



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

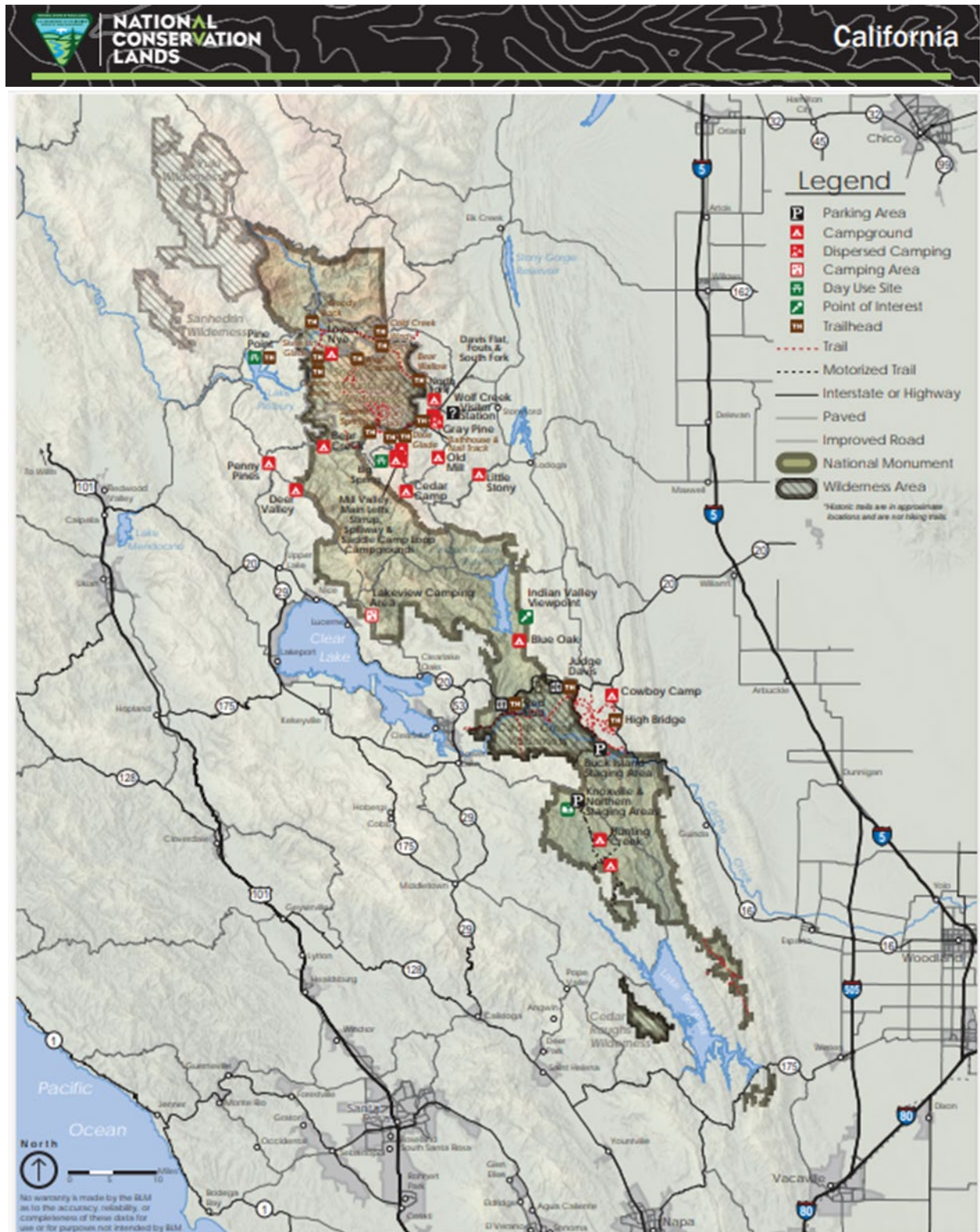
California
2023: Annual Manager's Report

Berryessa Snow Mountain

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

Introduction

The Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument (BSMNM or Monument) was established by [Presidential Proclamation](#) on July 10, 2015. Legislative proposals to expand the Monument and rename “Walker Ridge” to Molok Luyuk by Senator Padilla (CA-D) and Congressman Garamendi (CA-D-8) were introduced in both the House and Senate in 2023. The Monument currently spans approximately 330,780 acres and is co-managed by the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Ukiah Field Office and the U.S. Forest Service Mendocino National Forest (USFS). The two agencies oversee approximately 133,570 acres and 197,210 acres respectively. Accomplishments for both agencies are summarized in this report.

The region harbors many rare plant species, diverse wildlife and showcases some of the most significant geologic features visible above ocean waters. The expansive Monument holds cultural significance for several Tribes who continue to utilize the BSMNM for traditional cultural practices. This unique area offers a variety of important accomplishments, activities, partnerships, and co-stewardship efforts.



