



Intersecting Paths

How Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and Tumacácori National Historical Park Collaborate for Mutual Benefit

Two National Park Service (NPS) units in southern Arizona—one a national historic trail and the other a national historical park—have found opportunities to collaborate where their missions and significances intersect and overlap. By collaborating, they have leveraged their resources and found a common intersecting path, providing benefits to both NPS entities, other partners, and the public.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (NHT) and Tumacácori National Historical Park (NHP) were established for different purposes, but they share a one-mile segment of the Anza Trail along the Santa Cruz River in Tumacácori NHP. Many aspects of their interpretive narratives also overlap, as they are both Spanish colonial stories in the American southwest and have international ties to Sonora, Mexico.

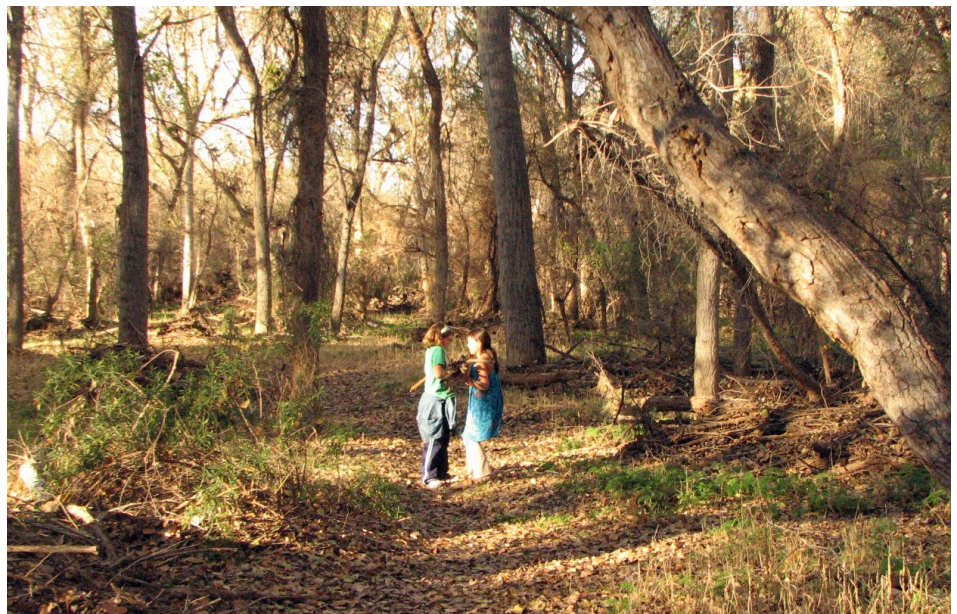
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail commemorates and interprets the route traveled during 1775–1776 expedition to bring Spanish colonizers from Mexico to the San Francisco, California area.

Tumacácori NHP protects, preserves, and interprets the natural and cultural heritage resources of three Jesuit and Franciscan missions.

The Tumacácori mission was established in 1691 and is the oldest such site in Arizona. Although construction of the current Tumacácori church did not begin until 1800, the Anza expedition passed by the Tumacácori mission on its way to Tubac Presidio, four miles north. Father Pedro Font, the expedition's chaplain, held a mass at Tumacácori on October 17, 1775.

Tubac Presidio was the final gathering place of the expedition prior to traveling overland to California.

Presidios (military forts) like Tubac and missions like Tumacácori went



Young hikers on the Anza Trail in Tumacácori National Historical Park.

hand-in-hand with each other as they were complementary parts of Spanish colonization efforts in the Southwest.

Tumacácori was first established as a national monument in 1908 and became a national historical park in 1990. In 2002, a one-mile segment of the Anza Trail was added to Tumacácori NHP to increase recreational and interpretive opportunities for park visitors. This section of the trail also passes through Southwest cottonwood-willow riparian and mesquite bosque habitat, both important ecosystems in the Santa Cruz Valley.

As the only NPS site in Arizona that includes a segment of the Anza Trail, Tumacácori NHP is an integral partner with Juan Bautista de Anza NHT. This case study explores the use of collaboration by Juan Bautista de Anza NHT and Tumacácori NHP and shares lessons from their successes and challenges using collaboration that may be helpful to other NPS employees.

"I'm all about partnerships. I'm all about collaborations because there are folks that may have solutions to your problems that you'll never get if you don't interface with them."



