

# HEALTHY PARKS: HEALTHY LATINOS



JULY 2015



hispanicfederation





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## INTRODUCTION

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More than 17 percent or 55 million Latinos call the United States home. From east to west coast, New York to California, Latinos live in rural, urban, and suburban areas where they seek to maintain strong ties to nature and the environment.

Unfortunately, Latinos are increasingly finding it harder to access and stay in touch with nature. Whether through camping, hiking or playing in a local park, our neighborhoods have not seen the investments needed to give us access to green spaces that most other communities enjoy.

The importance of parks to Latino neighborhoods and communities cannot be understated. These green spaces not only contribute to the beautification and air quality of our cities and towns, but also provide space for informal community convenings and facilitate neighborly connections that may otherwise go unmade. Moreover, parks make a direct economic impact to our neighborhoods in the form of greater real estate values and commercial contributions from local residents and visitors. Most importantly, investing in parks is a commitment to building community cohesion, pride and the overall quality life for Latino families and all Americans.

At the same time, the Latino community faces tremendous health disparities around chronic disease conditions, including obesity, diabetes, asthma and heart disease. While there are numerous reasons for these growing disparities, the significant lack of access to parks and green spaces throughout Latino neighborhoods is a prime contributing factor. In short, the health of our people is inextricably linked to the quality of the environment where they reside.

The 114th Congress has already begun debating these issues – most notably around the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which funds the creation of parks and will expire in September 2015, and the Antiquities Act, which gives the President authority to designate parks and monuments.

As the 2016 Presidential year is approaching, it is important for political leaders to understand challenges that face our community. As we have watched the electoral process unfold we have been heartened by the amount of attention that the candidates have been paying to Latino voters. But we worry also that while candidates may recognize that value of the Latino electorate, they may not fully grasp the scope of challenges that Latino families face across the United States. Among those, is our concern for the environment, access to green spaces and climate justice.

To inform policy makers on strategies to address this national crisis, we are proud to present **Healthy Parks: Healthy Latinos**, a profile of successful parks projects across several states that have improved access to green spaces for Latinos and many other Americans. It is our hope that this report bolsters support for excellent federal laws such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Antiquities Act, but also spurns local interest in establishing similar green spaces across all 50 states.



José Calderón  
*President*  
Hispanic Federation







We need to address the underlying factors that are causing the Latino community to struggle with obesity, diabetes and other health conditions. One of these factors is a lack of physical activity.

*– Dr. Elena Rios  
National Hispanic  
Health Foundation*

## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PARKS AND HEALTH IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

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Almost 55 million Latinos live in the United States across rural, urban, and suburban areas. Hispanics make up a vibrant segment of the U.S. population, but many struggle with issues such as poverty, access to health care, education and affordable housing. Latinos are also negatively affected by a number of serious chronic health conditions - sometimes at much higher rates than the White population.

## HEALTH CONDITIONS IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

### OBESITY

Approximately 42 percent of Latino adults are obese compared to approximately 32 percent of White adults and 22 percent of Latino children are obese compared to only 14 percent of White children.<sup>1</sup> The overall life expectancy for Latinos is declining as a result of obesity and obesity-related health risks.<sup>2</sup>

### ASTHMA

Latinos face disproportionate exposure to asthma-inducing air pollution and have the highest rates of asthma in the country. Latino children are 40 percent more likely to die from asthma than non-Latino whites, and nearly 1 in 10 Latino children under the age of 18 suffer from this chronic respiratory illness.<sup>4</sup>

### DIABETES

Latinos are 1.7 times more likely than Whites to be diagnosed with diabetes and it is the fifth leading cause of death for Latinos.<sup>5,6</sup> An estimated 24 percent of adult Hispanics have diabetes and the rate of Type 2 diabetes in Latino children is increasing.<sup>7,8</sup>

### STROKE

Close to 3 percent of Hispanic adults have had a stroke and Hispanics are 30 percent more likely to have a stroke than Whites.<sup>9,10</sup>

### HYPERTENSION

Hypertension – or high blood pressure -- is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Among Hispanics who experienced a stroke, 72 percent had high blood pressure compared to 66 percent in non-Hispanic whites.<sup>11</sup>

