

A man with a grey beard and short dark hair is shown from the chest up, looking off to the left. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt with small white dots. The background is a desert landscape with brown, rocky hills under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

CULTURAL EROSION

THE CLIMATE THREAT TO LATINO HERITAGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Latinos in the United States are facing challenges to their health, safety, food security, livelihoods, and cultural legacy as a result of the severity of climate change’s consequences. The impacts of climate change on cultural heritage, and consequently on the mental health, traditional knowledge, and identity of U.S. Latinos, are, nevertheless, often ignored.

This report aims to elevate these issues by discussing the connections between Latino communities, history, well-being, and climate change. It answers the question of what Latino heritage is, why it matters, and how it is affected by climate change and the legacies of colonialism – and how, in turn, heritage protection can be a climate and equity solution. The report features case studies of both climate threats and solutions for heritage preservation, along with a set of policy recommendations to better preserve all aspects of Latino heritage from the threats it faces.

CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES CREATED BY HISPANIC ACCESS FOUNDATION TO LEARN MORE:



[Place, Story and Culture:
An Inclusive Approach to
Protecting Latino Heritage Sites](#)



[Protecting Our Ocean:
Toolkit for Achieving Federal Ocean
and Coastal Protections](#)



[Agua Corriente:
The Latino Connection to
Waterways Report](#)



INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS LATINO HERITAGE?

WHAT IS HERITAGE?

Heritage is a broad concept. It includes shared legacies from the natural environment, the creations of humans, and the creations and interactions of humans and nature. It encompasses built, terrestrial, freshwater, marine environments, landscapes and seascapes, biodiversity, geodiversity, collections, cultural practices, knowledge, living experiences, and more.

In this report, we talk about heritage without separating it into 'natural' and 'cultural' because everything we inherit is shaped by both human activity and the environment. By considering all types of heritage, including tangible things and intangible traditions, we explore better ways to protect our rich, shared legacies against future threats. Although often overlooked in crisis planning, heritage gives communities vital places to gather, share resources, and keep cultural practices alive, especially during disasters.

WHAT IS LATINIDAD?

"Latinidad" is a complicated and multifaceted term encompassing the cultural, social, and ethnic identification of Latin Americans and their descendants. It refers to the shared cultural history,



traditions, and stories of individuals and groups from Latin America, along with international locations in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and parts of North America, including Mexico. Thus, it is essential to emphasize that *Latinidad* isn't a monolithic or homogeneous concept; it acknowledges the diversity of Latin American cultures and identities. In the United States of America and parts of Latin America, the terms "Latinx" and "Latine" are becoming increasingly popular as gender-impartial alternatives to *Latino/a*.

Though presented as a broad cultural identity, *Latinidad* has often favored a specific group. When we consider how close someone is to being seen as white, in addition to factors like gender, sexual preference, and physical abilities, it makes us wonder: who gets included, who gets prioritized, and who gets left out of *Latinidad*?¹

LATINIDAD AND COLONIAL HERITAGE

Latinidad as an identity and both a socio-cultural and geopolitical construct is tethered by its shared history of European colonization, whether Spanish, French, or Portuguese. Thus, *Latinidad* attempts to fuse elements of European oppression and culture with those of Indigenous heritage and/or African ancestry, often resulting in both intentional and unintentional erasure of the latter two. Therefore, *Latinidad* is constructed in a way that, rather than unifying, often marginalizes and further diminishes the voices of Black and Indigenous individuals within the shared dispersion or spread of a people from their original homeland also known as diaspora.

Arguably, the cultural erasure present in Latin America is compounded within the U.S. Latino diaspora. The tension between Latino heritage and U.S. 'American' culture creates subcultures and identities parallel to assimilation and white supremacy.

Efforts to identify, conserve, and protect U.S. Latino heritage have mimicked the U.S. colonial/imperialist narrative by favoring the European 'Spanish' influence. Therefore, this colonial legacy is seemingly overrepresented in the narratives of the U.S. Latino heritage, especially amongst the architectural fabric of national historic site designations. We have often looked to Spanish architectural roots and influences to identify, conserve, and protect the U.S. Latino Heritage. At the same time, as indicated by the National Park Service's Latino Theme Study, *Latinidad* as a concept in the U.S. "refers to a long historical process through which those perceived as Hispanic and/or Latino were thought of as a different kind of people—politically, culturally, and racially—than the truly 'American.'² Thus, to identify, amplify, and protect Latino heritage, we must carefully consider how *Latinidad* can become a conduit to dismantle this 'othering' even amongst our own communities.

EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY, CONSERVE, AND PROTECT U.S. LATINO HERITAGE HAVE MIMICKED THE U.S. COLONIAL/IMPERIALIST NARRATIVE BY FAVORING THE EUROPEAN 'SPANISH' INFLUENCE.



WHY DOES HERITAGE MATTER?

In the U.S. and internationally, the benefits of preserving heritage are bound to capitalistic tendencies such as increased property values and economic activity such as tax revenue generated. As a result, conversations regarding heritage conservation are tied to neighborhood revitalization and economic development, thereby historically excluding Latino communities. Economic development and neighborhood revitalization initiatives often cause gentrification, disproportionately impacting Latino communities. Displacement thereby destroys the intangible and tangible heritage present. In order to ensure that Latino communities are not bearing the brunt of the negative impacts of economic investment decisions, heritage can be a pathway to empower communities and facilitate dialogue between key stakeholders.

BUILDS COMMUNITY PRIDE

Heritage places are tangible links to the past. They honor the wisdom and accomplishments of people who came before us and reflect the events that created our communities. Each community's unique history is written in its landscape, buildings, and streets. As a result, heritage landmarks serve as memories of a shared history that help define the character of our cities, towns, and rural areas, and build our sense of identity.

ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE

Our communities' livability and quality of life are significantly influenced by our structures, landscapes, and other human-made surroundings. Historic neighborhoods that have been maintained provide a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere. For locals and visitors alike, their distinct personality, human scale, and familiarity create a strong attachment to a place.

STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES

Heritage sites foster a sense of shared history and strengthen a sense of community among locals. Heritage conservation assists in preserving enduring social relationships and community networks by reviving older neighborhoods. After a disaster happens, heritage sites can also serve as locations for rehabilitation and disaster relief.

PROMOTES SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Heritage preservation promotes participation in civic affairs and supports lifelong learning. Building resilient, socially sustainable communities depends on giving individuals the tools to advance their skills and capacities and become active citizens. Heritage sites serve as instructional tools that aid in understanding and appreciating culture, history, technology, art, and architecture. Participation in cultural activities and membership in heritage groups fosters interest in local concerns and encourages engagement in local decision-making.

SUPPORTS MENTAL HEALTH

There are specific ways to use heritage to move forward from a painful past. In terms of disasters, heritage sites frequently serve as recreational areas that, in times of emergency, are crucial for assisting people in regaining a feeling of normalcy and in re-establishing contact with a damaged landscape. In addition, research has suggested that people who have PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and other psychological disorders who practice archaeology as a hobby feel that it has a significantly positive and lasting effect on their health and well-being.

Too often, our stories and contributions to this nation are left unrepresented in the narrative that our public lands and designated historical sites portray. Thus, the protection of existing monuments and historical sites, such as the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument in California and Casa Amadeo in New York, and the creation of new parks and monuments, are an opportunity to expand our nation's narrative to be inclusive of the histories and contributions of diverse Latino communities throughout the United States.

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HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE THREATEN LATINO CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES?

Extreme weather brought on by climate change disproportionately affects U.S. Latinos and occurs in locations significant to Latino populations, heritage, and history. The danger of losing places significant to our communities causes feelings of loss and the world slipping away, a form of climate grief.

Climate change and the resulting impacts have posed significant threats to both tangible and intangible Latino heritage in the United States. Over half of the U.S. Hispanic/Latino population resided in states with the highest levels of climate change threats, such as air pollution, extreme heat, and flooding.³ Moreover, approximately 71% of Hispanic/Latino adults said climate change impacts their local community at least some in a Pew research center survey.⁴ In Texas and Florida, many are concerned with the effects of sea-level rise, extreme temperatures, droughts, and variable precipitation regimes.

Crops, as a form of Intangible Cultural Heritage, in the coastal regions of states like Texas and Florida are at risk of saltwater intrusion into groundwater used for irrigation.