Mike Medrano
Superintendent
Tumacácori NHP

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

The Anza Trail begins at the southern Arizona border with Sonora, Mexico and travels across southern Arizona and California to its terminus in San Francisco, California at the Presidio of San Francisco in Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The 1,200-mile trail commemorates and interprets the route of the 1775–1776 colonizing expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza. Anza was the Spanish commander in charge of Tubac Presidio, the military installation just north of Tumacacácori National Historical Park. He led a group of nearly 300 settlers, soldiers, cowboys, Indian guides, and approximately 1,000 cattle on an overland journey that took five and a half months to the San Francisco area to establish a new presidio and mission there to help solidify Spanish control over California.

Juan Bautista de Anza NHT was established in 1990 through an amendment to the National Trails Act. It is administered by the National Park Service who works in partnership with other NPS units, other federal agencies, and state and local government entities. The National Park Service does not own any of the land that the Anza Trail passes through, except when it is within another NPS unit.

Juan Bautista de Anza NHT has three FTEs.

Tumacacácori National Historical Park

The purpose of Tumacacácori NHP is to protect, preserve, and interpret the natural and cultural heritage resources of three Jesuit and Franciscan missions and to promote understanding of the cultural interactions between Native and European peoples in the Santa Cruz Valley from the 17th century to today.

The site of the San José de Tumacacácori church was proclaimed a national monument in 1908 and redesignated as a national historical park in 1990 when the San Cayetano de Calabazas and Los Santos Ángeles de Guevavi missions were incorporated. Tumacacácori is nearly complete mission complex with the church having great architectural integrity. Both Calabazas and Guevavi contain important Spanish mission sites, and are only accessible during ranger-guided tours.



The Tumacacácori unit contains the remains of the Franciscan mission church, whose construction began in 1800, as well as related structures, the foundation of the original Jesuit church, cemetery, heritage orchard, and reconstructed O'odham ki (house). It also includes a one-mile segment of the Juan Bautista de Anza NHT.

Tumacacácori NHP has 16 FTEs.

Anza Trail Segment between Tumacacácori and Tubac Presidio State Historic Park

The first segment of the Anza Trail established in Arizona was that between Tumacacácori NHP and Tubac Presidio State Historic Park. This reach is also one of only two certified recreational trail segments in the state.

Trail certification provides official recognition of protected trail segments on non-federal lands. The certification process is part of the collaborative effort between property owners and the National



Park Service to manage national historic trails. The Anza Trail segment between Tumacacácori and Tubac Presidio is on private land except for the parts that are in each park on the two ends.

This trail segment is maintained by the Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona, in partnership with private landowners and the National Park Service.

Interpretive Consilience

The overlap in the geography and interpretive stories of Tumacácori NHP and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT naturally leads to collaboration between the two units.

The significance of both NPS units relate to the history of Spanish colonialism in the Southwest.

Tumacácori focuses on missionization in the Santa Cruz Valley, and the Anza Trail encompasses the impact that the colonizing expedition had on the heritage of the larger region along its route across southern Arizona and through California to San Francisco.

Tumacácori and the Anza Trail work together on the interpretation of the Anza expedition in the Santa Cruz Valley, including both on-site and off-site programs and involvement in special events. They have also worked together on interpretive products such as wayside exhibits, with staff members from both units contributing to the development of effective products.

During a development project for an Anza wayside, staff from both units brought their strengths and expertise together to benefit visitors. The Anza Trail had a wayside exhibit style guide as well as a graphic designer on staff, and were able to provide a larger perspective on the Anza expedition along the expedition's entire route. In turn, park staff were able to provide specific place-based expertise perspectives and the local viewpoint.

Tumacácori and the Anza Trail also partner on staffing to provide interpretive services.

