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NATIVE AMERICAN LAND CONSERVANCY SUPPORTS ESTABLISHMENT OF CALIFORNIA DESERT NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Whitewater, California - Leaders of the Native American Land Conservancy (NALC) participated in a public meeting today hosted by Senator Dianne Feinstein to request President Obama to designate Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and the Castle Mountains as National Monuments. The NALC requested that President Obama act immediately to honor the decades of cooperation, outreach, and support for the protection of the California desert by designating these public lands as National Monuments.

“We’d like to express our sincere thanks to Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Mike Connor and Under Secretary of Agriculture, Robert Bonnie for their attendance at this critical meeting,” stated NALC President, Michael Madrigal. “We hope that our desert community’s longstanding efforts to protect these lands will be recognized by President Obama and he will exercise his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate these public lands as National Monuments.”

The NALC was founded in 1998 to acquire, preserve, and protect Native American sacred lands. The NALC works with tribes, conservation groups, educational institutions, landowners, and state and federal agencies to ensure the long-term protection of Native American cultural landscapes. As an inter-tribal non-profit, the NALC is committed to managing these landscapes in a manner that preserves their integrity and promotes an understanding of their value to tribes nationwide and their neighbors in the community at large.

The NALC owns 2,560 acres of private land in San Bernardino County known as the Old Woman Mountains Preserve, which would fall within the boundaries of the newly created National Monument.

“We are confident that the areas incorporated into the National Monument will be managed to protect their unique biological, cultural, and historic resources for future generations,” said NALC Board Member Nicole A. Johnson.

Under the 1906 Antiquities Act, President Obama could proclaim Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and the Castle Mountains as National Monuments. Establishment of the Mojave Trails National Monument would provide a new level of protection to the Old Woman Mountains Preserve. This designation discourages uses on public lands which threaten the area’s sensitive cultural and ecological resources.

“We are pleased with Senator Feinstein’s active engagement on this issue, her many years of personal support for the protection of the desert’s natural resources, and her willingness to build bridges with local tribal communities in adopting these protection measures,” said Michael Madrigal. “We encourage others to voice their opinions in support of protecting these lands by contacting the Obama Administration officials and coordinating with Senator Feinstein’s office.”

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