



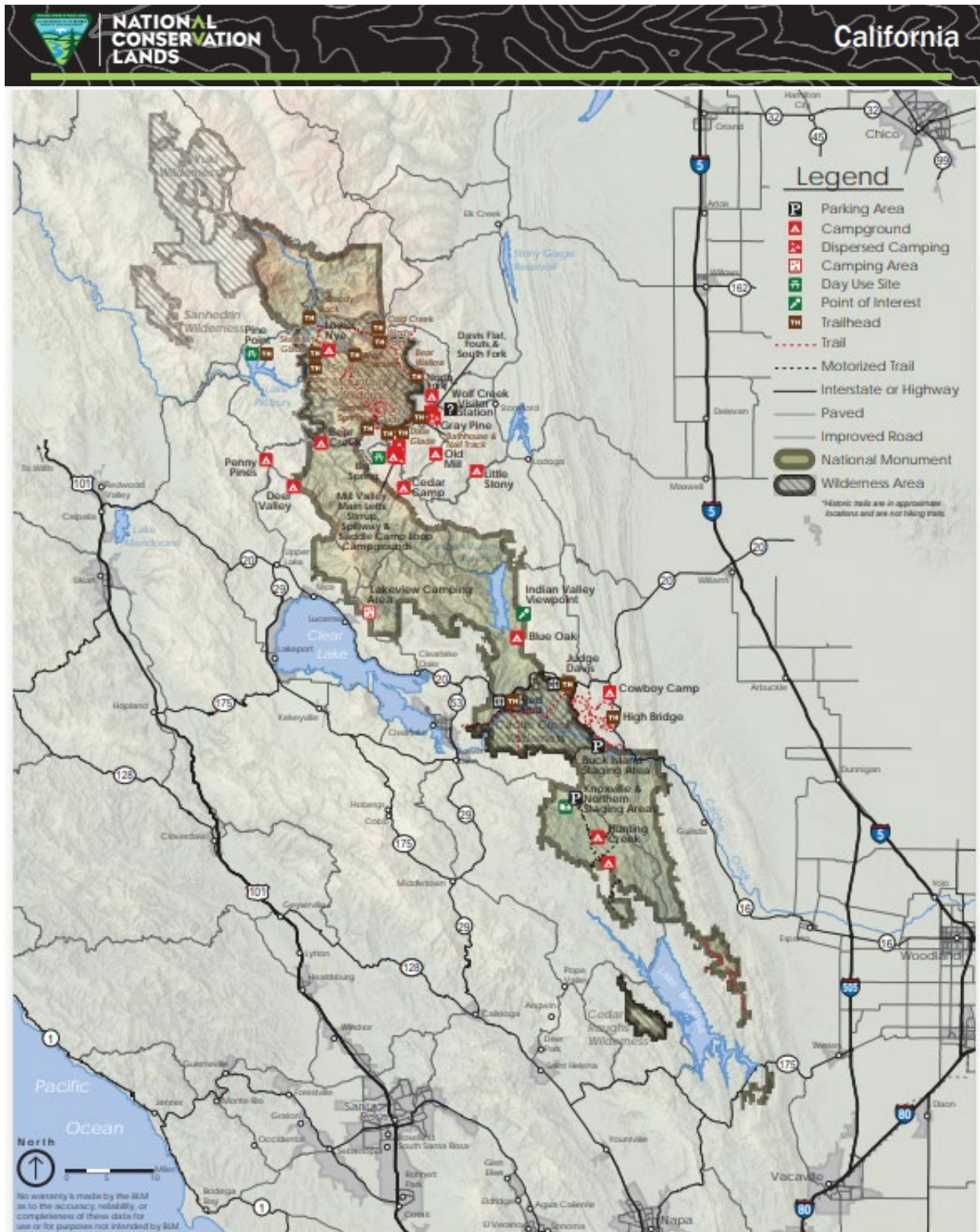
NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