During the last several years, the Anza Trail has provided funding to help cover

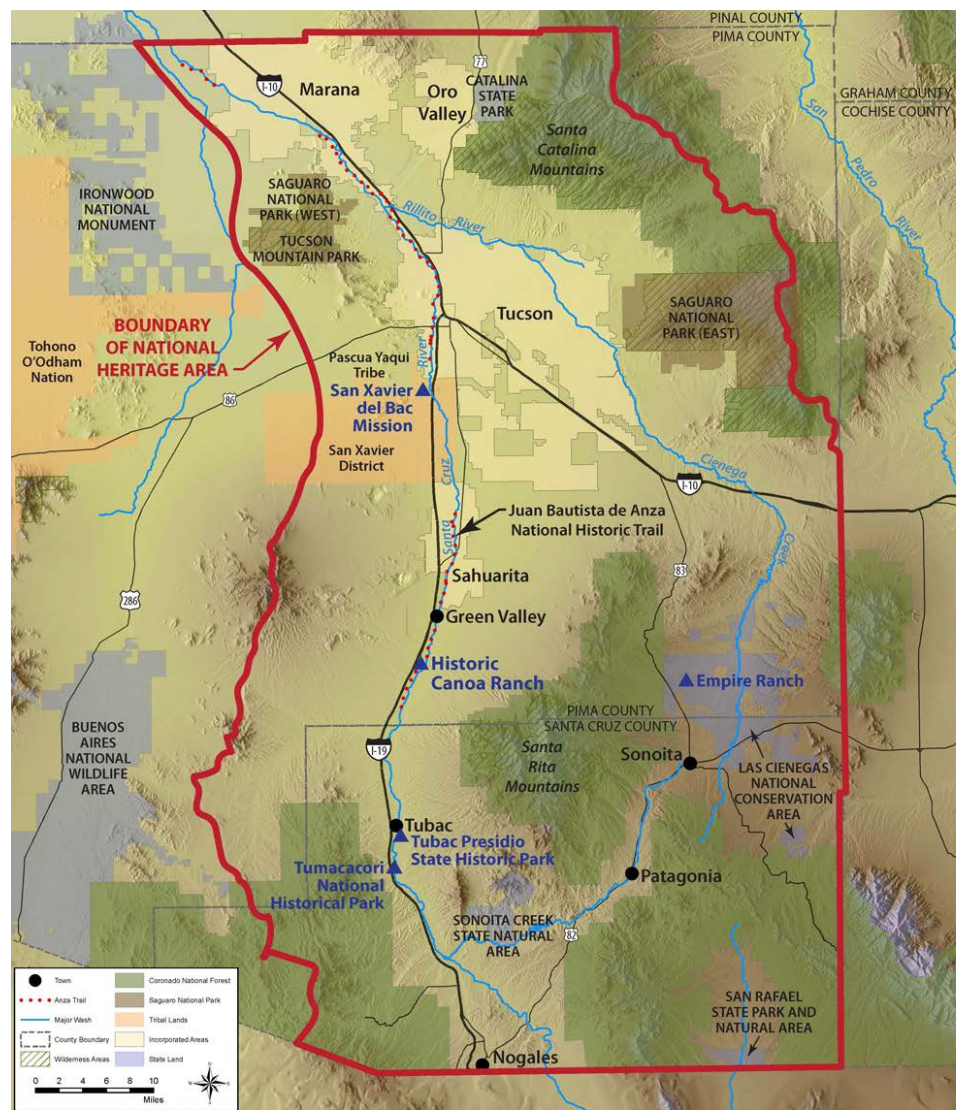
Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area was designated by Congress in 2019 for the area's rich history, natural and cultural resources, and the heritage of the Santa Cruz River watershed.

National heritage areas are community driven and support sustainable economic development, a healthy environment and people, education and stewardship, and community engagement and pride. They are NPS related areas where the NPS partners with national heritage areas, and provides financial and technical assistance to them.

A nonprofit, the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance, is the local coordinating entity of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.



Tubac Presidio State Historic Park is located about four miles north of Tumacácori NHP. The two parks are connected by the Anza Trail, which is an important part of the story of both sites. The Anza expedition celebrated a mass at Tumacácori and the final preparations for the expedition took place at Tubac Presidio. As their stories are linked, both Tumacácori NHP and Anza NHT actively partner with Tubac Presidio. Tubac Presidio is Arizona's first state park, but today is run by a nonprofit organization, Friends of the Tubac Presidio and Museum, Inc.





“The trail, because of its geographic nature, is in a very powerful position to link the stories between park units and nonpark units. I recently was in California where I grew up and I saw the Anza Trail logo while hiking. I legitimately had a little emotional flutter, “Oh my gosh, that’s my trail.” I was 1,200 miles away from where I work, and it’s the same trail and the same story. It was kind of magical. People can really make an emotional connection through a trail that strings along a whole landscape.”



Melanie Rawlins
Training Specialist (former),
Tumacácori NHP

National Trails System

Administration of a national historic trail is inherently collaborative.

