

# LAND, WATER & COMUNIDAD

TEN PLACES DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LAND & WATER  
CONSERVATION FUND TO LATINO AND OTHER DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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For many Latinos and other diverse urban communities, sites funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, often provide the only or most accessible means to experience the outdoors. From having places to connect with nature, spend time with family, enjoy outdoor recreation or explore cultural heritage, LWCF isn't just about protecting pieces of land or providing specific resources for development, it's about the connection we have with these places and what they represent for each individual and communities. These sites matter to people – and the loss of the program would be felt for generations to come.

LWCF began more than 50 years ago as a bipartisan promise that has been instrumental in creating, protecting and providing access to public lands not just for the Latino community, but also for every American across the nation – and at no cost to taxpayers. Its funding has touched nearly every county in the country and has been one of the most critical avenues in providing Latinos, low-income families, rural and urban communities with access to the outdoors.

LWCF is funded through oil and gas royalties, which is capped at \$900 million annually. However, because Congress must authorize and allocate funds to the program each year, the LWCF has only been fully funded twice in its 54-year history and in total has only received about 46 percent of the funds promised. When it originally passed in 1964, it was done so for a 50-year period. When it expired and came up for reauthorization in 2015, Congress temporarily addressed the issue by reauthorizing for a short 3-year period, leaving it to expire September 30, 2018. Without this program's existence, current and future protected lands and water sources would be left without the financial resources to remain protected and maintained.

Numerous polls show that Latinos prioritize the protection of open space, lands, waters and parks for future generations. Local economies benefit from consistent tourism and recreational visitors. The loss of the LWCF puts at risk the many workers, students, and Latino families that depend on the recreational and tourism industries for their livelihood. As parks face the threats of development, which in turn could jeopardize the historical, economical and cultural ties we maintain with these resources, it's vital to have all local communities engaged in the dialogue around balancing development with conservation for the future. Congress can certainly help by ensuring permanent reauthorization of LWCF and allocating the full funding to the program.

This report assesses ten locations (in no particular order), plus a bonus site, and demonstrates the importance and connection for Latinos, urban, rural and low-income communities, – providing access to the outdoors for every congressional district and nearly every American. These sites include:

## **#1: BILL BAGGS CAPE FLORIDA STATE PARK (FLORIDA)**

Off the coast of Miami, this island park helps preserve diverse ecology, while providing locals with a place to recreate through biking, hiking and kayaking.

## **#2: ROBERTO CLEMENTE STATE PARK (NEW YORK)**

In the heart of the Bronx, this park provides the diverse urban community with a shared community space that promotes sports and recreation.

## **#3: APODACA PARK (NEW MEXICO)**

One of the largest city parks in Las Cruces, this park is the hub of activity from birthday parties to soccer games and provides the community with great outdoor amenities.

## **#4: CHINO HILLS STATE PARK (CALIFORNIA)**

This park provides an array of outdoor activities for millions of people in Southern California and helps its visitors unplug from city life and connect with nature.

## **#5: SPRING MOUNTAIN RANCH STATE PARK (NEVADA)**

In the desert community of Las Vegas, this state park provides a unique green space against a red-rocked backdrop that the community can use for picnics, sports and gatherings.

## **#6: JOHN HEINZ NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (PENNSYLVANIA)**

This refuge, which protects a vital tidal basin, resides in Philadelphia and provides easy access to the outdoors for the city's diverse communities.

## **#7: ART DAGUE POOL AND WATERSLIDE (COLORADO)**

In rural cities like Rifle, the availability of community amenities may be lacking, but this city pool provides its youth with a place to stay active and connect with friends.

## **#8: JOSE MARTI RIVERFRONT PARK (FLORIDA)**

This Miami park not only provides the city community with outdoor space, but it also helps to celebrate the cultural heritage for many in the community.

## **#9: SAND TO SNOW NATIONAL MONUMENT (CALIFORNIA)**

This monument provides greater access for hunters and recreationists to public lands in the California desert.

## **#10: AZTLAN PARK (COLORADO)**

This neighborhood park provides a hub for recreation, gathering and connecting in this Denver community with a growing and diverse Latino population.

## **BONUS: EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK (FLORIDA)**

Like other national parks, Everglades benefits from LWCF support. From maintenance and restoration to acquiring land, the fund is a critical resource for these national gems.

