



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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PRESERVE  PROMOTE  PROTECT

INTRODUCTION

Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area tells the stories of the people, culture, and environment of more than 3,000 square miles of land in Colorado's San Luis Valley, which encompasses the headwaters of the Rio Grande. It is among the most unique and well-preserved cultural landscapes in the nation, with stunning, beautiful, natural resources and a rich mixture of historic and diverse settlements. The three southern counties of the San Luis Valley: Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla, form the Heritage Area, which are united by the Rio Grande and its intricate network of tributaries that have quenched the landscapes, communities, and farms of this dry, alpine Valley for centuries.

MISSION

The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area ("SdCNHA") was designated to promote, rehabilitate, and interpret the unique historical, geographic, cultural, and natural resources. We endeavor to preserve and protect the integrity of our area, and encourage stewardship for all generations through community collaboration.

VISION

"Nuestra Voz" (Our Voice) - The SdCNHA captures the essence of who we are, allowing us to impart our stories and preserve our heritage through our collective vision and creativity. Our spiritual, historic, and cultural traditions—including a reverence for land and water—assemble an extraordinary legacy to impart on current and future generations. Our communities are united in promoting the pristine landscape and the living history of rural, southern Colorado as a national and international travel destination, while simultaneously enhancing the quality of life for our residents by sharing our stories and traditions with each other.

BY THE NUMBERS



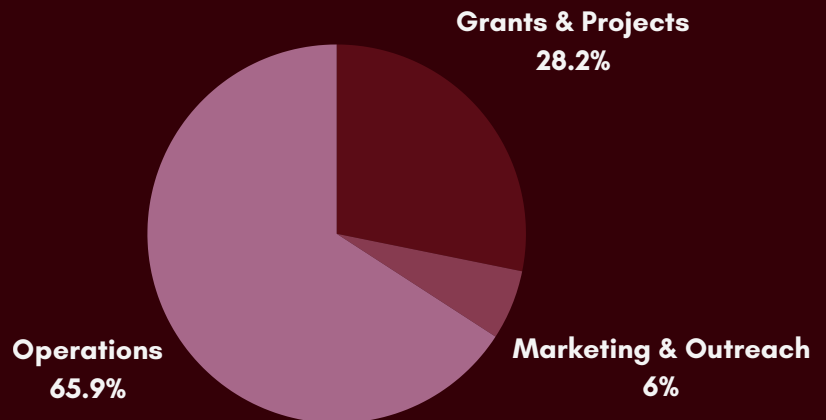
3 grants completed



8 signature projects



**183.5 volunteer hours
correlates to
\$8,129.34**



YOUTH PROGRAMS

History Fair Scholarships



The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area presented seven students with History Fair Scholarships. Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area provided annual scholarships to students who participated and competed in the Regional History Fair, with projects based on the year's theme "Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas."

Caminos del Valle - Youth Walking Tours



In 2024 Caminos del Valle - Youth Walking Tours had acquired six local students from across the San Luis Valley ages 15-18. The students chose areas/topics around the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area that they wanted to lead a tour on. While preparing to give their tours, the students completed training in public speaking, CPR, and self-defense. With research and trainings completed, the students administered three tours around the Heritage Area.

Heritage Camp



Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area's Heritage Camp was held June 3rd - 6th, 2024. This camp included historic site tours of Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla County.

SIGNATURE PROJECTS

A signature project is an approved project that SdCNHA would like to see completed and be involved in decision making, responsibilities and completion. A signature project may be consider by application for a grant from SdCNHA; by SdCNHA offering assistance to an organization; or, by an organization approaching SdCNHA requesting assistance. A memorandum of agreement will be negotiated, completed and signed by both parties. All parties are fully responsible to see the project completed with monitoring by SdCNHA.

2024 Congreso de Acequias

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. The centuries-old system of irrigation was used by the Valley's ancestors who settled the area under Mexican land grants and is still used today. The Congreso de Acequias was held in 2024 with approximately 100 community members attending and hearing from a variety of speakers

Conejos Museum

This signature project collaborates with Conejos County and local residents to research, design, and open a museum in Antonito, Colorado focusing on Antonito and its surrounding settlements. SdCNHA has signed with a contractor to complete some maintenance in the building in order to install exhibits and open the museum to the public at the end of May 2025.

Southwest Conservation Corp

During the summer of 2024, SCC operated a 5-week Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla youth crew to engage 30 local youths, ages 14-18, from the San Luis Valley in a variety of conservation and service-learning projects, as well as an educational day each week. Participating in these crews helps youth develop work ethic, communication, teamwork, leadership and financial literacy skills while exposing them to job pathways and ways to get involved in their communities.



2024 Congreso de Acequias



Conejos Museum



Southwest Conservation Corps

GRANTS

A Grant Project is approved by SdCNHA through the grant application process. Upon approval, a grant agreement is negotiated and signed by both parties, and the grant recipient is fully responsible for the completion of the project with monitoring by SdCNHA.

Garcia Ranch Potato Barn



Wall and roof stabilization of the Garcia Ranch Potato Barn in Antonito.

Rio Grande Natural Area Interpretive Signs



Upon developing a nature-based classroom to interpret the rich cultural, historic, and natural heritage of the Rio Grande Natural Area.

Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center



This project was in the phase of the interior rehabilitation of the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center. This phase saw the continued restoration of the following: viga and lattila ceilings in the theater and theater entrance hallway; the restoration of the hallways between the museum entrance and the theater entrance; restoration of plaster walls and the wood floor; the rehabilitation of a set of restrooms to make them ADA compliant; and electrical upgrade.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

SPMDTU Concilio Superior The early 20th century was a period of growing discrimination for Hispanos across Colorado. In the face of such adversity, many of the Hispano families and workers of the San Luis Valley banded together and created the Sociedad Protección Mutua de Trabajadores Unidos (SPMDTU), one of the oldest mutual benefits societies in the United States. The Concilio Superior building was constructed in 1925 in Antonito to serve as a regional headquarters for the SPMDTU. It was at the centerpoint of important historical moments as Hispanos and Chicanos of Colorado, New Mexico, and neighboring states fought for rights as basic and universal as water access, land ownership, labor unionization, and public school attendance. After over 120 years of service, the building has been rehabilitated. The major funders for this project have been History Colorado-State Historical Fund, Colorado Community Revitalization Fund, Gates Family Foundation, and Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.



EVENTS



Cinco de Mayo

The block of San Juan Avenue and Main Street in Alamosa was abundant with individuals, colorful decorations, lively music, and cultural dancing on May 3, 2024 for the 4th Annual Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area Cinco de Mayo Block Party. An estimated 1,500 people attended throughout the evening.



Hispanic Heritage Event

In partnership with the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, SdCNHA held a special Hispanic Heritage Month event at the National Park on September 14, 2024 to celebrate Hispanic heritage in the San Luis Valley. The celebration included a presentation from descendants of the Trujillo family and performances by Los Vecinos Bailadores, Semillas de la Tierra, and Borderline.



Colorado Byway Symposium

Colorado Byways Symposium 2024 was hosted by the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway, overseen by the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. Colorado Byways Symposium 2024 had visitors from Colorado, across the United States and a special delegation visiting from the Japan and Hokkaido Scenic Byways.

PARTNERS



THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our partners, grantees, board members, and visitors!

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