



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance and the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area**

### **❖ *What is a National Heritage Area?***

The National Park Service describes a National Heritage Area as a place “where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form cohesive, nationally distinctive landscapes arising from patterns of past and present human activities shaped by geography.” With its combination of cultures, history, languages, traditions, and landscapes, the Santa Cruz Valley is just that!

National Heritage Areas (NHA) are different from National Parks and other types of Federal designations because they do not impose Federal zoning or regulations on land use, and do not involve land acquisitions. Because a National Heritage Area is locally initiated and managed, it is a community-based conservation strategy that recognizes that the people who live in a heritage area are uniquely qualified to preserve its resources.

There are currently 37 designated National Heritage Areas across the country. Visit the NPS National Heritage Areas Program (<http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/>) for more information about National Heritage Areas.

### **❖ *What is the role of the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance?***

The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance is identified in the legislation as the local coordinating entity. We are a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, with a mission to connect people to the cultural, historic, and natural treasures of the Santa Cruz Valley through education, preservation and promotion of its unique resources.

As the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area, the Heritage Alliance is responsible for developing a Management Plan upon designation as a National Heritage Area, coordinate heritage projects and programs among diverse partners in the National Heritage Area, and grant funding to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, and other parties within the National Heritage Area that are implementing heritage promotion, preservation and education programs.

### **❖ *Is there local support?***

Several local governments (two counties, five municipalities, and one tribe), the Arizona Office of Tourism, the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau, several local businesses, and numerous individuals contributed funding totaling \$75,000 for preparation of the required Feasibility Study (completed in 2005 by the Center for Desert Archaeology).

To support hiring of staff and initiation of heritage area activities prior to Congressional designation, three-year funding commitments totaling \$132,000 have been received from Pima County, Tucson, Marana, Oro Valley, and the MTCVB. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe awarded a grant of \$50,000 for the 2006/2007 fiscal year.

List of supporters and endorsers include:

- Governor Janet Napolitano
- County, city and town governments
- Tribal governments
- Federal land and park managers
- State land and park managers
- Arizona Department of Tourism
- Area museums and historical societies
- Agencies and organizations promoting tourism and regional economic growth
- Groups and nonprofits involved in historic preservation, nature conservation, and environmental education:
  - Ranchers, farmers, and agricultural businesses
  - Small business owners
  - Civic and business organizations
  - Chambers of Commerce

❖ *How does the size compare to the other National Heritage Areas?*

The proposed boundaries of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area were selected because they mark an area that is a source of identity for residents, is a coherent natural and cultural landscape, and contains sufficient nature and heritage resources of national significance to support a NHA designation.

The size of the area (3,325 square miles) falls in the mid-range of the sizes of the 37 existing NHAs and includes portions of only two counties. The average size of existing NHAs is twice as large, at 6,955 square miles.

Every local government, tribe, state park, and federal land-managing agency within the proposed boundaries supports the NHA designation.

❖ *Are property rights impacted?*

No! The boundaries of a NHA are not regulatory, and designation will have no effects on private property rights, land use zoning, property taxes, or the right to renovate or remove existing buildings on private property. No zoning changes or changes in property taxes result from designation of a NHA.

Private landowners within the boundaries are not required to allow public or government access to their properties. Specific language is included in the designation bill and will be included in the subsequent Management Plan stating that the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will have no regulatory authority, and it will be precluded from using federal funds to acquire real property or an interest in real property.

NHAs cannot own real property. They cannot designate, acquire, or own lands for conservation; any conservation of resources on private lands is voluntary.

Owners of private property located within the boundaries of a NHA are not required to participate in it or be associated with it.

Property owners within NHAs are not restricted from tearing down old buildings on their properties, or from selling or subdividing their properties, or from developing their properties.

The U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) recently published the conclusions of a year-long study of NHAs, which included consultations with six private property rights advocacy groups. The GAO did not find a single case of a NHA affecting private property uses or values in any of the existing NHAs.

❖ *What if Federal funding is not available in the future?*

The amount of local funding raised to date speaks to the community's support and our ability to raise funds locally. The Feasibility Study was completed entirely from local donations and did not require federal funding. There is consensus among the local stakeholders that Congressional designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area is an honor and absolutely desired and appropriate for the region whether funding is available in the future or not.

For more information please contact:  
Vanessa Bechtol, Programs Manager  
Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance  
(520) 429-1394

[vanessa@santacruzheritage.org](mailto:vanessa@santacruzheritage.org)  
[www.santacruzheritage.org](http://www.santacruzheritage.org)