



July 9, 2017

Mr. Ryan Zinke  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, Support for Retention of Current Boundary and Protections

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo, a public lands conservation group based in the Eastern Sierra. I write in my professional capacity, on behalf of our 700+ members, and also as a United States Citizen, Californian, and Outdoor Recreator to support retention of the current boundary and protections for Berryessa Snow Mountain National monument.

First, please consider that Berryessa Snow Mountain provides critical support for the local rural economy of the area that surrounds it:

- Generates \$156 million in annual revenue per year;
- Creates more than 1800 jobs per year (Small Business Majority);
- Generates approximately \$900,000 in sales and lodging tax revenue per year within the local counties in which it is located; and
- Will very likely cause an increase in the per capita income of individuals residing in the areas surrounding the monument, as studies have consistently shown that per capita income in the areas surrounding monuments always increases in the years following the designation (Headwaters Economics).

Second, please know that, now more than ever, citizens of the United States understand that the outdoor recreation economy in the United States is responsible for a significant portion of the GDP, provides a significant number of jobs to Americans, and a

significant amount of money (in taxes) to the federal treasury: The 2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy national report revealed that outdoor recreation is an \$887 billion industry that supports 7.6 million jobs and generates \$65.3 billion in federal tax revenue. Much of this economic activity depends upon access to recreational resources on public lands, including national monuments.

Third, please consider that the designation of Berryessa Snow Mountain was the culmination of extensive public outreach, especially championed by Tuleyome, a non-profit supported by hunters, off-road vehicle users and others fond of the land, who are not traditionally supportive of executive environmental protection action. In addition to hunters and off-road vehicle users, over 200 local businesses, 35 local/national recreation and conservation organizations, more than 50 state and elected officials support the monument designation.

Fourth, please consider that Berryessa provides many recreational uses for locals and visitors alike including hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, fishing mountain biking, and horseback riding. The monument offers a world-class off-highway vehicle trail system such as Fout Springs, and opportunities for whitewater kayaking and hang gliding. Further, Berryessa protects the water supply for millions of people. The large, broad-topped Snow Mountain sheds precious water toward the Sacramento River in the east and the Eel River Basin in the west.

Finally, please consider that Berryessa has one of the highest species richness in all of California, attributable in part to its great variations in elevation, from sea level to 7,000 feet. Berryessa protects 12 plant species not found anywhere else in the world.

Berryessa also protects many rare plants and animals including: particularly delicate serpentine plants clinging to otherwise barren and rocky mountainsides (endemic bent-flowered fiddleneck and bittlescale, the Breweres jewelflower, Purdy's fringed onion, musk brush, serpentine sunflower, bare monkeyflower, indian Valley brodiaea, Red Mountain catchfly, Snow Mountain buckwheat), serpentine herbs (Lake County stonecrop, coastal bluff morning glory, Cobb Mountain lupine, Contra Costa goldfields, Napa western flax), and near-endemic or restricted to serpentine soil plants (MacNab cypress, leather oak, swamp larkspur, Purdy's fritillary).

Berryessa is also home to bald eagles, black bears, river otters, coyotes, deer, Tule elk, mountain lions, songbirds and many other wild animals roaming across this diverse, remote and rugged landscape.

Other special features include:

- Seismically active Bartlett Springs, a fault zone with hot springs, geologic outliers with marine invertebrate fossils that can be traced back to the Cretaceous Period and Cenozoic Era;

- Cache Creek, a California Wild and Scenic River, riparian habitat and habitat for one of the largest wintering populations of bald eagles in the state;
- Goat Mountain, home to “unusual plant assemblages that have created one of the most diverse butterfly regions in California”; and
- Bear Creek Watershed, containing over 450 plant species, more than half of California’s 108 species of dragonfly/damselfly, six rare insects, and 80 species of butterflies.

In short, Berryessa Snow Mountain is a unique national treasure. It’s designation clearly fulfills the requirements of the Antiquities Act, and is locally supported by a variety of interests and user types for recreation and regional economic vitality. For all of these reasons, Friends of the Inyo’s 700+ members encourage the retention of current boundaries and protections for Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

Sincerely,

Wendy Schneider  
Executive Director  
Friends of the Inyo