

Sand to Snow National Monument Collaboration Workshops

Summary Report 2016

Introduction:

A series of public workshops were hosted cooperatively by San Bernardino National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management California Desert District in July of 2016. Four workshop locations were identified within communities adjacent to the newly designated Sand to Snow National Monument. Workshops were hosted within the communities of Yucaipa, Big Bear, Yucca Valley, and Desert Hot Springs. Each workshop conducted the same set of activities, focused on providing basic information about the newly designated Sand to Snow National Monument and requesting information from workshop participants. Press releases and fliers were used to promote these workshops to the general public.

Workshops were held from 5:00 pm. to 7:30 pm. at the following locations and dates:

- July 13th at the Yucaipa Community Center, 34900 Oak Glenn Road, Yucaipa, CA 92399
- July 14th at the Big Bear Discovery Center, 40971 North Shore Drive, Highway 38, Fawnskin, CA 92333
- July 19th at the Yucca Valley Community Center, 57090 29 Palms Highway, Yucca Valley, CA 92284
- July 21st at Miracle Springs Resort & Spa, 10625 Palm Drive, Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

To provide information, staff from San Bernardino National Forest (USFS) and from the Desert District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) were on hand to answer questions and talk with workshop participants. Text from the February 12, 2016 presidential proclamation that established Sand to Snow National Monument was posted in both Spanish and English. Several maps were also posted to provide a basis for community discussions. These maps conveyed information about existing federal land management area designations, potential sign locations, and known uses. An ArcGIS digital mapping system computer workstation was also staffed at each workshop to provide more detailed information when requested.

Activities also focused on gathering information about what workshop participants value most about Sand to Snow National Monument and to identify what types of experience participants want to have within it. Information was collected using the following tools: sign-in sheets, an online computer program where participants could submit handwritten/phone text responses, hand written comment cards, and maps that could be annotated. Workshop participant responses to these questions were tabulated and sorted into general categories based on the objects and resources identified for management within the presidential proclamation. Results from this information gathering effort are provided in this report.

Background:

A presidential proclamation on February 12, 2016 designated approximately 154,000 acres that had been independently managed by the BLM or USFS to be managed jointly by both agencies as Sand to Snow National Monument. This designation was the result of efforts made by residents, land managers, local, state, and federal officials.

In 2009, 2011, and 2015, Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced legislation to designate the Sand to Snow area as a national monument. In October 2015, the Senator hosted several meetings with tribal leaders and stakeholders. The public meeting in Palm Springs attracted more than 600 people. Stakeholders speaking in favor of this designation included local business owners, representatives from the California travel and tourism industry, environmental groups, recreationists, sporting enthusiasts, academics, and representatives of local faith-based groups.

Format of Workshops:

Each workshop contained a set of activities to provide information to the public about the newly designated Sand to Snow National Monument and to gather information that may be used to guide future planning efforts. These workshops were promoted on fliers that were sent to tribal governments, known inholding property owners, and existing mailing lists from the San Bernardino National Forest and the BLM California Desert District. News of these workshops were picked up by newspaper, television, local government websites, and social media sites.

Goals for these workshops were as follows:

1. Communicate what is contained within the presidential proclamation
2. Identify resource values and public expectations going into the planning process
3. Communicate “decision space” parameters for monument management planning
4. Identify interested parties and potential opportunities for collaboration
5. Foster productive relationships between interest groups and agency staff

Two workstations were offered to provide information about the newly designated Sand to Snow National Monument. At the first, the presidential proclamation was posted in English and in Spanish. Federal agency staff were on hand to help workshop participants look up information contained within the proclamation. The second was focused on the national monument planning process. An overview of current federal land and resource management plans was correlated to a map of current land management areas/zones identified within USFS and BLM plans. An overview of the USFS and BLM planning process and associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process was included at this workstation. Maps showing the current land management planning zones were also posted at other stations throughout each workshop. Agency staff were on hand to answer questions about these processes.

Other activities were provided to encourage public participation and gather information from workshop participants. The first and most obvious method for gathering information was a sign in sheet at the workshop entrance. Participants were encouraged to provide a contact email on this sign in sheet, on comment cards, and on annotated maps if they would like to be notified of upcoming news or events about Sand to Snow National Monument. Participants were asked to suggest potential collaboration opportunities and to provide that additional contact information as well.

Several activities focused on identifying the things that workshop participants value most within Sand to Snow National Monument. Realizing that most participants voiced support for many things that they value within the monument, they were asked to pick only one for the word cloud activity and were provided with only a small space to record this information on comment cards. If participants wanted to provide more detailed description, space was provided as part of the Valued Places workstation. The word cloud activity provides a computer generated representation of participant responses. It also provided an opportunity for participants to submit their responses anonymously as a text message if they did not feel comfortable providing their response to a federal employee. Due to the limited capability of the computer program used to display responses at the workshops, word cloud images displayed during the workshops were only able to cycle 25 words per image. However, all word cloud responses were tracked and have been compiled in this report.

Comment cards were also used to gather information from workshop participants about the types of experiences they want to have within Sand to Snow National Monument. These cards posed two questions and provided space for additional information on the back of each card. Participants were encouraged to submit all of their comments, ideas, and suggestions on a comment card or on one of the Valued Places maps.

The following questions were posed on each comment card:

1. What type of experience is most important to you within Sand to Snow National Monument?
2. What do you value most within the National Monument?

Figure 2. Summary of word cloud responses regarding what is valued most within Snow National Monument.