LWCF has touched the lives of so many across the nation – you likely live mere minutes from a site supported by it. To let such a valuable and effective conservation tool expire would be a tragedy that would reverberate through future generations. LWCF represents a promise to the American people to conserve our public lands and water resources and ensure that everyone has access for generations to come. Let's make sure we keep that promise.



# INTRODUCTION

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Pastor Juan Almanza from Centro de Adoración Familiar in Las Vegas stands behind a barbecue grill in Spring Mountain Ranch State Park. He comments about how places like this are critical to his church and community.

Hunter Moises Moreno along with his father and uncle hike Sand to Snow National Monument in the California desert. They discuss how hunting at this place is not only a family tradition, but that it also provides a way for them to connect with one another.

Mother Christina Gonzalez swims with her daughter in the cool waters of Art Dague Pool and Waterslide in the rural town of Rifle on Colorado's Western Slope. She explains how the pool connects their community and is a safe space for her daughter to recreate.

College student Daniel Miguel rides his bike throughout the island home to Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park just off the coast of Miami. A place he enjoyed as a child, he reminisces about how the park provides a way for immigrant families to develop a sense of belonging in America.

Latino Heritage Scholar (and co-author of this report) Norma Hartell explores the grounds and the large Native American statue at Apodaca Park, one of the largest city parks in Las Cruces, New Mexico. A hub for the community, she describes how families throughout the city enjoy the park for sports and gatherings.





The common thread among each of these sites is that every single one received financial support from the Land and Water Conservation Fund – a government program funded through offshore oil and gas drilling royalties. Additionally, each of the five individuals and locations at the beginning of the introduction were featured in “Land, Water y Comunidad,” a short film (available at [www.HispanicAccess.org/LWCF](http://www.HispanicAccess.org/LWCF)) that highlights the impact the LWCF has had on Latino and urban communities throughout the United States. It also emphasizes why Congress needs to permanently reauthorize the program before it expires at the end of September and why it should to be fully funded.

It’s easy to become mired in the policy or the politics when discussing government programs and it would be simple to paint this issue with a broad “green” brush, but LWCF rises above all of this. This program is about people. It’s about the connection we all have to LWCF sites and projects. Over its 54-year history, LWCF has supported more than 42,000 federal, state and local parks and projects, touching nearly every county in the country.

Whether it’s developing a community pool, creating green space in the desert or strengthening our national parks, LWCF is one of the most critical tools for creating access to the outdoors -- especially for diverse and urban communities.

Just as the film did, this report looks to examine the connection we have with these sites – how the Land and Water Conservation Fund is about more than protecting land. It’s protecting a way of life.

As LWCF is set to expire at the end of September 30, 2018, we need to keep this perspective in mind. This program has had such a profound effect on communities throughout the nation and has made access to the outdoors possible in many places for many different types of people. Permanent reauthorization and full funding isn’t just what LWCF needs, it’s what it deserves.





PHOTO BY CAMILA OLIVARES

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# Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park is located in the island of Key Biscayne in southern Florida just outside of Miami. The state park has 1.25 miles of sandy beach, where the locals like to snorkel and swim. Other popular recreational activities at the park include boating, fishing, cycling, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, and wildlife viewing, where visitors can spot over 50 butterfly species and 170 bird species. Other park amenities include the Cape Florida Light, one of the oldest structures in southern Florida built in 1825. In 2004, the park was designated as part of the National Underground Network to Freedom Site due to it being one of the last stops in the underground railroad, where Black Seminoles would try to take a boat to the Bahamas or go north to seek freedom. The park is named after Bill Baggs, former editor of the Miami News newspaper. Baggs was also a land advocate and civil rights activist.



PHOTO BY CAMILA OLIVARES

Key Biscayne has a population of over 12,000 with over 60 percent being Latino. The Latino population benefits from all the recreational activities and the historic characteristics the site has to offer. The park provides public beach access, which is enjoyed by more than three-quarter of a million Florida residents and visitors annually, in urbanized southeast Florida.

On March 31, 1996 a 100-acre property (the initial area of Bill Baggs Cape Florida state Park) was acquired through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park has proved local residents and tourists with public beaches and natural areas for outdoor recreation and the opportunity to preserve wildlife habitats in a highly developed urban area.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park serves the predominately Latino population of Key Biscayne and Miami to provide tremendous outdoor access and activities. Beyond that, though, the park celebrates our nation's cultural heritage and history, while providing the immigrant communities of Southern Florida with a place to unite and connect.



