

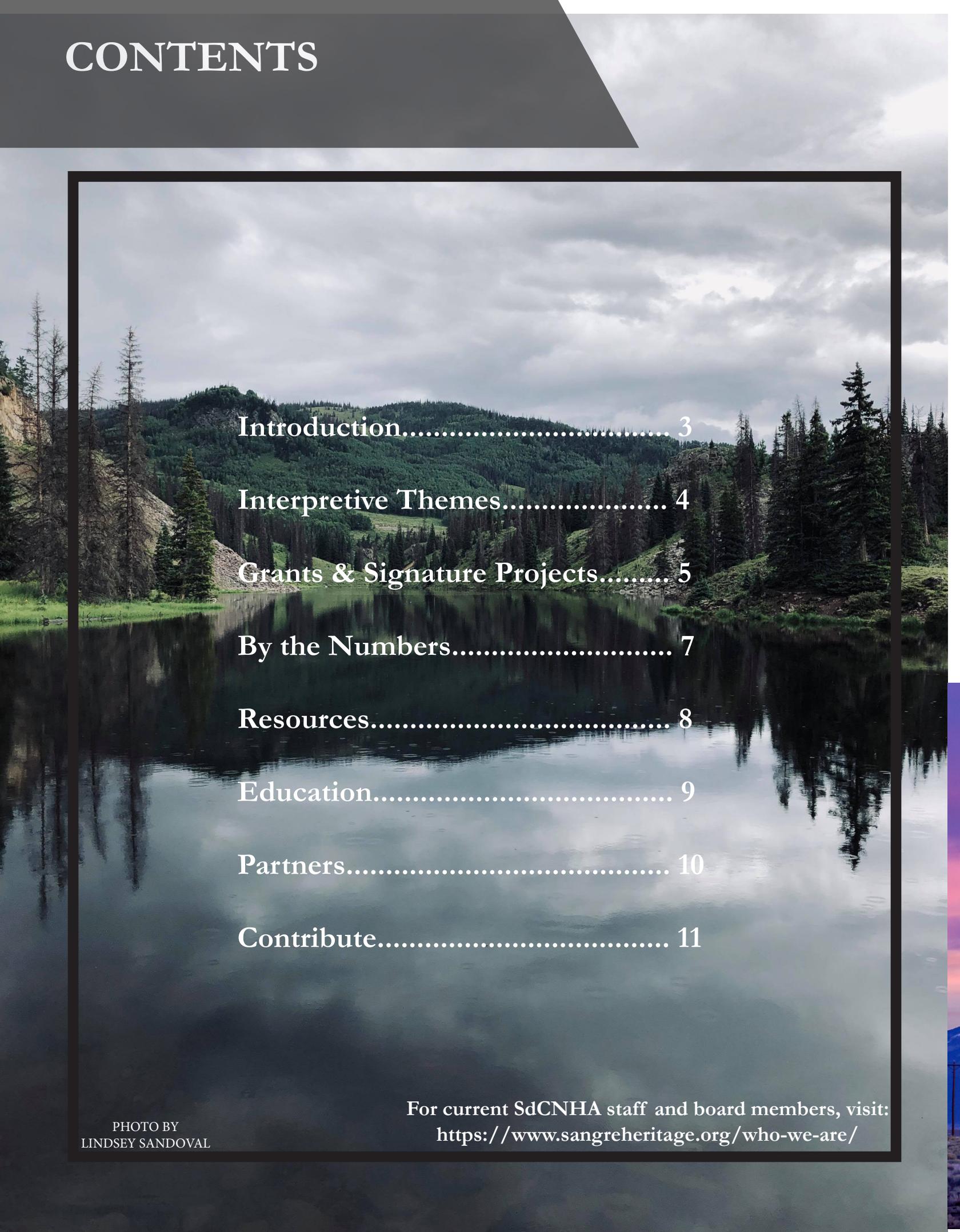
SANGRE ♦ DE ♦ CRISTO  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

2020  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

PHOTO BY  
JEREMY ELLIOT

**PROMOTE  
PRESERVE  
PROTECT**

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LINDSEY SANDOVAL

For current SdCNHA staff and board members, visit:  
<https://www.sangreheritage.org/who-we-are/>

# INTRODUCTION

The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area encompasses more than 3,000 square miles in the San Luis Valley. The Area includes the headwaters of the Rio Grande and its intricate network of tributary creeks, lakes, wetlands, artesian springs, and irrigation canals. In addition, it includes the stunningly beautiful natural resources of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Baca National Wildlife Refuge, Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge, Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge and Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic & Historic Byway. Our Heritage Area also includes all of Alamosa County, Conejos County, and Costilla County; public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management; a portion of the Rio Grande National Forest; and a host of smaller sites protected by the State of Colorado.