### HEART DISEASE

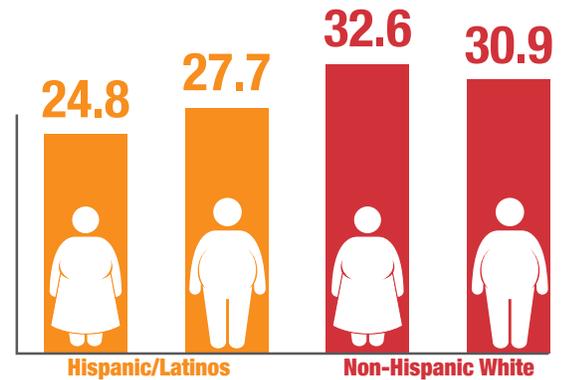
Heart disease is the leading cause of death for Latinos.<sup>11</sup> According to the American Heart Association, 48.3 percent of Hispanic men and 32.4 percent of Hispanic women aged 20 and over have cardiovascular disease.<sup>13</sup>

## A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO HEALTH CONDITIONS LOW RATES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY

There are a number of contributing factors to the high rates of chronic health conditions in the Latino community, including inequities in healthcare, poverty, poor education and lack of access to healthy food choices.

One of these factors is that the Latino population is 30 percent less likely to engage in active physical activity than Whites.<sup>15</sup> One study found that 56 percent of Hispanic adults did not meet federal activity guidelines compared to 44.1 percent of Non-Hispanic White adults.<sup>16</sup>

### OBESITY RATES IN ADULTS (18+ YEARS)<sup>3</sup>



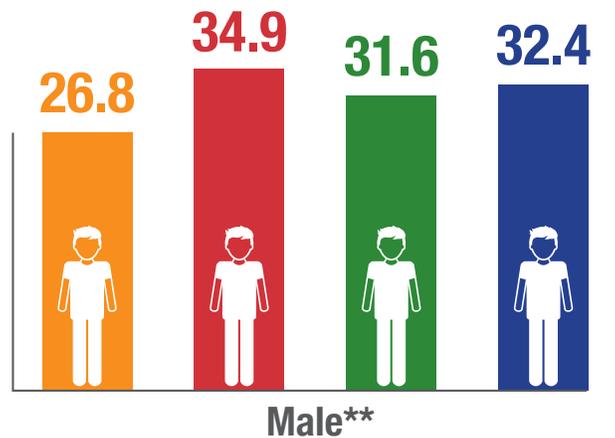
A 2014 National Council of La Raza study found that the cost and rates of chronic disease are rising steadily among millions of Latinos nationwide, which will have a profound economic impact on the United States.<sup>14</sup>

## A BARRIER TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: LIMITED ACCESS TO SAFE PLACES TO WALK, BIKE & PLAY OUTSIDE

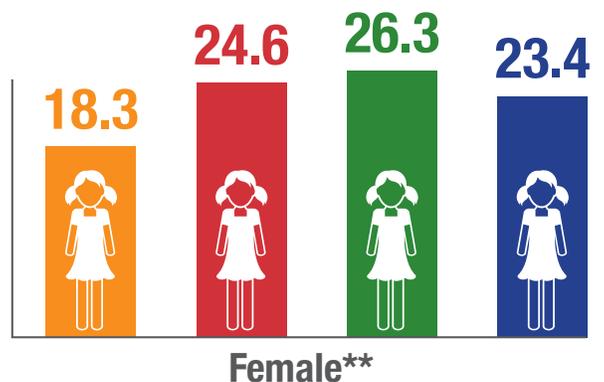
One of the barriers to increasing physical activity for Latinos is a lack of access to safe places to walk, bike and play outside. Only one-third of Latinos live within walking distance of a park compared to almost half of all Whites.<sup>18</sup>

A Trust for Public Lands report found that “low-income neighborhoods populated by minorities and recent immigrants are especially short of park space....Lacking places for recreation, minorities and low-income individuals are significantly less likely than whites and high-income individuals to engage in the regular physical activity that is crucial to good health.”<sup>19</sup>

### PERCENT OF YOUTH (6-17) WHO PARTICIPATED IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY\* EVERY DAY IN THE PAST WEEK 2011-2012



Hispanic Non-Hispanic White Non-Hispanic Black Total U.S.