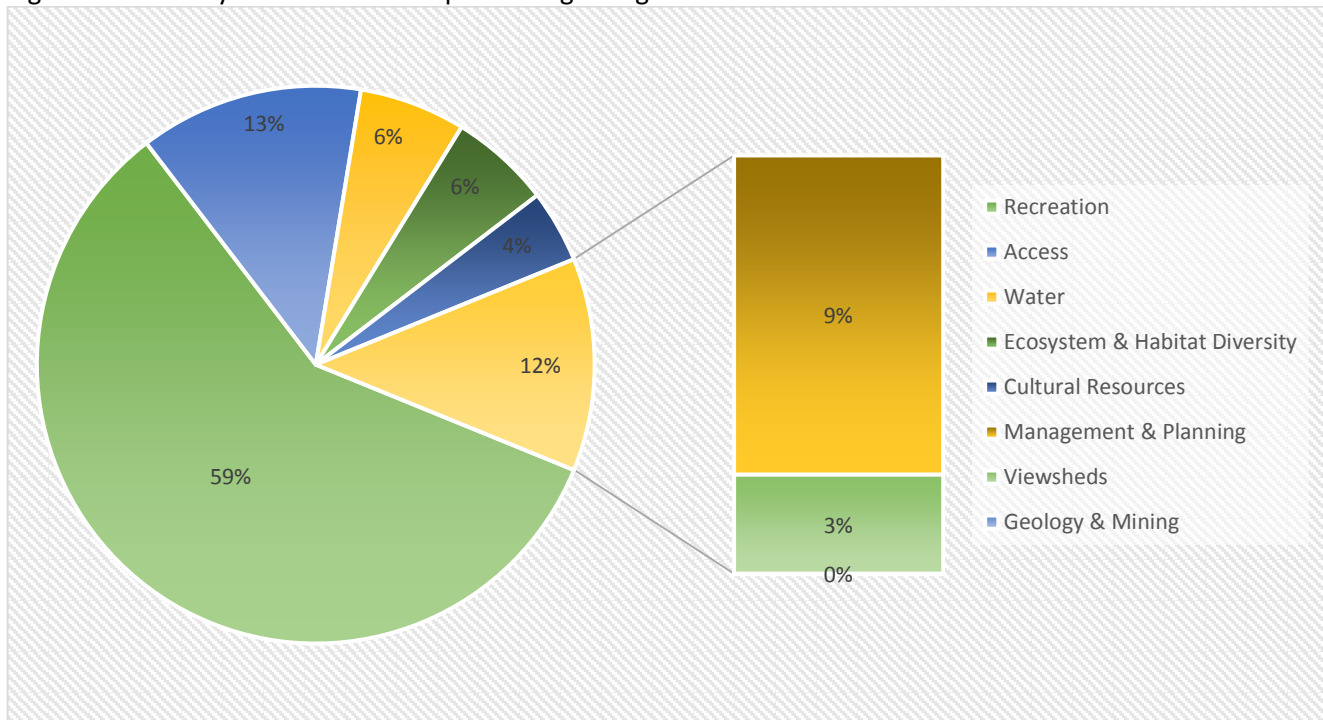


Figure 3. Word cloud participants' most valued recreational activities.

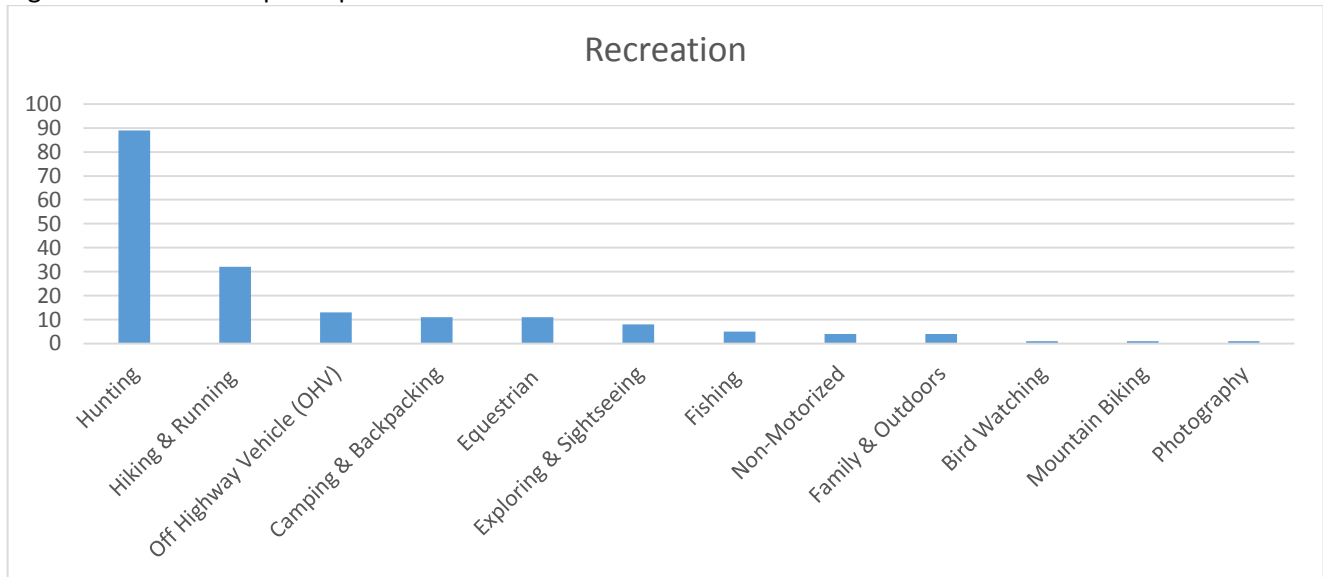


Figure 4. Word cloud participants' most valued types of access within Sand to Snow National Monument.

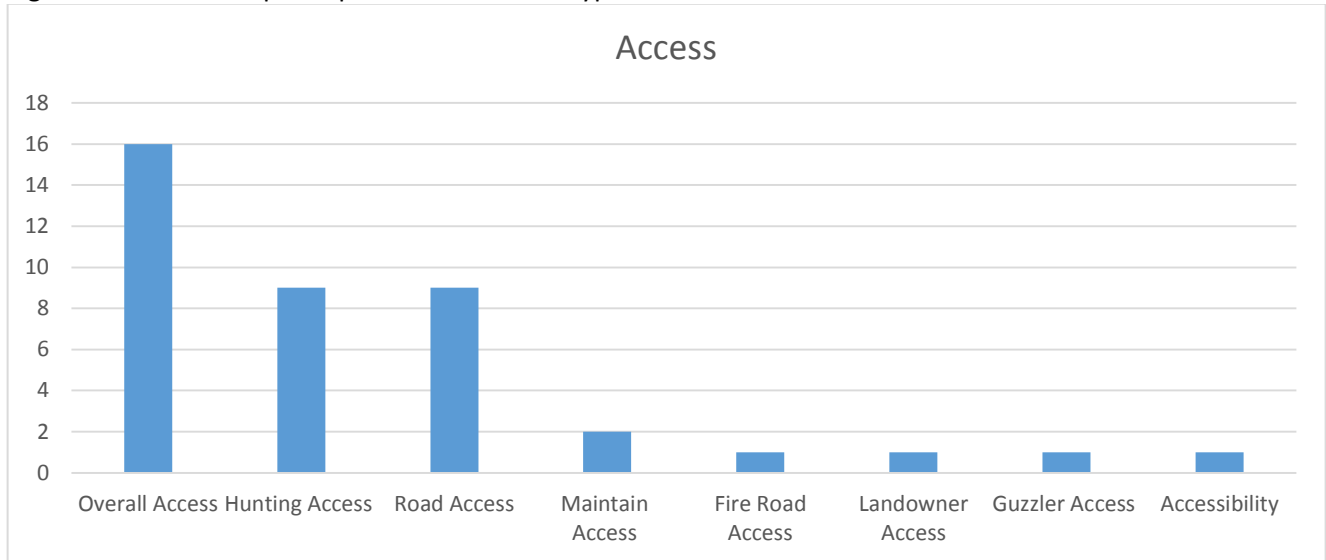


Figure 5. Word cloud participants' most valued recommendations for monument management and planning.



Figure 6. Word cloud participants' valued things related to ecosystem and habitat diversity.

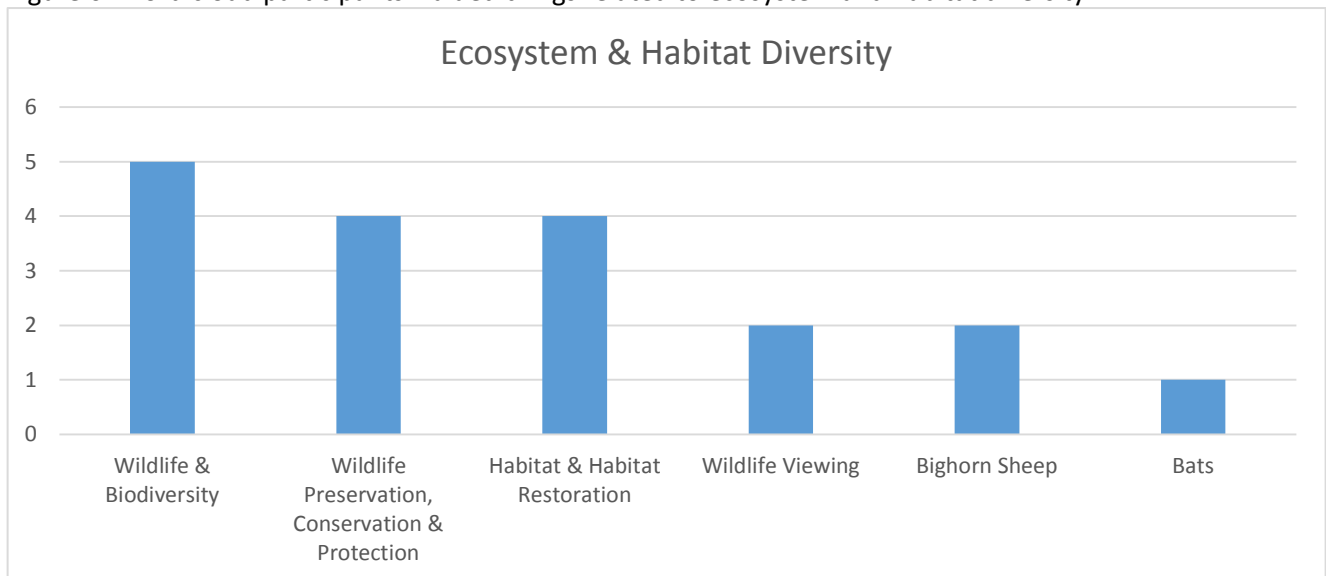


Figure 7. Word cloud participants' valued things related to water resources.