The administration of President Ronald Reagan supported the concept of National Heritage Areas as a cost-effective way to tell America's story and conserve the nation's natural and historic resources. Former Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar, former Congressman John Salazar, and Senator Michael Bennet played critical roles in establishing Colorado's three National Heritage Areas in 2009. Historic preservation through the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area has created jobs, stabilized historic districts, assisted in heritage tourism strategies for the region and state, and contributed to rural economic development plans.

## Our Mission

The mission of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is to promote, preserve, protect, and interpret its profound historical, religious, environmental, geographic, geologic, cultural, and linguistic resources. These efforts will contribute to the overall story, engender a spirit of pride and self-reliance, and create a legacy in the Colorado counties of Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla.

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JEREMY ELLIOT

# INTERPRETIVE THEMES

## **A High Desert Valley's Wind, Water, and Sand**

The interplay of wind, water, and sand have shaped the San Luis Valley's unique landforms and its biological diversity. The Valley's hidden aquifers support wetlands that are home to globally unique plant and animal species and are a migration stopover for many birds.



## **Land of the Blue Sky People**

Interwoven with the Valley's natural history is a very long and rich human history. The San Luis Valley served prehistoric and Native American cultures as a seasonal hunting ground where fowl, game, and edible and medicinal plants were bountiful. Select landscape features within the Valley have long been revered as sacred.



## **Interwoven Peoples and Traditions**

The San Luis Valley is a place where different peoples have converged for thousands of years. The Valley's profound historical, religious, and cultural convergence remains visible in the landscape and can be experienced in its communities, art, food, lodging, and events.



## **Hispano Culture: Folklore, Religion and Language**

The lower San Luis Valley lies at the intersection of the Hispano Southwest and Anglo Rocky Mountain West where the flavor of Hispano culture thrives. The Valley's relative isolation has preserved a living cultural tradition where art, language, architecture, folklore, and religious traditions remain evocative of the region's early Spanish and Mexican settlers.



# GRANTS & SIGNATURE PROJECTS

**GRANTS AND SIGNATURE PROJECTS** of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area area intended to encourage local cultural and historic heritage preservation activities and educational programs. These funds may support projects dedicated to interpretation and way-finding, conservation, or recreation with a heritage emphasis. The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area grants are awarded to help stimulate local discussion and participation and, at best, are the catalyst for community and partner collaborations. A small grant at the right time can go a long way toward inspiring a community or an organization to take action on a heritage project. These efforts will support heritage preservation and tourism, and promote the counties of Alamosa, Conejos and Costilla; the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge; the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge; the Baca National Wildlife Refuge; the Rio Grande National Forest; and the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

A **GRANT** is a project that the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area would like to see completed and approved as part of a competitive application process. A grant agreement is negotiated and signed by both parties. The grant recipient is responsible for ensuring that the project is successfully completed with monitoring by the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

## Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association *Congreso de Acequias*



The Congreso de Acequias is a unique event which brings together the acequia community each year to celebrate and strengthen Colorado's oldest farming communities. Acequias are a critical piece of the Heritage Area's living history, supporting the ancestors of those who settled under the Mexican land grants. It also provided critical water rights information to irrigators.

## Town of Antonito *Antonito Depot*



This project was a continuation of the exterior rehabilitation of the historic Denver and Rio Grande Depot. The project continued the rehabilitation of stucco repair and stone repointing, lighting, and wood storm windows.

## PaleoCultural Research Group *La Botica*



La Botica site's lengthy occupations, its unique biological setting, and its importance both to Native American and Hispano communities is one of the most significant sites in the region. This multi-disciplinary project aimed to better understand the site's place in the regional cultural landscape as well as the factors that shaped it over time. PaleoCultural Research Group conducted identification and evaluation inventory work at the site, as well as limited artifact collection for threatened resources.

## Costilla County Economic Development Council *Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center (Theater)*



This project rehabilitated the historic theater in the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center. The work included the restoration of its character defining features – the wood floors, plaster & adobe walls, the vigas and latillas, and the historic stage.