California
2022: Annual Manager's Report

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument



Map

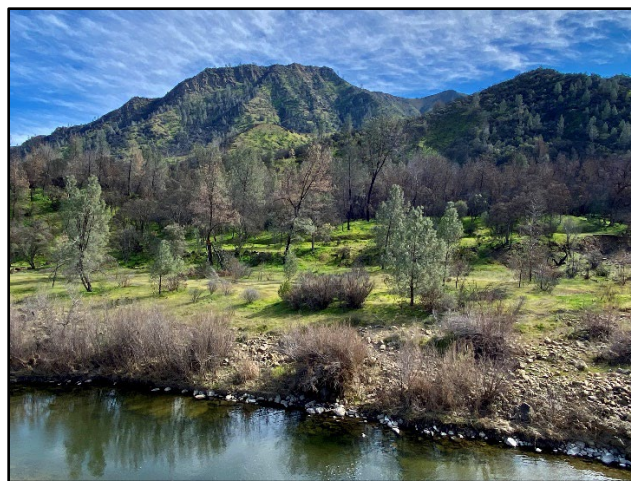


Accomplishments

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 133,576 acres, or about 40%, of the 330,780 acres that comprise the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. This portion of the monument is managed out of the BLM's Ukiah Field Office. The remaining acres are managed by the Forest Service as part of the Mendocino National Forest. In 2022, the BLM along with partners and contractors accomplished several important projects to enhance the visitor experience, protect and restore sensitive areas, and inventory and monitor resources of value.

Wilderness

The BLM manages two wilderness areas within its portion of the monument. The Cache Creek Wilderness Area, which consists of 27,296 acres and includes 17 miles of Cache Creek, a California state designated wild and scenic river, and the 6,350-acre Cedar Roughs Wilderness Area. In 2022, monitoring was conducted within the Cache Creek Wilderness. Approximately 23 miles and 11,295 acres were traversed during the course of this monitoring. Few minor human disturbances were observed, and the area retains its wilderness character qualities, most notably, opportunities for solitude. The observed night skies were clear, dark, and beautiful. Signs of wildlife included tracks from deer, coyote, mountain lion and bears, trees cut down by beavers, fish jumping in Cache Creek, numerous birds of prey and herons, and coyotes howling at night.



Credit: BLM. Cache Creek Wilderness, Fiske Peak

Cultural Resources

The BLM began work on an ethnographic place-based assessment to better understand ethnographic place-based resources within the monument. The objective of this study is to work with Tribes whose aboriginal territory overlaps with the Monument to leverage

indigenous knowledge of sensitive Tribal resources and better inform future monument management planning.

BLM archaeologists continued work on a systematic cultural survey of the areas within the monument including the Knoxville and Indian Valley management areas, Cache Creek Natural Area (CCNA) and Wilderness, the Cedar Roughs Wilderness Area, Berryessa Peak, and scattered tracts. The results of this robust inventory will inform management actions regarding cultural resources within the monument as well as help to assess the accuracy of past predictive models and inventories.



Credit: BLM. Conducting a cultural survey in Cache Creek area

Wildlife and Vegetation

In 2022 the BLM utilized partnerships with local sheep ranchers to help control the proliferation of yellow star thistle and invasive annual grasses like medusa head rye within the monument. This method of weed and invasives control has shown promising results as the native species are given the opportunity to compete for necessary resources like water, light, and space.

Monitoring for foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*) populations (a BLM sensitive species) was conducted within the monument to determine extant population locations and identify potential adverse impacts and potential for future restoration. Monitoring and inventorying activities were also conducted for several populations of sensitive plants. There are over 20 BLM sensitive species known to occur throughout the Monument, supported by the unique geology and soils throughout the region. Populations were monitored within the Indian Valley Management Area and the Cache Creek Management Area.



Photo Credit: BLM. Foothill yellow-legged frog, Kilpepper Creek

Native seeds were collected throughout the monument in accordance with the National Seed Strategy, a component of BLM's Seeds of Success program. The main objectives of the seed collection are to increase the quality and quantity of native plant materials available for restoring and to support resilient ecosystems through future plantings within the monument.