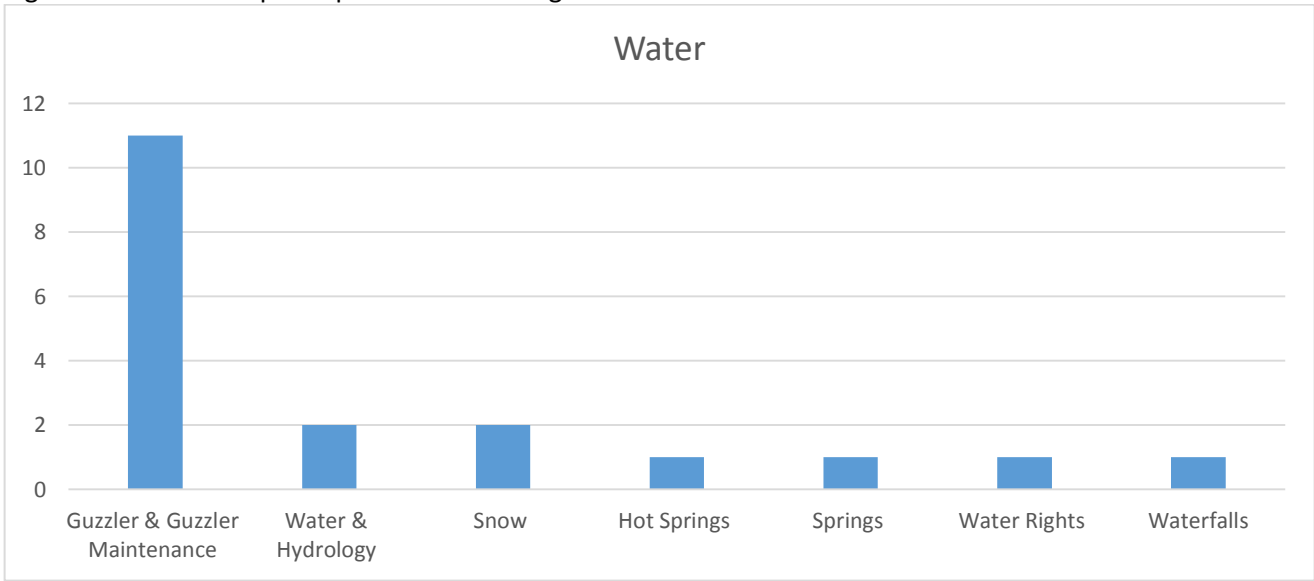
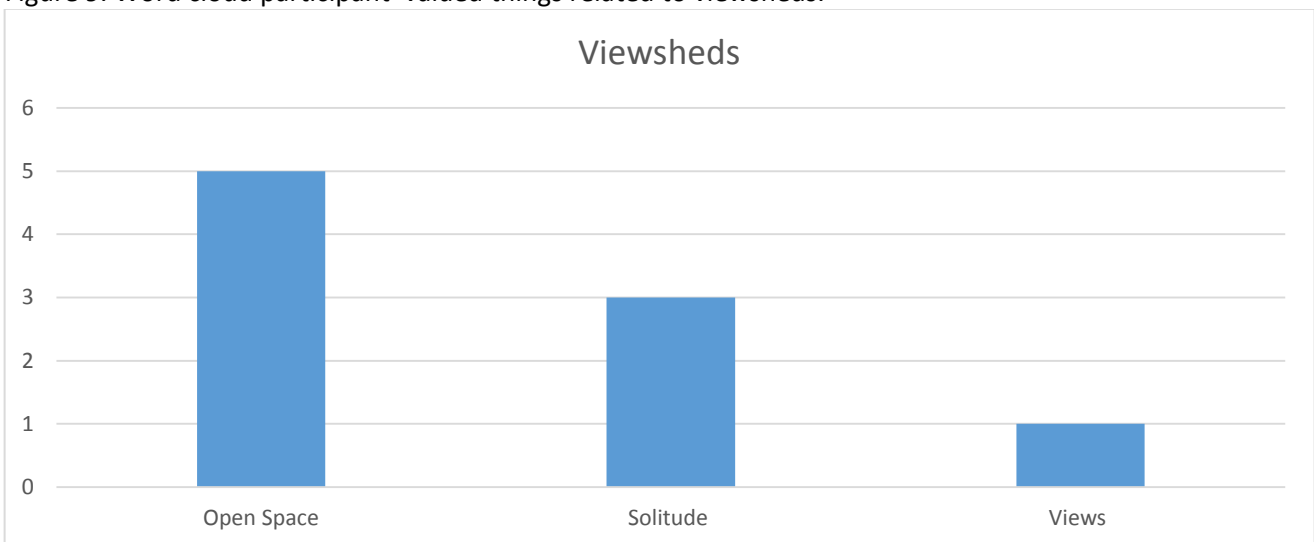


Figure 8. Word cloud participants' valued things related to cultural resource management.



Figure 9. Word cloud participant' valued things related to viewsheds.



Workshop Comment Cards:

- What do you value most within the National Monument?
- What type of experience is most important to you within Sand to Snow National Monument?

More detailed information about what workshop participants' value within Sand to Snow National Monument and what types of experiences they like to have there were provided on hand written comment cards. Participant responses to comment card questions were classified into the seven general categories for this report. Information in this narrative format is less conducive for generating graphic representations but it often provides important insights that a word cloud activity cannot. As a basis for comparison, word cloud responses were also grouped using the same seven general categories. Comment cards were received from 194 individuals, compiled from all four workshops.

Figure 10. Summary of comment card responses to the "Values" question from all four workshops.

