

July 12, 2007

Legislative Hearing
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
House Committee on Natural Resources

Testimony Supporting the Establishment of
The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area Act - H.R. 1885

Testimony Submitted by:
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Good Morning, my name is Linda Mayro, and I have worked as the Cultural Resources Manager for Pima County in Tucson, Arizona for 19 years, and I have worked toward this Heritage Area designation from its inception. Before I start, I would like to thank Congressman Grijalva and Subcommittee members for holding this hearing and allowing me to provide testimony for the designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.

I would also like to express how very honored I am to be here, representing a broad-based coalition that has worked together with enthusiasm and collaboration for the last five years. Through an open and inclusive process, we built consensus in our region for Congressional designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.

MANY INTERESTS - ONE VISION

The concept of a Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area grew out of a partnership of local interests who have a stake in the region's future. Our vision promotes a sense of place, provides new economic opportunities, and most importantly, offers a way for the people who live here to create a future that sustains our Western way of life and celebrates the diverse cultural traditions, historic places, working landscapes, and natural treasures that make this region unique.

Since 2003, more than 100 public meetings were held throughout Pima and Santa Cruz counties. Consensus built in this process concluded that designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will: 1) benefit and honor the region, 2) protect property rights, 3) inspire voluntary stewardship, and 4) provide economic opportunities through sustainable heritage tourism and place-based local businesses.

Supporters include every local government in Pima and Santa Cruz counties, two American Indian tribes, civic organizations, non-profits, museums, small business owners, chambers of commerce, tourism councils, the Tucson Airport Authority, developers, the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, conservation groups, ranchers, farmers, federal and state parks, land management agencies, educational institutions, and others. At the state level, Governor Janet Napolitano has provided her support, as has the Arizona Office of Tourism.

By pooling resources and working in partnership, we have succeeded in:

1. Raising local funds of **\$75,000** to prepare the Feasibility Study
2. Completing the Feasibility Study in 2005
3. Creating the non-profit Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance to act as the management entity, and
4. Raising additional funds of **\$203,000** to support local efforts as a heritage area.

We are ready to be designated as a National Heritage Area, and we firmly believe our region, rich in natural and cultural resources and living traditions, is exceptionally well-qualified for this honor.

A NATIONALLY DISTINCTIVE REGION

The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area encompasses about 3,300 square miles in southern Arizona, bordering Mexico. As the natural watershed of the Santa Cruz River, the valley is a source of identity for residents and forms a coherent natural and cultural landscape. Our environment is spectacular and diverse, ranging from Sonoran Desert, to upland grasslands, to alpine forests on our desert sky-island mountains, soaring 9,000' above the valley floor. These exceptional natural and recreational resources are recognized at Saguaro National Park, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Coronado National Forest, Tucson Mountain Park, four state parks, and at numerous local parks.

This is the desert frontier of our American heritage. The present-day landscape of the Santa Cruz Valley has been shaped by long continuities in frontier livelihoods and institutions that define our sense of place and contribute uniquely to the fabric of America. This is a working, living, and many-storied landscape—home to Native peoples who first brought agriculture to our Nation 4,000 years ago, and whose descendants continue to view and use the land in traditional ways, home to descendants of Spanish settlers whose religious faith shaped the land and defined our cities, home to descendants of American pioneers whose courage brought them westward seeking new opportunities, and home to ranchers today whose stewardship of the land serves to preserve this landscape for us all. Our heritage resources are many – Tumacacori National Historic Site, 6 National Historic Landmarks, the Tubac and Tucson presidios, the Anza National Historic Trail, Canoa and Empire ranches, US military forts established during the Apache wars, mining ghost towns and 100s of archaeological and historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This heritage is alive today, and we are richer for it.

AN IDEAL REGION FOR A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATION

Our Feasibility Study concludes that the Santa Cruz Valley is an ideal region for National Heritage Area designation. It identifies the national importance of our Western region's stories, the abundance of natural and cultural resources, and the continuity of traditional uses of the land. The clear support of community leaders and the public for the concept and proposed boundaries are demonstrated. Public involvement in the conceptualization is documented, and the management entity is formed. The Feasibility Study concludes that National Heritage Area designation will provide the best opportunities for heritage education, sustainable tourism, local economic opportunities, and ongoing traditional land uses. Furthermore, it will enhance appreciation and visitation to our existing national, state, county, and local natural and recreational parks and historic sites.