The view from Inspiration Point along the Redbud Trail. Photo: BLM

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

In 2023, the BLM updated the lands with wilderness characteristics inventory on the BLM portion of the Monument. Eight Wilderness Inventory Units were surveyed including Walker Ridge West and East, Indian Valley, Hough Ridge, Lodoga Peak, Blue Ridge, Rocky Ridge, and Knoxville. An inventory summary report was completed to inform future decision-making in a monument management plan.

Cultural Resources

The BLM continued work on an ethnographic place-based assessment. The objective of this study is to collaborate with Tribes whose homelands overlap with the Monument to incorporate Indigenous knowledge of important Tribal resources and inform monument planning efforts. Available early 20th century ethnographic maps identify the Patwin Tribes' geographic expanse as the largest in relation to the Monument and the Koi Nation, Elem Pomo, Middletown Rancheria, and Grindstone Rancheria are identified to overlap within the Monument.

In late May 2023, the BLM and Chronicle Heritage hosted an introductory meeting for the ethnographic assessment at the Redbud Trail. Several Tribes were in attendance and ethnographers were able to schedule interviews. The first interview took place in late August and was accompanied by several field visits. This ethnographic assessment will complement the BSMNM Class I Cultural Resources Overview completed in 2018.



Tribal Members, staff from Chronicle Heritage and BLM staff meet at the Redbud Trailhead. Photo: BLM

Vegetation

The BLM continued partnership with local sheep ranchers from Kaos Sheep Outfit to control invasive annual weeds and grasses and reduce fire fuels production in several locations throughout the Monument.

The USFS completed prescribed burning, piling, and thinning operations on approximately 250 acres of USFS managed land within the Monument.

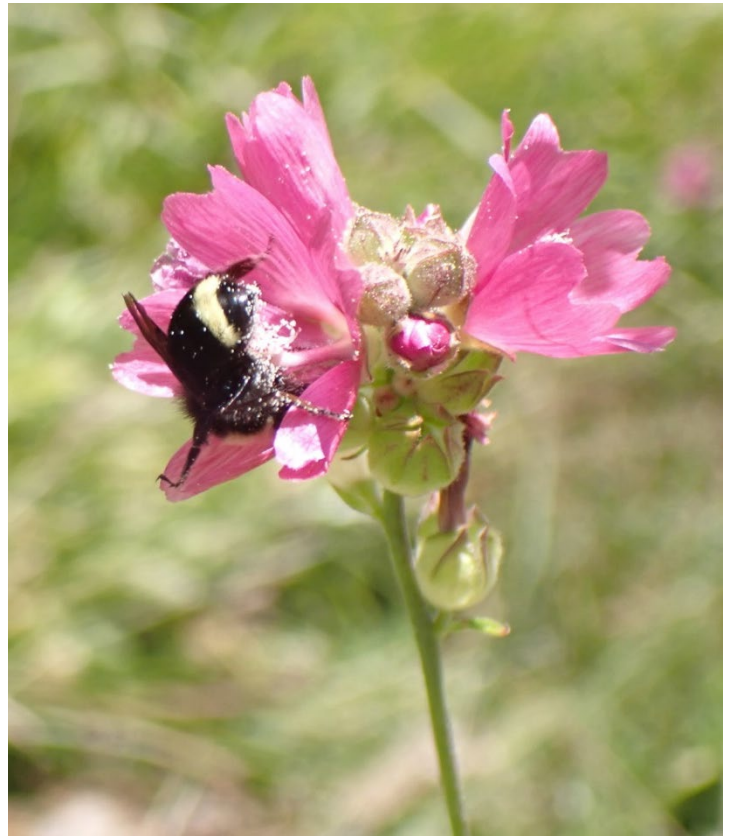
The BLM and USFS collected native seed throughout the Monument to be used in future restoration efforts. USFS focused seed collection efforts on rust-resistant sugar pine, a species important for the pine propagation program with the Mendocino National Forest. The BLM native seed collections, continued through the Seeds of Success program, focused on species that occur in the Indian Valley Management Area.,



Sheep begin their grazing efforts near the Judge Davis Trailhead. Photo: Kaos Sheep Outfit

Wildlife

The BLM and USFS continued to monitor sensitive species throughout the Monument. The USFS collaborated with the North American Bat Conservancy to install bat detectors in Deer Valley Meadow and conducted Northern Spotted Owl surveys along the M6 Road where one owl was detected aurally. Both agencies surveyed for pollinators in collaboration with the Xerces Society to support the California Bumble Bee Atlas and Monarch Joint Venture.



