



## **Background on the Designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area**

The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance is a grassroots 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has been working towards designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area since 2003. With broad and bi-partisan representation and support, the Heritage Alliance developed a feasibility study for the National Heritage Area in 2005. The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area Act (H.R. 324), was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Raúl Grijalva and Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, and was approved by the House on September 23, 2009. The Heritage Alliance is identified as the local coordinating entity for the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area and will be responsible for promoting the heritage area and coordinating heritage education projects, with extensive public input and participation.

National Heritage Areas (NHA) are designated by Congress 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. These patterns make the regions representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the cultural traditions that have evolved in the areas” (National Park Service, 2004). **NHAs stimulate local heritage-based economic development by marketing regional heritage tourism, and promoting place-based foods, arts, crafts, and other traditional products.**

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 National Heritage Area designation and promote heritage tourism.

### **Protection of Private Property Rights**

- The U.S. Government Accountability Office published the conclusions of a year-long study of NHAs, which included consultations with six private property rights advocacy groups. The study did not find a single case of a NHA affecting private property uses or values.
- The boundaries of a NHA are not regulatory and designation does not affect private property rights, land use zoning, property taxes, or the right to renovate or remove existing buildings on private property.
- In SEC. 9. PRIVATE PROPERTY AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS, the legislation states: “Nothing in this subtitle abridges the rights of any property owner (whether public or private), including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the National Heritage Area.”
- Specific language is included in the designation bill 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.

### **Impact of National Heritage Areas on Regional Heritage Tourism**

- Visiting a National Heritage Area was the primary purpose of 57% of visitors to seven NHAs studied in 2004 (doubled the amount of tourism).

- "Tourism is the number one industry along this four-state corridor. Visitation to every one of those parks was trending downward until we created and branded the region." *Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, Washington Post, February 19, 2009*
- Tourism has a \$2.3 billion economic impact on Tucson annually and provides 40,000 tourism-related jobs. Surveys indicate that the unique culture and nature related activities that visitors to Tucson experience is far above the national norm.
- The tourism industry contributed \$19.3 billion in 2007 in Arizona. Spending by tourists also generated 171,500 travel industry jobs in 2007, and generated \$2.7 billion in local, state and federal tax revenues. Designating the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will help the travel and tourism industry continue to significantly contribute to Arizona's economic development.
- Cultural tourists spend more than others - \$623 vs. \$457.
- 50% of US adults participate in cultural tourism annually.

### **Examples of Economic Development in other National Heritage Areas**

- Path of Progress National Heritage Route (Pennsylvania) established The Progress Fund to assist individuals in obtaining loans for small heritage-related businesses not typically funded by conventional bank loans. Over an eight-year period the Fund made 152 loans totaling more than \$11.3 million and also provided more than 5,000 hours of business counseling.
- Wheeling National Heritage Area (West Virginia) invested \$54,000 to conduct architectural re-use studies of four vacant downtown historic businesses. In two years the studies spurred \$17.2 million in private investment to renovate the buildings and all four had new owners. 200 new jobs were created as a result of this project.
- Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor: Since 1987, federal funds have leveraged other funding at a 22:1 ratio—a public and private investment in excess of \$500 million.
- Growing interest in heritage areas is due to their proven success as an economic development strategy through increased heritage tourism, and related increases in jobs, business incomes, and tax revenues.

### **Local Endorsements for the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area**

The Feasibility Study for the proposed Heritage Area was completed in 2005 with funding support from Pima and Santa Cruz counties, five municipalities, two tribes, the Arizona Office of Tourism, the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau, and numerous local businesses and individuals. Endorsements for the National Heritage Area designation include:

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

A complete list of endorsements is available online at [www.santacruzheritage.org/localsupport](http://www.santacruzheritage.org/localsupport). For more information please contact Vanessa Bechtol, Executive Director at (520) 429-1394 or [vanessa@santacruzheritage.org](mailto:vanessa@santacruzheritage.org) or visit [www.santacruzheritage.org](http://www.santacruzheritage.org).