for the area, reflect extensive input from the public and what is necessary to protect the area's historical sites and ecological values.

Will a monument designation bring additional resources to the area?

If previous monument designations are an indication, this monument designation is expected to bring additional resources to the area. Already, more than 4 million annual visits are made on the Angeles National Forest. That number is expected to increase with the designation of a national monument. One study, released in 2014 by an economics firm, suggests that local economies benefit from national monuments (<http://headwaterseconomics.org/land/reports/national-monuments>).

Among the findings is that “protecting public lands can assist western communities working to promote a more robust economic future” under several factors, including jobs, income, property values and recreation.

Based on 2012 data, the Forest Service estimates that the Angeles National Forest, with the monument overlaying about half of the forest, contributes 597 full- and part-time jobs and more than \$39 million to the local economy.

The Forest Service has also begun initial investment to improve visitor experiences in the San Gabriel Mountains in its new status as a national monument. The Forest Service provided the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests funding to hire eight additional youth conservation corps crews to improve various visitor recreation sites and visitor centers. The Angeles National Forest Monument staff includes Monument coordinators for administration, partnership, volunteer, conservation education along with three visitor information specialists. Monument coordinators will provide the oversight for administering various activities within the Monument area. For instance, the Forest Service will replace signs throughout the area. How can the public help shape management of the Monument?

The monument is an important recreational setting for millions of residents in Los Angeles County and surrounding areas. For many urban residents, the monument provides the only available and measurable open space. The site also provides general educational, cultural and recreational opportunities, including hiking, hunting, fishing, horseback riding and cycling, and archeological, astronomical and geological interpretation.



Photo: A couple enjoys Spring time in the Monument.



Photo: Two people floating and fishing.

Currently, the Forest Service is in the very first steps of developing a management plan. As a part of that, the Forest Service will provide for maximum public involvement in the development of the plan, including consultation with tribes, State, and local governments, as well as community-based environmental conservation, health and justice organizations. Through the planning process, the Forest Service will work with the public by engaging them in opportunities to participate in the process.

Are existing water, flood control, utility and transmission infrastructure affected?

The monument designation will not affect existing operation, maintenance, replacement or modification of water resource, flood control, utility, pipeline or

telecommunications facilities within the monument. New facilities or expansions of existing facilities may occur to the extent consistent with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the designation, and subject to the Secretary's special uses authorities and other applicable law.

What types of recreational activities are currently allowed and will they change within the Monument?

Current recreational opportunities include, for example, geological, natural history and cultural interpretation activities, hiking, bicycling, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, picnicking, skiing and off-highway vehicle use.

The Forest Service will continue to manage these opportunities, consistent with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation. Nothing in the designation will prohibit special events; the Forest Service will continue to evaluate requests for special use permits on a case-by-case basis.

Will current or potential mining be affected within the national monument?

The monument designation will withdraw the area from all forms of location, entry, and patent under mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, except under the Materials Act of 1947 (sand, stone, gravel).

Will monument designation affect wildland fire response or fuels treatment of the area?

Wildland fire is a natural part of this ecosystem and the area has had significant fires in recent years. There are five firefighting stations within the monument. The monument designation will not interfere with future wildland fire management.

Vegetative management treatments will continue to be used to address the risk of wildfire, insects, or diseases that could endanger the natural and cultural resources or threaten public safety. To manage for healthy forests and reduce the risk of severe fire and/ or insect-caused mortality, it will be necessary to conduct thinning or prescribed burning with some periodic removal of timber or biomass. Reducing the risk of severe wildland fire is a critical factor in protecting the objects of the monument.

Will there be any fees or an Adventure Pass required with visitation to the monument?

Monument designation, itself, does not prompt a fee. An Adventure Pass will be required at picnic areas where a pass is required today. The same site- specific fee will continue to be required at campgrounds and off-highway vehicle areas.

What Congressional districts cover the San Gabriel Mountains?

The monument overlays several federal congressional districts, including:

Rep. Tony Cardenas	38 acres
Rep. Paul Cook	6,300 acres
Rep. Judy Chu	310,300 acres
Rep. Steve Knight	14,700 acres
Rep. Grace Napolitano	3,300 acres
Rep. Adam Schiff	11,500 acres

**Approximate acreage*

For more information visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sgmnm>