



Conservation  
Lands  
Foundation

*Protecting America's Heritage*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:** Meghan Kissell, 571-643-3526; [meghan@conservationlands.org](mailto:meghan@conservationlands.org)

**Community Leaders and Conservationists Applaud President Obama's Designation of Five New National Monuments**

*President's action will expand our National Conservation Lands and boost local economies*

Durango, CO (March 22, 2013) – Conservation and community leaders are celebrating President Barack Obama's commitment to designate five new national monuments in New Mexico, Washington, Maryland, Ohio and Delaware. These national monuments will permanently protect a diversity of lands and waters that honor our country's heritage and conserve open space important for hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation.

"President Obama has taken an important step in protecting America's outdoor heritage and honoring our nation's history," said Brian O'Donnell, Executive Director of the Conservation Lands Foundation. "These designations came in response to locally-driven efforts and we are grateful for President Obama's leadership in advancing conservation at a time when it's desperately needed."

Two of these designations – the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in northern New Mexico and the San Juan Islands National Monument in Washington– will become part of the Bureau of Land Management's National Conservation Lands. These national monuments will benefit the local economies, protect important wildlife habitat and ensure that future generations will continue to experience America's great outdoor heritage.

Local communities have long sought to protect these areas, but their efforts had been frustrated by congressional gridlock. In fact, the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress became the first Congress since World War II to fail to protect a single new acre of public land as a park, monument or wilderness area.

"Today's announcement about the designation of Rio Grande del Norte as a National Monument is a result of the commitment and passion of our people for this landscape we call home. For years, our community of sportsmen, ranchers, small business owners and other citizens across northern New Mexico has worked collaboratively with our members of Congress to protect it. Now we can rest assured that Rio Grande del Norte's majesty will be preserved for generations to come," commented Taos Mayor Darren Córdova.

"The San Juan Islands National Monument will honor the hundreds of volunteer who have helped the BLM maintain these lands," said San Juan County Council Chair and Lopez Island resident Jamie Stephens. "The communities in these islands now look forward to working with the Bureau of Land Management to develop and carry out a management plan that protects these valuable natural and cultural sites."

Photos and additional background materials available at [www.RioGrandeDelNorte.org](http://www.RioGrandeDelNorte.org) and [www.SanJuanIslandsNM.org](http://www.SanJuanIslandsNM.org).

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*The mission of the Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF) is to protect, restore and expand the National Conservation Lands so they will endure from generation to generation. The National Conservation Lands are protected public lands and*

970-247-0807

160 E 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit 2  
Durango, CO 81301

[www.ConservationLands.org](http://www.ConservationLands.org)



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*waterways managed by the Bureau of Land Management that have joined the ranks of our national parks and wildlife refuges as special places that preserve our natural, historical and scientific treasures. [www.conservationlands.org](http://www.conservationlands.org)*

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