



## CalWild Grant Proposal

CalWild is excited to submit this application for a \$50,000 grant from The Conservation Alliance. Your support will primarily help fund our 2024-2025 efforts to establish two new National Monuments (NM) in southern California through administrative actions by President Biden, as well as advocating for passage of conservation bills through legislative means.

Funds awarded through this grant will directly benefit California campaigns highlighted by TCA's *Mobilizing For Monuments (M4M)* campaign and road trip, which brought attention to some of the remarkable places we are in the process of conserving. We were pleased to participate in TCA's fly-in to Washington, D.C. in September to advocate for these campaigns, and in the M4M Monumental Road Trip and filming event with TCA at the future Chuckwalla NM to highlight its unique character and the reasons why it so richly deserves protection.

With President Biden's designation of multiple new NMs, this Administration has signaled its willingness to use the Antiquities Act to help meet its America the Beautiful goal that would protect 30% of the U.S. by 2030 ("30x30"). By assisting or leading more than three NM campaigns throughout California, CalWild is poised to continue our decades of public lands leadership and to advance both California's and the Administration's 30x30 goals. Administration officials broadly hinted that at least one NM expansion or designation in California would be coming soon when we met with them in September.

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### **The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument (CNM) and the proposed expansion of Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP)**

As a result of CalWild and coalition partner efforts, this summer Representative Dr. Raul Ruiz embraced the proposals as his own and introduced legislation to enact them while calling on President Biden to designate the areas under the Antiquities Act. Several local elected officials, tribal representatives, and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Secretary, Wade Crowfoot, spoke in support of the proposal. The impressive list of tribes, other government bodies, individual elected officials, businesses, and other "grasstops" supporters has continued to grow. It is worth noting that of the 13 tribes that are affiliated with these lands, five have provided public expressions of support and several more are likely forthcoming. At Dr. Ruiz's request we have thus far focused on grassroots support-

building in the Eastern Coachella Valley where our staff have used their Spanish language skills extensively.

Unfortunately, after experiencing minimal public opposition until this summer, we are now dealing with opposition from some communities, primarily on ideological grounds, as well as from some recreational stakeholders who are concerned that their activities may be curtailed or even eliminated with a NM designation. Almost all of these concerns are not based in fact or reality. Our coalition has also met with large scale utility companies and energy developers, who may at first glance be inclined to oppose our proposal. Those meetings are ongoing and continued organizing efforts are required.

We will continue to advocate for President Biden's use of the Antiquities Act to designate the CNM and expand JTNP in 2024.

### **The yet-to-be-named effort to develop a National Monument proposal for the western portion of the Angeles National Forest (ANF)**

As there is a strong likelihood that Chuckwalla NM will be designated in 2024, CalWild is prepared to pivot our efforts to organizing in support of a new National Monument in this yet-to-be named region of the ANF after such a designation takes place. This 195,000 acre (305 square mile) area has remarkable biodiversity and immense cultural and historical importance. One of the highlights is the magnificent Fish Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area, which the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has recommended for wilderness designation. This rugged area is characterized by abrupt landscapes and towering peaks. It features stately chaparral, ridgelines, and red rock-studded canyons, including Fish Canyon and its narrows. Fish Canyon and other remote swathes of the proposed NM provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and adventure not far from Santa Clara and L.A. We have been helping primary advocate John Monsen engage as needed with the Angeles National Forest staff, helping him to draft the proposed boundary, identify and then engage with key stakeholders, identify important outreach targets, and research values for the required "objects of interest report."

As of this writing the campaign is really picking up steam in the form of numerous key endorsements such as from the City of Santa Clarita.

The ecological treasures included in these NM campaigns provide innumerable benefits to their wildlife inhabitants and human visitors, including:

- Habitat and refugia for endemic and native flora and fauna, including many rare, threatened, and endangered species

- Migration corridors and reference landscapes
- Seed sources for ecological recovery that can be used for restoration
- Carbon and nitrogen sinks to neutralize damaging greenhouse gases via the lack of disturbance in the ecosystems
- Cultural and historical values
- Undeveloped areas that provide opportunities for spiritual respite
- Stimulants for California's massive outdoor recreation economy that generates \$54 billion annually from public lands

The Conservation Alliance funds will directly support CalWild staff and contractors, travel expenses, and campaign materials when we pivot to full focus on this new NM proposal following a designation of Chuckwalla NM.

Our collective success can be measured by the following:

- Significant progress made towards NM enlargement of the San Gabriels NM and Joshua Tree National Park, and new NM designations for the Chuckwalla and Angeles National Forest regions