Female\*\*

\* For at least 20 minutes and was strenuous enough to make the child sweat and breathe hard. Activity was parent-reported.

\*\* Hispanic males are significantly less likely to exercise every day than white males. Hispanic females are significantly less likely to exercise every day than either white or black females. Hispanics can be of any race. All race/Hispanic origin data self-reported.

Source: Child Trends' analysis of National Survey of Children's Health from the Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health.

“

A 2014 Child Trends report about Latino youth found that “...just over one in four Hispanic males and just over one in six Hispanic females is getting the recommended amount of daily exercise.”<sup>17</sup>

“

Recent findings by Salud America!, a nonprofit research group at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, that Latino children have less opportunity to engage in physical activity than other kids should be of concern to all of us. According to the group's research, only 19 percent of Latino children across the country have access to recreational spaces close to their neighborhoods compared to 62 percent of Anglo children.<sup>20</sup>

## ONE SOLUTION FOR OUR COMMUNITY: CREATING MORE PARKS

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To remove this barrier, we must continue to find opportunities to create safe, accessible places for Latinos to be more active outside with their families. Many organizations focused on the well-being of the Latino community agree:

- In 2010, the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) held a summit to talk about the Latino obesity crisis. One of their recommendations was to “promote green space and parks development in public planning.”<sup>22</sup>
- In 2013, the National Hispanic Medical Association and the National Hispanic Health Foundation issued a report that identified “limited outdoor space for parks” as a challenge for the Latino community. The report made a recommendation to “increase access to more parks, community gardens and walking areas.”<sup>23</sup>

## SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

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This report offers some examples of parks and other outdoor spaces around the United States that are providing opportunities for Latinos to be more active, including:

- Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge  
Albuquerque, NM
- La Villita Park  
Chicago, IL
- San Gabriel Mountains National Monument  
Los Angeles, CA
- Belden Trail  
Brownsville, TX
- Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge  
Denver, CO
- Kiel Ranch  
North Las Vegas, NV
- Sterling Forest State Park  
New York

“

And as for physical activity, consider these statistics: Compared to white parents, nearly five times more Hispanic parents report that safety is a barrier to their kids being active. And Hispanic kids ages 9 to 13 are only half as likely to participate in organized physical activity outside of school.<sup>21</sup>

– Michelle Obama, keynote  
speech at the 2013 National  
Council of La Raza Conference

“

....all kids deserve safe parks and playgrounds nearby.<sup>24</sup>

– Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey  
President and CEO  
Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

**SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:**

# **Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge**

## **Albuquerque, NM**



“

Thanks to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, New Mexicans now have access to the Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge, which provides them wonderful opportunities to get outside and be more physically active.

*– U.S. Representative,  
Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)*

“

Too many kids get more television time than outdoor time, but this new wildlife refuge is our opportunity to change that... This wildlife refuge will help New Mexico kids discover the incredible natural heritage of our state, and it represents an important investment in their health and well-being.<sup>30</sup>

*– U.S. Representative,  
Martin Heinrich, 9/27/2012*



## ABOUT THE PARK

In 2012, the **Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge** was designated by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar as the first urban wildlife refuge in the Southwest.<sup>25</sup>

Located on a former dairy farm along the Rio Grande in a historically underserved and predominantly Latino community, this wildlife refuge is within driving distance of over half of New Mexico's population.

