

## **Letter: Bolster Antiquities Act as priority**

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On May 18, 1980, the Pacific Northwest changed visibly, never to be quite the same again: Mount St. Helens blew her top. Just two years later, the mountain and areas immediately around it were designated and protected as the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, set aside for research, recreation, and education.

Mount St. Helens is the most active volcano in the Lower 48, and as a nontechnical climb, it is accessible to and popular with seasoned and amateur climbers alike. It is an area that our members enjoy regularly, and as visitors to Mount St. Helens, they support the local tourism economy.

While Mount St. Helens was congressionally designated as a national monument, presidents are also able to establish monuments via the Antiquities Act. At The Mountaineers organization, we think it's important to maintain all the tools we have to protect America's outdoor heritage for future generations. We're thankful to have leaders like Sen. Patty Murray and Sen. Maria Cantwell championing the Antiquities Act in Congress and helping ensure it is not weakened.

Public lands belong to all of us, and protecting them should be a priority for all of us.

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