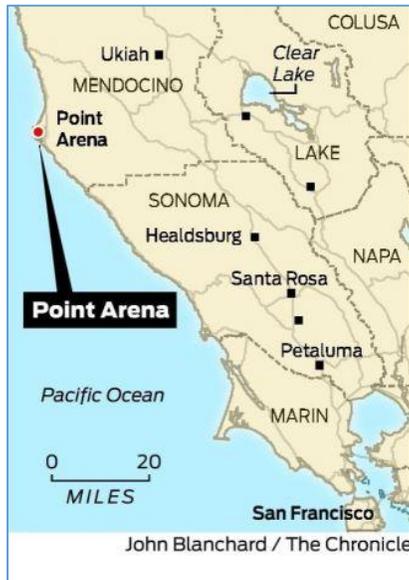


Obama adds land near Point Arena to National Monument

David R. Baker



A stretch of shoreline near Point Arena marked by bluffs, forests and a salmon-filled river will become part of national monument come Tuesday, when President Obama is expected to sign an order protecting the site for generations to come.

The land, a key piece of which remained in private hands until just last year, was once slated to house a nuclear power plant. Now it will be added to the [California Coastal National Monument](#), a protected space running just offshore from the state's long, rugged coast. The addition will be the first time that the monument, established in 2000, is expanded to include a piece of the shore itself.

"You get out on that landscape, and you are out there in a different world - and it's a magical world," said [Markley Bavinger](#) with the [Trust for Public Land](#), one of the environmental and community groups working to protect the site. "You're surrounded by these vistas that extend all the way as far as the eye can see."

Many area residents hope the move will lure tourists to Point Arena, a small city in Mendocino County that once depended on logging before the local timber industry collapsed. The Point Arena Lighthouse is the area's biggest draw, with more than 40,000 visitors per year.

"We all think this is going to be really, really helpful to the local economy and bring in the kind of tourism that appreciates the natural beauty of the area," said former Mayor [Leslie Dahlhoff](#), who will fly to Washington, D.C., to attend Tuesday's signing ceremony. "This land is totally worthy of national monument status, and it deserves that protection."

Formally known as the [Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands](#), the 1,665-acre property was cobbled together from several parcels over the course of years. Clover Stornetta Farms originally held some of the land, turning over title to the [U.S. Bureau of Land Management](#) in 2005 in a complex, \$8 million deal. The final piece of private property, held by the [Cypress Abbey Co.](#), was acquired last year by a group of foundations and public agencies assembled by the trust, which then turned over management of the land to the [BLM](#).

The Cypress Abbey property had been the proposed site of a Pacific Gas and Electric Co. nuclear power plant in the early 1970s. But the project faced strong local resistance, in part because of the site's proximity to the San Andreas Fault, and was abandoned in 1973.

The shoreline provides habitat for sea lions, beavers and the endangered Behren's silverspot butterfly, while whales migrate just off the coast. The Garcia River, home to chinook and coho salmon as well as steelhead trout, flows through the property.

The push to make the shoreline part of the national monument drew support from [California Democratic Sens. Barbara Boxer](#) and [Dianne Feinstein](#), as well as Reps. [Jared Huffman](#), D-San Rafael, and [Mike Thompson](#), D-St. Helena. They wrote a letter to the president last year seeking monument designation. "I am so pleased that President Obama is taking action to permanently protect this majestic piece of California's coast for future generations to enjoy," Boxer said Sunday, in a prepared statement. Interior Secretary [Sally Jewell](#) visited Point Arena last fall, seeking public opinion on the idea. "She said at that meeting, 'I'm going to go back and tell the president that the community is totally behind this,'" Dahlhoff said. "Most of us are sort of in shock. We're all starting to realize this is really happening."