When it is complete, Valle de Oro will encompass 570 acres of land that offer open spaces and trails for hiking, nature walks and other outdoor recreation activities. It will also provide critical refuge to migratory birds and other wildlife, offering educational opportunities for people to connect with and learn about the natural world.<sup>26</sup>

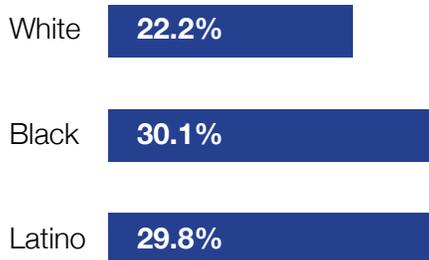
## LATINO POPULATION

Hispanics make up over 46 percent of New Mexico's population.<sup>27</sup>

## HEALTH CHALLENGES

The Latino population in New Mexico struggles with many chronic health conditions. A New Mexico Department of Health study found that over one-third of Hispanic third graders in the state were overweight or obese.<sup>28</sup> The Hispanic rate of diabetes in New Mexico is also 2 times the rate for the White population.<sup>29</sup>

## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)



Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)

## THE PROJECT

Part of the funding to create the Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

LWCF uses fees paid by oil companies drilling off-shore to protect parks and public lands and create outdoor recreation opportunities across the country. A portion of LWCF fees are also allocated to a "State Assistance Program," where matching grants are made available to communities to build playgrounds, bike paths, parks, soccer fields, swimming pools, etc.

## SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:

# La Villita Park

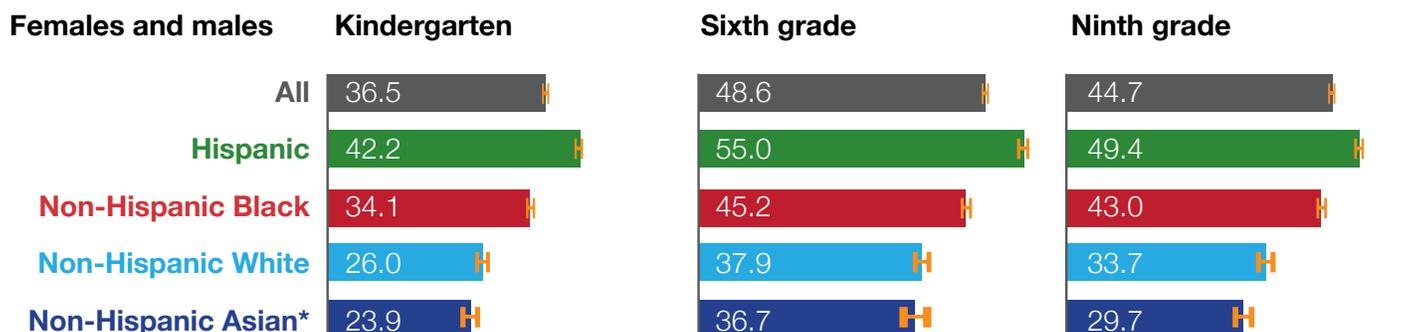
## Chicago, IL



### ADJUSTED ESTIMATES OF OVERWEIGHT OR OBESITY AMONG CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS

Separated by grades kindergarten, 6, and 9 and by race/ethnicity.

Orange bars denote 95% confidence limits (i.e., the margin or error associated with each estimate).





## ABOUT THE PARK

La Villita Park was built on a brownfield that used to be a contaminated industrial site in Little Village, a predominately Latino neighborhood in the South Lawndale area on the West side of Chicago.

The Little Village community fought for years to shut down the coal plants that operated on the site, which was known as Celotex, and turn it into a park.<sup>31</sup> It was designated as an EPA Superfund site, cleaned up and then acquired by the Chicago Park District in 2012. La Villita Park was opened on the site in 2014.<sup>32</sup>

The 22-acre park has the largest skate park and largest playground in the city. It also includes multiple grass and artificial turf athletic fields, basketball courts, community gardens and a trail with fitness stations.

La Villita Park was named in honor of Chicago's immigrant neighborhoods as well as the contributions the Latino community made to Little Village and Chicago.<sup>33</sup>

## LATINO POPULATION

Chicago has the fifth largest Hispanic population of any city in the United States.<sup>34</sup>

## HEALTH CHALLENGES

A 2013 study conducted by Chicago Department of Public Health found that obesity rates for Hispanic children in Chicago are higher than obesity rates for non-Hispanic White children. The research found that childhood obesity rates were as low as 13 percent in Lincoln Park, a white, higher-income neighborhood, and as high as 33 percent in South Lawndale, a Hispanic, lower-income neighborhood.<sup>35</sup>

## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)

White 27.0%

Black 38.7%

Latino 29.9%

Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)

## THE PROJECT

La Villita Park is the largest EPA Superfund-to-park conversion to happen in a major U.S. city. It cost approximately \$19 million to develop with funds from the city of Chicago, the Chicago Park District and two Illinois state grants.<sup>36</sup>



As the first park built in the community in 75 years, the new park will greatly improve the access to open space for people in Little Village and help them lead healthier, more active lifestyles.