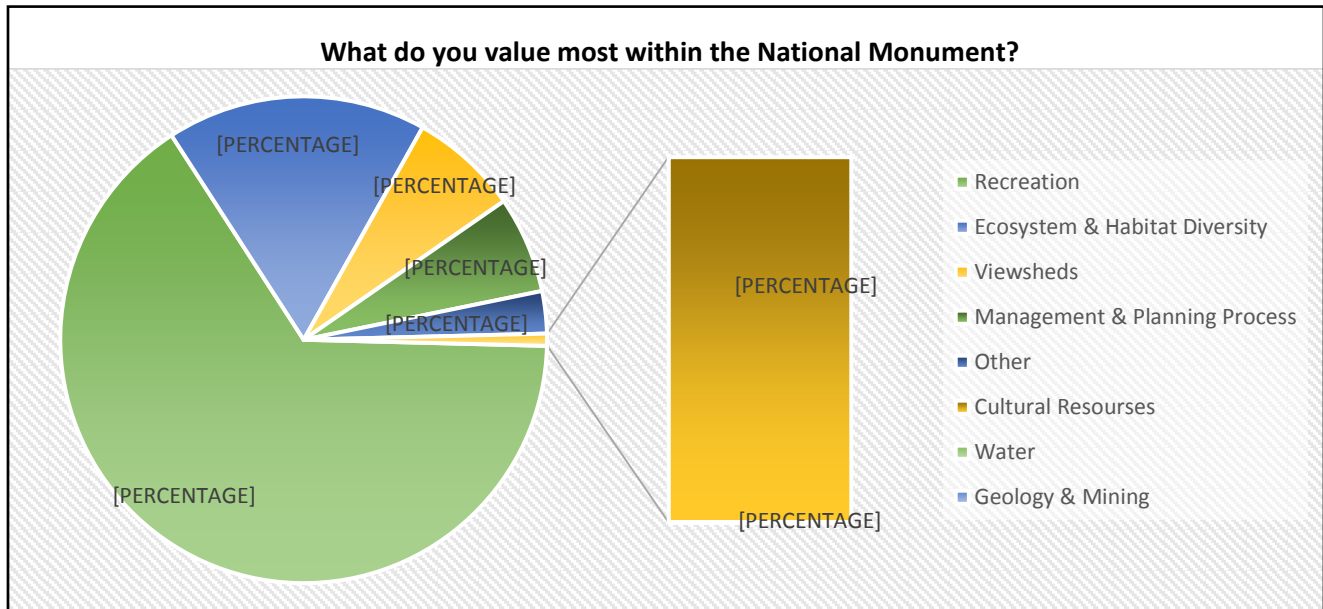
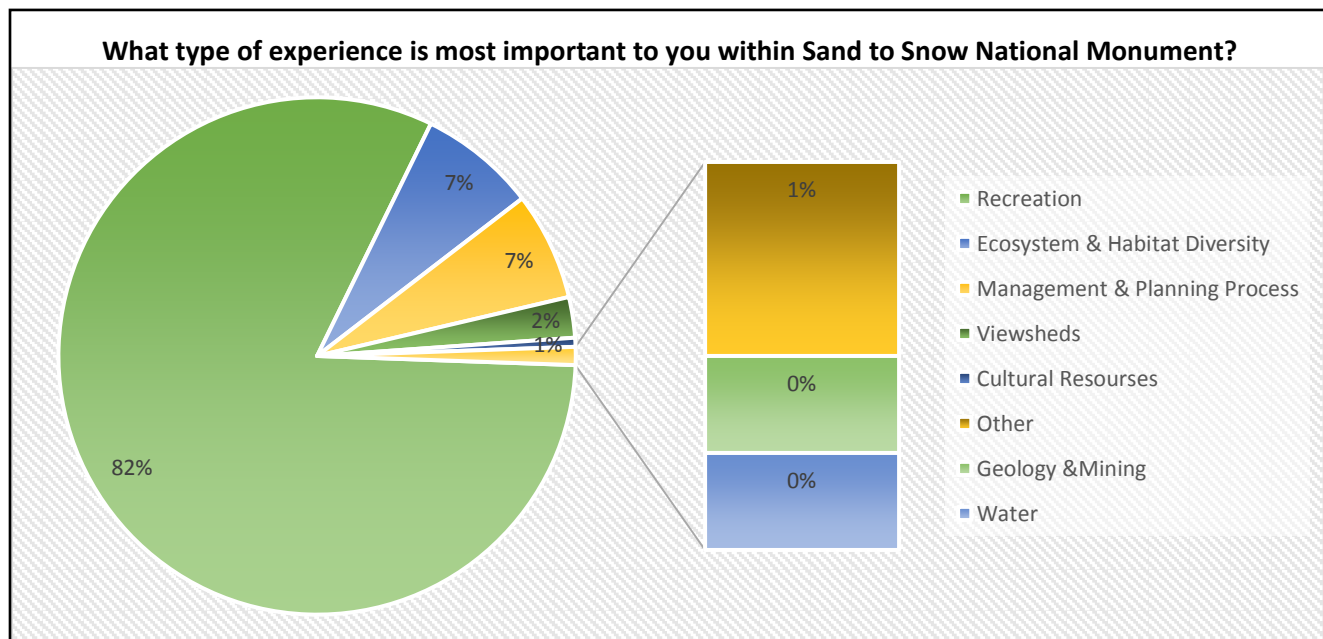


Figure 11. Summary of comment card responses to the "Experience" question from all four workshops.



Valued Places Annotated Maps:

- Please identify the places that hold special value to you and/or community groups that you are associated with.

A single page map was provided as a handout for workshop participants to annotate and submit information regarding what they valued most about places within the newly designated boundaries of Sand to Snow National Monument. Workshop participants were provided an opportunity to work with agency staff and query mapping information using ArcGIS software. A total of 115 annotated maps were submitted from all four workshops. Information provided during this activity will help agency staff understand where land management activities and maintenance needs are located. Some of the responses annotated on these maps are more detailed than others, but general trends have been incorporated into the attached maps. More than half of all comments and suggestions provided during this activity were related to recreational uses. Thus, the Valued Places workshop activity provided valuable information regarding what areas of the Sand to Snow National Monument are used recreationally and where those recreational uses occur. Figures 13-18 display graphic representations of recreational use information compiled from the Valued Places activity.

Summary of Public Workshop Responses:

Information collected within this workshop was used to identify trends in the values and experiences workshop participants voiced. Most participant responses provided information, suggestions, or concerns related to outdoor recreation and user access. Hunting, hiking and running, off-highway vehicles, camping and backpacking, equestrian, and other activities were each highlighted as current recreational uses within Sand to Snow National Monument. Ecosystem and habitat diversity were strong values voiced by workshop participants. Wildlife viewing, habitat restoration, and wildlife management were highlights from that category of responses. Many suggestions were provided for the management of resources within Sand to Snow National Monument at these meetings. The USFS and BLM will continue to gather information about the values and expectations that people have for managing this new national monument. These public workshops have provided some basic information as both agencies look forward to begin national monument management planning efforts. National monument planning will be developed with maximum public involvement, including tribal, local and state governments, permit holders, and other stake-holders.

Figure 12. Comparison of data gathered through different methods during the workshops.