PHOTO BY NATIONAL SWIMMING POOL FOUNDATION

# #2 Roberto Clemente State Park

Roberto Clemente State Park, named after the first Latino professional baseball player to be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, occupies a 25 acre area in Bronx, New York along the Harlem River. The park was built on the original Tremont Bridge with land donated from New York University. The original plan for the park was prepared by renowned landscape architect, M. Paul Friedberg who has made a career on focusing on the impact of social and physical issues inherent in an urban environment. The park was the first New York State Park established in New York City and since its inception it has accommodated youth, adults, senior citizens, and the physically disabled in many recreational activities. The park includes a number of amenities such as a swimming pool, baseball fields, basketball courts, picnic areas, playgrounds, and more. The park itself was opened in 1973 as Harlem Park but the name was later changed to honor Latino-American, Roberto Clemente.



As of 2017, the U.S. Census states that there were over 1.47 million people residing in the Bronx, with approximately 53 percent being Latino. The Bronx has the highest percentage of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in the United States. Roberto Clemente State Park not only honors that Latino identity that the major of the people in the Bronx identify with, but also the many recreational activities and the outdoor space many people in the area appreciate and benefit from.

“Roberto Clemente State Park is an important escape for the Bronx community, its families and our children. People of the Bronx, and residents in my district, are proud to call themselves Bronxites; we are lucky to have such beautiful

parks in our Borough,” said Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner in a press release from Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s office. While the park was heavily damaged during Hurricane Sandy, the state has invested more than \$35 million to repair damage, improve its storm resiliency and make it greener.

Funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has contributed approximately \$1,361,110 from 1979 to 2005, made the development of Roberto Clemente State Park possible.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Roberto Clemente State Park is a hub of activity in the Bronx community, which is predominately Latino. If not for parks like this, it would be difficult for many in the area to regularly access the outdoors and recreation. When surrounded by buildings and skyscrapers, outdoor space is a premium.





# #3 Apodaca Park

Apodaca Park in Las Cruces, New Mexico is one of the city's largest at 27 acres. The Park contains numerous amenities for the public to include an eight acre ball field, benches, shelters, tables, playgrounds, water fountains, grills, restrooms, tennis courts, and a public swimming pool. The park was acquired by the city of Las Cruces in 1953 starting with the ball fields and then adding the 17 acre park area. The park is named after the mayor of Las Cruces at the time, Mike Apodaca, who served from 1953 to 1955. Many residents of Las Cruces would recognize the park by the large wooden sculpture entitled "Dineh" which was dedicated in 1986 by Hungarian born sculptor Peter Wolf Toth who had embarked on a mission to have a statue in every state of the United States honoring oppressed peoples, such as the Native Americans. The statue, carved from wood and sitting on a stone pedestal, depicts the bust of a Native American Man and stands approximately 20 feet tall.



Apodaca Park is a valuable asset to the Latino population of Las Cruces, which maintains a long history of cultural diversity. As of 2010 Census data, the population of Las Cruces is approximately 56 percent Latino. Apodaca Park has provided a place for Latino families in the area to hold events such as birthdays and other celebrations as well as a place

where families can enjoy amenities that they may otherwise not have access to. The ball park hosts the Las Cruces "Vaqueros" minor league baseball team allowing for the opportunity for local Latino families to enjoy time together watching the games. As mentioned above, the park features a sculpture by Peter Wolf Toth of a Native American man that tends to make visitors reflect on our shared and complex history in the region to include the long history of Hispanic involvement in the area.

Without the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Apodaca Park would surely not be able to offer the services and benefits to the Latino community as outlined above. LWCF has supported the park beginning in the early 1970s and has been responsible for many developments and renovations at the park, including the addition of sprinkler system for the parks various sports fields.



## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Las Cruces, similar to the rest of New Mexico, is populated by a large percentage of Latinos and with Apodaca Park providing one of the city's largest green spaces, its importance as a place for family gatherings, sporting activities and play cannot be overlooked. For larger cities, LWCF is critical to outdoor access.



PHOTO BY ROBERT FANGER

# #4 Chino Hills State Park

Chino Hills State Park is 14,102 acres of open space from the Santa Ana Mountains to Whittier Hills. The park is also located within three urban counties (Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino). The site provides opportunities for tranquility, solitude, recreational outdoor activities, and relief from the urban life surrounding it. The Park is also part of an important 31 mile long regional wildlife movement corridor of natural open space, providing refuge for many species of plants and animals between Santa Ana Mountains and Whittier Hills.