The [National Trails System](#) was established by an act of Congress in 1968, as amended. National historic trails are one of the four classes of trails that make up the National Trail System. Today, there are 11 national scenic trails and 21 national historic trails. National recreation trails receive federal recognition. Side and connecting trails are intended to provide for additional points of public access to other trails.

Like national scenic trails, national historic trails are long-distance trails administered by federal agencies.

The National Park Service administers 23 of these long-distance trails, the US Forest Service administers 6 trails, the Bureau of Land Management oversees one trail, and the NPS and BLM jointly administer two.

National historic trails must have an actual route of historic use that is documented well enough to be located, national significance, and significant potential for public recreation and/or interpretation. National historic trails reflect the diverse history of the United States. In addition to Juan Bautista de Anza NHT, other national historic trails include Selma to Montgomery, Lewis and Clark, Iditarod, Star-Spangled Banner, Washington-Rochambeau, Trail of Tears, and Ala Kahakai.

As administrators of national historic trails, NPS staffers generally have different roles and responsibilities than other park managers. The NPS does not have any actual land ownership for national historic trails, except when a trail passes through another NPS unit, like the segment of the Anza Trail in Tumacácori NHP, and the one in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

NPS trail administrators perform some of same functions as traditional federal land managers as related to planning, operations, and public relations. But they also work largely through interagency agreements and via partnerships with landowners and stakeholders. Generally, trail administration requires much coordination with state and local governmental entities, as well as nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, such as volunteer groups. The enabling legislation of Juan Bautista de Anza NHT specifically states that volunteer trail groups are encouraged to participate in the development and maintenance of the trail.



“The way I characterize trails versus parks is that national parks are like a house. And to manage a house you take care of the building, you decide what stories you tell inside that building, and you can decide who can come in, and so on. There’s more control of a piece of real estate. Administrators of national trails are like travelers that follow along a path. We approach the different landowners and explain the designation and ask how they would like to be involved.”



Naomi Torres, Superintendent, Anza NHT

the costs of a seasonal interpretive park ranger to provide programming on Anza and the expedition he led, including off-site programs at Tubac Presidio State Historic Park, where Anza had been the commander prior to leading the 1775–1776 colonizing expedition. This ranger (Rick Collins) has also been able to share his expertise about Anza with other interpretive staff and volunteers at Tumacácori.

Tumacácori and the Anza Trail has also shared interns and seasonal interpretive rangers. For example, in 2017, a seasonal interpreter for the Anza Trail was stationed at Tumacácori, which provided many benefits for both the trail and the park. Anita Badertscher, the then Tumacácori Chief of Interpretation (now retired), provided on-site supervision for this seasonal interpreter. In addition to providing interpretive services on the Anza expedition, the interpreter assisted in staffing the Tumacácori Visitor Center and providing interpretive services for the park as needed. Additionally, by participating in weekly staff meetings at Tumacácori, the interpreter was able to facilitate regular information exchange between the park and the trail, which helped to keep both units up-to-date on each other.

The collaboration between the two park units also allows staff the opportunity to tackle larger and more complex issues that are sometimes difficult, such as Spanish colonialism in the American Southwest and the impact it had on the Indigenous peoples living in the area. The fact that Tumacácori's staff know the Santa Cruz Valley very well and the Anza Trail staff have the larger regional perspective allows them to complement each other to provide multiple perspectives and a greater understanding of the relevant interpretive issues.

Additionally, interpretive staff from both units can leverage each other's stories to build stewards for both Tumacácori and the Anza Trail and a broader understanding of the significances of both resources.

Park-to-Park Hiker Shuttle

The free hiker shuttle between Tumacácori and Tubac Presidio is a tangible example of the collaboration between Tumacácori NHP and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT. This shuttle allows hikers to walk one way on the

Other Collaborative Partners

Although this case study focuses on the collaboration between Tumacácori NHP and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT, both NPS units collaborate with many other partners.

Collaboration with other entities is a natural extension of both Tumacácori's and the Anza Trail's missions as both are part of the larger regional and cultural stories of the Santa Cruz Valley, including the Anza expedition and Spanish colonialism in general.

Neither the park nor the trail could fully fulfill their missions without placing their resources in their larger contexts. Specifically, Tumacácori is particularly aligned with Tubac Presidio State Historic Park given their historical ties and proximity to one another. And as a national historic trail, Juan Bautista de Anza NHT has an explicit mandate to work with volunteer organizations.

The Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona, including the Anza Color Guard of Arizona, and the Western National Parks Association are both significant partners of the NPS units. The Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona's mission is to educate the public about the historical significance of the Anza Trail, help maintain segments of recreational trail, and support the Arizona section of the trail. WNPA supports education, interpretation, research, and community engagement with national parks. Many of the park's and the trail's collaborative projects also involve these organizations.

Other partners include Pima County, the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind, Ironwood Tree Experience, Environmental Education Exchange, and Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area. Park administrators with the Juan Bautista de Anza NHT also partner with many other organizations along the entire length of the trail elsewhere in Arizona and in California and Sonora, Mexico.



La Expedición de Anza, 1775, also known as the Anza Trail Cultural History Park, is an accessible park adjacent to the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind in Tucson. The development of this site was initiated by the Anza Society International, in collaboration with the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind, Pima County, and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT.

Anza Trail between Tubac Presidio and Tumacácori, and is very popular with members of the local community and park visitors. The shuttle runs on the third Saturday each month from November through March.

People who complete the walk between the two parks can also earn their "I Hike for Health" pin. The "I Hike for Health" challenge is a multipark program in southern Arizona that rewards participants for meeting distance goals.

The hiker shuttle is funded by the Anza Trail, with the park handling the logistics of providing the van that serves as the shuttle.

Recreation is a significant part of the National Trail System mandate, and this program encourages public use of one of the premiere walkable segments of the entire trail. In addition to the beauty of the riparian zone along the Santa Cruz River, both Tubac Presidio and Tumacácori have great historical

significance related to the Anza Trail. Juan Bautista de Anza NHT funding the park-to-park shuttle supports not only Tumacácori's mission, but furthers their own.

Working with Other Partners

Many of the projects and events that Tumacácori NHP and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT collaborate on involve other non-NPS partners. In many ways this is natural since Tumacácori is a relatively small park and the enabling legislation for the Anza NHT specifies that it will encourage volunteer groups to participate in trail development and maintenance. Nonetheless, Tumacácori and the Anza Trail have a special relationship since they are both NPS units that share common resources and the NPS mission. In these ways, the two NPS units organically gravitate towards each other, yet their collaboration is set within a larger network of collaborations with other agencies and organizations.

The triad of Tumacácori NHP, Juan Bautista de Anza NHT, and Tubac Presidio State Park work very closely with each other on projects where they overlap, such as the story of the Anza expedition, the history of Tumacácori, and the park-to-park hiker shuttle. Each unit also collaborates closely with nonprofit partners such as the Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona whose missions tie to those of the parks and the trail.

Both NPS units work with other organizations where they have common purpose. For example, Ironwood Tree Experience, a nonprofit experiential, outdoor education organization does youth programming and partners with the Anza Trail and Tumacácori NHP.

The Sonoran Institute, a nonprofit whose mission is to connect people with the natural resources that nourish and sustain them, works with both Tumacácori and the Anza Trail on conservation projects related to the Santa Cruz River. The river is very closely tied to the significance of both NPS units.

The Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area provides a new opportunity to further the collaborations between Tumacácori, the Anza Trail, and their other partners. The national historic trail serves as a natural backbone for the new national heritage area since it



The Santa Cruz River near the Anza Trail, Tubac Presidio State Historic Park, and Tumacácori NHP. Credit: Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona.

“Collaboration is always beneficial. You always enrich your program and are able to do more than you could have done on your own. For some people in some situations, it could be a distraction or it could be a pull in a different direction. But that has not been our experience.”



Anita Badertscher
Chief of Interpretation & Education
(retired), Tumacácori NHP

naturally pulls together many partners and runs north-south through the heart of the Santa Cruz Valley.

Continuing Collaboration

By using collaborative practices, Tumacácori NHP and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT have been able to assist one another in meeting their management objectives and providing expanded

services and opportunities for the public.

The efforts between the two NPS units also put them in an advantageous position to partner with other agencies and organizations, including in emerging relationships such as with the newly established Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.

The collaboration between Tumacácori and the Anza Trail is just a part of those of a larger complex web of agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other entities throughout the Santa Cruz Valley related to telling the histories and cultural stories of the area. These organizations are currently addressing many challenging issues such as a reframing of Spanish colonial stories, especially within the larger context of American history, multiculturalism, current challenges in the borderlands region, and a centering of Indigenous stories and perspectives.

