



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hispanic Community Leaders in Doña Ana County tell Zinke to Protect their History

LAS CRUCES – More than a dozen Hispanic community and elected leaders from Doña Ana County sent a letter to U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke urging him to honor the value of Hispanic and Native History and to keep the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) in tact.

The letter details the importance of thousands of years of human habitation and archaeological history to Hispanic communities in southern New Mexico. OMDPNM, designated in 2014 by President Obama, has been the home of prehistoric, Native, Spanish, Mexican, and American people for several centuries. Hundreds of archaeological sites detailing the history of these cultures are found within the current footprint of the monument, specifically in sections of the Desert Peaks.

“Among this harsh terrain, hard-fought battles were had for territorial control among Native tribes and eventually, among the Spanish and Native people. The tumultuous arrival of the Don Juan de Oñate expedition along the upper Rio Grande and the subsequent colonization of Native people throughout New Mexico and West Texas forged the creation of the Modern American Mestizo and melded two cultures that form our identity today,” the letter reads.

In light of the Trump Administration’s executive order to review 27 national monuments created under the Antiquities Act, local Hispanic community leaders are urging Secretary Zinke to honor the uniquely American history of great importance to the identity of Doña Ana County residents.

Click here to read a full copy of the letter.

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The Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project is based in Las Cruces, NM, and works to give Hispanic and underserved communities meaningful experiences in outdoor recreation, the majority of which take place in the Organ-Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument. The project is a partnership of Latino Outdoors, the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. For more information, visit www.nuestra-tierra.org.

Latino Outdoors is a network of national leaders committed to engaging Latinos and Latinas in the outdoors, connecting familias and youth with nature, and empowering its community of storytellers to explore and share their personal experiences. For more information, visit www.latinoutdoors.org.

Hispanic Access Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that improves the lives of Hispanics in the United States and promotes civic engagement by educating, motivating and helping them access trustworthy support systems. For more information, visit www.hispanicaccess.org,