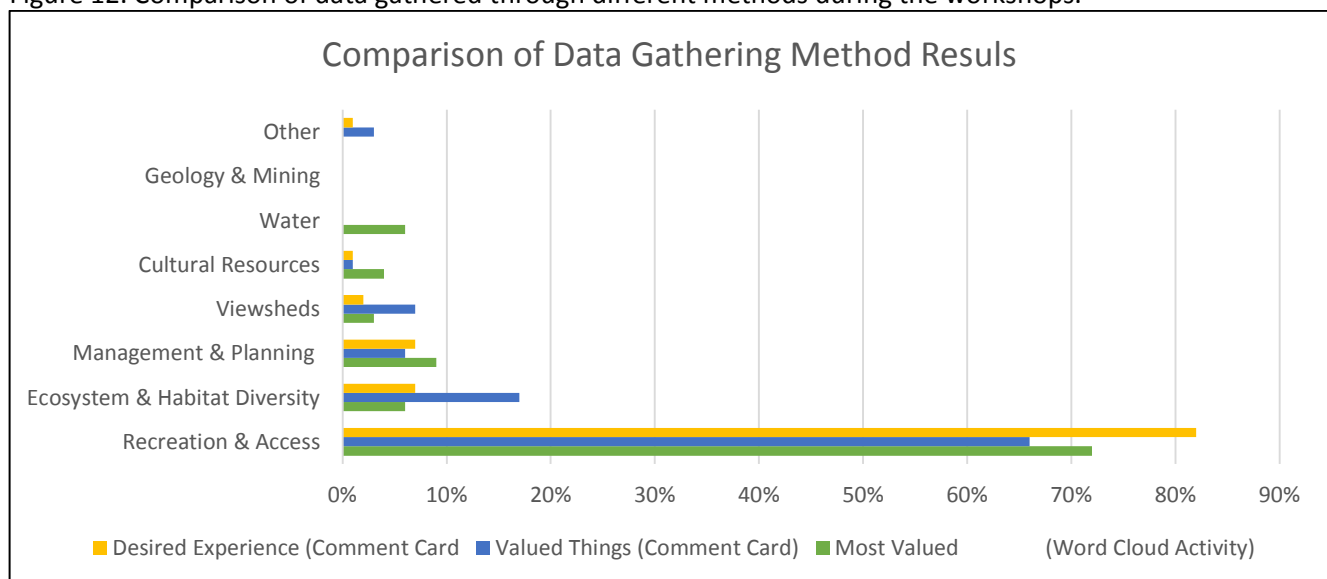


Figure 13. Map showing the valued places that were annotated on maps during the Sand to Snow Collaboration Workshops.

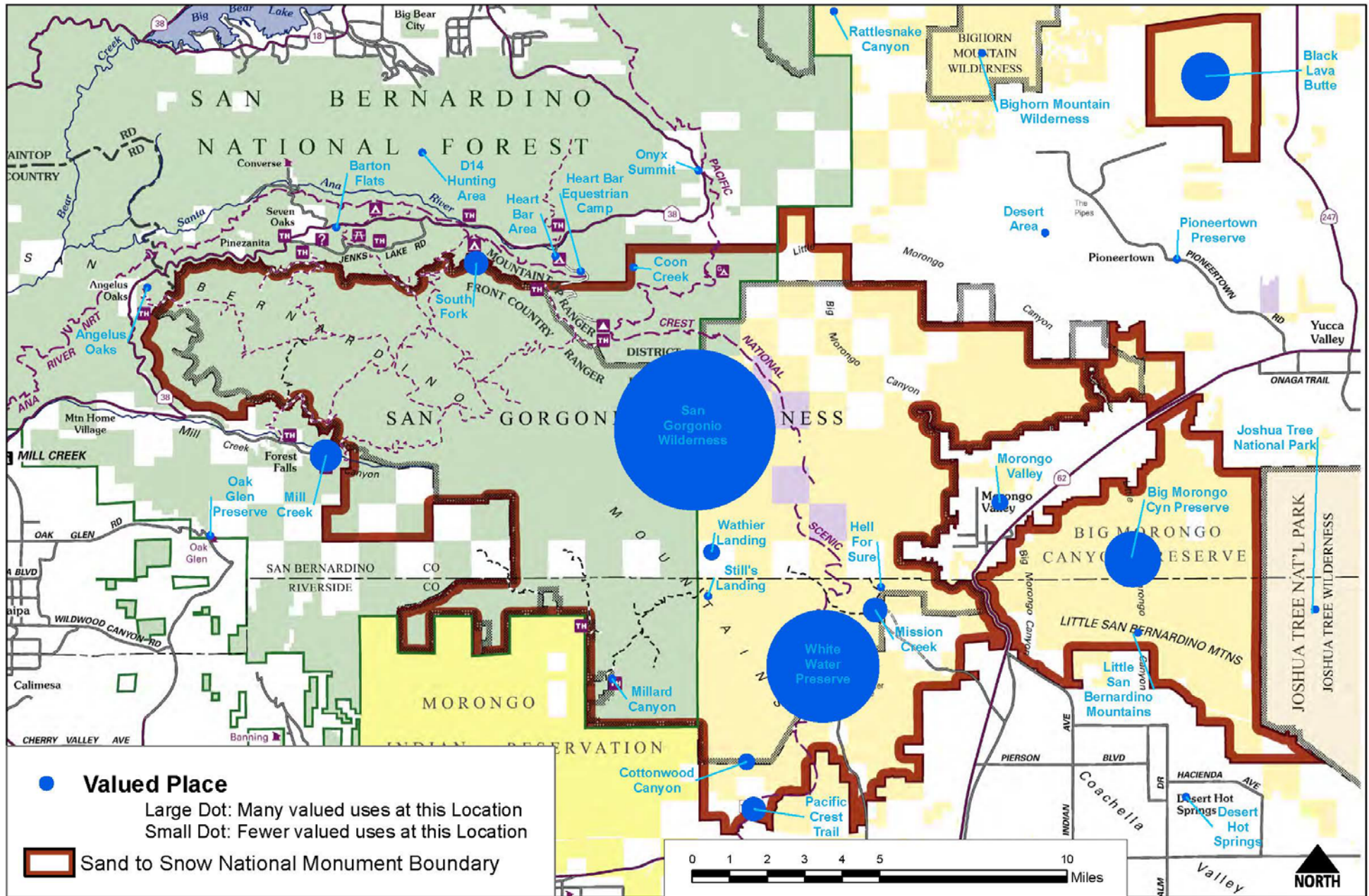


Figure 14. Map showing the annotated locations associated with hunting.

