



Santa Cruz Valley
HERITAGE ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SANTA CRUZ VALLEY HERITAGE AREA APPROVED BY HOUSE

TUCSON, AZ – Today the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation to designate the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area in southern Arizona.

“Congressman Grijalva was a champion for this bill on the House floor today, and we applaud him for bringing southern Arizona a step closer to realizing this broad-based bi-partisan community effort,” said Vanessa Bechtol, executive director for the non-profit Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance.

The proposed National Heritage Area for southern Arizona has been endorsed by every local government in the region, as well as former Governor Napolitano, the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Arizona Office of Tourism, Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, Metropolitan Tucson Chamber of Commerce, Southern Arizona Homebuilders Association, every federal and state park and land manager in the region, museums and historical societies, non-profits, ranchers and farmers, and more.

National Heritage Areas stimulate local heritage-based economic development by marketing regional heritage tourism, and promoting place-based foods, arts, crafts, and other traditional products. More information on National Heritage Areas can be found at: www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/.

The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area encompasses the watershed of the Santa Cruz River, from Nogales and Patagonia, to Marana and Oro Valley. It is a non-regulatory designation made by Congress to honor and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of a region, while utilizing those resources to stimulate heritage-based economic development, primarily through tourism. The increase in tourism in other National Heritage Areas has been significant.

All programs and projects of the National Heritage Area will be conducted on a completely voluntary basis. The designation as a National Heritage Area does not have any regulatory authority and therefore does not affect land use, zoning, property taxes, or private property rights. The legislation authorizes up to \$1 million annually in federal funding, which requires a 1:1 match from local or private sources, but does not appropriate any funding.

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The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization whose mission is to connect people to the cultural, historic, and natural treasures of the Santa Cruz Valley through education, preservation and promotion of its unique resources. The Heritage Alliance is the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area. For more information visit www.santacruzheritage.org.