

San Gabriel Mountains National Monument Frequently Asked Questions

Potential San Gabriel Mountains National Monument:

Why do the San Gabriel Mountains need additional protection?

The San Gabriel Mountains attract over 3 million visitors a year. What many people don't realize is just how much strain this area is under to keep up with the growing demand for outdoor space and recreation. The Los Angeles area is one of the most park poor regions of the country. As a result, the mountains are one of few places Angelenos can enjoy the outdoors, but they are under immense stress from overuse.

There is persistent trash, graffiti, safety hazards, and few visitor facilities and services in the Mountains. These conditions increase fire dangers, decrease water quality, and threaten the diverse ecology and other features that make these mountains unique in the world.

How did the idea for a national monument come about?

The need for a national monument designation is an extension of ongoing conversations over the past decade on how to protect, preserve, and enhance the San Gabriel Mountains. The many public meetings, town halls, and stakeholder roundtables over the last ten years have laid the foundation for today's effort to achieve a national monument.

For over a decade, constituents and stakeholders in the Los Angeles area have called for increased protection of local natural resources, as well as greater community engagement with the outdoors. The National Park Service (NPS) conducted a Special Resource Study over a ten year period and recommended additional protections for the Mountains as a National Recreation Area (NRA). Rep. Chu then introduced H.R. 4858, the San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act. However, residents continue to demand tangible change. In response, Rep. Chu reached out to President Obama to help make the community's priorities a reality at long last.

What is a national monument and how is it different from a National Recreation Area (NRA)?

A national monument is very similar to a national recreation area. Under the Antiquities Act, the President has the authority to designate a national monument to protect objects that are of historic or scientific significance.

Both designations uphold and protect water rights, property rights, land use rights, etc. Both enhance conservation and improve management of areas with special ecological, cultural, historic, and recreational value through more resources, education, and public engagement. Both allow a wide range of recreational activities.

The **primary difference** between a national monument and an NRA is that **a national monument only includes federal lands**. It would NOT include any state, city, or private property. In this case, the boundaries are limited to the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests.

What does the San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act do and how does it protect my rights?

The San Gabriel National Recreation Area Act (H.R. 4858) that Rep. Chu introduced in 2014 establishes an NRA as a unit of NPS including the San Gabriel Mountains, Emerald Necklace river corridor, and Puente Hills. This allows NPS to contribute resources and bring together partners at the State, county and local level to pursue community-based projects in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

NPS would help address trash, graffiti, poor signage, fire safety and water quality by improving visitor services, staffing, and facilities in the Mountains. It would help cities create more opportunities for recreation within their neighborhoods, and establish environmental education programs and volunteer and work programs for minorities, youth, and veterans.

The legislation was crafted in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders, including water, utilities, residents, and elected officials. As a direct result of the feedback she received from her public outreach, Rep. Chu drafted legislation for the NRA that ensures a continuation of property rights, local land control, water rights, fire management and several other priorities.

Key features of the legislation include:

- Protection of water right, private property, land use, and existing laws, ordinances, permits, plans, regulations, rights of way, and preservation of all existing jurisdictions and authorities;
- A Public Advisory Council and a Management Partnership comprised of a majority of local officials;
- An opt-out clause for cities.

Where can I find a copy of the NPS Special Resource Study and a copy of the NRA legislation?

NPS Study: <http://www.nps.gov/pwro/sangabriel/>

H.R. 4858: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr4858ih/pdf/BILLS-113hr4858ih.pdf>

If Rep. Chu introduced NRA legislation why do we need a monument protect the mountains?

For over a decade we have been on an unsustainable trajectory. Persistent trash, graffiti, and safety issues increase fire dangers, decrease water quality, and threaten the ecology and unique habitats of the mountains. We need increased resources and better management to make sure people can still enjoy this open space while also maintaining it better. We also need more community engagement in the urban corridor.

The NRA legislation is a first step in achieving stronger protections and more resources for the region. However, with a divided Congress and a weak record of passing conservation bills, it will likely be several years before progress is made on passing this legislation. A monument can bring about tangible improvements sooner.

What are the benefits of a national monument?

The benefits of a national monument are very similar to the NRA, because the needs of the region are the same. A San Gabriel Mountains National Monument would help prioritize the area within the U.S. Forest Service and bring with it the resources needed to provide our families with sustainable recreation so that people can enjoy the mountains now and preserve them for generations to come.

