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## Respect Great Bend of the Gila

<b>Application Date</b>	5/29/2024		
<b>Applying Organization</b>	Archaeology Southwest	<b>Grant Type</b>	Member Directed
<b>Requested Amount</b>	\$50,000.00	<b>Project Name</b>	Respect Great Bend of the Gila
<b>Contact Name</b>	Skylar Begay	<b>Project Location (State or Territory)</b>	AZ
<b>Contact Title</b>	Director of Tribal Collaboration	<b>Project State/Province</b>	AZ
<b>Contact Email Address</b>	skylar@archaeologysouthwest.org	<b>Project Multiple Locations</b>	
<b>Notes</b>		<b>Status</b>	Submitted
		<b>Created By</b>	Skylar Begay, 5/29/2024, 4:49 PM

### Organization Details

<b>Organization Name</b>	Archaeology Southwest	<b>Annual Operating Budget</b>	\$3,145,815.00
<b>Applying Contact</b>	Skylar Begay	<b>Tax Status/Organization Type</b>	501c3 Organization
<b>Staff Size</b>	25	<b>Main Phone</b>	(520) 882-6946
<b>Total Membership</b>	1,875	<b>Website Address</b>	https://www.archaeologysouthwest.org/
<b>BIPOC-led</b>	No	<b>Address</b>	281 North Stone Avenue Tucson, Arizona 85701 United States
<b>C-Suite Staff</b>			

### Proposal Questions

<b>1. Purpose/History Of Organization</b>	Archaeology Southwest was founded in 1989 in Tucson, Arizona, on the lands of the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Our mission is to explore and protect heritage places while honoring their diverse values. We accomplish this mission in four ways: advocating for the preservation of cultural landscapes and site; educating the public about archaeology; researching places using non-invasive techniques; and collaborating with Tribes to advance their values, interests, and	<b>2. Final Success</b>	The federal government will protect 329,310 acres of public land as the "Great Bend of the Gila National Monument" (GBGNM), enabling co-management by Tribal Nations and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to ensure sustainable recreation and preservation of the Great Bend's natural and cultural resources.
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preferences in relation to heritage places. Since 2008, we have advocated for the protection of the Great Bend of the Gila River while researching and documenting the heritage resources that remain on the ground, including tens of thousands of petroglyphs, hundreds of geoglyphs, and dozens of village sites, all of which are connected through an ancient trail system that is visible to this day and extends across much of southwestern Arizona and adjacent regions.

### 3. Location Details

The Great Bend of the Gila (GBG) is the hub of a great wheel with spokes reaching to all corners of the Southwest. 13 sovereign Tribal Nations maintain connections to this stretch of the Gila River. This sector of the Sonoran Desert includes a riparian corridor surrounded by shield volcanoes and low mountains. Hosting one of the densest concentrations of petroglyphs in North America, the region holds immeasurable significance for today's Tribal Nations. The Great Bend has also played integral roles in early colonial history. Spanish, Mexican, and finally American militaries and settlers used this section of the Gila River to push west through some of the hottest, most rugged parts of the Sonoran Desert. Their accounts speak of the bounty harvested by Indigenous Peoples who still call this place home. This rich heritage is embodied in the numerous places that constitute the cultural landscape that is the Great Bend of Gila. In 2023, the Butterfield Overland Mail Route was designated as a National Historic Trail. It and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail run through this part of Arizona.

Permanent protection of the GBG will provide critical natural habitat for threatened and endangered species and help combat the climate crisis. There are existing protections for some lands within the boundaries of the proposed national monument, including the Signal Mountain and Woolsey Peak Wilderness Areas. There are also three Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs): the Sears Point, Lower Gila Terraces and Historic Trails, and the Saddle Mountain ACECs. Saddle Mountain is a lambing area for Desert Bighorn Sheep. Endangered species present with the Great Bend region include the Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope and the Acuña Cactus.

All these resource values are threatened by ever-expanding and quickly encroaching urban development. With Phoenix's West Valley now less than an hour's drive away, this landscape faces diverse and imminent threats:

- Vandalism and theft of cultural

### 4. Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

We are co-leading (with The Wilderness Society) the Respect Great Bend (RGB) coalition, a grassroots effort involving Tribes and over a dozen organizations intent on securing National Monument designation within the next 18 months. Archaeology Southwest is in dialogue with the 13 Tribes who have connections to this land and with 8 affected municipalities. We are engaging the broader public through a vibrant website and social media platforms that highlight Indigenous and other underrepresented voices. Up to this point (May 2024) the RGB Coalition has been working with Congressman Raúl Grijalva and House Natural Resources Committee staff members. A congressional bill to designate the GBGNM is expected to drop in early summer. Due to the nature of Congress at this time, we do not anticipate monument legislation will move through Congress. Given that, we are poised and ready to appeal to the Biden-Harris administration to secure protection via a presidential proclamation. To do this, we are in the process of securing formal support from the 13 Tribal Nations with connections to the GBG. We are simultaneously enlisting affected municipalities, BIPOC communities, Arizona State legislators, businesses, and the general public. While Archaeology Southwest is participating in outreach to all these stakeholder groups, our primary responsibility is outreach to Tribes and Indigenous communities.