OVER HALF OF THE U.S. HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION RESIDED IN STATES WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS, SUCH AS AIR POLLUTION, EXTREME HEAT, AND FLOODING.³



Whereas in New Mexico, primary concerns are the reduced snowpack and loss of precipitation, coupled with increased drought and wildfire severity.⁵ Additional hazards like erosion and wildfires are endangering vital heritage of U.S. Latino communities, causing displacement and loss of traditions. The destruction of heritage sites due to climate change is already impacting communities globally through the displacement of people, loss of knowledge, traditions, and more.

Recently, Intangible Cultural Heritage has been expanded to include food culture from production, processing, and storage to culinary, eating, and social practices.⁶ Hispanic producers accounted for 32 million acres, and 21.8 billion dollars in agriculture sales in 2017 with the top 3 states being Texas, Florida, and New Mexico.⁷ In this sense, the Intangible Cultural Heritage of agricultural practices,

especially in Florida and Texas, are threatened by a changing climate as crops once grown in certain regions may not be as productive as they once were. It could also threaten the traditional practices of how crops are grown as traditional practices may not be able to maintain productivity in their original places with a changing climate.

In Florida, the citrus, strawberry, and sugarcane crops are the most heavily produced.⁸ However, Texas also contributes to many agricultural products and includes cotton, hay, and corn as its major products.⁹ While these states have vastly different primary crops, many of their concerns are similar, including sea level rise, rising temperatures, more severe droughts, and more variable precipitation regimes. These novel threats to agriculture are changing the Intangible Cultural Heritage of local producers, traditions or practices will have to be developed, or producers will have to relocate, as climate migrants, to regions where conditions will be suitable for the crops they would traditionally grow.

The displacement of Latino communities along the U.S. coast due to coastal erosion, exacerbated by climate change, not only results in physical relocation but also has a profound impact on their intangible cultural heritage. This encompasses traditions, customs, and various facets of their vibrant cultural heritage. Heritage holds significance when individuals attribute meaning and value to it, and climate change can adversely affect traditional knowledge and vital cultural characteristics within a community, leading to a loss of resilience.

LATINO HERITAGE – IN ALL OF ITS MANIFESTATIONS – IS UNDER THREAT FROM CLIMATE CHANGE.

SEA-LEVEL RISE

Coastal regions boast numerous Latino sites, and site submergence and wear result from escalating ocean tides. The foremost climate threat in coastal areas is rising sea levels, and inundation increases the danger to fragile cultural landmarks.

CHANGES IN PRECIPITATION AND STORM INTENSITY

Extreme precipitation, both too much and too little, will also impact cultural heritage sites, both natural and built. Sites with decreasing rainfall will experience drying soils that may heave or crack. In cases where extreme precipitation is increasing, higher relative humidity will accelerate the corrosion of materials and increase occurrences of mold and decay.¹⁰

EROSION

Localized or widespread weathering due to climate variability endangers ancient remains' integrity. Soil displacement often leads to artifacts being taken out of context or disconnected from their context. Consequently, this can lead to looting or illicit trade of artifacts. With its influence on rising sea levels and the increased frequency and intensity of storms, climate change significantly exacerbates coastal erosion, leading to the loss of archaeological sites.

TEMPERATURE EXTREMES

The Latino community accounts for 46% of construction laborers and 47.2% of agricultural field workers in the U.S., and extreme summer heat in the U.S. poses threats to the continuity of these forms of livelihoods.¹¹ Impacts of increased temperatures will also exacerbate deterioration rates both terrestrially and in aquatic/marine environments through erosive or corrosive processes for both natural and built heritage sites.¹² While rising temperatures will stress all crops, they also increase the threat wildfires and droughts will pose to the structural integrity of both natural and archeological heritage sites.¹⁰

CLIMATE GENTRIFICATION

Climate gentrification arises from climate-induced migration, involving shifts in population due to environmental alterations resulting from climate change. This phenomenon leads to the displacement of specific lower-income communities, making way for more affluent ones in terms of housing and residency.

In all instances mentioned above, climate change affects not only the tangible aspects of heritage like the cultural heritage sites, unique natural environments, or foods and crops grown, but also the intangible aspects of heritage like practices, knowledge, skills, and traditions. For climate migrants, there may be a sense of place-based identity loss, or a loss of cultural heritage sites, or even a change in food culture from what is grown to how it's grown and the knowledge and traditions that go with it. This also includes those involved with ecotourism, the wider tourism industry, and how access to nature may change.