As a National Heritage Area, we will work to conserve and celebrate one of America's defining landscapes, its cultural diversity, and living traditions. Designation will stimulate economic growth. The strong ties between our communities and our historic, cultural, natural, open space, recreational, and business resources will be promoted together for the benefit of multiple stakeholders. Designation will encourage voluntary conservation of significant natural, cultural, and working landscapes, while providing the potential for increased incomes and economic opportunities for property owners, ranchers, farmers, and other local businesses.

With its wealth of important cultural and natural resources, living traditions, and diversity of communities with deep historic roots, the Santa Cruz Valley is an ideal region to be added to the 37 existing National Heritage Areas in the United States, only 9 of which are in the West.

The Santa Cruz Valley, shaped by both physical geography and the convergence of cultural forces of successive sovereignty, settlement, and cultural interactions for thousands of years, is a significant and unique part of the identity of the United States and has contributed in many ways to the broad patterns of our Nation's history and development. I hope you will agree.

**ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 1885, DESIGNATING
THE SANTA CRUZ VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
CONTAINING EXCERPTS FROM THE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Santa Cruz Valley is blessed with a rich historic legacy in a unique natural environment. It has many flourishing cultural traditions that are important parts of the national story. In no other region in the United States can be found the particular combination of Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and American Old West customs, crafts, music styles, foods, and other types of folk life that are maintained and celebrated here. The distinctive mix of folk traditions in the Santa Cruz Valley is a result of its long history as a borderland crossroads and corridor. It represents the Spanish Colonial and Mexican periods in the history of the Southwest—less well known, but important counterparts to English and French colonialism in North America and the early history of the United States.

This region has been the focus of the nation's attention several times: during the late 1840s search for a possible railroad route from the Rio Grande to California as part of the Gadsden Purchase negotiation after the Mexican-American War, during a series of gold and silver rushes in the late nineteenth century after the California Gold Rush played out, during the Apache Wars of the 1870s and 1880s, and during the campaign against Pancho Villa in 1916. Since the 1880s, this has been one of the leading copper-producing regions in the nation. With its dry air and warm climate, this area has been a destination for health seekers since the 1890s, and since the 1920s local guest ranches have drawn visitors searching for a taste of the Old West. The dramatic landscapes of this valley have been etched into the minds of generations of Americans by hundreds of Western films made here since the 1930s.

Currently, this region is internationally renowned as a leading center of research in desert ecology, climate history research, archaeology, astronomy, optics, and solar energy. In summary, the Santa Cruz Valley has been the stage of important moments and movements in the national experience, and its scenic landscapes, colorful history, and vibrant folk traditions are fundamental parts of the national consciousness and character.

Faced with rapid growth, the residents of this region are seeking to create a future that includes the cultural traditions, historic places, working landscapes, and natural treasures that make this a special place to live, and are assets for heritage-based economic development. A broad spectrum of local stakeholders in the region have coalesced around the National Heritage Area concept because it provides a framework for voluntary heritage preservation, education, and promotion through local decision-making, with residents of the region setting the agenda and implementing it themselves.

Rather than relying on regulation, heritage education and environmental education help build a stewardship ethic, and conservation is voluntary. An additional attraction is the proven success of National Heritage Area designation as a regional economic development strategy through increased heritage tourism and rehabilitation of historic buildings, and related increases in jobs, business incomes, tax revenues, and investment opportunities.

PRINCIPLES

The National Heritage Area program of the National Park Service is based on innovative differences from other types of federal land designations for the purpose of resource conservation. Rather than being top-down, mandatory, and involving land set-asides or use-restrictions, this type of designation is based on grass-roots organization and voluntary preservation, and does not involve property or land-use regulation. The concept of a Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area is based upon several principles of National Heritage Areas:

- **Heritage Education**

A deeper understanding and appreciation of our cultural and natural legacy can be achieved through heritage education. In addition to nurturing a sense of continuity and connection with our historical and cultural experiences in this region, heritage education instills a stronger "sense of place," and encourages residents to consider their past in planning for the future. In a National Heritage Area, heritage education fosters a stewardship ethic that leads to community-based, voluntary resource preservation.