The San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation has been, and will continue to be, a key rightsholder group and focus for outreach. Engaging the District Council, Elder groups, Youth Council, Education Department, and the general community before and after designation in formal and informal settings will be essential to the campaign's long-term success. Engaging all 13 Tribal Nations, mainly at the Tribal Council and Tribal Historic Preservation Office/Cultural Resources Department levels of government, to secure or reaffirm their support is in progress. Engaging the Tribal members and Indigenous communities who live outside

## resources

- Irreparable damage to cultural resources, cacti, and animals from target shooting
- Off-road vehicular impacts to geoglyphs, other cultural sites, cryptobiotic soils, plants, and animals
- Rapid development of industrial-scale energy projects; sale or transfer of public lands to private interests
- Increased desertification and erosion driven by climate change
- Expansion of invasive plant species and resultant loss of natural habitat and native ecosystems.

Tribal Trust Lands and in urban areas through continued partnerships with Indigenous led organizations such as Cahokia Social Tech and Artspace in Phoenix, Arizona, will also remain a focus. The Biden-Harris administration has been particularly responsive to Indigenous-led protection efforts and others supported by Tribal Nations. For the GBGNM, we aim to amplify the support offered by Tribes and direct it to the administration's relevant office, including Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. We are also facilitating, as appropriate, communications among Tribal Nations and Congressman Grijalva's staff as they conduct sovereign-to-sovereign consultation.

Members of the RGB Coalition include HECHO, Chispa Arizona, and GreenLatinos. Archaeology Southwest staff work closely with these organizations to engage the Latino/a/x and BIPOC communities of Phoenix and surrounding municipalities. Many of these events are in-person and include hikes, gatherings hosted by businesses in Phoenix (e.g., Arizona Wilderness Brewery), and other community-oriented activities. Educational materials and the RGB website are available in both English and Spanish. We partner with Spanish-speaking staff from these organizations, as warranted, to translate during in-person events, social media posts, and coverage from Spanish-language news outlets. Continuing to amplify news, supports, and Indigenous and Latin/x voices on the RGB platforms and earned media coverage will continue.

The Wilderness Society leads the coalition's engagement with civic leaders and local business from Phoenix and nearby municipalities. The Sierra Club leads outreach to Arizona State legislators. Other coalition members work with the general public, faith-based communities, outdoor groups, and recreationists. Our coalition has been featured in larger conservation campaigns, such as Monuments for All and The Road to 30. We have also been featured in stories on Phoenix's Channel 12 News, Univision Arizona, The Arizona Republic, and the 90 Miles from Needles and Native Circles podcasts. A recent "Day of Monumental Action" in Washington D.C. generated positive press nationwide. The coalition will continue to be featured in local and national news outlets in English and Spanish, in addition to promoting the content of the RGB social media pages.

All these goals are set to a deadline at the end of the current Biden-Harris administration, as our strategy hinges

largely on the GBGNM's designation via presidential proclamation. We do not feel it is likely that an administration unfriendly to conservation will be open to designating a new National Monument. And yet, if we are successful by the end of 2024, the work to protect the Great Bend will have just started. Pioneering a BIPOC-led "Friends of the Great Bend" group and implementing the Tribal co-managing of the monument in partnership with the BLM will commence in late 2024 and escalate through 2025.

#### 5. Key Decision Makers

Congressman Raúl Grijalva has championed additional protections for the Great Bend for over a decade. In this time, many of his House colleagues have co-sponsored one of the four prior bills the congressman introduced to protect this area. Most recently (2022), this included representatives Seth Moulton, Andre Carson, Dina Titus, Jared Huffman, Grace F. Napolitano, Earl Blumenauer, Paul Tonko, Joe Neguse, Ann Kirkpatrick, Katie Porter, and Tom O'Halleran. We are also seeking the support of Senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly. Senator Sinema recently championed the successful designation of the Baaj Nwaavjo l'tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, and we suspect she will support the GBGNM effort, as well. We have secured support from many Arizona State legislators, including Senators Lela Alston, Juan Mendez, Rosanna Gabaldon, Stephanie Stahl Hamilton, and Andres Canos, former Senator Rebecca Rios, and Representative Melody Hernandez. We are working to gain support from governments in Phoenix's West Valley and have secured key support from City of Buckeye councilmember Jeanine Guy. The San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation is the closest Indigenous community to the proposed boundaries, and we gained their verbal support in early 2024. As early as 2012, the Gila River Indian Community and Yavapai-Apache Nation issued letters and resolutions of support for the monument. Since then, other Tribes have signaled their support: Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe (2016), Tohono O'odham Nation (2015), Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (2015), The Hopi Tribe (2016), Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe (2016), and Cocopah Indian Tribe (2016). It is highly likely these Tribes will reaffirm their support when Grijalva introduces new legislation this year. We hope this will encourage Secretary Haaland to lend her support to this effort. Ultimately, we are prepared to appeal to the Biden-Harris administration as the final decision maker.