A national monument will protect water quality by applying more resources toward preventing trash and pollution in and along the rivers.

A national monument will also have a positive economic effect. Numerous studies have shown that recreational spaces increase property value and increase revenues for local businesses as well as cities.

A national monument can create opportunities for urban families, youth, veterans, and minorities to enjoy outdoor activity and learn about nature and the history and ecology of the mountains. They will learn how to preserve and protect the environment, and participate in empowering work and volunteer opportunities.

Under a monument designation, where will the funding come from for improvements?

Ultimately, budgets are about priorities and a national monument status would allow the Forest Service to permanently prioritize our region when allocating resources. The U.S. Forest Service has long operated with a tight budget and as a result the agency continually has to shift resources around to meet all its responsibilities.

If the Angeles and San Bernardino Forests are elevated to the status of a national monument the U.S. Forest Service would be able to raise funds through private-public partnerships, apply for grants, and potentially increase support from foundations. Already there are organizations willing to contribute funds for conservation

and recreation but currently the U.S. Forest Service has no way to prioritize these funds and direct them specifically to the San Gabriel Mountains. A monument would change this.

How will water and property rights be protected under a national monument?

Monument designations only apply to federal lands, not state, local, or private lands. They do not affect state, local, or private property in and around the monument boundaries. They do not create additional land use or regulatory authorities. They do not create new water rights or alter existing ones. They do not affect existing uses of the area.

Additionally, Rep. Chu has asked the Administration to use the language of the NRA legislation, crafted with extensive local input, as a foundation for a national monument proclamation. This would preserve exiting water and property rights. Most recent monument proclamations have used existing legislation as a starting point, and it is STANDARD for water and property rights to be explicitly protected in monument designations. For example, the proclamation for Chimney Rock National Monument explicitly states that, “Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to alter the valid existing water rights of any party, including the United States.”

What will the boundaries of the monument be? Who will manage the area? Will there be local control?

National monuments can only be declared on existing federal lands. A potential San Gabriel Mountains National Monument will be limited to U.S. Forest Service land, following the forest boundaries. The U.S. Forest Service will manage the monument.

At present, local communities have no direct input in the Management Plan of the Angles and San Bernardino National Forests. Rep. Chu wants to ensure that more public input is included in the process. She has asked that the Administration create a Public Advisory Council, like the one described in her NRA bill, to help manage the monument and ensure local control. The recently established San Juan National Monument, in Washington State, created a similar Public Advisory Council at the request of the states’ congressional representatives.

If I live in the mountains or would like to hike, hunt, fish, cycle, run marathons, ride off-highway vehicles in the mountains, will I be able to continue to do so?

Yes. These are kinds of activities that a national monument – like an NRA – is designed to preserve. With increased resources and public education, these activities would even be enhanced as the mountains are better managed, cleaner, and safer. Monument designations do not affect existing uses of the area.

Will there be opportunities for public comment before a monument is declared?

Yes. The U.S. Forest Service held a public town hall on August 26th, and has been holding stakeholder meetings. This is an ongoing process and the U.S. Forest Service intends to reach out to as many stakeholders and communities as possible. Rep. Chu is encouraging these meetings and will continue to advocate that the U.S. Forest Service conduct ample outreach. The Obama Administration has a strong record of being highly responsive to local communities in crafting new national monuments.

If you have not been contacted and would like to participate, please let Rep. Chu know!

Side-By-Side Comparison:

	National Rec Area	National Monument
Who will establish it?	Congress	The President
What will it do?	Protect areas with special ecological, cultural, historic, and recreational value, and enhances recreational opportunities through education and	Protect areas with special ecological, cultural, historic, and recreational value, and enhances recreational opportunities through education

	better management.	and better management.
Which Federal Agency is Involved?	The National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service	The U.S. Forest Service
What will the boundaries be?	Federal and non-federal lands: The Angeles National Forest, the Emerald Necklace, and the Puente-Chino Hills.	Federal lands ONLY: The Angeles National Forest and potentially the San Bernardino National Forest.
What are the main benefits?	More resources and greater community engagement.	More resources and greater community engagement.
How will it increase resources?	Budget line item.	Budget prioritization, access to grant funding, and public-private partnerships.
How long will it take to see these benefits?	Potentially many years.	Potentially much sooner than the NRA.