



## **2017 National Monument Review (WSF Conservation Staff Analysis)**

[2017-05-23]

With the President's Executive Order 13792, issued April 26, 2017 directing USDI review of existing National Monuments, and for future designations of national monuments:

WSF recommends that management of National Monuments rest with either the BLM or USFS. Both agencies have mandates and history of managing lands and resources for multiple uses. BLM and USFS are experienced in managing public access, and have traditionally accepted state fish and wildlife management primacy, including hunting, trapping, fishing, habitat enhancement needs and wildlife management protocols (e.g., wildlife surveys, capture and restoration efforts, water improvements, etc.). The NPS, and in some cases the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge systems, have not been as forthcoming in acknowledging State authorities.

WSF recommends the ongoing review, and future monument proclamations, focus on access for use and access for fish and wildlife management. An adequate public outreach effort is essential for existing and future monuments. Including:

1) Providing access for people to enjoy designated National Monuments compatibly with the stated management purpose for the area. Access includes not just foot or horseback; access is also important to provide and properly manage motorized access (ground-, aerial-, and water-based) to and within these areas. Hunting and fishing are important components of that access.

2) Providing access to State management authorities for hunting and fishing seasons, fish and wildlife management activities, and collaboration on habitat improvement projects. Including:

- acceptance of State hunting, trapping and fishing regulations; more specifically, management of National Monuments should not challenge or infringe upon State authority via additional federal agency regulations;
- acceptance of State fish and wildlife surveys, including all forms of aerial (e.g., fixed-wing, helicopter, etc.) and ground-based (e.g., ATV, pickup, boat, snow-machine) survey methods;
- acceptance of State fish and wildlife capture and restoration efforts by methods deemed appropriate by the State, including any and all aerial methods (e.g., darting, drive-netting, net-gun, helicopter fish stocking, etc.); and
- supporting and collaborating with State initiatives for fish and wildlife habitat improvement methods including prescribed fire, installing/maintaining water guzzler systems (including helicopter support for slinging materials, tanks, personnel, etc.) for wildlife, improved grazing system management, noxious weed control programs, prescriptive silvicultural treatments, etc.

WSF takes no position on the size of existing National Monuments. However, at least one National Monument (i.e., Castle Mountains, eastern San Bernadino County, CA) that falls under the 100,000-acre threshold needs to also be included in this review per the Executive Order clause concerning inadequate "public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders". Designation late in the Obama administration transferred an area previously managed by the BLM and open to public use to the management authority of the NPS (Mojave National Preserve). This had been an important area for multiple use, including recreational hunting for deer, and potentially desert bighorn sheep; once transferred to NPS management, those recreational hunting opportunities vanished. WSF recommends the Castle Mountains National Monument be returned to BLM management, so multiple-use (including recreational hunting) can again occur.