Over centuries, people have made use of the space and the many natural resources Chino Hills has to offer. The Gabrielino (Tongva) Indians, who lived along the Santa Ana River basin, set up temporary camps for gathering natural resources like berries and nuts. When the Spanish arrived and set up Mission San Gabriel in 1977, the Chino Hills were used for grazing. Grazing continued up to after Mexico ceded California to the United States in 1848. In 1977, the California legislature

passed a resolution directing California State Parks to conduct a study about acquiring Chino Hills land for park purposes. In 1984, the State Park and Recreation Commission officially declared the area part of the State Park System.

The park provides many amenities. Visitors can enjoy the trails by walking, jogging, or riding horses. The park is also a popular spot for families, campers, and picnickers. As of 2010, census data, the population of Chino Hills is approximately 34 percent Latino. The park provides the opportunity for many families to connect to their roots and learn about the past through many recreational opportunities as well as through interpretive themes, resources, collections, and educational facilities like the Discovery Center.

LWCF funding has been used for Chino Hills Park for numerous commodities including to renovate facilities, created a multi-use trail, trailhead, scenic overlook, maintenance storage area, comfort station, underground utilities, erosion control measures, landscaping for ballfields, irrigation, fencing, backstops, sand volleyball court, picnic areas, parking and land acquisition. In the 1980s the park received several funds for land acquisition expanding the refuge for many plants and animals as well as for recreational use by people.



PHOTO BY ROBERT FANGER

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

From a spot to walk a pet, places to camp, or hills made for cycling and hiking, Chino Hills State Park provides an array of outdoor activities for millions of people in Southern California. Visitors can completely unplug from city life and sounds and connect with nature.



PHOTO BY ROBERT FANGER

# #5 Spring Mountain Ranch State Park

Spring Mountain Ranch State Park consists of a 528 acre forested preserve that seems to have always managed to draw the interest of humans due to the numerous springs that provide water in the area. The park is located in Clark County, Nevada — just a short drive west of Las Vegas — and offers many amenities including a visitor’s center, day use picnicking areas, group use areas, hiking trails, as well as guided tours. The park contains evidence that the many springs have provided respite to early peoples for at least 10,000 years. The springs were utilized by the Southern Paiutes and later Mountain men and early settlers. During the late 1800s the primary use of the area transitioned to a privately owned ranch. Throughout the years the Ranch has passed from owner to owner including Chester Lauck who was half of the popular comedy duo Lum and Abner, German actress Vera Krupp, and even the American millionaire Howard Hughes. In 1972, Howard Hughes sold the ranch to business partners Fletcher Jones and William Murphy. The partners quickly developed a plan to convert the scenic area into a residential area which caused public outcry.

Shortly thereafter the Bureau of Land Management in conjunction with the Nevada State Parks Department acquired the property from the partners and designated it a state park. The park was included on the National Register of Historic places in 1976.

As mentioned above, Spring Mountain Ranch State Park is located in the most populous county in Nevada. The county’s 2018 Latino population totaled 31 percent, which is higher than the state’s overall Latino population of 29 percent. Presumably this large Hispanic population benefits from access to the State Park and all of its amenities as outlined above. Access to public lands and the history that they contain is an important facet of building communities and strong family ties, especially among the historically disenfranchised such as the Latino population.

The acquisition of Spring Mountain Ranch State Park owes itself to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1973, the Nevada State Parks department in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management, was granted \$1,635,000.00 to acquire the property. The acquisition process began in 1973 and was completed in 1976.

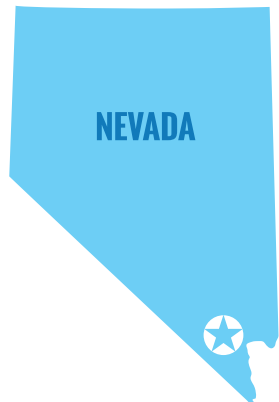


PHOTO BY ROBERT FANGER

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Spring Mountain Ranch State Park provides a green oasis in the middle of the red rocked Mojave Desert. Its close proximity to Las Vegas provides the growing diverse urban area with space for picnics, lands for hiking, fields for sports, an outdoor theater and connections to the area’s history.