- **Voluntary Conservation**

A fundamental principle of the National Heritage Area concept is that conservation efforts are most successful when the people living closest to the resources set the agenda, identify priorities, and initiate preservation actions voluntarily. Owners of private property located within the boundaries of a National Heritage Area are not required to participate in it, or be associated with it. Participation is voluntary – the primary function of a National Heritage Area is to provide assistance to stakeholders to help them achieve their own goals of resource preservation, promotion, and interpretation.

- **Security of Property Rights**

National Heritage Areas are under no federal regulatory authority. The National Heritage Area concept recognizes the importance of private lands, and that property owners are the primary planners of land use. Designation does not affect private property rights, property taxes, land-use zoning, or the right to renovate or remove existing buildings on private property. 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 will be precluded from using federal funding to acquire real property or an interest in real property. Any conservation of resources on private lands is therefore voluntary. Owners of private property located within the boundaries of a National Heritage Area are not required to participate in it or be associated with it. Property owners within a National Heritage Area are not required to permit public or government access to their lands. Property owners within National Heritage Areas are not restricted from tearing down old buildings on their properties, or from selling or subdividing their properties, or from developing their properties.

- **Local Management**

The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will be managed by a local entity comprised according to the goal of broad and equitable representation of jurisdictions, interest groups, and cultures within the region. Every local government and tribe will be represented, as well as ranching, agriculture, nature conservation, historic preservation, arts, education, tourism, lodging, and other local business interests. Local units of the National Park Service, the National Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management will serve in advisory and partnership roles. The appointment of a representative by the State of Arizona will ensure that planning and activities are coordinated among heritage areas within the state.

GOALS

Building upon these principles, establishment of a Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will create a locally controlled framework to support the management of heritage and nature resources, without affecting property rights. The local managing entity with broad representation of the region's stakeholders will select and assist voluntary efforts to preserve, restore, and interpret the heritage

and nature resources that make this region unique. Opportunities for partnerships and funding for these activities will increase. A National Heritage Area will also coordinate promotion of the region's resources for heritage and nature tourism, and will provide a framework to link related resources with themes that are nationally distinctive.

Goals of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area:

- Increased national and international recognition of the unique history, cultural traditions, and natural beauty of this region.
- Encouragement of a stronger regional identity and "sense of place."
- Linkage of related heritage, nature, open-space, and outdoor-recreation resources for interpretation and promotion.
- Development of a coordinated, regional approach to voluntary preservation.
- Creation of new opportunities for preservation funding and partnerships.
- Stimulation of the region's economy through increased heritage and nature tourism and other types of place-based economic development.
- Balanced promotion and preservation to best benefit local communities.
- Improved cross-border tourism between the U.S. and Mexico.

BENEFITS

Many advantages to a National Heritage Area approach are apparent. It is an opportunity to make conservation more inclusive by broadening the participation of different kinds of people. It provides a way to link related resources and coordinate conservation efforts over a large area. It helps build bridges between diverse local organizations where none existed before, and provides a framework within which privately and publicly owned resources can be managed together through voluntary partnerships. It provides a mechanism to combine public and private funding to increase their effectiveness toward local goals.

Designation of a National Heritage Area will make the region eligible for federal match funding of up to \$1 million annually over a period of 15 years. The funding is administered by the National Park Service, and cannot be spent on acquiring real property. This federal seed money has proven to be an important catalyst for local fundraising. The Alliance of National Heritage Areas reports that, for every \$1 of federal match funding, the existing National Heritage Areas have leveraged an average of \$8.7 in local funding.

If the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area can match the average performance of existing ones, the total economic impacts of tourism will approximately double within ten years of designation. This would pump an additional \$1.8 billion into the local economy, and create 40,000 new jobs related to tourism. New types of jobs will also be created in the areas of historic preservation, nature conservation, resource interpretation, community development, and regional planning.

