

WHAT IS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA?

National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources combine to create a cohesive and distinctive landscape. Congressional designation enables NHAs to receive federal funding that is leveraged by local entities to conserve, interpret and promote heritage resources.

SANGRE DE CRISTO NHA:

The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (SdCNHA), designated in 2009, includes more than 3,000 square miles in south-central Colorado. The SdCNHA tells the story of the peoples, culture, and environment of the lower San Luis Valley and its adjacent mountains. Stories of the SdCNHA build public awareness of the Valley's significant legacies, support the local economy through heritage tourism, and strengthen communities by facilitating local initiatives.

THREE PRIMARY GOALS of the SdCNHA:

- Support development of a vibrant heritage tourism sector that stimulates preservation, economic development, and community revitalization.
- Tell the stories of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area in ways that build community pride and support preservation, living traditions, economic development, and community revitalization.
- Cultivate excellent management that provides regional leadership, reflects community values, and achieves sustainability.

MISSION OF THE SANGRE DE CRISTO NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA:

To promote, preserve, protect, and interpret its profound historical, religious, environmental, geographic, geologic, cultural, and linguistic resources. These efforts will contribute to the overall national story, engender a spirit of pride and self-reliance, and create a legacy in the Colorado counties of Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla.

CONTACT US:

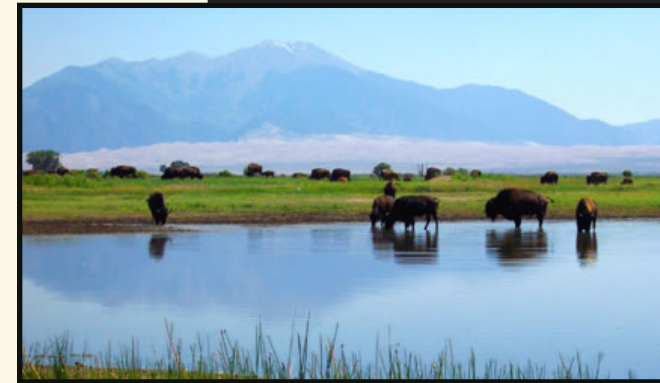
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SANGRE DE CRISTO NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



SANGRE DE CRISTO
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA





ALAMOSA COUNTY

Just two years after Colorado became a state, a narrow-gauge train loaded with expectant settlers and their belongings stopped at a protected bend in the Rio Grande shaded by a grove of cottonwoods. In 1878, Alamosa - Spanish for cottonwood grove - was founded.

Attractions

- Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge
- Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve
- Luther Bean Museum
- Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge
- Rio Grande Scenic Railroad
- San Luis Valley Museum
- Zapata Falls/ Zapata Ranch
- Zapata Ranch Headquarters

CONEJOS COUNTY

Conejos County was one of the original 17 counties created by the Colorado legislature on November 1, 1861. Although it was first called Guadalupe County it was renamed Conejos, the Spanish word for “rabbits,” one week later.

Attractions

- Chile Line- Historic Railroad Line
- Conejos County Murals
- Conejos County Museum
- Conejos Oldest Congregation - in Colorado
- Cumbres & Toltec Scenic and Historic Railroad
- Jack Dempsey Museum
- Old Spanish Trail
- Pike’s Stockade
- Rio Grande National Forest
- Sanford Museum
- San Luis Hills and King Turquoise Mine
- Sociedad Protección Mutua de Trabajadores Unidos- Concilio #1 Antonito

COSTILLA COUNTY

Costilla County was settled by the ancestors of today’s families well before Colorado became a state. Those first Hispano settlers brought with them a language and culture that still exists today, four hundred years after the Spanish first arrived in the Americas.

Attractions

- Fort Garland Museum
- Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center
- San Luis Bridge (Lobatos Bridge)
- San Luis Cultural Murals
- San Luis de la Culebra Historic District
- Stations of the Cross Shrine and Capilla de Todos Santos
- The People’s Ditch and La Vega Commons
- Trinchera Ranch

PROGRAMS

Grants

SdCNHA Matching Grants are available to local organizations working to promote the mission of the National Heritage Area by restoring historic buildings, providing interpretation, restoring/promoting scenic and recreational resources or documenting culturally significant components of the

way of life in the San Luis Valley. These efforts will support Heritage Preservation and Tourism and promote the counties of Alamosa, Conejos and Costilla.

Matching grants from the SdCNHA are intended to encourage local cultural and historic heritage preservation activities and educational programs. These may include projects dedicated to

interpretation and wayfinding, conservation, or recreation with a heritage or cultural emphasis.

