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Subject: Take Action! National Parks & Latinx Heritage Under Threat

Dear Amigxs,

Preserving Latinx heritage has always been a fight — and this year, the stakes are higher than ever. The past few months have been a stark reminder of how much work remains to ensure our stories are recognized, protected, and preserved for future generations. I write to you with both urgency and resolve as we enter a defining moment for historic preservation and Latinxs across the country.

Recent federal decisions are undoing critical progress and reducing visibility: dedicated National Park Service (NPS) staff have been dismissed, funding commitments have been rescinded, contributions are being deleted from websites, and some of our most treasured historic lands, like one million acres of national monuments are now at risk. These actions threaten not only our federal workers, public lands, and historic buildings, but also the broader preservation movement and our ability to protect the heritage of historically minoritized communities, like Latinxs.

The most immediate concern is the vulnerability of newly designated Latinx sites in rural areas and within national parks, like the [Blackwell School National Historic Site](#) in Marfa, TX, as well as those currently in line for federal support, funding, or designation reviews. The instability surrounding these sites jeopardizes their preservation, undermining years of advocacy for social and racial justice and community-led efforts.

Latinos in Heritage Conservation (LHC) is also experiencing the impact. A federal agreement to identify two Latinx heritage sites as National Historic Landmarks (NHL) could also be affected. Despite the challenges and pushbacks, we will stand firm with our partners to push this work forward. We learned from past administrations that patience is required - progress on an NHL nomination can take years. The top pressing predicaments are the lack of technical support and funding opportunities for these sites and the potential funding loss for LHC in subsequent phases.

The erasure and silencing of our work does not stop here.

Last month, a webinar I recorded with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) was taken down, and a second webinar, which focused on threatened and endangered Latinx sites, was canceled altogether. Even more concerning, NPS removed Rio Vista Bracero Reception Center—an essential Bracero history site and the most recently [designated Latinx National Historic Landmark](#)—from its website, despite its [May 2024 ribbon-cutting ceremony](#), and being the first NHL with a bilingual plaque. This erasure of the contributions of millions of Braceros and their families, who aided the U.S. during wartime labor shortages, is appalling. Their history matters—to me, to LHC, and to the millions who descend from the program. These actions send a chilling message about whose history is valued and whose can be thrown away. In addition to this, on March 1, English became the official language of the

US, despite 250 years of linguistic diversity. Now, important resources, such as legal documents and federal websites, are no longer translated into Spanish. These acts of violence contribute to the erasure and assimilation process of Latinxs in the country

LHC, like many other organizations, feels directly targeted by these actions. This is a part a broader pattern that threatens the integrity of our nation's commitment to preserving Latinx stories, narratives, and our collective experience. The setbacks we face today will reverberate for decades to come.

Now, more than ever, we must stand united. We need your voices, your advocacy, and your support to ensure that Latinx history is not erased from the national landscape. In the coming weeks, we will share ways to take action—through petitions, direct outreach to decision-makers, and collective advocacy efforts.

This fight is far from over, and together, we will push forward. Our history, Latinx history — *is* American history, and we will not allow it to be sidelined.

Thank you for standing with us.

Juntos seguiremos,

Sehila Mota Casper

Executive Director

Latinos in Heritage Conservation