*– Antonio Lopez  
Executive Director,  
Little Village Environmental  
Justice Organization*

**SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:**

# **San Gabriel Mountains National Monument**

**Los Angeles, CA**



“

Too many Los Angeles area families lack access to park and recreational opportunities. The designation of the San Gabriel Mountains as a National Monument is a noteworthy step in making our communities more livable and ensures that for the 17 million people living within an hour of the monument, there is nearby open space for family picnics, hiking, and other recreation activities.<sup>47</sup>

*– Hilda Solis, former U.S. Secretary of Labor and Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for District 1*

“

Los Angeles ranks 45th out of the 60 largest cities in the United States for access, spending per person and median size of city parks, leaving 1.8 million residents more than a 10-minute walk from a park or green space.<sup>44</sup>

“

We heard from the community that for a lot of urban families this is their only big, outdoor space.<sup>45</sup>

*– President Barack Obama*



## ABOUT THE PARK

The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument is home to a variety of outdoor recreation activities, including hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, nature viewing, picnicking, water activities and horseback riding and camping.

For many residents of Los Angeles County, the San Gabriel Mountains provide the only available large-scale open space. The area that was made into the monument is located within a 90 minute drive of 15 million people in the Los Angeles Basin and receives more than 4 million visitors per year.<sup>37</sup>

This monument designation will create new opportunities for the Forest Service and local communities to work together to continue to increase outdoor recreation opportunities.<sup>38</sup> Its creation was supported by members of Congress, business, tourism, environmental justice, conservation, academic and cultural preservation communities in the area.<sup>39</sup>

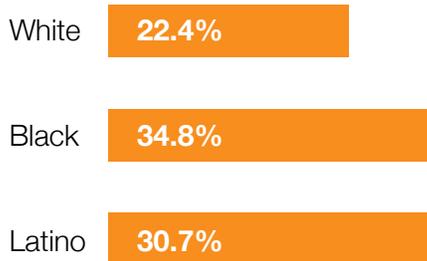
## LATINO POPULATION

The Los Angeles Basin has the largest Hispanic population of any metropolitan area in the U.S.<sup>40</sup>

## HEALTH CHALLENGES

Among California Latinos, heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes account for nearly 60 percent of all deaths.<sup>41</sup> Close to 11 percent of Latino adults in California have been diagnosed with diabetes compared to 7 percent of White adults in the state.<sup>42</sup>

## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)



Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)



Los Angeles has too few parks, and its residents have high rates of obesity and diabetes, so a San Gabriel Mountains National Monument will offer a fun and healthy escape from the pavement and congestion.<sup>46</sup>

– Daniel Rossman, San Gabriel Mountains Forever Chair

## THE PROJECT

On October 10, 2014, President Barack Obama used his authority under the Antiquities Act to designate 346,177 acres of existing federal lands as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, the eighth national monument under Forest Service management.<sup>43</sup>

The Antiquities Act allows the president to protect America's wild lands and historical sites as national monuments.

**SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:**

# **Belden Trail**

## **Brownsville, TX**



“

By using grants and leveraging additional funds from the city, community and national foundations, we turned a dangerous alleyway into a well-lit mile-long concrete path that connects several schools in a low-income neighborhood.<sup>55</sup>

*– Dr. Rose Gowen, MD  
Commissioner At-Large,  
Brownsville, Texas*

“

As a school kid, I used to walk along these train tracks to get to my classes at Skinner Elementary School....Now, where train tracks used to be there is a wide concrete path lined by grass, trees and the occasional bench greet joggers, dog walkers and families who are out for a stroll.