CASE STUDIES

MABODAMACA COMMUNITY NATURAL RESERVE IN ISABELA, PUERTO RICO

Mabodamaca Community Natural Reserve has long been prized for its dunes. Located in Isabela, Puerto Rico, the reserve's dunes are crucial for ecosystem health, climate resilience, and shoreline preservation.¹³

In the 1950s, these dunes began to be severely damaged by U.S.-based companies. With support from the U.S. government, companies extracted tons of sand for construction purposes and subsequently dwindled the reserve's dunes.¹³ For decades, the reserve was degraded into a makeshift landfill, and without any intervention from government agencies, Puerto Rican and U.S. alike, it continued to be riddled with the dredges of human extraction.¹³

The dunes and coastal mangroves protect the island from disastrous storm surges. Without them, Puerto Rico is still suffering to this day from coastal flooding in coastal and inland areas alike.¹³ What's more, climate change is exacerbating this issue by increasing the intensity and frequency of hurricanes, as shown by the devastation from 2017's Hurricane Maria.

The emergence of local community-based organizations such as Conservacion Costera has united Isabela and surrounding communities behind the improvement of the reserve. Since 2006, community volunteers have planted more than eleven thousand mangroves and other

SINCE 2006, COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS HAVE PLANTED MORE THAN ELEVEN THOUSAND MANGROVES AND OTHER COASTAL PLANTS, BUILT BACK THE DUNES, AND REMOVED TRASH AND OTHER DEBRIS.



coastal plants, built back the dunes, and removed trash and other debris. Isabela is one example of community self-management, having single-handedly restored the reserve through volunteer efforts.¹³

Today, Puerto Rico is still not immune from extractive activities. Companies continue to extract resources such as sand from the island illegally and in the dead of night to avoid patrols. The community, therefore, continues to fight to protect the reserve's abundance of species and the vibrancy of its biodiversity, being an active nesting site for the leatherback sea turtles and a multitude of bird species.¹³

LITTLE HAITI, MIAMI, FLORIDA

Little Haiti in Miami has stood as a vibrant immigrant community for decades. Its streets are adorned with quaint residences and vibrant shops, all serving the needs of this predominantly Afro-Caribbean neighborhood.

For over a century, the area now recognized as Little Haiti had a historical identity as Lemon City. After the Civil War, numerous individuals settled on unclaimed land adjacent to Biscayne Bay, north of the Miami River. Eventually, these settlers formally applied for homestead grants for the land they had been inhabiting.

After enduring years of political unrest and disasters in their homeland, Haitians sought economic prospects in the United States. In the 1970s, a significant wave of Haitian immigrants found a home in South Florida. The Haitian American community in Miami-Dade County is the largest in the United States¹⁴, and despite facing racial and economic prejudices, these communities have thrived. With rising sea levels posing a growing threat, local community activists in Miami's predominantly Black neighborhoods are focusing on resilience efforts and fighting ongoing gentrification. They aim to empower the residents rather than displacing them, seeking to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Among the impacts on tangible heritage is the loss of historic structures. Gentrification often involves demolishing or renovating older buildings to make way for new developments. This can result in the loss of historically significant structures, erasing the physical history of this Afro-Caribbean neighborhood. Gentrification inevitably brings the displacement of longstanding residents and businesses, disrupting both the physical and social fabric of a community. Rising property values and rents force people to leave, which can alter the community landscape through the replacement of traditional storefronts with modern commercial establishments, thereby impacting the once-familiar streetscapes.

However, it is important to recognize that the risk of loss extends beyond tangible heritage, such as historical structures and culturally significant areas that encapsulate the neighborhood's stories. With the displacement of residents and the demographic shifts, there is a potential loss of intangible heritage. This includes the erosion of cultural traditions, languages, and vital social networks integral to the community's identity and in some cases, leads to the commercial appropriation of cultural elements.



In neighborhoods like Little Haiti, where close-knit communities are the norm, the upheaval caused by displacement and gentrification poses a significant threat to preserving collective memory and cherished cultural experiences that define the area. Furthermore, the environmental strain brought on by flooding can negatively affect community well-being, leading to the disruption of local events, the degradation of public spaces, and the erosion of the fundamental sense of place that plays a pivotal role in shaping Little Haiti's intangible heritage.