Monitoring was conducted on several plots throughout the monument in accordance with BLM's Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring Strategy (AIM). This included lotic AIM, terrestrial AIM, and wetland AIM. These data collected will serve as baseline information for future use in a monument management planning.

Planning

Several actions were ongoing during 2022 that support monument management planning. Trail and route inventorying and assessments were conducted to inform a future draft of a travel and transportation management plan. A collaborative action and dispute resolution process was initiated to re-engage users and inform potential management actions. A visitor use survey was conducted at several trailheads and an inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics was initiated. These actions will support the development of a comprehensive monument management plan during the coming year.

Realty

In fiscal year 2022, the BLM Ukiah Field Office processed right-of-way (ROW) requests and renewals for USGS seismic monitoring equipment, earthquake early warning infrastructure, and utility weather stations within the monument. A ROW permit application for a proposed wind development project along Walker Ridge Road, adjacent to the monument and within the area of proposed monument expansion, was denied. The project proponent was unable to provide detailed biological, cultural, and geospatial data

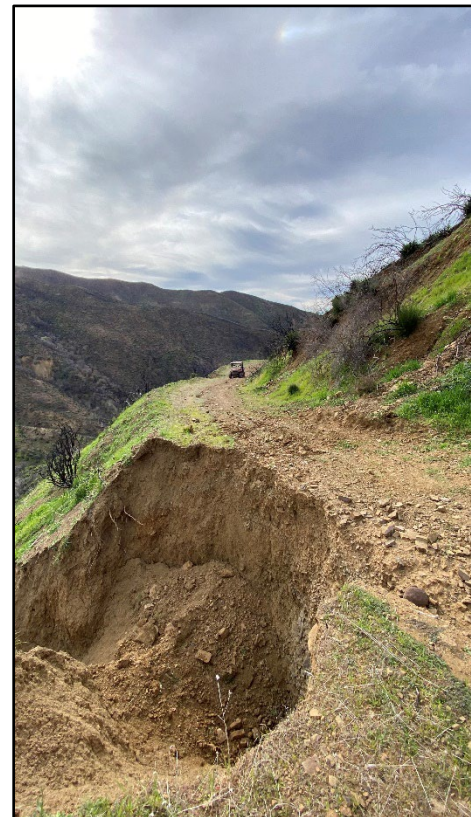
to meet BLM requirements and Tribal consultation identified concerns regarding the project's potential impacts to cultural and botanical resources, as well as the viewshed from the monument.

Challenges

The key challenges for managing the monument in 2022, were primarily related to planning, staffing, and financial shortfalls. The monument operated without a manager for all of fiscal year 2022 and has no other dedicated staff. Another key challenge is the lack of a travel and transportation management plan within the monument. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is a predominant recreational activity in and adjacent to the monument, however there are currently no designated routes in the heavily used Walker Ridge area (other than Walker Ridge Road) and adverse impacts to sensitive vegetation and cultural resources have been observed. The outlook for the coming year is greatly improved with the completion of several actions that will support planning efforts and the recent hiring of a new monument manager.



Credit: BLM. Cleaning up a dump site



Credit: BLM. Erosion on Reiff-Rayhouse Rd.

Visitors

Visitors and recreationists returned to the monument after the recent downturn in visitation due to COVID-19. Results of a visitor survey conducted at trailheads in 2022 show that overall visitors are satisfied with the experience they had and the level of available facilities and access. Few interpretation or public engagement events were held due to continuing health and safety concerns early in the year and staffing shortages.



