



ARAPAHOE COUNTY

Proclamation

PROCLAMATION ESTABLISHING NOVEMBER 29, 2023, AS SAND CREEK MASSACRE COMMEMORATION DAY

WHEREAS, on November 29, 1864, approximately 180 miles southeast of Denver, approximately 675 United States soldiers under the command of Colonel John Chivington Killed more than 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho villagers, many of whom were elderly men, women, and children; and

WHEREAS, despite assurance from American negotiators that they would be safe, and despite Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle raising both a United States flag and a white flag as symbols of peace, Colonel Chivington ordered his troops to take no prisoners and to pillage and set the village ablaze, violently forcing the ambushed and outnumbered Cheyenne and Arapaho villagers to flee on foot; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Chivington and his troops paraded mutilated body parts of men, women, and children in downtown Denver, Colo., in celebration of the massacre; and

WHEREAS, the Sand Creek Massacre was a tragedy of worldwide importance and continues to impact the sovereign Tribal nations whose ancestors were massacred that tragic day; and

WHEREAS, healing from such tragedy requires, in part, recognition of and redress for the tragedy, and efforts have been made both to help educate the public about the massacre and to teach respect for diverse cultures in order to better understand and learn from the past; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, during the first Spiritual Healing Run, ceremonies were conducted to heal the land of the atrocities committed by the massacre and along the approximate route taken by the Colorado U.S. soldiers, who paraded the body parts of their victims through Denver and placed them on display; and

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2007, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior dedicated the Sand Creek Massacre National History Site, which was established under an Act of Congress (P.L. 106-465) in 2000; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the State of Colorado offered a public apology for its role in the Sand Creek massacre and created the Sand Creek Massacre Commemoration Commission to increase public awareness and community engagement about this vital part of Colorado's history; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Arapaho Tribe established a meaningful partnership with area high schools located on tribal land, which will honor the tribe and educate students; and

WHEREAS, Arapahoe County sought to formalize a relationship with the Northern Arapaho Tribe in 2020, to establish better ties with descendants of the county's original inhabitants in alignment with the County's strategic plan, culminating in a historic Memorandum of Agreement adopted in 2022 that outlines how the County will work with the Tribe in meaningful ways; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners is committed to deepening the County's relationship with the Tribe and our collaborative efforts to support ongoing public education about the Sand Creek Massacre so that future generations can learn from our past and heal from this devastating event.

NOW THEREFORE, The Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim November 29, 2023, as Sand Creek Massacre and Commemoration Day and encourage all people to join us in this observance, and learn more about the Cheyenne and Arapaho people who lost their lives during the Sand Creek Massacre and honor their descendants.

Commissioner Carrie Warren-Gully
Chair of the Board

Commissioner Jessica Campbell-Swanson

Commissioner Leslie Summey

Commissioner Jeff Baker
Chair Pro Tem

Commissioner Bill L. Holen