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## **MONUMENTAL SHIFT APPLAUDS BIDEN ADMINISTRATION PROTECTION OF CASTNER RANGE**

**NATIONAL** - In a historical decision, the Biden Administration protected over 7,081 acres of sacred land in West Texas by designating Castner Range in El Paso as a National Monument. For years, communities and conservation groups in Texas have been passionately advocating to protect the historically and ecologically-vital lands of Castner Range. Located within the Chihuahuan desert along the Rio Grande, Castner Range sits at the southeastern point of the Franklin Mountains, which stretch from El Paso to New Mexico in a majority-Latinx and indigenous community.

Best known by the locals for its annual display of blooming Mexican Yellow Poppies, the range's vast history and historical significance is the ancestral homeland of the Comanche and Apache people, and its cultural ecology is considered sacred to several Indigenous communities in the area. The designation of Castner Range as a National Monument does much more than just preserve its value and significance; it instills hope and anticipation that more monuments that tell diverse American histories and that address the need for increased access to nature for communities of color and low-income families will be protected for future generations.

*"The designation of Castner Range as a National Monument continues to build on the legacy of America the Beautiful. By protecting these special places, the administration is elevating the voices of the local communities who have led these protection efforts and who stand the most to benefit from the protection of these places they call home, and more access to connect to these landscapes, and greater opportunities to connect with one another in the outdoors. We hope to see even more momentum for this legacy of community-led conservation to continue to build, to ensure that future stewardship of landscapes like these preserves the history of the land while creating a path forward for all to enjoy the benefits of protected lands and waters."*

- **Teresa Ana Martinez, Executive Director, Continental Divide Trail Coalition**

While we continue to celebrate the Biden Administration designation of Castner Range as a national monument, we are hopeful for further conversations to occur with the Sovereign Tribal Nations and the community to co-lead the efforts going forward. We applaud the use of the Antiquities Act for this designation and encourage President Biden to continue protecting sacred sites that equitably represent ethnically diverse communities.

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*[Monumental SHIFT](#) is a coalition rooted in racially and ethnically diverse leadership transforming the traditional creation, conception, funding, and stewardship of national monuments in the United States in order to better represent and honor lands and places sacred to the communities which we belong to.*



## Coalition Quotes

**Camilla Simon**, *Executive Director of HECHO:*

### **Statement on Castner Range designation as a National Monument**

- “Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO) applauds President Joe Biden for the designation of Castner Range, as a National Monument through the Antiquities Act. The Castner Range is a special historical and ecological area within the Franklin Mountains range. It totals over 7,000 acres and abuts the majority-Hispanic community of El Paso and its southern neighbor, Cd. Juarez.”
- “We are very excited to learn that President Biden has finally used his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate the Castner Range National Monument. The local community has advocated long and hard for this day, and today we celebrate this victory with them. The monument designation increases access to and protects a unique mountain range in a highly urban area, and will benefit people from all economic backgrounds while reflecting and honoring the local communities and the history and culture of those who live there. Community advocates in El Paso have sought protection and public access to this landscape for decades. The campaign that supported Castner Range’s designation included community leaders from the region who genuinely represent the borderlands.”

**Bennae Calac**, *Executive Director of 7g Foundation:*

- “The designation of Caster Range as a National Monument is one that directly protects the Traditional land of Tigua people of the Ysleta del Sur. These continued efforts allow ratification and acknowledgment of the wrongs Indigenous have endured. It will also allow communities of all who live within this time to enjoy the treasure, like Castner Range.”

**Cassandra Carmichael**, *Executive Director of National Religious Partnership for the Environment:*

- “We applaud President Biden for designating Castner Range as one of the nation’s newest monuments,” said Cassandra Carmichael, Executive Director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. “Not only does Castner Range display the beauty of God’s creation, it tells important stories of human history. The more than 7,000 acres will provide added recreational opportunities for the Hispanic and Black communities that live in neighboring communities.”
- “Today, President Biden honored his promise to designate Avi Kwa Ame, also known as Spirit Mountain, as a National Monument,” said Cassandra Carmichael, Executive Director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. “This sacred land, which is the center of Yuman creation stories and spiritual ideology, deserves permanent protection. In honoring this special part of God’s creation, President Biden is not only safeguarding ecological integrity and ensuring continued access to outdoor recreation but defending the religious liberty of the Tribal communities.”

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