



Santa Cruz Valley
HERITAGE ALLIANCE

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SANTA CRUZ VALLEY HERITAGE AREA APPROVED BY HOUSE

Reps. Grijalva and Giffords' Legislation Celebrates Our Heritage

TUCSON, AZ – After four years of building a broad base of bipartisan support, the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area designation is one step closer to becoming a reality. Today the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation to create a National Heritage Area in the Santa Cruz Valley.

"We applaud Congressman Grijalva and Congresswoman Giffords for supporting legislation that not only celebrates our rich cultural heritage, but also supports heritage-based economic development throughout the Santa Cruz Valley," states Vanessa Bechtol with the local non-profit Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance.

"As the local coordinating entity identified in the legislation, the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance looks forward to assisting residents, government agencies, non-profit groups and private partners to collaboratively plan and implement projects that preserve and celebrate the defining places, landscapes, and cultural traditions of the Santa Cruz Valley," says Bechtol.

All programs and projects of the National Heritage Area are conducted on a completely voluntary basis. The designation as a National Heritage Area does not have any regulatory authority and therefore does not affect land use, zoning, property taxes, or private property rights.

Upon designation, the non-profit Heritage Alliance will serve as the managing entity to assist the region's stakeholders in achieving their own preservation goals by building partnerships and bundling local funding to match federal funding and other grant sources. Prior to designation, the Heritage Alliance is already working to build regional capacity for heritage education, promotion, and preservation. A recently completed example is the region's first heritage tourism map highlighting the numerous heritage destinations within the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area. Maps are available to the public free of charge at local Visitor Centers and through the Heritage Alliance. The Heritage Alliance is currently expanding its website to support heritage tourism, heritage education, and heritage-related businesses and organizations in the region.

Also in support of the National Heritage Area concept, the Heritage Alliance is planning a heritage foods workshop for spring 2008, dedicated to promoting local heritage foods. The workshop will bring together local food producers, restaurants, food co-ops, groceries, farmers markets, seed banks, food banks, related non-profits and the public to plan a local farm-to-chef network and educate the community about the rich history of heritage foods in the Santa Cruz Valley.

The Santa Cruz Valley 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.

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