

Officials dedicate Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument

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- **Submitted photo**
Officials dedicated the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument on Saturday. The monument covers 350,000 acres of public lands, including 62,000 acres in eastern Napa County.
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Over 900 people joined U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell Saturday for a dedication ceremony for the recent designation of Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in California.

The monument covers 350,000 acres of public lands, including 62,000 acres in eastern Napa County. It stretches from the Snow Mountain Wilderness Area in the Mendocino National Forest 100 miles south to the mountains separating Solano and Napa counties. No private land is included. The dedication and spring festival took place at Cowboy Camp west of Williams in Colusa County.

“The journey of this moment has been a story of dedication and persistence on the part of many local residents,

business owners, outdoor recreation lovers, farmers, ranchers, community leaders, sportsman and conservation groups,” said Winters Mayor Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, who opened the ceremony.

U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, Bureau of Land Management Director Neil Kornze, U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson and John Garamendi, California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird, state Sen. Lois Wolk, and other community and conservation leaders were also in attendance.

“I continue to be amazed by this area,” said Jewell, who commented on the cultural sites, unique geology, and tremendous biodiversity of the region. “This monument designation is going to preserve those uses that people love here — the hunting, the fishing, the livestock grazing, the solitude, the (off-road vehicle) use in areas where that’s appropriate, and the complete solitude and wilderness in areas where that’s appropriate.”

“It takes a village to get something like this done,” said Assemblyman Bill Dodd, who introduced a resolution of support in the California State Legislature.

Jewell predicted that the national monument would bring economic benefits. Currently the monument supports more than 300 jobs, officials said. An economic report released by the Winters Chamber of Commerce found that the new national monument could generate up to an additional \$26 million for economies of counties surrounding the monument in the next five years.

“The area is not only a wonderful place for outdoor recreation, it also contains one of the highest concentrations

of biodiversity in the state of California,” stated Sara Husby, executive director of Tuleyome, a conservation group, which pushed for the federal designation.

“In every walk in nature we receive far more than we seek, and today we receive an extraordinary legacy of protected public lands,” said Wolk, who introduced legislation in the state Senate for the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. “Generation upon generation will be able to join John Muir in that walk with nature.”

The area is known for its rich serpentine soils and world-class geologic wonders — occurring from three converging tectonic plates. The region is also home to threatened and endangered critters, including species found nowhere else on the planet, officials said.

Moving forward, the Department of the Interior requires that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Department of Agriculture’s U.S. Forest Service cooperate in preparing a management plan for the region. This plan will outline the necessary actions to protect the resources identified in the presidential proclamation, and must include public involvement from tribes, state and local governments, ranchers and other stakeholder groups.

For information and interactive maps for the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, go to:
blm.gov/ca/st/en/prog/nlcs/Berryessa_Snow_Mountain.html.