*– John Villarreal  
District 4 City Commissioner*



## ABOUT THE PARK

The Belden Trail is a mile-long hike-and-bike trail that was developed in 2013 on a section of old railroad tracks that runs through West Brownsville.

The 10-foot-wide smooth concrete trail is approximately one mile long and has lighting, benches and vertical barriers at intersections to keep out motorized vehicles.<sup>48</sup> The trail also includes “bump-outs,” extensions of the curb that make it easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to see oncoming vehicles.<sup>49</sup> The trail ends at Skinner Elementary School, creating a safe route to school for many students in the surrounding area.

The Belden Trail is part of a citywide project to bring a trail within one mile from all homes in the city and connect all parts of the city.<sup>50</sup>

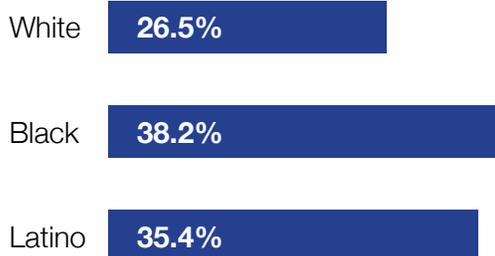
## LATINO POPULATION

Latinos make up over 90 percent of the population in Brownsville.<sup>51</sup>

## HEALTH CHALLENGES

Overall, Texas has the highest Latino obesity rates of the top ten states with the largest Latino population.<sup>52</sup> In the city of Brownsville, 80 percent of the residents are overweight or obese and one-third of the population is diabetic.<sup>53</sup>

## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)



Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)

## THE PROJECT

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department made a National Recreational Trail Grant of \$151,274 towards the project and the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation<sup>54</sup> and the Community Development Corporation of Brownsville covered the rest of the expenses.

**SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:**

# **Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge**

## **Denver, CO**

“

The creation of Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge has made it easier for Latino families to get out and be more active in nature. We need to continue to look for opportunities to develop parks and other open spaces near underserved neighborhoods.

*– Paul Lopez  
Denver City Councilman*



## ABOUT THE PARK

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Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest urban wildlife refuges in the United States.

The refuge is located 10 minutes from downtown Denver and is bordered by low-income neighborhoods that are home to many Hispanic and black residents.

It has nearly 17,000 acres of open lakes, wetlands, prairie grasslands, and woodlands and is home to wildlife, including bison, bald eagles, deer, songbirds, waterfowl, and burrowing owls. It offers many recreation activities including guided wildlife viewing tours, fishing, and hiking on over 9 miles of nature trails. A record 300,000 people visited the refuge in 2013.<sup>56</sup>

This area was once a chemical weapons manufacturing facility known as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. In 1986, a communal roost of bald eagles was discovered on the land which triggered an intense and successful grassroots effort to have the Arsenal cleaned up and declared a national wildlife refuge. The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge was opened in 2010.<sup>57</sup>

The refuge is part of the Rocky Mountain Greenway project, which is designed to create the nation's largest urban park, connecting Denver residents to open space.<sup>58</sup>

## LATINO POPULATION

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Over one million Latinos live in Colorado and over 30 percent of Denver County's population is Hispanic or Latino.<sup>59</sup>

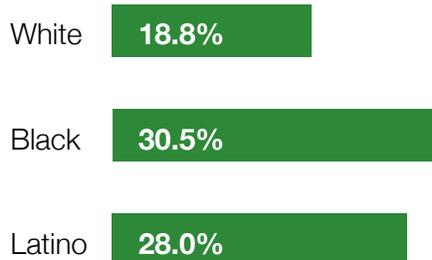
## HEALTH CHALLENGES

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A report from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment found that one-third of Hispanic/Latino children in Colorado aged 2-14 are overweight or obese compared with nearly a quarter of White children. Latino students in Colorado in grades 9 -12 are three times more likely to be obese than White students.<sup>60</sup>

## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)

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Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)

## THE PROJECT

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The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge was developed in part through funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

LWCF uses fees paid by oil companies drilling off-shore to protect parks and public lands and create outdoor recreation opportunities across the country. A portion of LWCF fees are also allocated to a "State Assistance Program," where matching grants are made available to communities to build playgrounds, bike paths, parks, soccer fields, swimming pools, etc.

**SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:**

# **Kiel Ranch**

## **North Las Vegas, NV**



“

The Land and Water Conservation Fund not only provides funding to protect our nation's wild lands and natural habitat, but also gives our local communities the opportunity to provide much needed urban recreation and preserve our state's history. Kiel Ranch, one of Nevada's oldest homesteads, has been in a state of near ruin in North Las Vegas for decades. Thanks to LWCF and other funding sources, we are able to preserve an important part of Nevada's wild west history and provide a park and open space in an urban area desperately in need.

– Senator Reid

“

Although North Las Vegas is home to almost 220,000 residents.... there was a serious lack of public parkland. A 2004 update to the North Las Vegas Parks and Recreational Facilities Master Plan identified a 'sizeable regional parkland level-of-service deficit of nearly 500 acres.'<sup>68</sup>



## ABOUT THE PARK

Kiel Ranch is a 7-acre historic site located about 1.5 miles west of downtown North Las Vegas, a city with a large Hispanic/Latino population.

It was settled in the Las Vegas area mid-1800s by Conrad Kiel and is on the list of the National Register of Historic Places. The ranch is home to one of the state's oldest adobe structures and an active artesian spring. Until recently, the site was overrun with trash and weeds and hidden in the middle of an industrial area.<sup>61,62</sup>

In 2010, the city of North Las Vegas announced plans to turn the site into a public park.<sup>63</sup> The site is in its first phase of construction and will eventually include a preserved historic site, a park and open space area for walking and other outdoor recreation activities.<sup>64</sup>

## LATINO POPULATION

Nearly a third (30%) of the population in Clark County, Nevada—which is home to the city of North Las Vegas—is Latino.<sup>65</sup>

## HEALTH CHALLENGES

According to a 2013 report, 65 percent of Nevada's Latino/Hispanic population is overweight or obese and 54 percent do not meet basic requirements for daily physical activity.<sup>66</sup>

## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)

White 24.7%

Black 34.9%

Latino 27.3%

Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)

## THE PROJECT

More than \$2 million of the funding for the construction of Kiel Ranch was provided by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act and Land & Water Conservation Fund.<sup>67</sup>

LWCF uses fees paid by oil companies drilling off-shore to protect parks and public lands and create outdoor recreation opportunities across the country. A portion of LWCF fees are also allocated to a "State Assistance Program," where matching grants are made available to communities to build playgrounds, bike paths, parks, soccer fields, swimming pools, etc.

SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:

# Sterling Forest State Park

## New York

“

Because of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we can all breathe more breaths of fresh air and enjoy the green spaces that our state and nation has to offer. Federal investment in greenspaces, parks and preserving natural areas allows people to experience and enjoy nature in both pristine and urban setting. The bottom line is that we need more and better parks for all our communities – especially for those in our cities who have less access to the glories of nature and the oases of well-built parks – and the LWCF is the vehicle to make that happen.<sup>76</sup>

– Charles Schumer  
US Senator



## ABOUT THE PARK

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Sterling Forest State Park includes 22,000 acres of nearly pristine forest land in the New York-New Jersey Highlands, one of our country's most densely populated areas.

The park offers amazing outdoor recreation opportunities such as fishing, mountain biking and cross-country skiing.<sup>69</sup> It includes 83 miles of trails, including an 8-mile section of the Appalachian Trail.<sup>70</sup>

This park is located less than an hour from New York City and is accessible by commuter train or bus.