#### 6. Elevate Voices

The San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation is the closest Indigenous community to the proposed GBGNM. Their Tribal trust lands are currently surrounded by BLM land and would be encompassed by the National Monument once designated. Understandably, they are concerned about continued access to those lands and increased visitation. For the past three years, Skylar Begay has worked with the District Council, Elder groups, and the Education Department of the District to understand and address these concerns. Building trust with the community has been an essential focus and culminated with an invitation to Archaeology Southwest staff to visit the community's sacred mountain. In early 2024 a District Council Member stated their support for a GBGNM. We have also sought to highlight voices from other Tribes that maintain connections to the Great Bend of the Gila on [www.respectgreatbend.org](http://www.respectgreatbend.org), our social media outlets, earned media, and printed outreach materials.

Respectgreatbend.org is available in Spanish, as are our printed outreach materials. HECHO, Chispa Arizona, and Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project—all Latin/x serving organizations—are parties to the RGB coalition and have effectively activated their respective memberships to build broad support for monument designation. In-person events such as hikes in the Great Bend, tabling at Indigenous People's Day in Phoenix, and holding trivia nights at Arizona Wilderness Brewery are examples of how the RGB coalition engages and mobilizes community. A story map highlighting many of these voices can be found at <https://story.respectgreatbend.org/>. Paintings by Angelo Cortez, a Chicano and Akimel O'odham artist, were commissioned by the RGB campaign and are featured in its print and digital communications. Our partnership with Angelo continues today as he lends his perspective as an artist to the protection effort.

**7. Measurable On-Ground Outcomes**

(1) Designation of a “Great Bend of the Gila National Monument” via Presidential Proclamation under authority of the Antiquities Act before the end of the Biden-Harris administration’s first term (January 20, 2025).  
 (2) Assessment, and if viable, establishment of a BIPOC-led “Friends of Great Bend” group by the end of 2025.  
 (3) 4–6 field trips in the Great Bend of the Gila with Tribes and BIPOC community members by end of 2025.  
 (4) A new video featuring Indigenous voices with accompanying social media clips by third quarter 2025.

**8. Evaluate Your Progress**

Measures of progress include completion of the on-the-ground outcomes planned for 2024–2025, namely (1) organizing with partner organizations, businesses, and Tribes to establish a friends of group for the Great Bend that is inclusive, diverse, and gets people out onto the land, and (2) production of more videos highlighting diverse voices to be shared on RGB’s online platforms. Campaign success will be evaluated similarly, with metrics being (1) positive relationships with leadership and citizens of associated Tribal Nations that incorporate the four kinship values in our Model for Tribal Collaboration, (2) Tribal support and interest in co-managing a new GBGNM, as measured through a Resource Management Plan that incorporates Tribes’ Traditional Ecological Knowledge and expertise regarding management, (3) gaining the support of elected leaders, and ultimately (4) successful designation of a Great Bend of the Gila National Monument.

**9. TCA Funding Plan**

The majority of the funding will support outreach to Tribal Nations and other underrepresented communities, including the Latin/x population of Phoenix and surrounding municipalities. Outreach will include site visits by Tribal members, with honoraria and travel expenses offset by Conservation Alliance funding. We are also organizing a gathering of all 13 Tribes for later this year to celebrate protection of the Great Bend. We will highlight their perspectives and stories through social media and production of another video. Outreach will also explore opportunities for a BIPOC-led Friends of Great Bend 501(c) (3).

**10. JEDI Efforts and Impact**

Archaeology Southwest developed a JEDI policy in 2020, and it is currently under revision. The hiring of Indigenous staff and board members in the past five years has contributed significantly to our JEDI goals. Strategic planning in 2021 identified Tribal collaboration as an organizational priority. This led to Archaeology Southwest’s 2023 “Model for Tribal Collaboration.” Conceived and written by our Directors of Tribal Collaboration, this model lays out our philosophy, explains the “why” behind our work, and offers a blueprint for other organizations. Tribal collaboration and JEDI policies will remain priorities as we undertake another round of strategic planning later this year. All staff recently undertook harassment prevention training, and we are currently involved in an Appreciative Inquiry process. We are working on solutions to address JEDI in our advocacy, membership, research, and fundraising efforts.

**11. Confidential Items**

Not Applicable.

**Other Relevant Application Details**