EL CAMINO REAL DE TIERRA ADENTRO (ROYAL ROAD OF THE INTERIOR LAND), SPANNING FROM SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO TO MEXICO CITY, MEXICO



In the Southwest U.S. there is a pan-national trail, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro or Royal Road of the Interior Land, that spans from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Mexico City, Mexico. This trail has a rich and complicated history between a variety of European and non-European empires.¹⁵ It includes world heritage sites on the Mexican side, while the United States has declared its portion a national historic trail. The trail's historic multipurpose function and multicultural influences that undoubtedly shaped the physical and cultural landscapes of the Southwest and the lives of its people established it as a national historic trail.¹⁵

While most of the U.S. portion of the trail resides in New Mexico, there are portions of it in Texas, and many aspects of Latino heritage can be found throughout the trail. From unique natural

environments like those present in the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge to built cultural heritage sites like Kuaua Ruins or historic adobe structures, Latino heritage could be at risk from the impacts of a changing climate. Preserving these pieces of heritage inspires those to connect with and explore the landscapes, stories, and intangible heritage associated with this historic trail.¹⁵

Temperatures in New Mexico have risen over 2°F since the beginning of the 20th century. Increases in temperatures impact the number of extremely hot days and the potential for drought and wildfire. Drought conditions for New Mexico are also projected to become more intense in the future. Unlike many areas of the United States, New Mexico has not experienced an upward trend in the frequency of extreme precipitation events. However, the monsoon rains can be highly beneficial while occasionally being destructive.¹⁶

Drought and fire impact the vegetation surrounding cultural sites and, as a result, influence the vulnerability of cultural resources. While long-term drought minimizes grass cover that feeds wildfire, it also provides ripe conditions for erosion and flash flooding during the summer monsoon season.^{15,17} A burst of rain may increase vegetation growth, which in turn can fuel fires.

In 2000, an extensive fire burned nearly all homestead archeological sites at Bandelier National Monument, most of which were constructed of wood.^{15,17} Park staff helps archeological sites resist climate change by slowing the factors that exacerbate the effects of climate change. For example, researchers at Bandelier have found that reducing the density of trees and using the cut trees as a type of slash mulch to provide an “erosion blanket” on bare soils produces a three-fold increase in understory grasses, shrubs, and forbs. The process greatly reduces soil erosion while stabilizing cultural resources.

The intensity and duration of rain events contribute to the severity of erosion and the occurrence of catastrophic collapse of earthen structures.¹⁸ Knowledge of adobe architecture and other earth-building traditions of New Mexico and West Texas is of high priority for protection in terms of heritage. This knowledge has been put into practice to preserve buildings in multiple El Camino Real sites during the past several years, preserving both the tangible and intangible heritage associated with it.¹⁵

The community’s work to preserve its architectural history is best represented by the adobe Our Lady of Candelaria church, which blends Spanish, Mexican, and New Mexican architecture and design.¹⁵ After certain maintenance strategies risked a potential collapse, meticulous restoration efforts, including the making of 17,000 replacement adobe bricks, has helped restore this heritage site.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HERITAGE AND CLIMATE FROM THESE INITIATIVES

- The Climate Heritage Network, launched in 2018, brings together over 200 sector actors in a ‘voluntary, mutual support network of arts, culture and heritage organisations committed to aiding their communities in tackling climate change and achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement’. Find out more at <https://www.climateheritage.org/>.
- The Emerging Conservation Professionals Network within the American Institute for Conservation has launched a podcast entitled Conservators Combating Climate Change. Listen on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, and more.
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Advisory Committee on Living Heritage and Climate Change organized a Scientific Symposium in 2021, whose results can be found at <https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/governance/general-information-about-the-general-assembly/annual-general-assembly/97583-2021-icomos-scientific-symposium>.



SYSTEMIC ISSUES AND THE DIASPORA PERSPECTIVE

New Mexico. Colorado (coh-lo-ra-do), California (Cahl-lee-four-nee-ah). It is no coincidence that the southwestern states of the United States have Spanish-sounding names. Following the Mexican-American War (1846-48), half of Mexico's territory became part of the United States under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848.¹⁹ Mexican citizens habiting these areas had to choose whether to relocate south of the new U.S.-Mexico border or become full U.S. citizens.

