



Collaborating with Latinx Organizations and Communities

Backman Elementary School students paddle on the Jordan River in Utah, many for the first time. The National Park Service is helping the school plan and develop open space and a footbridge to connect the community to the outdoors. *Photo courtesy of Backman Elementary School.*

How Does the National Park Service - *Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance* Program Collaborate with Latinx Communities?

Latinx* organizations across the United States have invited the National Park Service – *Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance* (NPS-RTCA) program to partner with communities in making their conservation and outdoor recreation visions a reality. Together, we have worked to create and restore parks and trails, and conserve lands and rivers. The National Park Service (NPS) has helped strategize solutions and develop diverse outdoor recreation opportunities in Latinx communities.

Latino Outdoors 2020 – Connecting Cultura and Community with the Outdoors

In 2017, NPS-RTCA supported the development of *Latino Outdoors 2020 – Connecting Cultura and Community with the Outdoors*, a strategic plan to promote culturally relevant outdoor connections and leadership. The NPS tapped the creative spirit and knowledge of the community through a series of facilitated conversations focused on the history, success and aspirations of the organization. The plan highlights three focus areas; “Vamos Outdoors” (Building Outdoor Connections), “Juntos Mejor” (Building Volunteer Leadership and Engagement Together), and “Strong Raices” (From our Roots, Supporting and Sustaining a Successful Organization). The NPS coupled planning assistance with fund development support through research, writing and sharing of best practices as a boost to Latino Outdoors’ capacity building efforts.

Creating a Diverse Workforce

Hispanic Access Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing access, developing leaders and elevating voices in Latinx communities, works in partnership with NPS-RTCA to help bridge the career gap for Latinx conservation enthusiasts. What started as two fellowship positions in 2018 has blossomed into 13 funded positions throughout the country.

The National Park Service has recently filled many vacant permanent positions with Latinx staff who were mentored in our emerging leaders fellowship program, like the Hispanic Access Foundation’s MANO Project (My Access to Network Opportunities). To learn more about the MANO Project and apply for open fellowship positions, visit manoproject.org



After completing their fellowships, fellows are eligible for a noncompetitive hiring authority for permanent National Park Service positions. *NPS photo.*

**Latinx is an inclusive gender neutral term for Latino/Latina.*

Community-Driven Conservation and Recreation Projects

Superior Waters and Trails Action Plan

In assisting local partners, the National Park Service helped complete a five-year action plan to enhance recreational and natural values in Superior, Arizona, a town with predominantly Hispanic residents. The plan identifies projects that will restore and conserve Superior's Queen Creek and plant life, as well as connect the town to improved local trail systems, making Superior a top destination for outdoor recreation.



Community members participated in design workshops and collaborated with the National Park Service in creating the Superior Waters and Trails Action Plan. *NPS photo.*

National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program



For more information visit
<https://nps.gov/rtca>

Veredas del Noreste (Northeast Puerto Rico Trail Network)

The National Park Service is working with communities of northeast Puerto Rico to create trail connections between historical features, open spaces, residences, schools, local and regional facilities, and businesses that contribute to a vibrant and accessible community. The youth are active participants in the planning process, from mapping workshops to “Remo Verde” (Green Paddle), the youth leadership and recreational development program that helps middle-schoolers develop conservation leadership ethics by experiencing the outdoors. This project will engage participants and hikers with history and culture while inspiring them to protect and conserve Puerto Rico's treasured natural environment.



Contractors work on rebuilding El Yunque's trail system, which will link the national forest to the surrounding communities. *Photo courtesy of Preston Keres, USDA.*

San Felipe Creek

The San Felipe Creek provides Del Rio, Texas with water, recreation opportunities, and a wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, flooding, invasive species and inadequate creek stewardship over the years have impacted the stream's health and function. To address these concerns, the National Park Service helped the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and “Protect San Felipe Creek,” a coalition of citizens and local organizations working to clean up and protect the creek and its ecosystems.

The National Park Service assisted the coalition with:

- Mapping sensitive resources and invasive species
- Developing educational materials and a conceptual plan for a creek-side nature park
- Conducting user and area resident surveys
- Forming a local chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, a volunteer-based organization focused on interpretation and conservation of the state's natural resources.



Ongoing conservation efforts continue on the San Felipe Creek which flows through the heart of Del Rio, Texas. *Photo courtesy of San Felipe Del Rio Cisd.*