A National Heritage Area is also a way for voluntary preservation to integrate with economic land uses and community development. National Heritage Areas are compatible with economic activity because they recognize the importance of private lands, and that property owners are the primary planners of land use. Their effectiveness as an economic development strategy is demonstrated by the significant increases in heritage and nature tourism in existing National Heritage Areas, and related increases in jobs, business incomes, and tax revenues. Rehabilitation of historic buildings supported by grants and loans from a National Heritage Area, in combination with federal and state

tax credits, will create new housing, help revive historic neighborhoods and downtowns, stimulate growth of a rehabilitation industry, and open up new investment opportunities.

Some of the most important benefits of a National Heritage Area cannot be measured in economic terms. Designation will increase national and international recognition of the significant heritage, nature, open-space, and outdoor recreation resources of our region. Conservation and restoration of important natural areas will improve the quality of life in the region. Development of a stronger regional identity and a greater "sense of place" for residents will be additional outcomes. Living in a National Heritage Area, residents will find a stronger connection to the place they live, and will take greater pride in its distinctiveness. Individuals, neighborhoods, and communities that have a strong sense of place will work voluntarily to preserve the things that make their home special.

NATURE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES

The nature resources of the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area are ecologically important, including flowing streams, important desert, riparian, and grassland habitats, "sky island" mountain ranges with multiple life zones, unfragmented corridors for wildlife movements and migrations, and diverse plant and animal communities – including many endemic and tropical species that cannot be seen in other regions of the U.S. As well as ecological value, the valley's natural resources and open spaces also have aesthetic and recreational values that add to southern Arizona's high quality of life and are major draws for visitors from other parts of the U.S. and many countries. Resources for outdoor recreation and nature tourism include hundreds of miles of backcountry trails, many excellent birdwatching locations, and other natural attractions and outdoor recreation opportunities in Coronado National Forest, Saguaro National Park, Tumacácori National Historical Park, four state parks, and other parks, preserves, and public lands. Residents and visitors also enjoy many unobstructed views of scenic landscapes, clean air, and dark night skies full of stars.

Important Nature and Outdoor Recreation Resources

- Saguaro National Park
- Tumacácori National Historical Park
- Las Cienegas National Conservation Area
- One-third of Coronado National Forest
- Three National Natural Landmarks
- 4 State Parks
- 6 large county parks
- 36 nature parks and preserves
- Sky Island Scenic Byway
- Sonoita-Patagonia Scenic Highway
- 90 miles of streams and rivers that flow year-round
- Four large public lakes
- More than 600 miles of public trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking
- More than 100 miles of the Arizona Trail
- 14 developed public campgrounds
- Over 400 native bird species, and about 200 migrating bird species
- More than 100 species of butterflies
- "Sky Islands" with many unique species, including tropical species rarely found north of the Mexico border
- 9 areas with some of the highest biological diversities in Arizona
- 38 excellent bird-watching spots open to the public
- 11 nature museums and gardens
- 10 nature-themed annual events
- More than 25 hotels, inns and B&Bs are located in scenic natural settings
- More than 45 nature related businesses
- 20 nature-related organizations
- 16 outdoor recreation organizations

HERITAGE RESOURCES

The heritage resources of the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area are incredibly rich and diverse because of the long human presence in this region, its function as a corridor for exploration, contact, and colonization for a succession of cultures, and its unique mix of living cultural traditions with deep historical roots. Within the proposed National Heritage Area are several National Historic Landmarks, a 100-mile segment of a National Historical Trail, and a large number of historic districts and buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other types of heritage resources include working historic landscapes, historic communities and neighborhoods, ghost towns, historic trails, historic buildings, traditional cultural places, historical museums and parks, heritage and cultural events, historic lodgings, and heritage organizations. Traditional local crafts, foods, agricultural products, and music styles can also be interpreted and promoted as heritage resources. As well as historical value, the heritage resources of this region also have cultural and aesthetic values that add to a "sense of place" for valley residents, and attract visitors from all over the world.