The collaboration between Tumacácori and the Anza Trail has been informal to date, with projects initiated and completed in an ad hoc and opportunistic manner. But staff from both units postulated that it may be possible to strengthen and expand their collaborative opportunities if they build in more structured processes with more opportunities for regular communication. A more formal collaborative process

Lessons Learned

- » Effective communication is essential for successful collaboration. Communication can take place via in-person meetings, virtual meetings, phone calls, or email, but there are some advantages to in-person meetings when they are possible. Also taking the time to discuss projects and their outcomes beyond their basic parameters can further collaborative relationships and outcomes. Additionally, building in regular opportunities for communication to take place can lead to new collaborative projects as a result of expanded forums for brainstorming and the sharing of ideas.
- » Lengthening a project's timeline can give the opportunity for all members of a collaboration to get fully on board and provide input. Slowing a project down may provide better results than rushing to complete it.
- » Maintaining good long-term relationships with colleagues and partners can allow a collaboration to weather operational challenges like staff turnover and vacant positions, and issues such as an individual project not going as planned.
- » Coordinating with a regional entity like a national historic trail, a national heritage area, or state-level NPS office can link NPS units together and help them tackle larger projects and more complex issues. It provides opportunities for fellowship with other NPS staffers and to work on projects that are broader than those that impact a single park unit.
- » Bringing multiple parks together on difficult issues like Spanish colonialism can help identify the best ways to address complex topics and help the agency address them in a more systematic and comprehensive way.
- » Finding areas of overlap between separate programs or the missions of multiple park units allows each to leverage against one another to provide better products and services to the public.
- » Collaboration frequently produces better results because it brings together multiple ideas, more voices, more varied expertise among collaboration members, and a broader network of participants.
- » Collaboration with other NPS units can also include collaborations with other federal, state, and local agencies which can strengthen the internal NPS collaboration.

“Given the somewhat polarized environment that there is towards the border and related issues, NPS interpreters really need to tell this story about Hispanic heritage and Indigenous heritage here in the Southwest, now more than ever. Tumacácori and the Anza Trail tells the story of encounters between cultures in the Santa Cruz Valley. Also, given Tumacácori’s and the Anza Trail’s proximity to Mexico, there’s the opportunity for a lot of positive outreach to our Sonoran neighbors.”



Alex La Pierre
Seasonal Park Ranger (former),
Juan Bautista de Anza NHT



O'odham women and girls holding baskets for the O'odham basket dance at La Fiesta de Tumacácori, an annual celebration of the many cultures, historically and presently, associated with the Santa Cruz Valley. The people who lived along the Santa Cruz River when the first contact with the Spanish was made were a branch of the O'odham.

“Without collaboration, it would look really different down there. I think we would be working with partners in the area, but we wouldn’t have this central hub that we’ve created. Everything seems to come through Tumacácori for us. Even our non-government, non-park service partners, like the Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona and the Anza Color Guard of Arizona. I don’t think we’d be as successful in our mission without this collaboration. That region has been one of our most active and engaged ones for volunteers and partner groups, and just for awareness of and interest in the trail.



Christopher Bentley, Interpretation Program Manager, Juan Bautista de Anza NHT



Tumacácori NHP Park Ranger Rick Collins portraying a soldier during the Anza expedition.

should not add to the administrative burdens on each NPS unit, but instead build on its current strengths and generate new ways that they can work together.

By using collaboration as a way to leverage their intersecting paths—literally and figuratively—Tumacácori and the Anza Trail have found ways to

better serve the public, engage in more partnerships with outside entities, and help one another meet their respective missions.

To learn more about the collaboration between Tumacácori NHP and Juan Bautista de Anza NHT, read an [oral history](#) on the collaboration available from the [NPS Data Store](#).

The National Park Service Collaboration Network

The National Park Service Collaboration Network is a group of dedicated employees who recognize the value of collaboration. We believe that we best serve our parks, and the American people, when we embrace our collective power—the diversity of skills, people, experiences, and expertise that comprise our NPS community. We believe that the mission of preserving our resources, unimpaired, for this and future generations is what unites us across disciplines and administrative boundaries.

To this end, our work is to pave the way for a successful cultural shift—a shift to a more collaborative environment within our organization.

Acknowledgments

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