Giant Sequoia National Monument protects 328,315 acres in the Sierra Nevada. It is most notable for its collection of towering giant sequoias, vast, lush mountain meadows, and thousands of miles of pristine streams.

Native Americans have a deep history here, inhabiting the area for at least the past 8,000 years, leaving behind artifacts, petroglyphs, and village sites. Today, the Dunlop Band of Mono Indians, the Tule River Tribe, and others call the forestlands and communities surrounding the Monument home.

The Giant Sequoia, only naturally viable on the western slope of our Sierra Nevada, are some of the largest and oldest living trees on earth. Approximately seventy-five percent of all living Giant Sequoia in the world are located in Giant Sequoia National Monument. Unfortunately, there are current efforts to undermine Giant Sequoia’s protection—where logging and development could put the landscape and wildlife at serious risk.

GIANT SEQUOIA'S MONUMENT DESIGNATION

Tribal communities, volunteers, scientists, nonprofits, Congress, and at least five U.S. presidents have worked to protect this superlative forest for more than 150 years. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln protected Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees. That act, in the depths of the Civil War, was the beginning of land conservation in this country. It was around that time that John Muir and others began to sound the alarm over the aggressive harvest of the forests of the southern Sierra, spurring a truly grassroots movement to protect the giant sequoia.

Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, President Benjamin Harrison and President Theodore Roosevelt continued to expand existing protections to safeguard the natural resources of these critical upper watersheds, which even then were linked to the health of the local economy. Fast forward to 1992, when President George H. W. Bush signed an order to withdraw the giant sequoia groves from mining and mineral exploitation. In 2000, 327,769 acres in the Southern Sierra were permanently protected by designating the Giant Sequoia National Monument, which was meant to forever preserve the unique objects of historic, cultural and scientific interest found therein.

An extensive, collaborative, and years-long process determined that the designated area was the smallest area compatible to protect the Giant Sequoias and other objects of historical and scientific interest. These objects include the ancient Giant Sequoia themselves, as well as limestone caves and other geological formations, and essential habitat for rare plant and animal species. The national monument also contains hugely significant archeological sites which provide a story of the Native American peoples who have lived in the region for the past 8,000 years. Giant Sequoia’s outstanding natural, scientific and cultural values deserve to be preserved for future generations.
WHAT’S AT RISK FOR GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

• Climate Change:
  - The Monument mitigates climate change. Researchers have discovered that Giant Sequoia and related coast redwood forests store more climate-altering carbon pollution per acre than any other forest type on Earth.

• Ecological Diversity:
  - Only naturally viable on a narrow band of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, the Giant Sequoia is a rare and amazing organism in of itself. Growing from a seed only half an inch long, a fully grown specimen can reach over 250 feet, with many growing to over 25 feet in diameter. However, the Giant Sequoia cannot exist in isolation and rely on the canopy and watersheds within the greater forest ecosystem for survival.
  - This ecosystem supports the great gray owl, American marten, northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, spotted owl, and a number of rare amphibians. The giant sequoias themselves are the only known trees large enough to provide nesting cavities for the California condor, and provides essential habitat for the imperiled Pacific fisher. Like the giant sequoia, these species are increasingly imperiled by climate change, making it essential to protect as much of their range as possible.

• Local Communities:
  - Local communities in the Central Valley, which suffer from some of the worst air and water pollution in the nation, depend on the monument as a place to experience clean air, cool streams and nature. Many of these communities are connected to their native forests and feel a deep ecological and spiritual connection to the forest.

• Outdoor Recreation:
  - National Monuments like GSNM not only protect natural wonders like the Giant Sequoia and serve as outdoor scientific research labs, but also drive tourism and outdoor recreation. Maintaining the status of GSNM and investing in visitor facilities in gateway communities like Porterville, will bring jobs and revenue to one of the poorest regions of California.

• Fire:
  - The 2012 Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan recommends a full range of fuel-reduction activities within the national monument, including prescribed fire, thinning, and removal of dead trees for ecological purposes.
  - However, the Forest Service needs to secure additional independent federal funding in order to execute fuel reduction activities in the Wildland Urban Intermix (WUI) zones to address community concerns. These resources, as well as visitor and tourism resources, are more likely with National Monument status.

• Water:
  - Giant Sequoia National Monument protects our precious water resources, as rivers like the Kings, Kaweah, and Kern are critical to the livelihood of downriver communities.
  - The forests within and surrounding the monument keeps clean water flowing downstream to hundreds of small family farms and large agricultural enterprises in California’s Central Valley.
  - The Central Valley generates 8 percent of all food produced in the United States and contributes substantially to agricultural exports. The viability of those farms depends directly on the water that comes from these forests.
**Economic Benefits:**

- Our national monuments are tremendous drivers of California's economy. Outdoor recreation in our state generates approximately 732,000 jobs and $85.4 billion in consumer spending each year. Tourism and travel are important to communities in the Giant Sequoia region.

- The monument is good for local businesses and communities that rely on it economically—a phenomenon common to national monuments. Research from VisitCA found tourism is a $2.23 billion industry in the Central Valley, generating almost 24,000 jobs.

- In Tulare County alone, travel dollars generated $37.8 million in local and state tax receipts. Research by Headwaters Economics shows that since designation of the Giant Sequoia National Monuments, jobs in the area increased by 20 percent, per capita income by 24 percent, and population in the area by 21 percent.

- Gateway communities like Kernville and Springville have seen diners, breweries, and hotels spring up as visitation has increased over the past 17 years. There is a thriving recreation industry which supports bikers, hikers and rafters. Giant Sequoia National Monument is the closest access point for the 18 million people of the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area to experience these forests.

**WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUPPORT**

- More than 2.7 million comments poured in during the Interior Department 60-day comment period for the review of the national monument—a record-breaking response. More than 98 percent of all comments received expressed support for maintaining or expanding Giant Sequoia and other National Monuments.

- This review was deeply unpopular across the board, but especially in states like California where multiple monuments were put up for review. In the 2017 Conservation in the West poll conducted by Colorado College, 80% of Western voters supported keeping protections for existing monuments in place while only 13% of Western voters supported removing protections for existing monuments.

- There was strong support in California at the time of designation in 2000 and this remains the case today, including:
  - Senators Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein
  - California State Legislature
  - California Attorney General Xavier Becerra
  - City of Porterville
  - Visalia Tourism Bureau
  - Sierra Business Council
  - Porterville Chamber of Commerce
  - Ed Begley, Jr.
  - Southern California Edison
  - Many Scientists including: Phil Rundel, Anthony Ambrose, Wendy Baxter, Joe Fontaine
  - Sequoia Riverlands Trust

- Since it was signed into law by Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, the Antiquities Act has been used by sixteen presidents—eight Republicans and eight Democrats—to protect America’s most iconic natural, cultural, and historic places. We should stand with sportsmen, cultural heritage organizations, evangelicals, conservationists, outdoor recreation businesses, historic preservation advocates, and others against undermining this vital law.