

A TOOLKIT BY HISPANIC ACCESS FOUNDATION

A man wearing a teal polo shirt, a dark baseball cap, and a watch is standing on a rocky cliff. He is holding a smartphone up to take a picture of a cityscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the city and the mountains in the background. The city is densely packed with buildings, and the mountains are visible in the distance under a hazy sky.

# NATIONAL LANDMARKS WE NEED TO PROTECT

IN HONOR OF LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK



Hispanic  
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## SPECIAL PLACES THAT NEED PROTECTION FOR LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK

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[Latino Conservation Week](#) is a time to celebrate Latino connections, old and new, to the lands, waterways, and ocean we call home, as well as the air we breathe. Unfortunately, Latinos and other communities of color continue to face the [Nature Gap](#), lacking the benefits that nearby nature brings, and far too few of the protected lands and waters in the US [tell Latino histories](#). For these reasons, this Latino Conservation Week, Hispanic Access Foundation is recommending the designation and protection of new parks, waterways, and ocean and coastal areas throughout the US that will serve Latino and other disinvested communities.

These areas, and many more that are important to local communities, will serve a vital purpose with their protection. Greenery absorbs pollution, cleaning the air, water, and soil around it. Natural spaces also moderate temperatures, keeping hot areas cooler and acting as windbreaks. Roots protect soil from erosion and the threat of mudslides, and healthy soil is better able to absorb stormwater and prevent floods. This adds up to climate resilience: mitigating the extreme heat, droughts, storms, and floods that we are increasingly experiencing with

global warming - while also absorbing carbon pollution and slowing further climate change.

It also impacts physical and mental health. Spending time in natural areas, on the coast, and around waterways has well-documented benefits to mental health, from stress reduction to decreases in anxiety and depression. They also boost physical health by making the air cleaner and incentivizing exercise, reducing the risk of lung diseases and COVID-19. Economically, green and blue spaces provide a high return for the investment in tree maintenance and trail creation, as well as lifting the outdoor recreation economy. Children's education also benefits from access to the outdoors, providing cognitive benefits, reducing stress, and enhancing motor and social skills.

Protecting these areas would provide these benefits and more to local communities and visitors, while becoming jewels in the crown of the America the Beautiful initiative to protect 30% of U.S. lands, waters, and ocean by 2030.

**Together, we can protect these sacred lands for future generations.**

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## AVI KWA AME NATIONAL MONUMENT

SEARCHLIGHT, NV

### WHAT IT IS

Located in Southern Nevada, Avi Kwa Ame is a dramatic landscape in Southern Nevada with some of the most biologically diverse and culturally significant lands in the entire Mojave Desert. The region's mountains, canyons, natural springs, and bajadas are considered sacred by ten Yuman speaking tribes as well as the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

From protecting this land tied to the creation story of at least 10 Yuman-speaking tribes, to preserving the habitats of the Desert Tortoise and one of the largest Joshua Tree forests, securing a monument designation is key to the maintenance and responsible use of the land. In addition, making Avi Kwa Ame a national monument provides an opportunity to bring Nevada's outdoor recreation economy to new towns.

### GET INVOLVED

<https://www.avikwaame.com/>



Image Credit: Bob Wick

## **BERRYESSA SNOW MOUNTAIN NATIONAL MONUMENT EXPANSION ACT**

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SACRAMENTO, CA

### **WHAT IT IS**

This bill (H.R.6366) would add the Lake County portion of Walker Ridge, known as Molok Luyuk or Condor Ridge in Patwin, to Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and ensure that federally-recognized tribes can co-manage and steward the land with their federal partners.

### **WHY IT IS NEEDED**

Condor Ridge, Molok Luyuk, is a remarkable ecological treasure commanding views of much of Northern California. The bill will protect this remarkable land from the industrial development that continues to threaten it and ensure its appropriate protection, restoration, and management.

### **GET INVOLVED**

[www.tuleyome.org](http://www.tuleyome.org)



## CASTNER RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

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EL PASO, TX

### WHAT IT IS

The Castner Range in El Paso, TX, is a [treasured mountain range and historical site](#) showing off 7,081 acres of West Texas beauty, in need of protection from the threat of development and ongoing loss of nature in America.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

El Paso communities need places to recreate outdoors, restore mental health, and enjoy the fresh air and mountain views. Communities of color in El Paso and throughout the US are less likely to have green spaces and outdoor areas to recreate, so President Biden should use the Antiquities Act to designate Castner Range as a national monument and prevent our heritage from destruction while preserving nature and climate resilience.

