



Mike Greener for GreenLatinos and EarthJustice

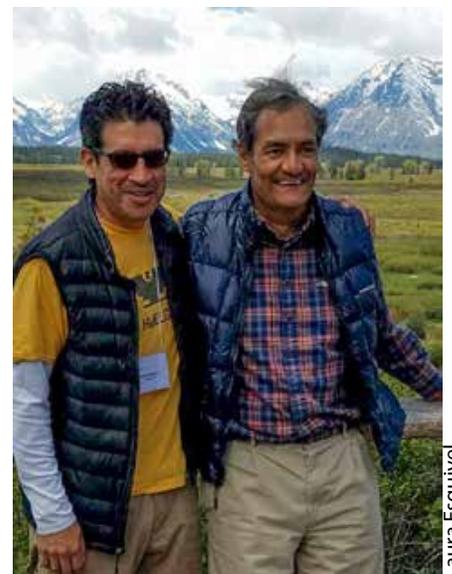
GreenLatinos Host Historic National Summit at Grand Teton National Park

By Mark Magaña and Robert García

GreenLatinos, a broad coalition of Latino leaders committed to addressing environmental and conservation issues that significantly affect the health and welfare of the Latino community in the United States, established its policy priorities at its 2016 National Summit in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming in May. The three-day summit, which convened more than 100 Latino environmental, conservation and social justice leaders from across the nation, included panel presentations, hikes, rafting and casual meals. High-level speakers included leaders from environmental justice and community organizations, national Hispanic organizations and mainstream environmental groups, and government agencies.

GreenLatinos organized the meeting against the backdrop of the majestic Teton Mountains and the beautiful Snake River to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service and to support diversifying access to parks and green space in the next 100 years. The summit featured an impressive lineup of speakers from public, private and government sectors: David Vela, the first Latino Senior Executive Superintendent of Grand Teton National

Park, opened the summit by welcoming GreenLatinos to the 310,000-acre park. Although Gina McCarthy, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), could not physically be there, she spoke to the group remotely about working with Latino communities on the Clean Power Plan and environmental justice. The agency will add park access to its on-line tool EJSSCREEN in June, according to other EPA officials.



Laura Esquivel

Mark Magaña and Robert García at Grand Teton National Park GreenLatinos Summit.

Following his presentation at the summit, keynote speaker Deputy Secretary of the Interior Mike Connor published an opinion piece titled “Public Green Spaces in the United States: A Place for Everyone (www.laopinion.com/2016/06/09/espacios-verdes-publicos-de-estados-unidos-un-lugar-para-todos) about GreenLatinos and park access, climate justice, healthy parks, historical monuments celebrating Cesar Chavez and other leaders of color, and jobs and youth leadership with the NPS on La Opinion website. Bureau of Land Management Director Neil Kornze, who supervises more than 245 million acres of public land nationwide, dropped in for dinner and a talk with attendees. And, when a last minute schedule change prevented Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee who has led efforts to diversify the green movement, from attending, committee staffer Bertha Guerrero spoke on his behalf. Former Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division, Ignacia Moreno, also gave comprehensive remarks.

The summit concluded with members selecting policy priorities for the coming year. In the weeks to come, GreenLatinos committees will promulgate action plans on:

- Climate change cessation and mitigation
- Compliance with civil rights, environmental justice and public participation laws
- Public lands designations, protection and access
- Solar and renewable energy proliferation
- Ocean ecosystems protection and coastal access

Climate change and environmental protection are civil rights and moral concerns as much as they are health,

economic and environmental issues. A diverse environmental movement will directly address the rights of communities of color and low-income communities.

Environmental issues are as important to Latino voters as immigration reform, according to a poll by GreenLatinos, EarthJustice and Latino Decisions. Hispanics disproportionately live in areas burdened by pollution, lack of green space and health vulnerabilities, and they are more likely to view climate and the environment as important to them personally. Public lands, including parks, beaches, monuments and recreation areas, are just plain fun and can help cool the air, clean the ground and water, improve health and the economy, and provide habitat protection. Latinos are among the strongest supporters of environmental protections, most willing to pay more for clean energy and the most loyal green voters.

Pope Francis, the first Latino pope, calls for environmental conservation, climate justice, and protection of the poor and underserved. Environmental health problems are particularly problematic for Latinos and climate change threatens the countries of origin of many Latinos. Through all of this, Latinos know that we can grow the economy and promote human health, the environment and equal justice at the same time.

Substantial investment in the Latino community now will reap political, public policy and real benefits for generations to come. Latino stewardship of the environment reflects long-held cultural tenets based on common sense, economic necessity and good citizenry rather than mainstream environmentalism. 

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About GreenLatinos

GreenLatinos is a national nonprofit organization that convenes a broad coalition of Latino leaders committed to addressing national, regional and local environmental, natural resource, conservation and justice issues that significantly affect the health, welfare and quality of life of the Latino community in the United States and abroad.

GreenLatinos invites its members to establish collaborative partnerships and networks to improve the environment; protect and promote conservation of land and other natural resources; amplify the voices of minority, low-income and tribal communities; and train, mentor and promote the current and future generations of Latino environmental leaders for the benefit of the Latino community and beyond. GreenLatinos develops and advocates for policies and programs to advance this mission.

To learn more about GreenLatinos and its initiatives, go to www.greenlatinos.org.

About The City Project

The City Project is a civil rights and environmental justice nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California that believes all people should have access to healthy, livable communities. Its mission is to achieve equal justice, democracy and livability for all.

The City Project’s multicultural, Latino-led team works with diverse allies to ensure equal access to healthy green land use through planning by and for the community, climate justice, physical education and schools of hope as centers of their communities, health equity and wellness, and economic vitality for all, including jobs and avoiding displacement as communities become greener and more desirable.

For more information about The City Project, go to www.cityprojectca.org.