# GRANTS & SIGNATURE PROJECTS

## Rio Grande & Conejos Rivers Stream Management Plan *Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation*



The Stream Management Plan is a stakeholder driven planning effort for Colorado's Rio Grande Basin. There are many environmental and water supply challenges facing the Basin. Stakeholders gathered to complete stream management plans (SMPs) on priority rivers in order to plan for environmental, recreational, and water supply needs for future generations. The SMPs identified goals that furthered efforts to improve flows and physical conditions of priority streams for environmental, recreational, and community benefits.

## SPMDTU *Interior and Exterior Restoration*



The SPMDTU's headquarter building in Antonito was able to restore and rehabilitate the building. This included additional architectural and engineering services, window and door construction, interior rehabilitation and electrical upgrades.

## Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad *Coach 256*



Complete rehabilitation of coach 256 and creation of new passenger trucks (running gear) for the car to return to service.

A **SIGNATURE PROJECT** is an initiative that the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area would like to see completed, and is involved in the planning and decision making, responsibilities, and completion. A signature project will be considered during the grant application process if the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area approaches organizations for their assistance or if the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is approached by another organization. A memorandum of agreement will be negotiated and signed by both parties. All parties are responsible to see that the project will be successfully completed with monitoring conducted by the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

## Tripp Umbach, Inc. *Economic Impact Study*



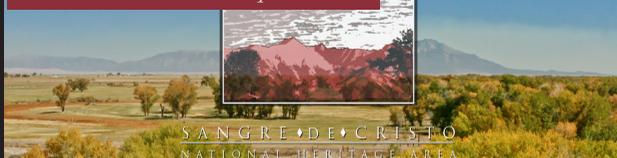
The impact study of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area measured the current economic, employment, and tax revenue of its heritage sites, attractions, and events within the heritage area's service location. By telling the "story" of the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts generated by the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and the heritage area's cultural attractions. It analyzed the impact of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area in increasing heritage tourism in the region.

## San Luis Valley Museum Association *TravelStories*



Developed a driving tour app for the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic & Historic Byway utilizing the TravelStories app to feature the Byway's rich legacy through its museums, historic sites and oral histories.

## Colorado Tourism Office *Commercial-Miles Partnership, LLLP*



The commercial goal was to increase tourism revenues and economic benefit within the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area through unique and effective marketing.

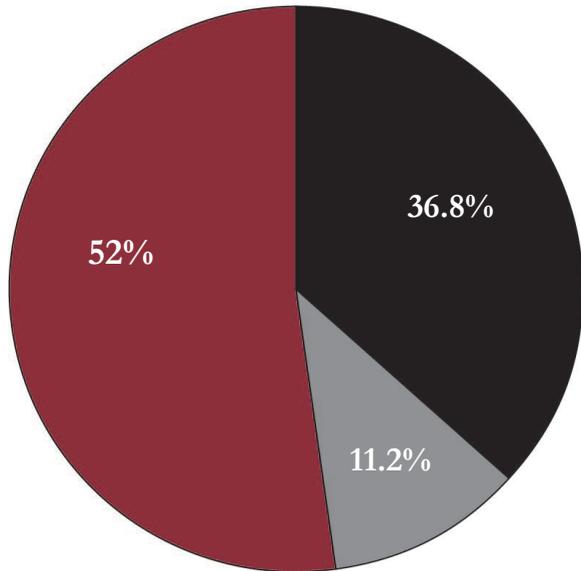
## Fort Garland Museum *Borderlands of Southern Colorado*



The Borderlands of Southern Colorado Exhibit & Memory Initiative at Fort Garland Museum is part of a multi-year, multi-site project underway at History Colorado Community Museums. Through this initiative, Fort Garland Museum & Cultural Center will launch a new core exhibit, Borderlands of Southern Colorado, that will illuminate the site's geo-political history, as well as the region's historic and ongoing borders of cultures, ethnicities, landscapes, religions and identities. The upgrade will include a collaborative community research centers where visitors are invited to conduct genealogy research, explore regional history and share personal and community memory. A series of lectures will be offered to the public to learn from and participate

# BY THE NUMBERS

## 2020 Budget



- Grants & Projects
- Operations
- Marketing & Outreach

## Scholarships

\$3,500 

## Awards

\$500 

138%



Social Media  
Awareness Increase

25 Volunteers



Value of Volunteer Hours

\$  
\$11,240.28

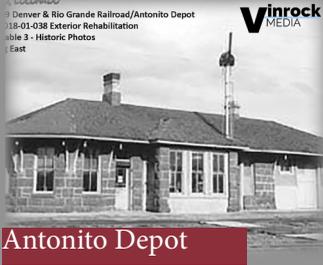
Total Volunteer Hours

 400

# RESOURCES

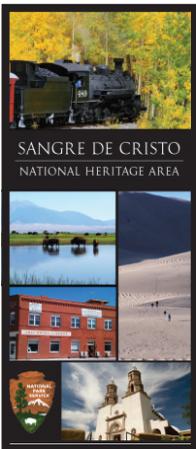
## Vignettes and Documentaries

For informative videos about the history of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area visit our social media and website!