### GET INVOLVED

[www.castner4ever.org](http://www.castner4ever.org)



## CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ AND THE FARMWORKER MOVEMENT NATIONAL PARK

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CALIFORNIA AND ARIZONA

### WHAT IT IS

The proposed [César E. Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Park \(S.4371\)](#) would preserve the nationally significant sites associated with César E. Chávez and the farmworker movement in California and Arizona. The park would include the following sites: Forty Acres in Delano, California; the César E. Chávez National Monument, which includes La Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz, in Keene, California; and the Santa Rita Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

Our park system preserves and honors the history of America, but only [8% of historic, cultural, and public land designations are based on Latino, Black, Indigenous and other communities of color histories](#) and this offers an opportunity to expand our nation's narrative to be inclusive of the histories and contributions of Latino communities in the United States.

### GET INVOLVED

Please contact your Senators and Representative and urge them to pass S.4371 to designate the Cesar E. Chavez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park.



## CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

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MARYLAND Y VIRGINIA

### WHAT IT IS

The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure - the largest estuary in the U.S., rich with history, culture, and biodiversity, and beloved to coastal and inland communities throughout the mid-Atlantic region. It is also undergoing one of the world's largest environmental restoration efforts. This proposed National Recreation Area would add parts of the Chesapeake Bay to the National Park system, bringing more resources, attention, and coordination to the Bay's educational, conservation, and recreational opportunities.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

The Chesapeake has a wealth of natural resources, beauty, and heritage, but many low-income and communities of color lack access to it, and the [Nature Gap](#) is especially acute in mid-Atlantic states. Creating the Chesapeake National Recreation Area would help connect parks and trails, enable better access to the region's landscapes and waterscapes, and bring federal resources to conservation and nature protection.

### GET INVOLVED

<https://united4cnra.com/>





## CHUMASH HERITAGE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

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SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

### WHAT IT IS

In fall 2021, NOAA initiated the process to create a new marine sanctuary off the coast of California, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Creating this sanctuary will advance Tribally-nominated, locally led, and locally designed ocean conservation efforts.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

The Chumash Sanctuary will preserve unique and irreplaceable coastal ecosystems and safeguard thousands of years of Chumash cultural heritage by protecting sacred sites. It will also stop the threat of offshore oil expansion and provide funding for needed local marine research.

### GET INVOLVED

<https://chumashsanctuary.org/> (English)

<https://www.healthyworldforall.org/sp/chumash-marine-sanctuary.html> (Español)



## FRIENDSHIP PARK

SAN DIEGO, CA

### WHAT IT IS

On the US-Mexico border between San Diego and Tijuana, there is one place that for decades has served as a gathering area for families with loved ones across the border, who otherwise wouldn't be able to see each other in person. In 1971, Friendship Park was celebrated by First Lady Pat Nixon, who said, "May there never be a fence between these two great nations so that people can extend a hand in friendship." Today, this tiny beachside park is housed between the border fencing that runs all the way into the Pacific ocean.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

In July, the Biden administration released a plan to [wall off Friendship Park with a closed, 30-foot border wall](#) designed by the Trump administration, which would keep families apart permanently. The increasing border infrastructure threatens wildlife in the area. In addition, access to the surrounding Border Fields State Park and Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve are threatened by increasing border security infrastructure and presence, as well as onerous entry requirements that provide a high barrier to access for Latinos and others. Designating this historic site and treasured gathering place as a Historic Landmark or National Monument would enable greater access not just for cross-border families, but also for the general public to enjoy a scenic coastal area and waterway that has been out of reach for the largely low-income, Latino population of south San Diego County.

### LEARN MORE

[New Report Highlights Seven Latino Heritage Sites in Need of Protection](#)



## GILA RIVER WILD & SCENIC

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SILVER CITY, NM

### WHAT IT IS

This bill (S.3129) would protect 450 miles of the Gila River under the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Gila River system is a valuable resource to all New Mexicans in that it provides a beautiful natural landscape to be enjoyed and appreciated by people from all over, a necessary environment for wildlife to thrive, [an important window into the history of New Mexico](#), a significant agricultural resource, and an important place to further the study of our natural environment.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

Making the Gila a Wild & Scenic River would protect the free flow of the river, preserve Indigenous and Latino heritage on the river, and give New Mexicans a voice to manage the river for current and future generations.

### GET INVOLVED

<https://wildgilariver.org/>



## LOS DOS LAREDOS BINATIONAL PARK

LAREDO, TX

### WHAT IT IS

The city of Laredo, and its sister city Nuevo Laredo across the U.S.-Mexico border, are collaborating to create a binational park along the Rio Grande (known as the Río Bravo in Mexico), that would be open to visitors from the U.S. and Mexico alike. The park will cover 6+ miles of the river and 1,000 acres of land, and will help restore the river's ecosystem, offer outdoor recreation opportunities, and celebrate the heritage and culture of "los dos Laredos," which were once a single city before being separated by the international border.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

The U.S.-Mexico border, especially southeast Texas, is a hotspot for the [Nature Gap](#) - a place where nature is being destroyed disproportionately near communities of color and low-income communities. These communities have less access to the benefits that nearby parks and waterways bring, so increasing green and blue space in the area is an important way to increase equity. In addition, the Rio Grande is badly in need of conservation and restoration, and a riverside park would help with efforts to clean up the river, as well as increasing well-being and economic opportunities in the region.



