

Testimony of
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President & CEO
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**RE: H.R. 5110: Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Boundary
Modification Act of 2010**

**Before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
June 10, 2010**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am William Doelle, President & CEO of the Center for Desert Archaeology. I am testifying today in regards to H.R. 5110 with the support of two O'odham tribes, three local governments, nine organizations, and four individuals. These supporters are summarized in a list within this statement, and attachments contain the letters or resolutions from: Gila River Indian Community, Ak-Chin Indian Community, City of Coolidge, Town of Florence, Pinal County, and the Pinal Partnership.

The Center for Desert Archaeology is a non-profit, membership organization founded in 1982 that works throughout the American Southwest and Northwest Mexico to preserve the places of our shared past. We appreciate the opportunity to state our strong support for H.R. 5110, the *Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Boundary Modification Act of 2010*. We commend Congresswoman Kirkpatrick for introducing this important legislation to advance a proposal that is ten years in the making. We commend Representative Grijalva for promptly hearing this important legislation and we urge the subcommittee to act favorably and quickly on this bill. This proposal has strong local support among a broad array of public and private stakeholders. I have provided a list of these supporters for the record along with resolutions and letters of support.

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument – A Unique and Culturally Significant Resource.

The Casa Grande Ruins National Monument preserves the remains of an ancient Hohokam farming community and "Great House," one of the largest prehistoric structures built in the United States. It is one of our most famous cultural landmarks and is prominent in Akimel O'odham, Tohono O'odham and Hopi oral traditions. Father Kino, a Jesuit missionary and explorer, described the Casa Grande in his 1694 travel diary. In 1892, three quarters of a square mile of the Casa Grande site was set aside as the Nation's first archaeological reserve. Twenty-

six years later, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the Casa Grande site a National Monument and placed it under National Park Service management.

The prehistoric Hohokam cultural landscape stretched across much of central and southern Arizona. Seven hundred years ago, their canal systems rivaled those of ancient Egypt, China and the Middle East. In the mid-1800s, these ancient canals, along with the success of Pima Indian farmers, led Jack Swilling, John Y.T. Smith, and the early Mormon pioneers of the Lehi settlement to build a new community founded on irrigation agriculture. The ancient canals served as a model for modern irrigation engineers, with the earliest historic canals being formed largely by cleaning out the Hohokam canals. The ancient ruins and canals were a source of pride to the early settlers who envisioned their new agricultural civilization rising as the mythical “**phoenix**” bird from the ashes of Hohokam society. Today the ongoing oral cultural traditions of Native Americans, the use of ancient canals and the borrowing of Hohokam symbology in public and private art play an important role in providing Arizonans with a sense of place.

The monument plays a unique federal role in the National Park System: it is the only unit that preserves and interprets Hohokam culture for public education and enjoyment. This purpose has brought 70,000 visitors to the Coolidge-Florence area each year. The Monument is the leading driver for tourism-related economic development in the Coolidge-Florence area. Efforts to protect the few remaining significant examples of Hohokam material culture off of tribal lands are essential if we are to preserve a portion of cultural legacy of this remarkable civilization as well as bolster economic development through heritage tourism.

Modifying the Boundary to Protect Significant Cultural Resources

The existing National Monument includes a portion of the of the massive Hohokam village associated with the “Great House”. This large settlement area was one of five large settlements strung like beads at regular intervals along the edge of a 22-mile long prehistoric canal that ran south of the Gila River. All together these villages formed a *Hohokam irrigation community* of perhaps ten thousand people joined together in making a living in a desert environment.

The proposed National Park Service boundary modification of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (based on a National Park Service study of parcels associated with the prehistoric south canal irrigation community) bring more of the original village (known as the Grewe site), a small portion of the Horvath Site which includes burial remains and is now managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a part of the prehistoric Casa Grande canal within the monument boundaries. It also proposes to add a large portion of Adamsville, a second large village area upstream of Casa Grande with a platform mound and ballcourt, two prominent elements of Hohokam public architecture. In the future this expansion may enable a pedestrian trail from Casa Grande Ruin to Adamsville that allows visitors to better experience Hohokam life by

walking between two of its main civic and residential centers while developing a broader appreciation of the landscape extent of the Hohokam. The legislation also proposes to transfer a small portion of land (3.5 acres) within the current Monument area to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to correct an unintentional trespass and allow for the widening and paving of the San Carlos Irrigation Project (Pima Lateral Canal).

Reasons to Include These Parcels as part of Casa Grande Ruins National Monument

During the last 100 years much of what remains of Hohokam material culture has been lost as the Phoenix-Tucson metropolitan area has become home to over 4 million people. Population projections indicate the area will double in population over the next thirty years thereby ensuring that much of what remains will be lost without further preservation action. Local communities such as Phoenix, Tucson and Mesa have preserved a part of their shared past by establishing public archaeological parks. Collectively these parks represent a small fragment of the prehistoric cultural landscape that was once present in Maricopa, Pinal and Pima counties and all, including the current National Monument, are isolated sites that do not adequately illuminate the extent of the Hohokam canal systems. Apart from tribal lands, the Hohokam features that remain in the Coolidge-Florence area may be our last opportunity to preserve a more complete picture of the Hohokam culture and to provide future visitors and researchers with a better understanding the prehistoric irrigation communities of the Hohokam. As the most significant tourism draw in the local area, the proposed boundary modification will continue to ensure that this significant federal resource continues to contribute to a diversified local economy through Heritage tourism. The proposed expansion of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument is a unique opportunity to provide for future learning and understanding of our shared past that will provide residents, visitors and researchers a collective appreciation for the scale and breadth of this past civilization.

Boundary Study

There are several additional parcels we believe may merit inclusion in the National Monument that are associated with the prehistoric north canal irrigation community. As previously stated the remaining Hohokam material remains in the Florence-Coolidge area are the best opportunity off of tribal lands to preserve a significant component of the Hohokam landscape. This study will complement the earlier NPS study of parcels associated with the prehistoric south canal and will provide a comprehensive assessment of the existing cultural resources relevant to the National Monument.

Conclusion

With the continued and desired growth of the Phoenix, Pinal, Tucson metropolitan corridor, it essential that we do all we can to preserve the remaining areas that contribute to our

understanding and appreciation of our shared past. H.R.5110 is critical to preserving an important cultural legacy for current and future generations.

Thank you for inviting the Center for Desert Archaeology to appear before you today and for considering our views.

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Boundary Expansion Partner Support

Tribal Governments

Gila River Indian Community

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Ak-Chin Indian Community

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Local Governments

City of Coolidge

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Town of Florence

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Pinal County

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Pinal Partnership

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Attachments Follow