Scholarships

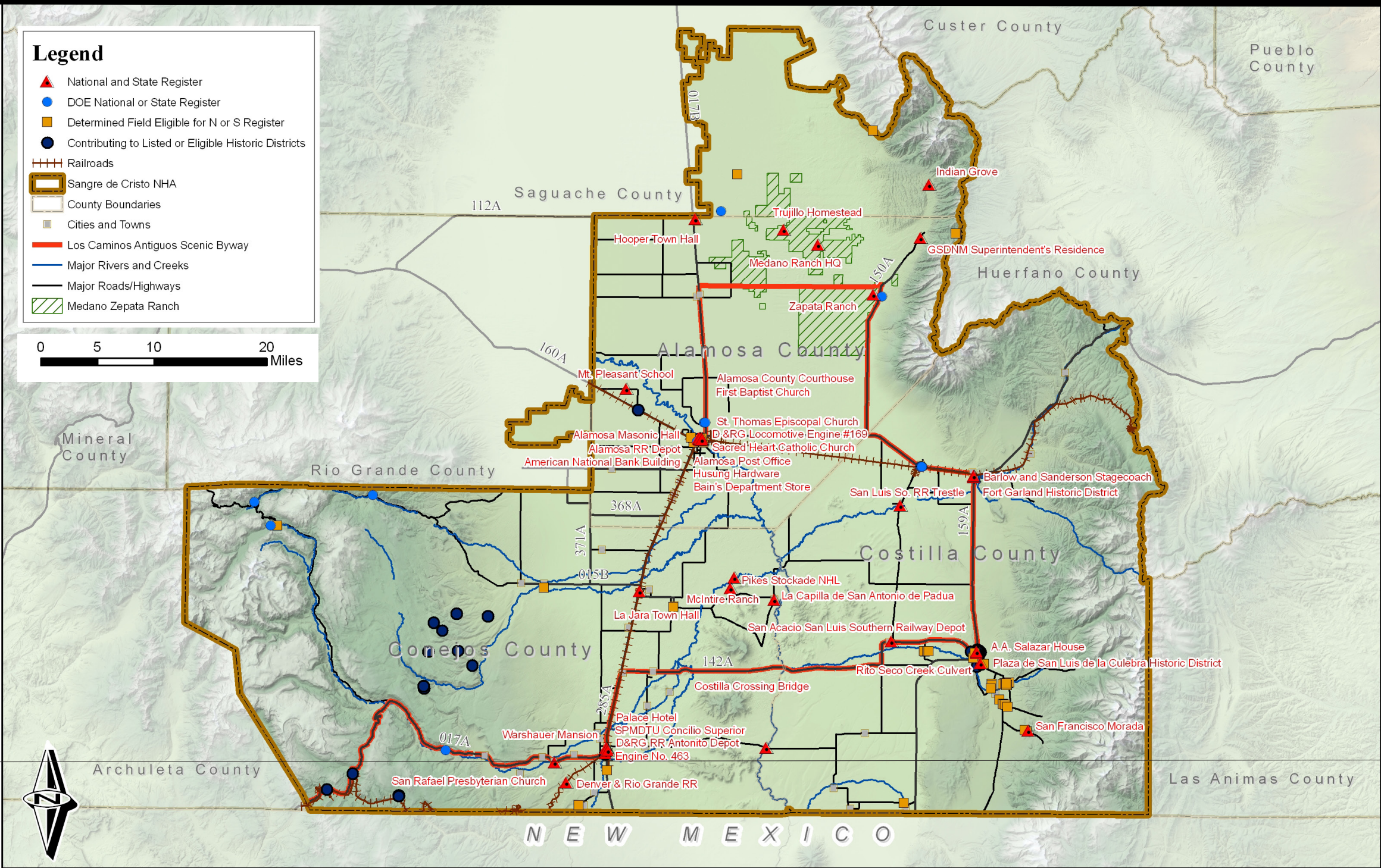
SdCNHA provides scholarships to middle and high school students in the National History Day Regional Competition at Adams State University. Students who place first must have a topic or theme related to the Heritage Area or San Luis Valley in any category.

DISCOVER OUR HERITAGE

Discover traces of culture representing the rich heritage of the moradas, placitas, mission churches, and murals. Traditions materialize through the art,

weaving, and culinary practices that stretch back in time hundreds of years. The unique adobe architecture can still be found today in plazas, public buildings and homes.

Abundant natural resources of fertile soil, flowing water, dense forest, and scenic beauty, such as the Great Sand Dunes and towering mountain ranges, attracted early settlers in their quest for new homes.



CONVERGING HERITAGE

An Alpine Valley's Wind, Water, and Sand Dunes

The delicate interplay of wind, water, and sand have shaped the San Luis Valley's unique landforms and contributed to its biological diversity. Though receiving little rainfall, the Valley's hidden aquifers support extensive 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. Certain 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 colonists and Mexican settlers.