



Sand to Snow National Monument, Calif.

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## Victory in the California Desert

### Three new national monuments preserve natural beauty and cultural heritage

Earlier this year, our members and supporters had the opportunity to celebrate a great victory in the California desert. President Obama nearly doubled the amount of public land he has preserved under the Antiquities Act when he designated the Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails and Castle Mountains National Monuments on Feb. 12. This brought permanent protection to roughly 1.8 million acres of spectacular desert lands, including a vast array of plants and wildlife, Native American archeological sites, geological wonders and remnants of our nation's pioneer history. These designations also marked a major achievement for U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who worked with local stakeholders for nearly a decade to preserve these wild places in the desert.

The Wilderness Society, with the support of our members, led and facilitated a coalition of conservation groups to work with Feinstein's office and the Obama Administration while also building strong, grassroots support for the monuments.

Among the irreplaceable treasures within our newest national monuments are the Pisgah Lava Flow, prehistoric Native American petroglyphs, the largest intact stretch of the iconic Route 66, the 550-million-year-old Marble Mountain Fossil Beds, and the Amboy Crater—one of North America's youngest volcanoes. The headwaters of Southern California's longest river, the Santa Ana, and its highest peak, Mount San Gorgonio, will also be protected, along with native desert grasslands, Joshua

trees, pinyon pine and juniper forests. This region will be a safe haven for migrating birds and wildlife, including bighorn sheep and the threatened desert tortoise.

Millions of people annually visit these starkly beautiful places. Nestled between two of the fastest-growing urban areas in the nation, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, much of this desert has been left virtually undisturbed by modern life.

"Now, more than ever, desert plants and animals need connected open space to survive," said Dan Smuts, The Wilderness Society's California senior regional director. "The new Mojave Trails National Monument protects a crucial migration link between Joshua Tree National Park

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The Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams hiking with his family last summer.

## DEAR WILDERNESS SOCIETY SUPPORTER,

In February we celebrated the protection of a unique and stunningly beautiful place with President Obama’s designation of three new national monuments in the California desert. Through this historic proclamation, the president demonstrated his commitment to using the Antiquities Act to preserve America’s most valuable landscapes.

We thank U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein for her leadership in making this conservation milestone possible and for her dedicated work over the past 20 years in protecting this vast landscape.

As we give thanks for this victory, we also pause to remember Doug Walker, The Wilderness Society’s former Governing Council chair, who passed away on Dec. 31, 2015. Doug was a visionary philanthropist, an avid climber and a tireless advocate for connecting people to what he loved most—the great outdoors.

Doug’s love of the outdoors was infectious, and he was committed to sharing that experience with others, not just personally but as a matter of public policy—working to increase access to public lands for all, and to protect them so that future generations may enjoy them. His leadership was critical to our growing effort to connect people to the outdoors and inspire them to care for the wild. The Wilderness Society is committed to carrying Doug’s legacy forward. To support that work, donations can be made to the Doug Walker Memorial Fund at [wilderness.org/walker](http://wilderness.org/walker).

In 2016, we have many opportunities to inspire Americans to care for our wild places, including the centennial of the National Park Service. As we honor these iconic American treasures, we seek to remind all Americans about the power of these places that belong to all of us. This centennial is a chance for all of us to celebrate these shared lands and what they mean not just for us, but for future generations. Thank you for all you do to support our efforts to protect the places we love.

Jamie Williams  
President

## VICTORY IN THE CALIFORNIA DESERT *continued*

and the Mojave National Preserve to the north, while Sand to Snow links Joshua Tree to the San Bernardino Mountains to the west. These national monuments will give plants and wildlife an opportunity to adapt in this era of climate change.”

Local desert residents and business owners are also expected to benefit from the protection of the natural beauty that surrounds them. “This is a world-class area for tourism—for hiking, camping, stargazing and just getting out into nature,” said Matt Jatovsky, The Wilderness Society’s California desert representative. “Now and into the future, people will be able to come here to play, explore and learn from the desert.”



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# HOT ISSUES:

## PRIVATIZATION THREATENS YOUR PUBLIC LANDS BY SCOTT MILLER

Across the West, a small number of elected officials in a handful of state legislatures are organizing to seize public lands and transfer them to state ownership. These special interests have been lobbying state governments, and our U.S. Congress, to seize America's public lands so they can be privatized or auctioned for drilling, mining and logging—not only threatening America's public lands but also our connection to them. These are the places where I experienced some of my favorite childhood memories. When school was out for the summer in the suburbs of Manhattan where I grew up, my mom packed our little Subaru hatchback and headed West. Like generations before and since, we were off on the great American road trip to explore the wonders of America's national public lands—our national parks, national forests, Bureau of Land

Management lands and wildlife refuges. Whether you live out West or just visit here, these lands touch your soul. That these national public lands belong to all of us is a uniquely American privilege, one that is so central to our culture and spirit that it is easy to take for granted. But this privilege—our common inheritance—is coming under attack. If we allow our public lands to be transferred to state ownership, they could be auctioned off to oil and gas drillers or sold for other development. Our public lands are our birthright, and they belong to all Americans, but with this freedom to enjoy them comes the responsibility to hand them down to future generations.