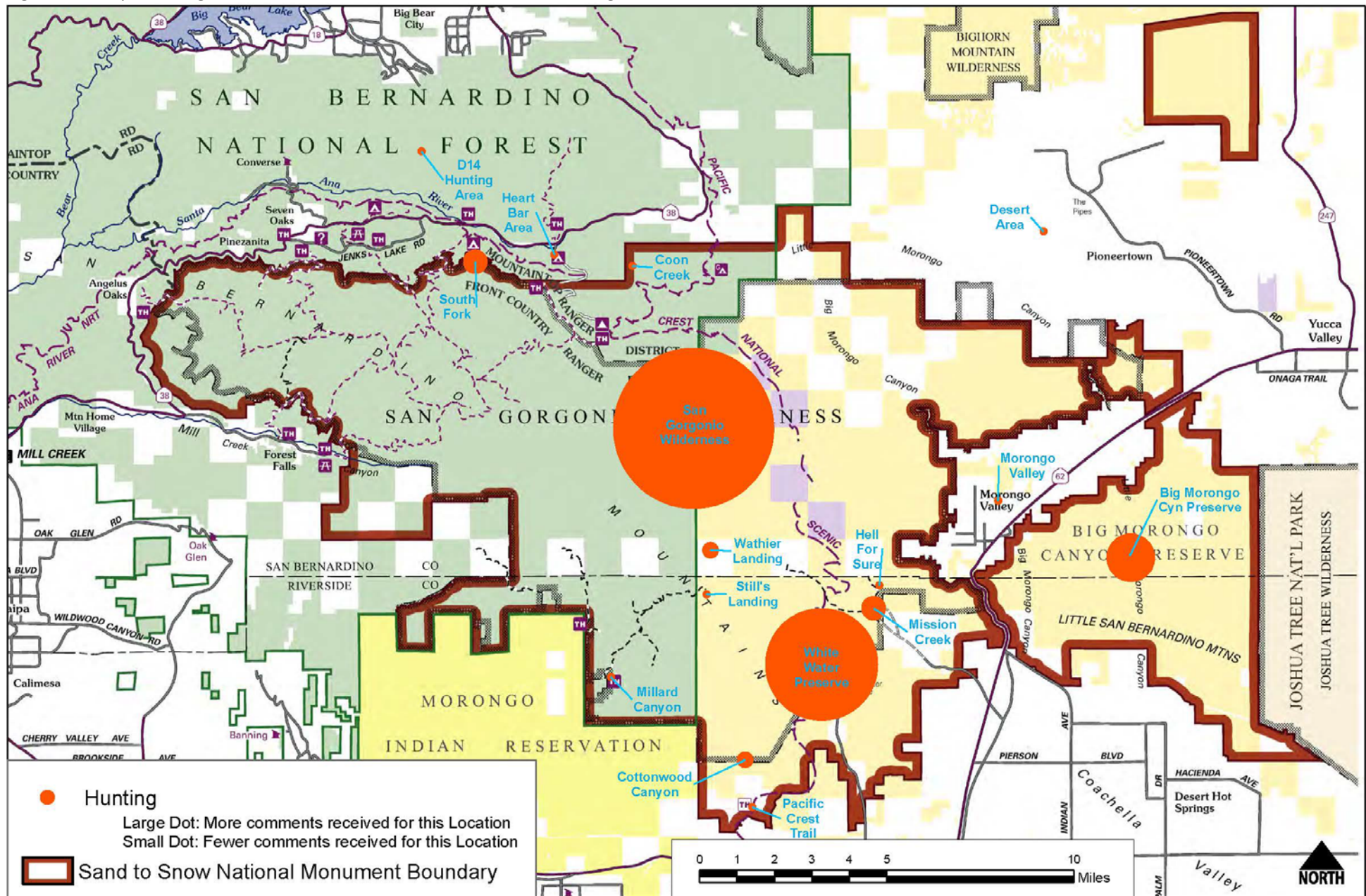


Figure 15. Map showing the annotated locations associated with hiking and running.

