



PEOPLE OF THE
SACRED LAND

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Uncovering the Past to Build a Strong Future



Richard B. Williams, Leader
People of the Sacred Land

People of the Sacred Land was founded with the vision of reconnecting American Indians in Colorado and those whose ancestors were forcefully removed from the region with their ancestral lands. The devastating impact of genocide has sought to destroy our traditions and lifeways for centuries. Despite these challenges, our resilience is evident as we work tirelessly each day to rebuild and strengthen our communities.

Our commitment to restoration is deeply intertwined with understanding the truth about our history in Colorado. This is why we established the Truth, Restoration, and Education Commission. By revealing the full extent of atrocities and

violations committed against our people by the U.S. and Colorado Governments, we lay the groundwork for reclaiming our sovereignty and identity, both as individuals and as nations.

In 2023, the Truth, Restoration, and Education Commission made substantial progress in uncovering the realities of the genocide faced by American Indians in Colorado. Their investigation has exposed severe acts of violence, multiple treaty breaches, and monumental economic loss. As this vital work nears completion, we eagerly await the final reports and recommendations to be published in 2024, which will offer guidance for governments to advance reconciliation efforts.

Alongside these efforts, our community initiatives have made significant strides. We have hosted cultural revitalization programs, educational workshops, and community events that foster a deeper connection to our heritage. These activities are designed to preserve and celebrate our traditions and empower and unite our people.

Our work extends to supporting local projects that enhance self-sufficiency and cultural pride and creating platforms for our voices to be heard in broader societal discussions. We are building a stronger, more vibrant community by engaging with our youth, nurturing traditional practices, and advocating for our rights.

Thank you for your support and commitment to our healing journey.





Mission

People of Sacred Land supports American Indian residents of Colorado, and those whose homelands are in Colorado, in preserving their culture, language, and traditional ways of life that are tied to the land.

Vision

Our vision is to achieve economic, social, and environmental justice for American Indian ancestors who were forcefully removed by uncovering the truth about past and present injustices, holding the state government accountable, and implementing meaningful change.

Community

At People of Sacred Land, we empower Colorado's American Indian communities to preserve cultural heritage, achieve economic and environmental justice, and create a thriving future rooted in tradition and resilience.





Making an Impact

People of the Sacred Land strives to be a vital resource for the Denver Area, dedicating themselves to educating nonprofit organizations, community leaders, elected officials, and government agencies about the rich history and contemporary realities of American Indians in Colorado. By fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of American Indian culture, traditions, and historical contributions, we aim to bridge gaps in knowledge and promote inclusivity within our community.

Our initiatives include workshops, events, and educational materials that highlight the significant impact American Indians have had on the development and culture of Colorado. We collaborate with local schools and universities to integrate American Indian history into their curriculums, ensuring that future generations recognize and respect the heritage of the original inhabitants of this land. Through our advocacy efforts, we work closely with policymakers to inform legislation that protects and respects American Indian rights and sacred sites. By building strong, informed partnerships, People of the Sacred Land is committed to creating a more just and equitable society where the history and contributions of American Indians are honored and celebrated.



Education

NATIVE HISTORY CURRICULUM

In 2023, we launched the development of a Native American History curriculum for elementary and middle school students. The goals of the curriculum are to provide a comprehensive and engaging educational experience that fosters critical thinking and cultural awareness among students. It aims to present historical facts accurately and impartially, encouraging students to reflect on and understand the significance of these events. Additionally, the curriculum seeks to bridge classroom learning with the community, inspiring students to become informed and active participants in societal change. Ultimately, it strives to create an inclusive environment where students of all backgrounds can learn about and appreciate Native history and culture, promoting allyship and mutual respect.

OUTDOOR NATIVE YOUTH CULTURE CAMP

In 2023, People of the Sacred Land continued their mission of providing educational opportunities for both Native. During the summer, we partnered with Tall Bull Memorial Park and the Denver Indian Center to host a cultural camp for Native students. This camp included activities such as, putting up teepees, learning about the outdoors, and completing traditional art projects. These activities allow students to engage in traditional practices. The camp also offered students the chance to reflect on their identities, aspirations, and values. With partners, we hosted over 20 attendees from the Denver Area.



Community

ELDERS DINNER

Elders play an integral role in People of the Sacred Land work and in the Indigenous community at large. It is important to always incorporate elders perspectives in our work and ensure we are giving back for all they share with our communities. This year we hosted a holiday dinner at the Denver Indian Center to honor over 100 American Indian Elders with a feast and gifts.

MICRO-INVESTMENT GRANT: TALL BULL MEMORIAL PARK

Part of our mission is to support American Indian leaders and nonprofits to help them be successful. This year, we worked in collaboration with Tall Bull Memorial Park to make land management easier and more efficient for park managers. We provided the park with funds to purchase a new tractor to enhance their capabilities, ensuring they have the necessary tools to maintain and preserve the land effectively. This collaboration reflects our ongoing commitment to empowering American Indian leaders and nonprofits and their success.



