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## **SANTA CRUZ VALLEY MAP HIGHLIGHTS HERITAGE DESTINATIONS**

Map Promotes Heritage Tourism in Proposed National Heritage Area

*TUCSON, AZ* - To promote heritage tourism to local heritage attractions, the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance has created the region's first ever heritage tourism map, dedicated solely to the promotion of heritage experiences in the Santa Cruz Valley. From Spanish missions and Mexican presidios, to prime birding spots and mining ghost towns, the Santa Cruz Valley's cultural and natural heritage destinations available to visitors and residents are endless. The Heritage Alliance, a local, grassroots non-profit organization, created the heritage tourism map as a project of the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.

The heritage map highlights ten nationally unique stories this region has to tell, and the related heritage experiences available to the public at destinations throughout the Santa Cruz Valley. The distinctive themes or experiences include sky islands and desert seas, streams in the desert, bird habitats and migration routes, Native American lifeways, desert farming, ranching traditions, the Spanish and Mexican frontier, remnants of mining booms, U.S. military posts on the Mexico border, and the U.S.-Mexico border culture.

"The heritage tourism map, like the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, links the heritage assets in Santa Cruz and Pima counties," says Paula Schaper, President of the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance.

Heritage tourism in the region also includes culinary tourism, which represents nearly 20% of tourism nationwide, according to the Travel Industry Association. From wineries to pick-your-own farms, the heritage map features various forms of culinary tourism under the Desert Farming theme. A 2001 study by the Travel Industry Association also reports that visitors to historic sites stay longer and spend more money than other types of tourists.

Jonathan Mabry, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance, explains that, "the heritage map promotes heritage-based economic development by showcasing our heritage assets." By encouraging heritage tourism based on resource preservation rather than resource extraction, this type of economic development is sustainable, long-term, and benefits current residents as well as future generations.

Copies of the heritage map will initially be presented to the local jurisdictions, visitor centers, and various supporters throughout the proposed National Heritage Area. A limited number of maps are also available through the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance.

The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance will manage the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Raúl Grijalva and Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in April, 2007 (H.R. 1885). The 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. For more information visit [www.santacruzheritage.org](http://www.santacruzheritage.org).

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