## LATINO POPULATION

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Over 18 percent of the population in the state of New York State is Hispanic/Latino and over 28 percent of the population in New York City is Hispanic/Latino.<sup>71</sup>

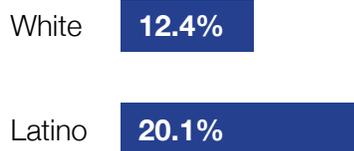
## HEALTH CHALLENGES

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In the state of New York, 27.3 percent of Latinos are obese compared to 23.6 percent of Whites.<sup>72</sup> Hispanics also have considerably higher rates of diabetes than Non-Hispanic whites. In addition, research shows that almost 35 percent of Hispanic adults in New York do not participate in any leisure-time physical activities.<sup>73</sup>

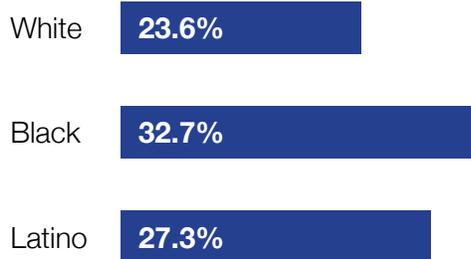
## OBESITY IN CHILDREN AGES TWO TO FIVE IN NY<sup>74</sup>

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## STATE ADULT OBESITY RATES (2013)

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Source: [www.stateofobesity.org](http://www.stateofobesity.org)

## THE PROJECT

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The Sterling Forest State Park received \$17.5 million of its funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).<sup>75</sup>

LWCF uses fees paid by oil companies drilling off-shore to protect parks and public lands and create outdoor recreation opportunities across the country. A portion of LWCF fees are also allocated to a "State Assistance Program," where matching grants are made available to communities to build playgrounds, bike paths, parks, soccer fields, swimming pools, etc.

## IN CONCLUSION

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We must work to lower the rates of chronic health conditions such as obesity and diabetes in Latino communities across our country. One way to achieve this goal is to continue to provide opportunities for our families to access parks and other outdoor areas where they can safely walk, bike and play.

At the Hispanic Federation, we support a number of strategies for accomplishing this goal, including:

- Building new partnerships at the state and local level to create new parks and open spaces.
- Engaging the Latino community in planning and design of parks and open spaces.
- Increasing awareness in the Latino community about the parks and outdoor spaces that are already available in their areas.
- Improving public transportation to available park locations to make them more accessible to Latinos.
- Supporting policy initiatives at the federal, state and local level that provide funding and other support for new parks and open spaces.

“**Today, the National Park Service reports that the unmet need for outdoor recreation facilities and parkland acquisition at the state level is \$27 billion. While the LWCF alone cannot address all state park needs, it is a critical federal partnership with our nation’s state and local parks and communities.**<sup>78</sup>

*– LWCF Coalition*



## KEYSTONE FEDERAL PROGRAMS

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We strongly support two of the most important federal policy programs that help create parks and open spaces – the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Antiquities Act – both of which are currently under attack in Congress.

### LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)

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We support full funding for LWCF. Each year, hundreds of millions of dollars in royalties are paid into LWCF by energy companies drilling for oil and gas offshore. Congress diverts nearly all of this money to other purposes, dramatically impacting efforts to build safe places for kids to get outside.



**Absolutely, there's a risk that this could go away.<sup>77</sup>**

**– Sally Jewell  
Interior Secretary  
5/23/15**

### THE ANTIQUITIES ACT

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We support the President's ability to act to establish new national monuments or enlarge existing monuments to protect places for future generations to enjoy. Polling shows that 86 percent of Latino voters support the Antiquities Act.<sup>79</sup>

Congress continues to try to take away this power, but we believe it is a vital tool for creating open spaces that can help Latinos be more physically active in nature.

We encourage Congress to continue to support these two initiatives – and efforts to create safe, accessible places for our families to be active outdoors.



## END NOTES

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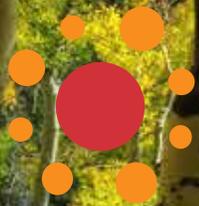
## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ABOUT HISPANIC FEDERATION

Hispanic Federation (HF) is the nation's premier Latino nonprofit membership organization. HF uplifts millions of Hispanic children, youth and families through public policy advocacy, innovative community programs and strengthening Latino nonprofits. By working with a dynamic network of leading Latino community-based organizations, HF is able to fulfill its mission to empower and advance the Hispanic community.

As part of its advocacy strategy, HF works with its network leadership to educate policymakers, funders, the public and media about the needs and aspirations of Latinos in the areas of education, health care, immigration, economic development, civic participation, the environment and more.



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