Credit: Tuleyome. Hikers on Cache Creek ridge

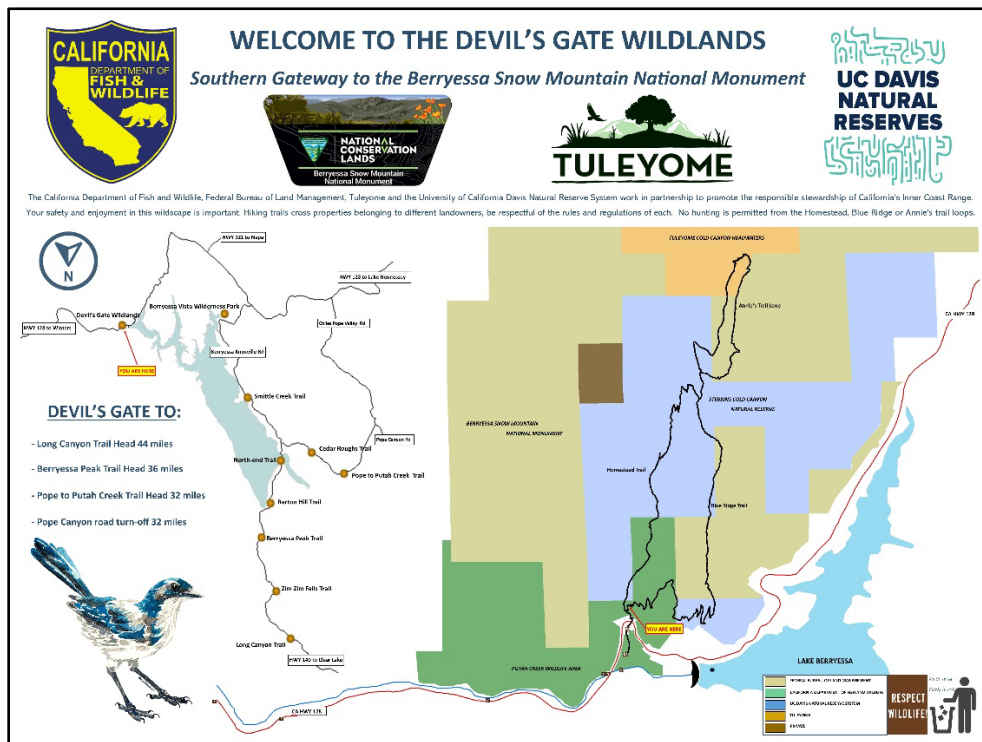
Credit: BLM. Camping in Cache Creek Wilderness

Partnerships

The BLM Ukiah Field Office works closely with a variety of partners to provide critical assistance with managing and protecting resources within the monument. In 2022, volunteers from AmeriCorps and American Conservation Experience assisted with vegetation management as well as trail construction and rehabilitation. The University of California – Davis (UCD) McLaughlin Reserve assisted with goat grass removal in a sensitive area. Staff and seasonal interns hiked to the meadow and nearby chaparral, located goat grass patches and removed them by hand-pulling, bagging and carrying it out. The UCD-Stebbins Cold Canyon staff led volunteers and staff from other partners in

several projects including trail rehabilitation, improved signage and interpretive kiosks, citizen science initiatives, and wildlife monitoring.

Arguably the strongest advocate for and supporter of the monument is Tuleyome, a nonprofit conservation organization based in Woodland, California. BLM has a cooperative agreement with Tuleyome for projects and events within the monument. In 2022, Tuleyome worked on trail maintenance in the Stebbins Cold Canyon area and collaborated with BLM on OHV trail maintenance in the Knoxville Management Area. Tuleyome was also awarded two grants for work to improve water quality in the region by stabilizing the OHV trails in the Management Area. Tuleyome is the lead organizer of a coalition of more than a dozen organizations calling for the expansion of the monument boundary to include an additional almost 4,000 acres along Walker Ridge. BLM leadership testified to Congress in support of the measure on March 1, 2022.



Credit: UC David Reserves

Science

The BLM conducted several science-based projects within the monument to support its ongoing management actions including assessment of trail and route conditions, inventorying lands for wilderness characteristics, monitoring the condition of wildlife and vegetation, and surveying for cultural resources. In addition, Tuleyome hosted two certified California Naturalist courses focused on Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. Topics included geology, management, flora, fauna, and water issues in the Monument. Graduates provide the link between the everyday and scientific communities. They become citizen scientists and advocates for the natural community.