Unique Heritage Resources

- 6 National Historic Landmarks
- More than 100 miles of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail
- 28 districts and 102 individual structures on the National Register of Historic Places
- 2 National Register Rural Historical Landscapes
- 12 working landscapes that support traditional rural livelihoods
- 15 historic communities more than 100 years old
- More than a dozen mining ghost towns
- Neighborhoods with Sonoran and Territorial style architecture and streetscapes
- Ruins of 19th-century U.S. Army forts
- Many miles of historic trails first used in the 18th and 19th centuries
- More than 5,000 recorded archaeological sites
- 5 National Register Archaeological Districts
- Numerous traditional cultural places
- 29 museums that interpret local archaeology, history, and cultures
- 40 archaeological and historical parks and preserves
- 40 annual heritage and cultural events
- More than 30 historic guest ranches, B&Bs, and hotels
- 33 heritage organizations

DESIGNATED NATIONAL TREASURES

Among the natural and cultural wealth of the Santa Cruz Valley are several places that have been designated as nationally significant resources. **Saguaro National Park** and the **Desert Laboratory National Historic Landmark** preserve and study the plants and wildlife of the Sonoran Desert, and the **Sky Island Scenic Byway** in Coronado National Forest provides spectacular views of one of the globally unique mountain ranges of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The rarity and biological importance of flowing water in the desert have been recognized by the designations of **Las Cienegas National Conservation Area**, and the **Patagonia-Sonoita Creek** and **Canelo Hills National Natural Landmarks**. The legacy of the Spanish Colonial and Mexican periods in the history and cultural development of the U.S. Southwest are exemplified by **Tumacácori National Historical Park**, and the **San Xavier del Bac**, **Guevavi**, and **Calabazas National Historic Landmarks**. As one of the earliest missions established in the Southwest, San Xavier also represents an important part of the cultural history of Native Americans of this region. The **Pennington** and **Binghampton National Rural Historic Landscapes** were designated to recognize the historical roots of American ranching and farming in the desert Southwest. The crucial defensive role served by this region during the Cold War is represented by the **Titan Missile Silo National Historic Landmark**. These nationally significant resources are centerpieces of the themes of the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, and are linked by those themes to related resources in the region that have national or local significance.

THEMES OF A DESERT FRONTIER

Ten themes have been identified as the special stories this region has to tell the rest of the nation, and they are unique among the 37 existing National Heritage Areas. For each theme, there is an assemblage of related and publicly accessible resources with sufficient integrities to convey the theme and its local and national significance.

- ***Sky Islands and Desert Seas.*** The forested mountain ranges of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands rise thousands of feet above desert and grassland "seas," like islands in the sky. They are globally unique because of their rich diversity of species and habitats.

- ***Streams in the Desert.*** The Santa Cruz watershed has 90 miles of streams and rivers that flow year-round. These "ribbons of life" support riparian habitats that are critical to wildlife.

- ***Bird Habitats and Migration Routes.*** A wide range of elevations and habitats support more than 400 native bird species. Rated one of the top birding destinations in the nation, the valley is also a major migratory corridor for about 200 species that winter in the tropics.

- ***Native Lifeways (11,000 B.C. to present).*** This is one of the longest inhabited places in North America, and the homeland of two Native American tribes. There are abundant archaeological traces of prehistoric cultures whose achievements include the earliest agriculture, canals, pottery, and villages in the Southwest.

- ***Desert Farming (2000 B.C. to present).*** This is perhaps the longest continuously cultivated region in the U.S, with an agricultural heritage extending back more than 4,000 years. It also has the longest history of water control in North America.

- ***Ranching Traditions (1680 to present).*** Cattle ranching is a living tradition with a three-century, unbroken link with Spanish, Mexican, and American pioneers.

- ***Spanish and Mexican Frontier (1680 to 1854).*** This region was once the northern frontier of New Spain, and later it was part of Mexico. There are well-preserved missions, presidio fortresses, and ranches from those periods, and many living descendants of early Spanish and Mexican settlers.

- ***Mining Booms (1680 to present).*** Historically, one of the most important economic activities was mining. Today, active copper mines are surrounded by the ghost towns left by several 19th-century gold and silver rushes.

