



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

MAR 26 2013

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to transmit to Congress the *San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study*. The study was completed pursuant to Public Law 108-42, signed in July 2003. The act directed the Secretary of the Interior to study the San Gabriel River Watershed and the San Gabriel Mountains to determine the significance of the area's resources and the suitability and feasibility of adding the area to the national park system. Responsibility for completing the study was delegated to the National Park Service (NPS).

The NPS finds that the resources evaluated through this study are nationally significant, suitable, feasible, and appropriate for NPS management, and that there is strong local support for NPS involvement in the area through partnerships.

The most effective and efficient alternative as determined by the NPS provides for the establishment of a San Gabriel unit of the nearby Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This unit would provide the NPS and other land management agencies and organizations with guidance and direction to work together in new ways. Partnership arrangements among federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations, and area landowners would be the primary means to achieve the conservation, recreational, and educational goals of the San Gabriel unit.

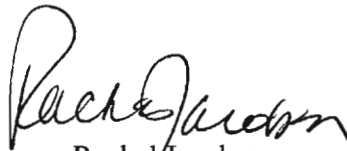
Under this alternative, which would expand the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the NPS and numerous other agencies and organizations with land and interests in the area would: 1) work collaboratively to protect significant resources, restore ecological communities, and improve recreational opportunities; 2) provide technical assistance to willing communities for conservation planning to extend open space connections and form a network of parks, habitats, and open spaces; and 3) offer new educational and interpretive opportunities. The Angeles National Forest (Angeles NF) would not be included in the San Gabriel unit. The NPS and the US Forest Service (USFS) would work in partnership through the Service First authority to achieve similar goals in the Angeles NF, and legislative guidance would provide additional support and authorities for the Angeles NF to steward resources and improve recreational opportunities. The full text of the most effective and efficient alternative can be found in the enclosed *Finding of No Significant Impact* (FONSI). The study included an extensive public involvement process with community members, non-profit organizations, private property owners, elected officials, and government agencies. Comments received during the study's public review period indicate strong support for NPS involvement in management of the area's resources. As directed in the study's authorizing legislation, the NPS

worked closely with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), the Angeles NF and other federal, state, and local government entities; and the NPS considered regional flood control and drainage needs and publicly-owned infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities. Under the selected alternative the NPS would not have any land-use regulatory authority over lands that the United States does not own.

The Department of the Interior's preferred management option for these resources is establishment of a San Gabriel unit of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and collaborative management with the USFS through the use of existing Service First authorities. This recommendation is based on the determination that this alternative is the most effective and efficient alternative in protecting resources and providing visitor use and enjoyment, and it reflects the perspectives of the USFS and the public support for NPS involvement in the area.

An identical letter is being sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate; the Honorable Doc Hastings, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives; and the Honorable Edward Markey, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives. The affected California delegation members will also receive a copy of the report and this letter.

Sincerely,



Rachel Jacobson
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish
and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Barbara Boxer
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Judy Chu
The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
The Honorable Gary G. Miller
The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano
The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
The Honorable Edward R. Royce
The Honorable Adam B. Schiff
The Honorable Brad Sherman
The Honorable Linda T. Sanchez
The Honorable Paul Cook
The Honorable Tony Cardenas
The Honorable Gloria Negrete McLeod
The Honorable Henry Waxman
The Honorable Julia Brownley