



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 5, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Department of Interior Approval of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area Management Plan**

I am pleased to inform you that the Department of Interior very recently approved [the Management Plan for the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area](#) in Pima and Santa Cruz counties (Attachment 1) that was designated by Congress in 2019, pursuant to the John Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Title VI, Section 6001 of Public Law 116-9).

Pima County has supported this effort since 2003, together with an alliance of community partners in Pima and Santa Cruz counties that has been working towards recognition of our unique heritage over the last 19 years. Built on the foundations of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, this management plan was steered by the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance by developing a feasibility study (2005), obtaining Congressional designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area (2019), and collaborating on this management plan with state, local, and tribal governments, as well as numerous nonprofit organizations.

The mission of the heritage area is to enhance public awareness and appreciation of the region's nationally significant historic, cultural, and natural resources, and living traditions through education, authentic experiences, and sustainable tourism. Approval of this management plan will provide federal funding opportunities over at least 15 years, and strengthen the Santa Cruz Valley as a regional and national asset that tells the story of how the Santa Cruz Valley and its people helped to shape the Nation's development.

JKL/anc

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Linda Mayro, Director, Office of Sustainability and Conservation
Nicole Fyffe, Senior Advisor, County Administrator's Office

ATTACHMENT 1



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

Ms. Vanessa Bechtol
Board President
Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance
4550 N Caminito Callado
Tucson, Arizona 85718

Dear Ms. Bechtol:

In accordance with Public Law 116-9, which designated the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, we are pleased to inform you of the approval of the Management Plan for the National Heritage Area. Please accept my congratulations on the successful planning process lead by the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance's Board of Directors and consultants in collaboration with the National Park Service and numerous Tribal, State, and local partners.

The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance developed a plan that promotes the continued appreciation and protection of the natural, historic, and cultural resources associated with the National Heritage Area, a place important to our Nation's history and heritage. We commend you for completing this well-conceived plan and for involving the interested Tribes, citizens, and organizations in Pima and Santa Cruz Counties in Southern Arizona.

As we move forward in our partnership, please be assured of our support of your implementation of your resource protection goals. This nationally distinctive landscape, which contains some of our Nation's most important natural and cultural resources, deserves continued respect and protection.

Sincerely,

Date: 2022.11.21
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Shannon Estenoz
Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

cc: Kathryn Leonard, Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer
Austin Nunez, Chairman, San Xavier District, Tohono O'odham Nation
Peter Yucupucio, Chairman, Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Kate Hammond, Acting Regional Director, NPS Regions 6,7,8
Alex Hernandez, NHA Coordinator, NPS Regions 6,7,8
Leah McGinnis, Superintendent, Saguaro National Park
Mike Medrano, Superintendent, Tumacacori National Historical Park
Naomi Torres, Superintendent, Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail