



SANGRE ♦ DE ♦ CRISTO
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Meet our new mascot...
Cody Coyote!



INTRODUCTION

Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (“SdCNHA”) 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.

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.

MISSION

The 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.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Talk about a whirlwind of a year!!! Beginning 2025, Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (SdCNHA), definitely had its challenges. First and foremost, we would like to express our sincerest appreciation to our members of Congress, federal directors, state leaders, local governments, partners, followers, friends, and families for your ongoing support and dedication to SdCNHA.

2025 presented itself with several hurdles to conquer, and like always, true to the National Heritage Areas Program, SdCNHA still had a successful year! SdCNHA faced trials and tribulations head on and were still able to host our events and programming as well as continue our work of preservation, interpretation, and education, of our unique history, heritage and culture. Our National Heritage Area was designated in 2009 because of our exclusivity and how we differ from other parts of our nation. SdCNHA is a melting pot of diversity in numerous aspects. From our ancestors, agriculture, architecture, language, landscape, settlements, history, traditions, and cultures, I think we can all agree that we are definitely the richest part of our country.

Thank you once again for all your support in 2025, your letters which you submitted to Congress, words and encouragement, attending our events, sharing and contributing on our social media platforms kept us in positive spirits to continue our mission. Remember, we are unable to share our individuality without your contributions of sharing your history, stories, traditions, cultures, memories, and photos!!!

With everyone coming together in 2025, we have been fortunate to receive many opportunities, and offer many of our resources. Several of these collaborations are in their initial stages and I am excited to start implementation in 2026. Just wait for our 2026 Annual Report!!!

With my genuine appreciation,

Julie Chacon

Julie Chacon
Executive Director



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.



San Luis Bank - Stabilization included shoring of the floor and roof, selective demolition of the stucco render to assess the adobe and document basal erosion. Removed flooring, ceiling and salvage to expose structural members and to complete shoring for stabilization of the roofs and walls.



Horno - An horno is adobe-built, outdoor oven that was used by early settlers of Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. The horno will be used to tell the story of our land and people, past and present, for many years to come. The community be involved in bread baking, chiko making, and many other cultural foods.

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.



Warshauer Mansion – Rehabilitation of the front porch and roof of the Warshauer mansion Completed. Guard rails and handrailed and masonry work has all be restored.



Congreso de Acequias – The Congreso de Acequias was held on Saturday, March 8, 2025. Over 130 participants and community members attended the event, which was held again at the Centennial School in San Luis. Participants heard from organizations such San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition, local herbal teacher Teresa Vigil, CSU Extension, local farmers and ranchers, and many others. Soil health practices and insights were shared via live demonstrations in the afternoon. Ruben Dominguez provided traditional folk music from Northern New Mexico, while Frank Vigil updated attendees on the status of the Cielo Vista Fence issue. 16 elementary students were awarded prizes for the Art Contest, in which three schools participated.



Sangre de Cristo Heritage Center – Rehabilitation of the south wing restrooms and the restoration of the latellas in the historic theater was completed. Emergent roof opening and repairs were completed due to bat infestation. Door hardware was installed. Cosmetic repairs to vigas in theater have been completed.

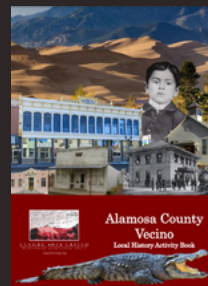
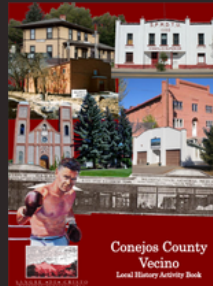
YOUTH PROGRAMS



History Fair Scholarships – Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area presented eight 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 "Rights and Responsibilities in History."



Caminos del Valle Youth Walking Tours – In 2025 Caminos del Valle – Youth Walking Tours had acquired five 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.



Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area Elementary Activity Books – The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area created youth activity books. These books include local history, traditions and culture and be made available during events and available to download at sangreheritage.org. Each county has its own historical figure as the tour guide.

EVENTS



Rio Grande Natural Area Ribbon Cutting – Adjacent to the historic Lobatos Bridge, this project's primary purpose was to develop a nature-based classroom to interpret the rich cultural, historic, and natural heritage of the Rio Grande Natural Area (RGNA). This project will also enhance public access and recreation opportunities. It will benefit people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds, especially the surrounding underserved communities.

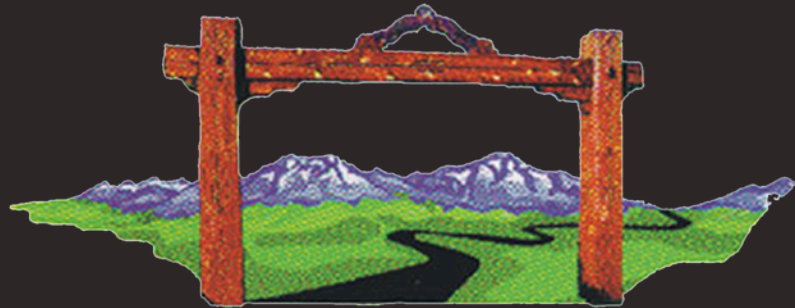


Alberto Ferrera Film – During The Great Depression, the Smithsonian commissioned several photographers to travel the United States of America capturing life around the country. New York author and filmmaker Alberto Ferreras has compiled a small and, perhaps, hidden sampling to share with the world. Mr. Ferreras pulled photos the Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico during this era and brought to present at Adams State University. It was an honor to cohost the inspiring Latino Portraits of the FSA: Master Class in History, Identity, and Visual Narrative.



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 2, 2025 for the 5th Annual Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area Cinco de Mayo Block Party. An estimated 1,500 people attended throughout the evening.

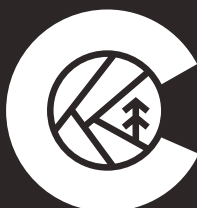
LOS CAMINOS ANTIGUOS SCENIC & HISTORIC BYWAY



The San Luis Valley is a landscape speckled in a diverse cultural richness, that dates back over 11,000 years. Travel back in time as you crest one of the four major road passages into the San Luis Valley, your eyes lay sight on the majestic open skies. The 8,000 square mile alpine desert valley, is tucked away where the southwestern culture of New Mexico tangles together with the western frontier culture of south-central Colorado. Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic & Historic Byway will take you through the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area; an experience that will immerse you in vast, untouched natural beauty and inspiring narratives of native tribes, explorers, frontiersmen, buffalo soldiers, ranchers, miners, and railroad boomers. This is where Colorado began and where the old west spirit of honesty, adventure, and small town hospitality is still very much alive.

Length: 129 miles

Self-Guided Tour: <https://travelstorys.com/tours/los-caminos-antiguos>



**CARE FOR
COLORADO**
COALITION



The National Voice of Scenic Byways & Roads

SOUTHERN CONEJOS COUNTY INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Southern Conejos County Interpretive Center was created to celebrate the people, places, and stories of Southern Conejos County. Rooted in local voices and history, we're here to honor our heritage and keep our community's stories alive for future generation



Our grand opening for the Southern Conejos County Interpretive Center was held on Saturday, August 30th.

The Southern Conejos County Interpretive Center is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the rich history of Southern Conejos County, including Antonito and its surrounding communities. Much of our region's history remains untold, nearly forgotten, and increasingly difficult to preserve as time passes. We are committed to ensuring these stories are not lost. We invite community members to help us document and share this heritage by contributing historical information, photographs, personal stories, family settlement histories, and other relevant materials.

Contributions may be submitted to scic@sdcnha.org.

Together, we can safeguard and tell the stories that define our community.



YEAR IN REVIEW



2 grants awarded

3 grants received



4 signature projects



Volunteer Value

\$17,798.26



Jozette Sandoval



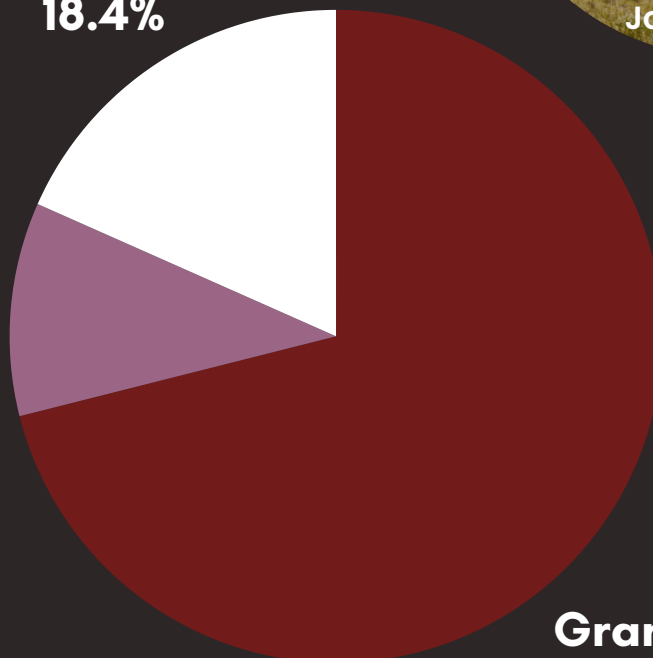
John McEvoy

Operations

18.4%

Marketing & Outreach

10.6%



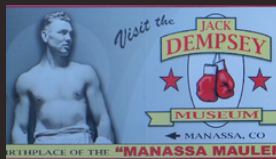
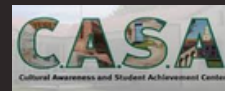
Grants & Projects

71.1%

PARTNERS



A MEMBER OF THE
**National Heritage
Area System**



THANK YOU

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



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YouTube