# #6 John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge is 1,000 acres located in Tincum Township and spans Philadelphia and Delaware counties in Pennsylvania. The National Wildlife Refuge has 10 miles of trails and many native plants and wildlife. The Tincum marsh is well known among birdwatchers, with over 300 recorded species. The site also provides many outdoor recreational activities including canoeing, fishing, and hiking. During the 17th century (when the marsh stretched over 5,000 acres), Tincum marsh was drained and used for grazing by Dutch, Swedish, and English migrants. During the 1950s the remaining marsh was known as Tincum Wildlife Reserve and in 1965 the site was declared a National Natural Landmark. In the 1970s the area was threatened with development of an interstate and this led locals to advocate for the protection of the site. Led by local grassroots efforts, congress passed legislation to put the site in U.S. Fish and Wildlife hands and in 1972 the National Wildlife Refuge was established becoming the nation's first National Environment Center. In 1991, the



site was named for Senator John Heinz, who had been active in the conservation of the marsh.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAF

Nestled next to the Philadelphia International Airport, the refuge protects the largest remaining freshwater tidal marsh in the state of Pennsylvania. According to the 2013 Banking on Nature report (the most recent version available) from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2011 John Heinz had nearly 178,000 visitors who contributed more than \$1.4 million to local economies. Having the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge benefits the local community of Tincum Township by providing jobs, bringing revenue from visits, and providing a natural space for residents to enjoy healthy outdoor recreational activities. For those in Philadelphia,

the refuge provides a close escape from the hustle and bustle of the city

The state of Pennsylvania has received approximately \$309.8 million in Land and Water Conservation Funding over the past five decades, this includes John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge. Since the establishment of the refuge in 1972, periodic acquisitions enabled through the Land and Water Conservation Fund have helped in the expansion of the site to include creeks, fields, and managed ponds.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge not only protects Pennsylvania's largest remaining freshwater tidal marsh, but it also provides the diverse communities in the urban center of Philadelphia with access to a diverse natural environment just minutes from their doorstep and provides economic stimulation to the surrounding communities.



# #7 Art Dague Pool and Waterslide

Built in 1969, Art Dague Pool and Waterslide, located in Rifle, Colorado, offers a variety of amenities to the local population. The pool, which was upgraded in 1993 to include the addition of a 177' waterslide, offers locker rooms and showers, concession stands, shade structures, lounge chairs, tables, chalkboards, diving boards, and more. The pool also offers various opportunities for swimming lessons and training. It also holds special community events to include "Dive in" movie nights and triathlons.

The town of Rifle sits in the western part of the state. According to 2016 Census data, the population is approximately 21.8 percent Latino. Rural communities like Rifle lack much of the same amenities that larger towns and cities have, but LWCF has been instrumental in supporting rural towns throughout the country by providing support for places like Art Dague and many other local parks and sporting facilities.



COLORADO



The Art Dague Pool and Waterslide is a valuable asset for the local Latino community in Rifle as it provides an area for community involvement and development, as well as providing the assets as outlined above.

The Art Dague Pool and Waterslide has benefited from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Without LWCF, the pool would not have been able to provide what it does to the surrounding community.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Art Dague Pool and Waterslide represents a prime example of how the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides support to rural communities that are often deficient of outdoor and recreation activities found in larger cities. For a community with a significant Latino population, LWCF is certainly providing Latinos with access to the outdoors.



# #8 Jose Marti Riverfront Park

Located in the Riverside area of Miami, Florida, Jose Marti Riverfront Park is situated along the bank of the Miami River. The park contains numerous amenities including a swimming pool, shelters, baseball fields, basketball courts, restrooms, a fitness center, a track, playgrounds, as well as others. Jose Marti Park is named after Jose Julian Marti Perez, who was born in Havana in 1853 and went on to become a Cuban poet, essayist, political theorist, among other things. Often described as the “Apostle of Cuban Independence”, Jose Marti pushed tirelessly for Cuban independence from Spain. He postulated that the unique identity and culture of Cuba should allow for governance independent from Spain. He also decried slavery and openly spoke about Cuban revolution against the Spanish government. After leaving Cuba for other Latin American countries and the United States, Jose Marti returned to Cuba in the late 1800’s to fight against the Spanish for Cuban independence. He was killed in battle against the Spanish in 1895.