Photo By: Cheyenne & Arapaho Productions



Renaming Mt. Evans to Mt. Blue Sky: A Step Towards Healing and Recognition

In September 2023, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names officially voted to rename Mt. Evans as Mt. Blue Sky. This change was driven by the efforts to remove Evans' name from one of Colorado's most recognizable and visited peaks. People of the Sacred Land, in partnership with the Mestaa'êhehe Coalition, played a crucial role in this renaming effort. For nearly three years, they worked with community and tribal partners to see this process through.

The coalition's goal was to educate the Colorado community about the significance of the

renaming, the history of the Sand Creek Massacre, and the impact of Evans' leadership on tribal nations in the mid to late 1800s still affects tribes today. John Evans, the former Territorial Governor of Colorado, played a significant role in the Sand Creek Massacre by creating policies that led to the attack on a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho people in 1864. This tragic event resulted in the deaths of many American Indians, including women and children.

Truth, Restoration & Education Commission

We aim to restore the status of Tribal Nations in present-day Colorado, and to create a place where Native communities in Colorado can thrive and prosper. The Truth, Restoration, and Education Commission (TREC) for American Indians began in 2022 and continues their work researching and assessing the impact of the genocide of American Indians in Colorado. The TREC is a privately funded, Native-led research initiative comprised of seven American Indian leaders who represent the Tribal Nations in Colorado that have sustained the most significant injury over the last 170 plus years. In 2023, TREC and PSL representatives met with Tribal Leaders from the Kiowa and Comanche, Kiowa and Apahce, Eastern Shoshone, Northern Arapaho, Cheyenne and Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne and the Ute Tribes to discuss our research and begin defining recommendations for how the State of Colorado can improve relations with their respective Nations.

WHY ESTABLISH A TRUTH, RESTORATION AND EDUCATION COMMISSION?

Understanding the true history of Colorado tribes and the immense hardships they endured during the violent colonization of the state is crucial for shaping our future actions and policies. By delving into this brutal past, TREC is dedicated to uncovering the full extent of these historical injustices. This comprehensive research serves as a foundation for developing informed and effective recommendations aimed at improving the relationships between the Colorado State Government, local governments, and business partners with Native Nations and their community members. Through this process, TREC seeks to foster a deeper respect for Native history and culture, promote reconciliation, and pave the way for a more just and equitable future.



TREC RECOMMENDATIONS

During the violent colonizations of Colorado, indigenous tribes faced forced displacement, cultural suppression, and violent conflicts due to European settlers. These events caused lasting trauma and economic hardship.

By delving into this brutal past, TREC is dedicated to uncovering the full extent of these historical injustices. TREC's commitment to historical accuracy aims to foster a deeper understanding and respect for indigenous cultures, supporting policies that address past wrongs and promote tribal rights, cultural preservation, and community empowerment.

Hohóú • Né-á'ěše • Towac

Thank You to Our Supporters

We extend our deepest gratitude for your generous supporters over the past year. Their contributions have been instrumental in advancing our mission to uncover and address the historical injustices endured by Colorado's indigenous tribes.

With their support, we have made significant strides in our efforts to document and share the true history of these communities, ensuring American Indians voices and experiences are heard and respected. Together, we are shaping a future that acknowledges past wrongs and fosters cultural preservation and community empowerment.

Their commitment to our cause inspires us to continue this vital work.