- ***U.S. Military Posts on the Mexico Border (1856 to present).*** Remnants of forts show how the U.S. Army staked the nation's claim to this former region of Mexico, conducted the Apache campaigns, and prevented the Mexican revolution from spilling across the border. Bomber groups and intercontinental missiles deployed here were also critical parts of the national defense during the decades of the Cold War.

- ***U.S.-Mexico Border Culture (1854 to present).*** Despite the barriers of the international border, people on both sides are connected through family ties, economic interaction, and common history and traditions. Here, a vibrant U.S.-Mexico border culture interacts with contemporary American society and ancient Native American traditions.

MANAGEMENT

Development of the concept of a Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area has involved a gradual transition from informal meetings of small numbers of local citizens, to well-attended monthly meetings open to the public, to creation of a special-purpose, nonprofit organization to provide long-

term leadership. Input from stakeholder meetings and a large number of supporting entities and individuals indicate strong support for the concept of a new local organization that will develop and manage the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area. The unique purpose of this organization is to serve as the local coordinating entity of the National Heritage Area. With broad representation of the region's stakeholders, this local management entity will select and assist voluntary efforts to preserve, enhance, and promote the resources that make our region nationally distinctive.

The organizational concept of the proposed management entity follows the nonprofit model used by the majority of existing National Heritage Areas. In June of 2004, an Arizona not-for-profit entity, the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance, Inc., was incorporated. Members are being added to the Board of Directors with the goals of equitable representation of the two counties, and a composition that reflects the cultural diversity of the Santa Cruz Valley.

Board members will include a representative of the National Park Service (the Superintendent of Tumacácori National Historical Park), a representative of the State of Arizona (appointed by the Arizona State Parks department), representatives of both counties (appointed by the respective county Boards of Supervisors), and several at-large members representing a combination of municipalities, Native American tribes, tourism, economic development, ranching, agriculture, historic preservation, nature conservation, and culture/arts. This Board of Directors is responsible for planning, fundraising, staff hiring, and final selection of projects that will be supported.

LOCAL SUPPORT

The effort to achieve designation of a Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area has been a broadly based, local movement that has already gained the formal support of all incorporated local governments, both Native American tribes, all federal and state parks within the proposed boundaries, Governor Janet Napolitano, and the Arizona Office of Tourism. The vision of this National Heritage Area has also brought together the business, historic preservation, and nature conservation communities under the common goal of voluntary preservation and promotion of the resources that provide a high quality of life for residents and attract many visitors to the region. Letters of support by a long list of chambers of commerce, other business associations, civic groups, and non-profit conservation organizations demonstrate this broad support by the region's stakeholders (please see attached list of supporters).

The depth of local support has been demonstrated by funding provided and committed. Two counties, five municipalities, two Native America tribes, 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). In addition to the \$75,000 for the Study, we have received or have commitments for an additional \$203,000.

CONFORMANCE WITH DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The Feasibility Study, prepared with public input and funding from several local governments, shows that the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area meets all of the criteria for eligibility and designation suggested by the National Park Service. The Feasibility Study:

1. Identifies ten nationally important stories of this region;
2. Inventories the significant natural and cultural resources associated with those stories;
3. Illustrates the continuity of traditional uses of the land;
4. Demonstrates the clear support of community leaders and the public for the concept and proposed boundaries;
5. Documents public involvement in the conceptualization;
6. Describes the proposed management entity;
7. Evaluates alternatives and concludes that a National Heritage Area designation will provide the best opportunities for heritage education, interpretation, and voluntary conservation.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The Santa Cruz Valley is exceptionally qualified for designation as a National Heritage Area. This is where our Native American, Spanish Colonial, Mexican, and American Territorial heritage and traditions intersect with the natural landscape in ways unique to the American story. The broad coalition of stakeholders supporting the National Heritage Area designation will use the designation as a framework to coordinate voluntary conservation efforts, to increase the effectiveness of tourism promotion, and to diversify the region's economy through heritage-based economic development. Designation will bring national and international recognition of the significant resources of our region. Living in a designated National Heritage Area, residents will find a stronger connection to the place they live, will take greater pride in its distinctiveness, and will work voluntarily to preserve the things that make their home special.