Due to the fact that Jose Marti Park is located in the Riverside area of Miami, it is an important resource for the Latino population in that area. The Riverside area of Miami, often referred to as Little Havana, is home to a large and diverse Latino population. Cuban, Nicaraguan, and other Latin American peoples have been settling in the area since the early to mid 1900s. After Fidel Castro took power in Cuba, the population of Cuban refugees increased substantially, which led to the large Cuban population in the area that persists to this day. Jose Marti Riverfront Park provides amenities and services to this Latino population as described above. Also, as a public space located within Miami’s Little Havana, it provides a place where the unique identity and culture of the Hispanic residents, so valued by the park’s namesake, can be expressed and appreciated.

Jose Marti Riverfront Park would not exist in its current state without the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1982 the city of Miami was granted \$672,359 to develop the park. The development took approximately three years, concluding in 1985.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Jose Marti Riverfront Park is an important resource for the Latino community, but it also represents how the Land and Water Conservation Fund goes beyond just providing access to the outdoors. LWCF also is an a major tool in preserving and celebrating our nation’s cultural heritage and shared history.



PHOTO BY ROBERT FANGER

# #9 Sand to Snow National Monument

Encompassing 154,000 acres, Sand to Snow National Monument stretches across diverse terrains, elevations, and ecosystems in Southern California. The monument, designated as such by President Barack Obama on February 2, 2016, rises from a starting elevation of approximately 1,000 feet above sea level to over 11,000 feet. The vast expanse of the monument allows for an ecological diversity that is the most botanically rich in the nation. Also, the monument is home to twelve federally listed threatened or endangered species. San Geronimo Mountain, which lies within the boundaries of the monument, tops out at over 11,500 feet above sea level. Historically the mountain has attracted various groups of people including Native Americans that held the mountain as sacred, Spanish missionaries, and later, people who recognized and wanted to experience the beauty of the unique and captivating natural features. The monument offers a variety of activities including camping, hiking, backpacking, climbing, birdwatching, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, stargazing, mountain biking, and more.



California has a rich history of racial diversity. The Pacific Coast has attracted human settlement since the first humans ventured into what is now the Americas. Native Americans and later the Spanish recognized the value of California, which includes the natural resource that is the Sand to Snow National Monument. California as a whole maintains a large Latino population. In fact, Latinos represent the largest ethnic group as a whole. Twenty four million people live within a two hour commute of the Sand and Snow National Monument. The monument itself creates a valuable opportunity for the community to interact and appreciate the natural environment in its pristine state. Due to this fact, as well as the fact that Southern California, specifically, maintains a large population that identifies as Latino, this natural resource is invaluable to the local Latino population.

While the Sand to Snow National Monument was designated in 2016, the acquisition of the land for preservation has a longer history. In 1999, a large swath of land in Southern California was acquired for preservation by the local nonprofit The Wildlands Conservancy. The acquisition of this land was accomplished through various funding sources including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was used to reacquire land that the government originally issued to privately-owned railroad companies.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Sand to Snow National Monument provides a tremendous amount of wilderness and outdoor experiences located in close proximity to a large Latino population in the California desert. LWCF helped in acquiring the land and greatly improved public land access for hunters and recreationists in the region.



PHOTO BY JENNY BRANDT

# #10 Aztlan Park

Located in downtown Denver, Colorado, Aztlan Park is a four acre urban park that provides local residents with many recreational activities. This includes a swimming pool for hot summer days, a basketball court, soccer field, a playground, picnic areas, and a community center. Aztlan Park originated with the community center, which was originally a youth center, in 1975. The park would later expand and serve the Denver Housing Authority residents and many neighboring families. The park today is used by non-profit organizations in the neighborhood and it has been used as a place for neighborhood gatherings, resource fairs for the community, and to interact with families in need.



The park is reflective of the Chicano identity in Denver, which is both Indigenous and Mexican. As of 2010 census data, over 30 percent of the population is Latino and over 2 percent Native American. Denver has a prominent history with the Chicano movement also known as Aztlan. In the 1960s, Denver had two civil rights movements, the Chicano Movement and the American Indian Movement. Both movements were concerned with with the war draft of the 1960s, the electoral process, farm workers rights, education, civil rights, housing, and land rights. Aztlan Park not only provides many recreational activities, it also provides a place where the community can reflect on their past and honor their identity.