Multiple entities used Tuleyome's Silver Spur Ranch, adjacent to the monument, as home base for studies including landslide monitoring by Dr. Tim Stark from University of Illinois, water quality monitoring along Cache Creek, vegetation and deer surveys by California Department of Fish and Wildlife.



Credit: UC Davis Reserves. Rain Gauge. BLM. Wilderness monitoring. BLM. Geologic interpretation.

Climate Impacts

The landscape surrounding the monument is susceptible to climate change impacts including native species migration, invasive species intrusions, drought, and wildfire. Regionalized climate modeling shows that valley oaks and blue oaks may be especially vulnerable. Drought conditions through 2021 had a visible impact on the blue oak species (*Quercus douglasii*) and gray pines (*Pinus sabiniana*) within the monument. Impacts from wildfire continue to be felt throughout the Monument through closed trails, limited access due to road conditions, and the need for trail maintenance throughout the Monument.



Credit: Nate Lillge, Tuleyome

Climate Resiliency

The Ukiah Field Office has worked on projects at the monument to remove invasive plants, improve eroded areas caused by improper visitor use, and minimize informal/social trails that fragment habitat. Grazing continues in various areas of the monument to reduce fire danger and invasive species.

Social and Environmental Justice

The BLM has worked to provide access to and involvement with the monument including support of youth involvement through AmeriCorps; engagement with Tribal governments on management actions, cultural surveys and ethnographic studies; and cooperation with Tuleyome to provide interpretive programs, projects, and nature hikes, focusing on diverse communities.



Credit: UC Davis Reserves. Youth volunteers working on trail construction.

Events

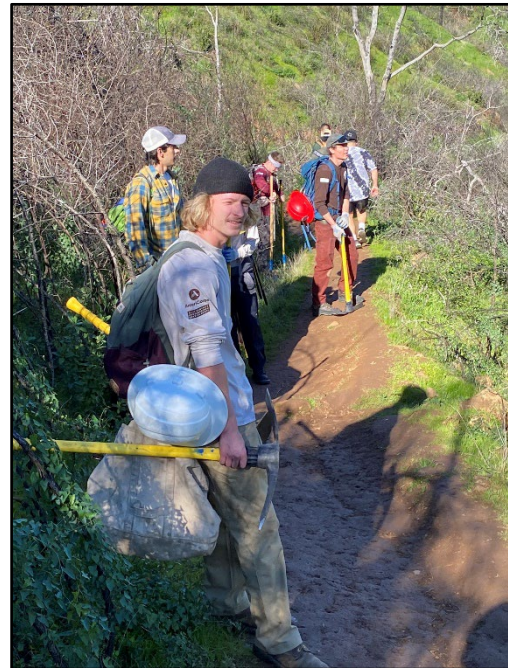
UC Davis held volunteer and staff work events at both its McLaughlin and Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserves adjacent to the monument during 2022.

BLM and Tuleyome have a Cooperative Agreement in place for activities in the Monument. Tuleyome led eleven events in or immediately adjacent to Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. These were included in the cooperative agreement and attended by a total of 118 people. Tuleyome also improved access to the Monument through four days of trail work at Stebbins Cold Canyon and Valley Vista Regional Park – both of which are immediately adjacent to the Monument and are popular Monument access points. Day hikes along Cache Creek Ridge, Redbud Trail, and Annie’s Trail took participants to magnificent views within the Monument. Tuleyome hosted an overnight event at the Silver Spur Ranch property, which abuts the Monument, then led a group to

explore the middle of the Monument just south of Indian Valley Reservoir. Tours of the Walker Ridge area highlighted the wildflowers, unique geology, cultural importance, recreational and economic opportunities, and ecosystem diversity in Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.



Credit: BLM. Recreation site clean-up



Credit: UC Davis Reserves. Volunteer Day



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Berryessa Snow Mountain

National Monument

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Report Cover credit: BLM. Adobe lily on Walker Ridge
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