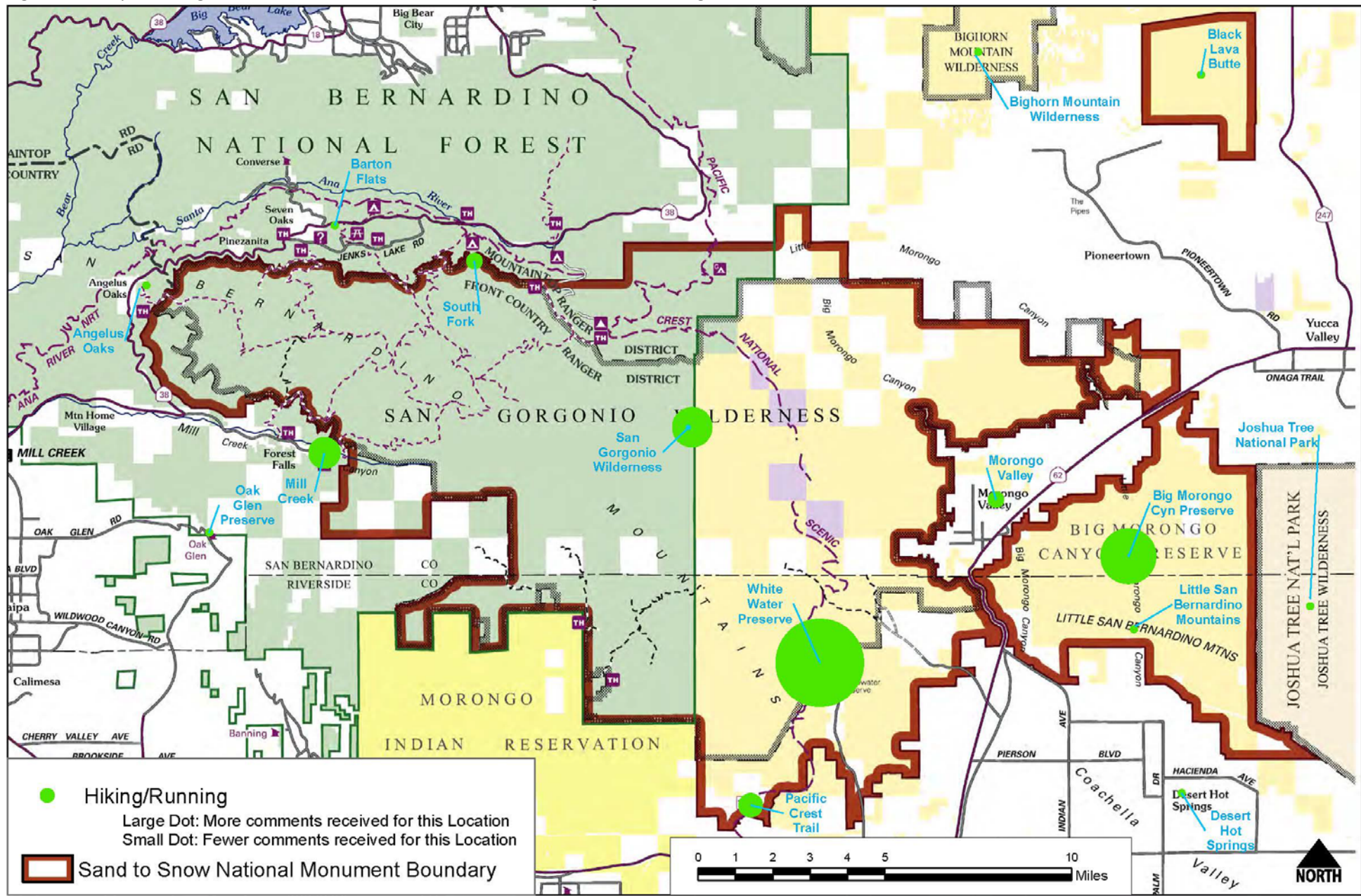


Figure 16. Map showing the annotated locations associated with Off Highway Vehicles (OHV).

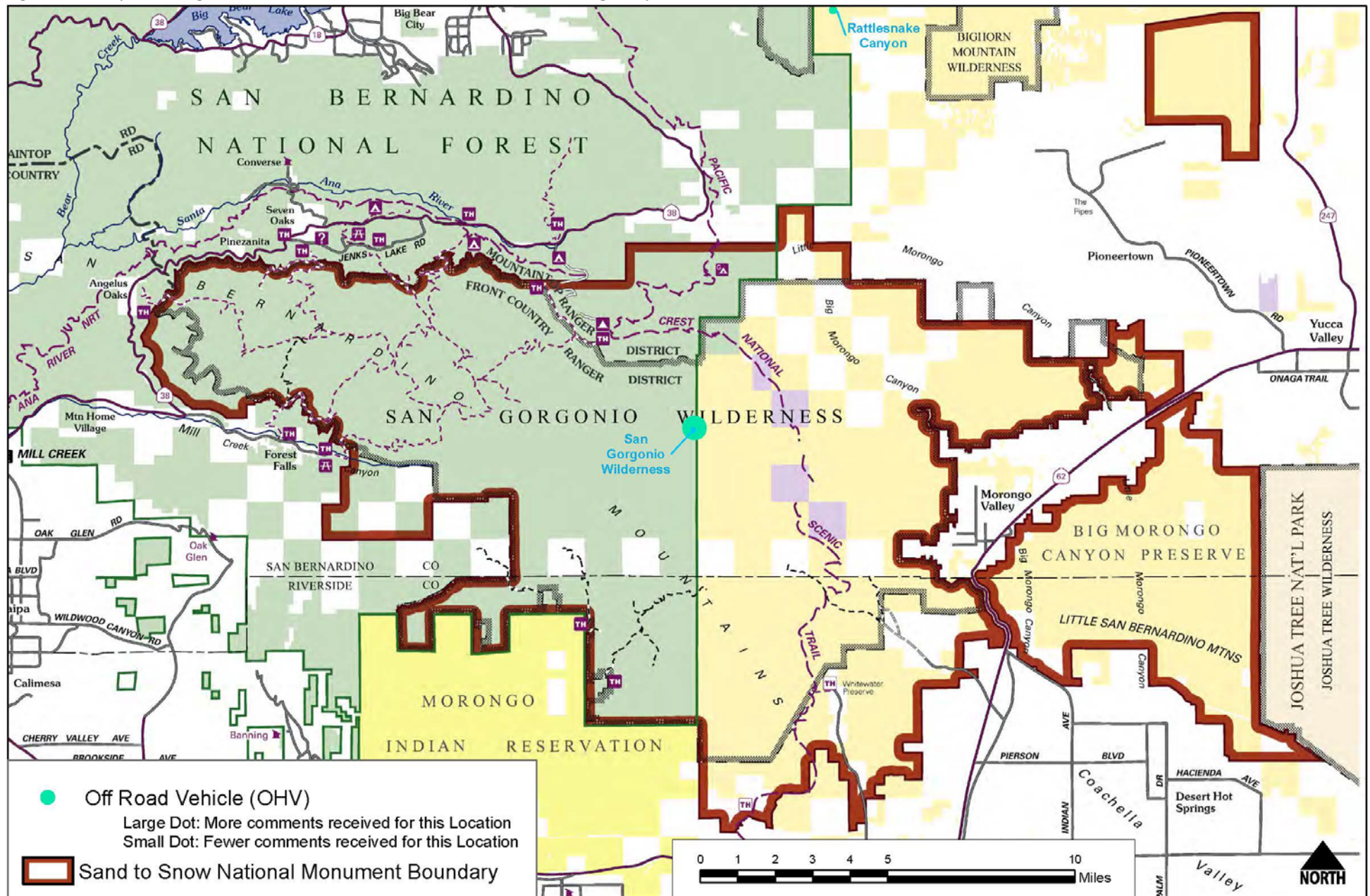


Figure 17. Map showing the annotated locations associated with camping and backpacking.