Nowadays, four in five Latinos (81%) living in the United States are U.S. citizens.²⁰ Despite the majority of Latinos living in the U.S. legally, a false narrative of rampant illegal immigration and employment competition has persisted over time. Political discourse has weaponized this narrative as a rallying tactic meant to cast Latinos as an "out-group" bent on curbing national progress.²¹ Manipulating Latino history is not a phenomenon limited to the present but has instead been a recurring issue since the Spanish colonization of Latin America. For decades, this narrative was told and even utilized by the National Park Service to designate and celebrate "Latino heritage".¹⁷

Recently, there has been a growing movement to reeducate the public on Latino heritage and history, recognizing the horrors of imposed colonialism and systemic discrimination. Latino heritage spans centuries before the Spanish arrived in Latin America, and included prolific and captivating civilizations throughout Mesoamerica, the diverse civilizations that shared similar cultural characteristics in the geographic areas comprising the modern-day countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. For the Indigenous communities of Latin America, Spanish "exploration" and continued neocolonialism, the maintenance of colonial or imperial forms following the recognition of independence, bring environmental and physical destruction, violence, disease, and cultural appropriation.²²

What the accurate retelling of Latino heritage accomplishes is an opportunity to revise our biases and misconceptions and move forward in a more unified and accepting approach to protecting our lands and waters from climate crises and degradation.

LATINO HERITAGE SPANS CENTURIES BEFORE THE SPANISH ARRIVED IN LATIN AMERICA, AND INCLUDED PROLIFIC AND CAPTIVATING CIVILIZATIONS THROUGHOUT MESOAMERICA, THE DIVERSE CIVILIZATIONS THAT SHARED SIMILAR CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COMPRISING THE MODERN-DAY COUNTRIES OF MEXICO, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, BELIZE, EL SALVADOR, NICARAGUA, AND COSTA RICA.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTING HERITAGE AS A CLIMATE SOLUTION

The following recommendations rely on a foundation of historical recognition, conscious progress towards eliminating stereotypes, and willingness to use a multilateral conservation approach centered on local communities to protect our natural and cultural heritage.

DEVELOP AN INVENTORY OF EXISTING HERITAGE AT RISK

Each year, the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) lists the “Most Endangered Historic Places”. Although not limited to climate risks, the list depicts the undeniable overlap between environmental impacts and communities of color, and the annual story and documentation of these sites is critical for their preservation. Yet, efforts to amplify and address these issues are rarely intersectional. In addition, while we applaud this annual effort, there remains a need for a comprehensive list and documentation of at-risk heritage to draw from for protection and amplification efforts.

REQUIRE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Require community engagement as a foundational pillar for addressing climate change and protecting heritage. Heritage is a proven tool for empowering communities and amplifying a shared community identity. Community-driven decision-making is critical to ensure that community needs and best interests aren't overlooked. Thus, prioritizing community self-determination and restorative justice is necessary to address climate impacts at all levels. We must also concentrate resources in low-income, historically disinvested communities of color to mitigate these impacts.

INCLUDE TAINO DESCENDANTS INTO THE NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT

The Act, known as NAGPRA, requires federal agencies and institutions that receive federal funds to repatriate human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiians.²³ Yet, the law does not include descendants of the Taino Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean.

URGENTLY, COMPREHENSIVELY, AND JUSTLY REDUCE CLIMATE POLLUTANTS



The U.S. Latino community is disproportionately affected by the causes and effects of climate change.²⁴ 96% of U.S. Latinos say environmental issues like pollution and global warming are personally important to them.²⁵ The U.S. Latino community is on the frontlines, facing stronger effects of climate change because of where Latino people live and work. Climate solutions include both mitigation and adaptation strategies. Mitigation involves reducing climate pollutants from various sources such as oil, gas, coal, waste, and agriculture while also promoting a just transition toward a climate-friendly economy. Simultaneously, adaptation strategies aim to bolster a community's resilience against climate

hazards and disasters, which are exacerbated by rising global temperatures. By integrating these actions, communities are empowered to prepare, withstand, and recover from the amplified risks presented in an increasingly warmer world, ensuring that they can navigate and respond to the evolving challenges of the climate crisis effectively and sustainably.

Climate policies must not overlook the intersection between environmental issues, jobs, health, education, and displacement when it comes to impacts on the Latino community.

FOR A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT THESE INTERSECTIONS



**Hispanic Access Foundation's
2023 Environmental Policy Toolkit**

ENDNOTES

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ABOUT US

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.

Hispanic Access Foundation 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, Castle Mountains National Monument, and Castner Range National Monument efforts. Additionally, Hispanic Access 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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