For more information on the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area check out our brochure, website, TravelStories App and social media platforms!

### Brochure



### Sangreheritage.org



Like and Follow Us



### TravelStories



# EDUCATION

Our education efforts coordinate with local school districts, teachers, parents, and students to increase understanding and appreciation of local history and culture, and how it relates to the long term sustainability of the region. These efforts engage young people in leadership development and the creation of a deep understanding of history, community functions, and needs. Local history, arts, and culture are not emphasized at the K-12 level through any formal curriculum standards, and students often graduate without a full understanding or appreciation of the cultural significance that is unique to the San Luis Valley. Through curriculum, field trips, and scholarship opportunities, we help local youth not only to understand their past and define their self-identity within the region's broader cultural context, but also to enrich their education by exploring ways in which they may personally contribute to the conservation of their communities and unique cultural traditions.

## Local Curricula



The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area has partnered with Adams State University and the University of Colorado at Boulder to assist local educators in creating curricula in line with Colorado State standards that focus on the local culture, history, and heritage within the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

## History Day Fair Scholarship Winners



2020

The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is proud to provide an annual scholarship to students who participate in the District History Fair, part of the National History Day competition. Eligible student projects must be based on a theme involving local history, culture, or traditions within the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

## Field Trip Grants



The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area field trip grants encourage excursions that foster the study of land and water; local history, heritage, and culture; archaeology; an understanding of place; and the shared natural and human resources.

# 2020 PARTNERS

THANK YOU to all of our 2020 partners!



MUSEUM HAPPENINGS



COLORADO  
TOURISM OFFICE | COLORADO.COM



Tripp  
Umbach



LOS CAMINOS ANTIGUOS  
SCENIC & HISTORIC BYWAY



Cumbres & Toltec  
SCENIC RAILROAD

# CONTRIBUTE

## Donate to Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area!

Your donation is reinvested directly into our communities and serves as a source of much needed funding for collaborative initiatives that build partnerships in education, interpretation, stewardship, heritage development and tourism promotion throughout the region.

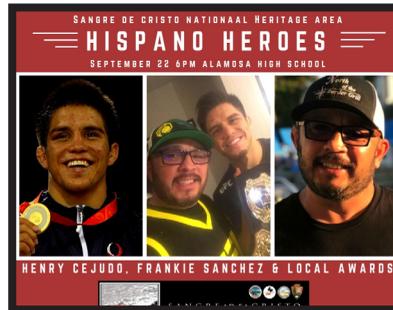
Donations accepted by PayPal, AmazonSmile, and ColoradoGives.



## Become an Event Sponsor!

Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area holds events and programs within the heritage area annually. Our successful events in the past have been documentary premiers, community educational lectures, and most recently our Cinco de Mayo Block Party.

To become an event or program sponsor, please send an email to [info@sdcnha.org](mailto:info@sdcnha.org).



## Volunteer and Intern with us!

Partners and volunteers are an important part of the success of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. Heritage areas are centered around the communities and people that comprise it. Partnership and collaboration help us work toward shared goals of our heritage area and local organizations. Volunteers complement these efforts by providing thousands of volunteer hours each year, for projects that might otherwise be impossible. As a volunteer, your work is invaluable and, as you'll discover, with volunteering comes camaraderie and the satisfaction of knowing your contribution matters.

### Volunteer opportunities include:

**Research and Education Volunteers** can research and document information in different media forms, give an interview for our oral histories project, assist on archeology projects, mapping, historical preservation, field trips and youth camps. Volunteers tell stories about their historical or cultural preservation work, family history, ethnic traditions, agricultural work, or culture.

**Office volunteers** can assist with scanning historical documents and photos, organizing research materials, day to day administrative duties.

**Event Volunteers** can assist with the creation of decorations, handing out information, providing donated food/drink, set up and tear down, presenting historical and cultural information or performances to the community.

### **Our Board of Directors are Volunteer Positions.**

If you are interested in volunteering with SdCNHA and/or its partner organizations, please email us at [info@sdcnha.org](mailto:info@sdcnha.org) about upcoming opportunities.





SANGRE ♦ DE ♦ CRISTO  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

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