A bat detector in a meadow and a bumblebee on a checker mallow in the Mendocino National Forest. Photo: USFS

Planning

In September, Congressman Mike Thompson (CA-4-D), Congressman John Garamendi (CA-8-R), Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning, joined local BLM, USFS, and State leadership for a visit of the proposed expansion area. A roundtable discussion followed their visit and provided both Congressmen, the Secretary, the BLM Director, and local leadership an opportunity to hear directly from Tribes. In December, Tribal, local government and public meetings were held in Woodland, CA, and attended by BLM Deputy Director Nada Wolff Culver and Wade McMaster, USFS Mendocino National Forest Supervisor.

Also in September, the Monument management team was given Interim Monument Management Directives outlining several deliverables. One directive was the development of a Preparation Plan as a first step in preparing for the formation of a Monument Management Plan.



A group photo after the roundtable meeting at the Blue Ridge Barn. Photo: BLM

Challenges

Staffing and funding issues generate a myriad of challenges throughout the Monument. Staff recruitment and retention is a challenge due to multiple socio-economic pressures, including the area's high cost of living and low locality pay. The Monument has one BLM dedicated staff, the monument manager, and no dedicated USFS staff. The BLM and USFS field staff support Monument efforts when possible. Lack of staff presence at the monument led to an increase in unauthorized camping, proliferation of unauthorized social trails in off-highway vehicle (OHV) management areas, and an increase in illegal dumping. Despite these challenges, the field staff utilized partnerships with the State of California to hire two career seasonal OHV park rangers with funding from the State of California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division's Grants Program. Visitor use issues related to unauthorized OHV use continued but curtailed in some locations with installation of signage and barriers. The park rangers installed an interpretive kiosk along Walker Ridge that encouraged riders to stay on designated roads and trails.



Trespass OHV recreation impacts in a rare serpentine wet meadow. Photo: BLM

Visitors

The Monument had 381,834 single entry visits in 2023. Visitation has increased since the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly recreationists seeking opportunities for OHV use. Other popular recreational activities within the Monument included botanizing, hiking, hunting, and wildlife viewing. Partners hosted several guided hikes throughout the Monument, including wildflower hikes within the Indian Valley Management Area, and several trail rehabilitation volunteer workdays.



A hiker uses his phone to take pictures of sheep grazing on nonnative annual grasses and yellow starthistle. Photo: Tuleyome

Partnerships

The BLM and USFS continue to collaborate with partners to provide opportunities for the public to experience the Monument in a variety of capacities and to help protect Monument Objects and Values by restoring and improving trails in several locations. Tuleyome, a nonprofit conservation organization, completed a large-scale road restoration project in the Knoxville Management Area and improved access to the Hunting Creek Campground. They also led several hikes with community groups such as with local Scout Troops and the Hispanic Access Foundation and led trail workdays with the UC Davis Stebbins Cold Canyon Preserve. Tuleyome continues to be a significant partner for the Monument and their work with the community and the Monument is invaluable.



Members of the Fuente de Vida Eterna on a hike hosted by the Hispanic Access Foundation and Tuleyome. Photo: Tuleyome

Science

Vegetation mapping efforts continued throughout the Monument to support the State of California Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program. Referred to as VegCAMP, the program will map all vegetation within the State, down to the plant alliance level, and will greatly support future planning efforts. The Cultural Program worked with Sonoma State University to continue further refining the predictive model that helps to identify cultural sites throughout the Monument.



A fire scarred blue oak tree. Photo: Tuleyome

Climate Impacts

Climate change impacts are visible throughout the Monument as approximately 98% of the Monument has burned within the last 10 years. In 2023, the Monument experienced a break from the climate change influenced fires but received above average rainfall and an incredibly warm summer. These weather events and temperatures influenced a large increase in weeds populations throughout the Monument. Climate impacts will continue to influence weed infestations and invasive species that outcompete native plant communities. Careful management of weeds and invasive species is needed to help protect the rare and unique plant species within the Monument.



After heavy rains in 2023 there was a large non-native annual grass crop. Photo: Tuleyome

Social and Environmental Justice

In 2023, the BLM continued to strengthen Tribal partnerships and the BLM entered into a co-stewardship agreement with the Koi Nation. This agreement focused on stewardship of a magnesite mine within the Monument, a valuable and important Tribal resource. In addition, discussions continue with three Patwin Tribes, Yocha Dehe, Cachil Dehe, and Kletsel Dehe, on a co-stewardship agreement for Molok Luyuk, formerly known as Walker Ridge, within the Indian Valley Management Area.



Vice Tribal Chair and Cultural Specialists of the Koi Nation. Photo: BLM



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

**Berryessa Snow Mountain
National Monument**

2550 N State Street, Suite 2

Ukiah, CA 95482

Phone: 707-468-4000

[Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument | blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)

Report compiled by: Kay-Leigh Barnitz, Berryessa Snow Mountain National
Monument Manager (Acting)

The mention of company names, trade names, or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the federal government.