Image Credit: Bob Wick

## MUTT KUPSHUW/‘ÉEXIL KWÁAVICHUSH NATIONAL MONUMENT

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SAN DIEGO, CA

### WHAT IT IS

The proposed Mutt Kupshuw/‘Éexil Kwáavichush National Monument includes federal public lands in the mountains and desert of eastern San Diego County, southern Riverside County, and southwestern Imperial County. These lands are known for their unique beauty, Tribal traditional cultural landscapes, sweeping views, special habitats and plants and animals, and popular outdoor recreation areas. In total, there are over 479,000 acres proposed for inclusion in the National Monument including six areas of the Cleveland National Forest and nearby lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

The proposed Mutt Kupshuw/‘Éexil Kwáavichush National Monument would ensure that important federal public lands along California’s southern Pacific Crest are protected and better managed far into the future. This is an opportunity to permanently protect the best of what’s left of southern California’s special natural and Tribal traditional cultural landscapes.

### GET INVOLVED

[Introduction to the Monument](#)



Image Credit: Bob Wick

## PROTECT CALIFORNIA DESERTS

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FROM PALM SPRINGS TO THE COLORADO RIVER,  
CALIFORNIA

### WHAT IT IS

Local organizations are coalescing to protect important public lands in Riverside and Imperial Counties, including designating a new national monument, increasing wilderness areas, expanding Joshua Tree National Park, and designating part of Mission Creek as a Wild & Scenic River. These efforts will also honor the homelands, sacred landscapes, and plant and animal relatives of the Tribal nations who call the area home, and elevate the legacies of César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and Larry Itliong - founders of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

This area spans a diversity of stunning desert landscapes and important values including palm oases, rocky mountain ranges, and lush desert woodlands with unique and threatened wildlife, along with historical and sacred sites. These lands are not fully protected and remain at risk from a host of threats, including mining and energy development. Protecting these lands would bring recreational and tourism opportunities, as well as equitable outdoor access to the diverse communities in the East Coachella Valley, a large proportion of which are Latino. Through this campaign we aim to empower these communities and ensure they have active engagement in, and benefit from, the protection of nearby nature.

### LEARN MORE

[Protect CA Deserts](#)



## **PROTECTING UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES BY INVESTING IN CALIFORNIA (PUBLIC) LANDS ACT**

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### **CALIFORNIA**

#### **WHAT IT IS**

This bill (S.1459) would increase protections for public lands and waters throughout northwest California, the Central Coast, and Los Angeles. It would designate nearly 600,000 acres of new wilderness, more than 583 miles of new wild and scenic rivers, and expand an existing national monument by over 100,000 acres.

#### **WHY IT IS NEEDED**

The PUBLIC Lands Act would protect California's iconic landscapes, provide critical access to open space for communities facing the Nature Gap, support California's outdoor recreation economy, and fight the climate crisis.

#### **GET INVOLVED**

<https://www.protectcapubliclands.org/>



## **WESTERN RIVERSIDE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

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RIVERSIDE, CA

### **WHAT IT IS**

This bill (H.R.972) would establish a new wildlife refuge in western Riverside County, CA. The Western Riverside Wildlife Refuge would have 500,000 acres to conserve wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity and create new public access points for the entire region.

### **WHY IT IS NEEDED**

The Western Riverside Wildlife Refuge would preserve remaining intact habitat for wildlife, while providing outdoor recreation opportunities and equitable access to nature in a highly urbanized region where Latinos and other communities of color are less likely to have parks and green space nearby.

### **GET INVOLVED**

[Western Riverside Wildlife Refuge Fact Sheet](#)





## REFUGIO DE VIDA SILVESTRE EN EL VALLE DEL RÍO GRANDE

MCALLEN, TX

### WHAT IT IS

In Southeastern Texas, the Rio Grande (known as the Rio Bravo in Mexico) flows to the Gulf of Mexico and marks the border between the US and Mexico. The border wall has been built to the north of the Rio Grande, separating the border communities of Texas from the river and enclosing a beautiful, wild riverside zone. This zone between the wall and the river would be ideal for a wildlife refuge.

### WHY IT IS NEEDED

Latino communities in the border region are overwhelmingly facing the Nature Gap – the destruction of nature nearby to them, and a lack of accessible parks and green space. Protecting this area as a wildlife refuge would give nature access to thousands of Texans and protect the natural resource of the riverine ecosystem.

### GET INVOLVED

Stay tuned for more updates!

# ABOUT US

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**Hispanic Access Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that connects Latinos with partners and opportunities, improving lives and creating an equitable society. Our vision is that all Hispanics throughout the U.S. enjoy good physical health, a healthy natural environment, a quality education, economic success and civic engagement in their communities with the sum improving the future of America. For more information, visit [www.hispanicaccess.org](http://www.hispanicaccess.org).



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