FOUNDATIONS

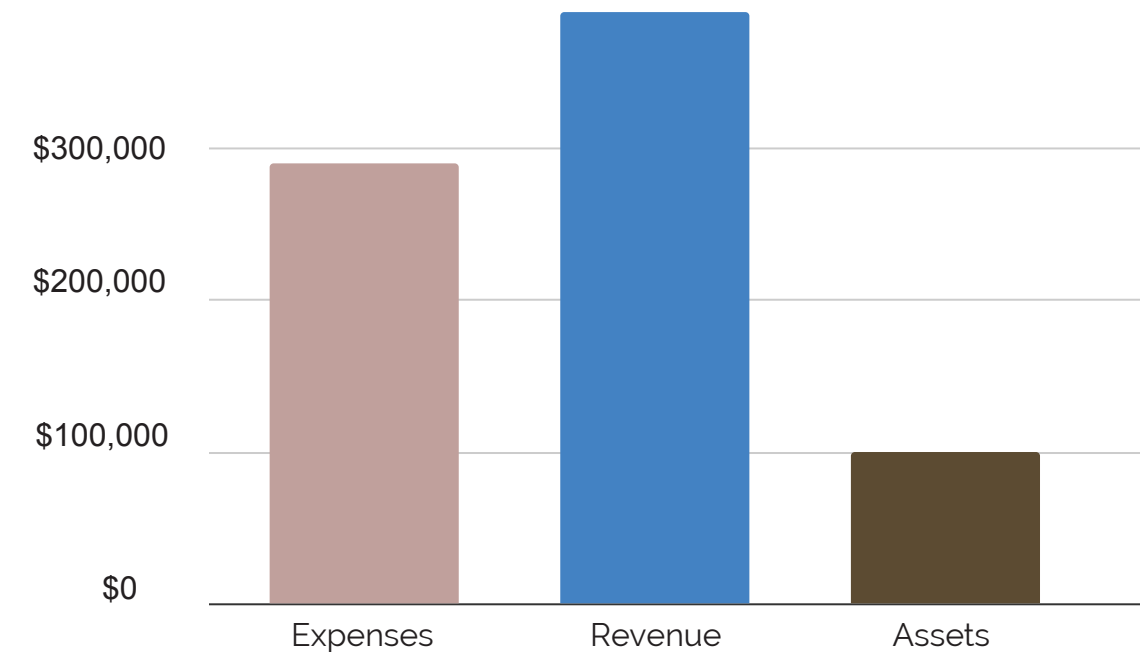
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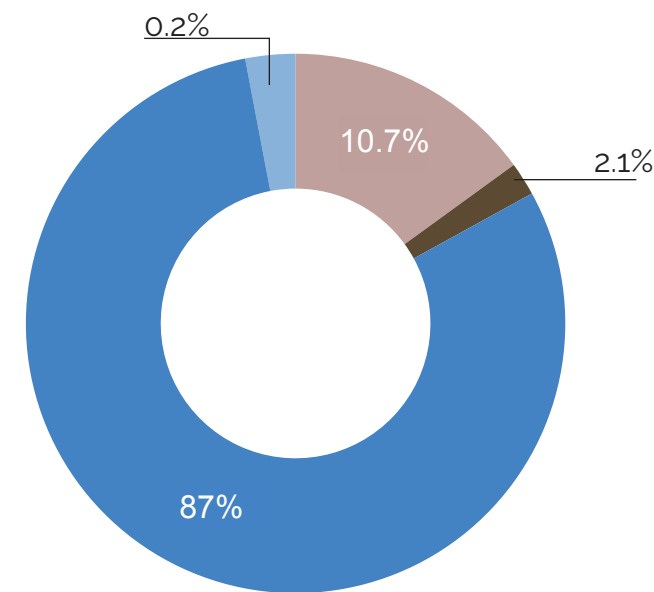
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PSL 2023 Financials

If you would like a copy of our 990 or have any questions, please contact us at info@peopleofthesacredland.org.

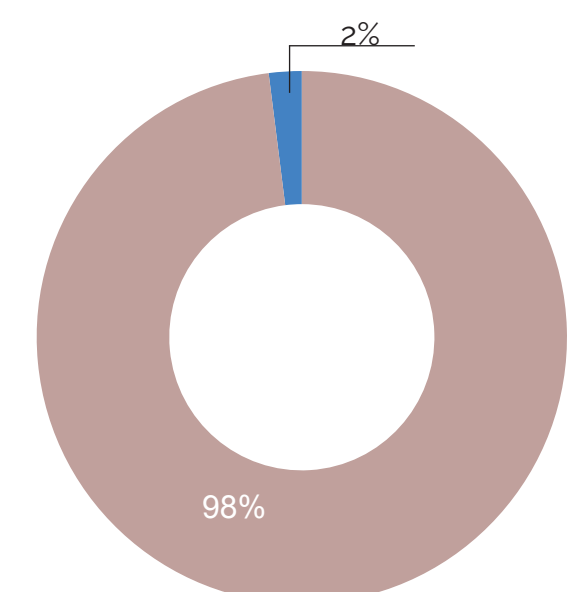


Expenses



- Programming
- Administrative
- Advertising & Marketing
- Other

Revenue



- Grants
- Individual Donors

Looking Ahead

As we look forward to the upcoming year, we are excited to share several key initiatives and projects that will advance our mission of supporting Colorado's indigenous communities.

Native History Curriculum

In 2023, we developed a Native History Curriculum for schools in Colorado. The curriculum is available to all elementary, middle and high school teachers who seek to share the truth about Indigenous history in Colorado in their classrooms.

Historical Documentation and Research

We will expand our efforts to uncover and document the histories of Colorado's indigenous tribes. This includes new partnerships with local historians and academic institutions to ensure a comprehensive and accurate portrayal of these communities' experiences. We will also publish detailed historical reports to share these findings with the public.

Advocacy Work

Our advocacy efforts will continue as we work support local and state policies that affect indigenous rights and resources. We aim to collaborate with policymakers to create legislation that addresses historical injustices and promotes equity.

Conservation Easements to Protect Sacred Sites

We are excited to announce a new initiative focused on establishing conservation easements to protect sacred sites. By collaborating with land trusts and conservation organizations, we aim to preserve these culturally and spiritually significant areas for future generations, ensuring they remain untouched by development and exploitation.

Please visit peopleofthesacredland.org to learn more about our upcoming work and our Colorado American Indian History Curriculum.