Pete Lozano, current supervisor at Aztlan Recreation Center states "Without this park, this neighborhood would be a poor place to recreate." LWCF supported further development of the park in the 1980s and helped shape what it is today.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Neighborhood parks are critical components of any community as it provides a hub for recreation, gathering and connecting with one another. For Aztlan Park, it goes deeper in reflecting the growing, diverse Latino community and provides a way to reflect on their past. Additionally, not only does the LWCF site provide access to the outdoors, it also serves as the center for community services such as hot meals for children in need.





PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# BONUS Everglades National Park

Everglades National Park is located in southern Florida. The park encompasses 1.5 million acres and is the largest tropical wilderness in the United States. Everglades National Park not only protects natural landscapes that provide an important habitat for many rare and endangered species like the manatee, American crocodile, and the Florida panther, it also provides many recreational activities. The many amenities include hiking, camping, kayaking, biking, fishing, canoeing, and slough slogging (off trail hiking in the water where you encounter wildlife face to face.)



Before early colonial settlers, water in southern Florida flowed freely from Lake Okeechobee southward towards the Everglades creating ponds, sloughs, marshes, hammocks, and forests. By the early 1900s early settlers were draining the wetlands for development of the area. This would severely damage the many ecosystems found in the Everglades. In 1974, Everglades National Park was established in order to preserve the land, plants, and animals that are found at the park. In 1979, Everglades National Park was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Everglades National Park attracts one million visitors per year from all over the world, as well as the many local residents from southern Florida. As of 2010 Census data, the population in southern Florida is 6.696 million with over 60 percent of the population being Latino. Everglades National Park not only serves the Latino communities in southern Florida it is also a place that has been home to American Indian tribes, including, Calusa, Tequesta, Jega, and later Seminoles.

The state of Florida has received more than a billion dollars in Land and Water Conservation Funds to protect Florida's outdoor spaces and everything that resides in those public lands. LWCF has specifically helped protect Everglades National Park by restoring critical large landscapes that are crucial for the survival of the wildlife.

## WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

Just as much as the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides support to state and local parks and projects, LWCF also provides a great deal of support to federal sites like national parks. Everglades National Park is a fascinating natural landscape and ecosystem that also connects to our cultural heritage and is only a short drive west of Miami.

# SOURCE INFORMATION

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<https://www.fs.fed.us/visit/sand-to-snow-national-monument>  
[http://www.wildlandsconservancy.org/conservation\\_california.html](http://www.wildlandsconservancy.org/conservation_california.html)  
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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## **NORMA HARTELL**

Since her youth Norma has been fascinated with learning about all the different ways in which history and culture could be expressed. Her interest grew when she went to study cultural anthropology at the New Mexico State University. With the understanding that history and culture can be expressed by place, she successfully worked to list the local Chope's Town Cafe and Bar on the National Registry of Historic Places in New Mexico. She is a part of HAF's Latino Heritage Scholars -- a coalition of young professionals in the fields of cultural and historic preservation who assist communities in navigating government processes or systems and achieving permanent protections of sites that are important to Latino communities. She recently co-authored the report "Place, Story and Culture: A Top Ten List of Places Important to the Latino Community and in Need of Preservation."



## **ROBERT FANGER**

Robert Fanger currently serves as the Chief Communications Officer for the Hispanic Access Foundation. His work has appeared in many of the nation's largest media outlets, including USA Today, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, CNN Espanol and Huffington Post; and local outlets like the Denver Post, La Opinión, Telemundo and Univision. Prior to joining HAF, Robert served as the president of Fanger Public Relations, where he led communications projects and campaigns for clients such as Hispanic CREO, GEO Foundation, Starfish Initiative, IUPUI – School of Public Health, Center for Education Reform, and several others. Before launching his public relations firm, Robert served as the communications director for the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation, which was created by the Nobel Laureate economist in 1996. He holds an MBA from Purdue University and a Bachelor's in Advertising/Public Relations from Franklin College's Pulliam School of Journalism.

# ABOUT HAF

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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).

HAF was actively involved in elevating the Latino community's voice around the Browns Canyon, San Gabriel Mountains, Boulder-White Clouds, Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains National Monument efforts. Additionally, HAF has launched the initiatives Por la Creacion Faith Based Alliance, which unites Latino faith leaders around the protection of God's creation and creating tomorrow's environmental stewards, and Latino Conservation Week, which includes dozens of conservation and outdoor-related events across the country.



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