*Scott Miller is The Wilderness Society's senior regional director for the Southwest Region, which includes Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah.*

## PUBLIC LANDS: PART OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTION

In December, a historic agreement to fight climate change was reached at the yearly United Nations conference in Paris. The accord among 196 nations, including the United States, set a target of reducing greenhouse gases enough to keep global temperatures from increasing no more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

Following this historic milestone, in his final State of the Union speech, President Obama addressed the need to modernize energy extraction on public lands and “accelerate the transition away from old, dirtier energy sources.” He also pledged to “change the way we manage our oil and coal resources, so that they better reflect the costs they impose on taxpayers and our planet.” Within

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# WILD PLACES

# CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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This year, America celebrates the 100th anniversary of America's best idea. The National Park Service was created around the notion that America's parks provide incredible opportunities for education, inspiration and recreation for all Americans, and thus deserve an agency dedicated to managing these nationally significant places. On Aug. 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed legislation that created the National Park Service and placed all federal parks under that agency's jurisdiction and management. At the time, the National Park Service was in charge of just 35 national parks and monuments. Now, the Park Service manages more than 400 sites, from the iconic cliffs of the Grand Canyon to the tropical wetlands of the Everglades to the historically-significant Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument. Celebrate the centennial by getting outdoors and finding your park—whether that be an urban green space or an iconic national wonder.

## ACADIA NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL

While we celebrate the centennial of the National Park Service, we also celebrate the centennial of one of America's original national parks—Acadia National Park in Maine. The park was established as Sieur de Monts National Monument on July 8, 1916, by President Woodrow Wilson—later becoming Acadia National Park in 1929. Situated on the rugged north Atlantic coast, the park contains coastal islands and glacially sculpted mountains that rise from the rocky coastline. While Acadia is the fifth-smallest national park in the country, it is one of the top 10 most-visited—offering more than 150 miles of hiking trails and endless opportunities for fishing, swimming, climbing and camping in the summer; and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and ice skating in the winter.



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## ESTABLISHING A MAINE WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT

In this centennial year of both the National Park Service and Acadia National Park, The Wilderness Society is working with philanthropist Roxanne Quimby and a private foundation to continue this legacy of America's best idea. Alongside our partners in Maine, we are working to establish a national monument, the first step toward a national park, in the exceptional Katahdin Woods region in northern Maine. The Quimby family's foundation hopes to donate this 87,500-acre property to the National Park Service. Bordered on the west by Baxter State Park with the East Branch of the Penobscot River running through its heart, this area offers amazing opportunities for numerous outdoor activities. The creation of a Maine Woods National Monument would guarantee access for future generations to canoe and fish the rivers, streams and ponds; hike or mountain bike through miles of trails; or ride a snowmobile deep into the heart of Maine's north woods. The area includes some of the wildest lands in Maine that inspired the works of Henry David Thoreau and Teddy Roosevelt, and continues to inspire people today. This region will be especially vital to climate adaptation for the region's forests, wildlife and fish. The proposed Maine Woods National Monument embodies the very qualities that the National Park Service was created to preserve so that all Americans, for many generations to come, may benefit from these spectacular places.



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**HOT ISSUES** *continued*

days, the Department of the Interior released a historic plan to reform coal leasing on public lands. Just a week later, the department also released new regulations aimed at reducing the waste of methane, a potent climate pollutant, from oil and gas operations on public lands. We hope to see new rules for wind and solar development that ensure we tap new clean energy sources while still protecting the places we love.

Public lands are key to a sustainable future with clean air and water, habitat for wildlife and recreation opportunities for all Americans. They are also an important piece of the climate change equation, with about one-fifth of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions coming from public lands. Here at The Wilderness Society, we are working to make sure that public lands become part of the climate solution—instead of contributing to the problem.



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WILDERNESS AND YOU

— REMEMBERING —  
**DOUG WALKER**  
— 1950 - 2015 —



**D**oug Walker knew only one direction, and that was up. From his home in Seattle, he achieved great heights as a climber, a software entrepreneur and a champion for non-profit causes. His desire to help others experience and appreciate the outdoors has benefited millions of Americans, especially kids.

Thankfully, it was that same boundless passion for the outdoors that led him to join The Wilderness Society's Governing Council more than 17 years ago. Beloved for his cheerful curiosity and deep love of wild places—especially Washington's North Cascade Mountains—Doug was considered "family" by many of us at The Wilderness Society. He was our hike leader, but he was also our mission leader, chairing the Governing Council from 2010 to 2015.

What set Doug apart the most were his trailblazing efforts to introduce the joy and wonder of the outdoors to others—both by expanding recreational access to our public lands and by protecting wildlands. Having spent his entire childhood exploring the backwoods of upstate South Carolina before moving to Seattle in 1972, Doug aspired to bring the same freedom and experiences that he treasured as a youth to other kids and families, particularly those in urban and underserved communities.

"Long before it was considered a real issue, Doug was pushing numerous organizations, lawmakers and administration officials to understand that everyone should have access to public lands," said Wilderness Society Senior Director of National Partnerships Michael Carroll. In many ways, Doug's vision gave life to a new conservation ethic, inspiring others to focus not just on the places we work to protect, but the generations of people who will inherit them.

Doug died during a New Year's Eve snowshoe hike on Granite Mountain near Seattle at the age of 65. "While Doug may have given his last breath to the mountains he loved, the shared legacy he created with his wife, Maggie, will endure because of their big hearts and fierce commitment over so many years," said Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams.

As we remember our leader, mentor and friend, The Wilderness Society recommits to honoring Doug's legacy by continuing the fight for protecting America's wild heritage and helping new generations get outdoors to discover themselves and come into their own.

*The Wilderness Society has established the Doug Walker Memorial Fund to carry on Doug's incredible legacy. Gifts to this fund may be made by visiting [wilderness.org/walker](http://wilderness.org/walker).*



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Photo courtesy of Darby Stanchfield

*“The only way our future generations will inherit these natural resources—including the great Arctic Refuge, is if we do everything in our power to help protect them now.”*

-Darby Stanchfield

Visit [wilderness.org/savethearcticrefuge](http://wilderness.org/savethearcticrefuge) to urge Congress to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

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