



Beyond the Model: Integrating Community Knowledge into Digital Infrastructure

Bottom-Up Data to Spatial Impact
through *the Abuelas Project*

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Latinos in Heritage Conservation





Historic Preservation in the United States: Who Is Represented?

0.65
Latinx sites within the
National Registry

- **National Register of Historic Places**
 - Federal recognition framework
 - Shapes preservation + funding decisions
- **Equity Gap**
 - 0.65% of sites reflect Latinx histories
- **Our Response**
 - Community-driven documentation
 - Geospatial storytelling
 - Pathways to recognition

Recognition begins with documentation

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Mapping Workshop by LHC in Tucson, Arizona, USA



The Abuelas Project is LHC's digital community archive that collects, curates, and amplifies stories of important Latinx movements, sites, and people across the country.

This project encourages intergenerational storytelling through mapping, educational workshops, and collaboration with local and regional organizations, bringing communities together through heritage preservation.



From Community Knowledge to Historical Designation

Step 1. Community Memory

Oral histories + lived experience + Research

Step 2. Digital Representation

Geospatial documentation

Step 3. Institutional Impact

Visibility → preservation → recognition



Explore the story here!



Migrating across the U.S. — Mexican border: A Mexican farmworkers' journey



2024

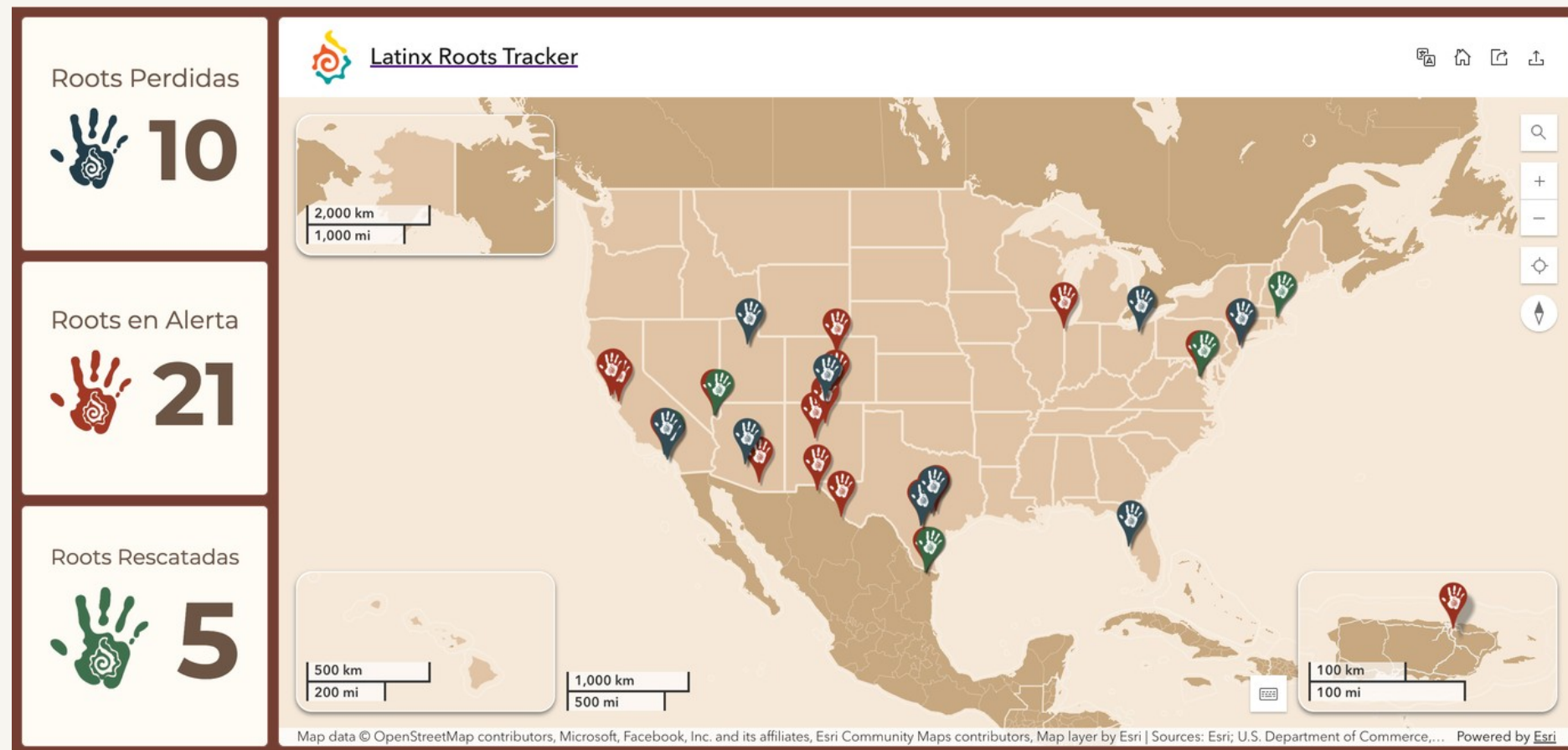
ArcGIS StoryMaps
Competition





The Future of Integrated Systems

What gets documented gets recognized and what gets recognized gets preserved.





Integrating Community Knowledge into Digital Infrastructure Systems



Expand Data Inputs

Include community-sourced data alongside BIM/GIS layers

Use Participatory Tools

Surveys, story mapping, and memory mapping

Layer Cultural Significance

Attach meaning to places—not just function

Inform Planning Decisions

Use community data in early design + modeling phases



¡Gracias!

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