



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

Sand Creek Massacre  
National Historic Site

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## Sand Creek Massacre News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### 1,000 join in weekend of ceremonies, events to mark 150 years since Sand Creek Massacre

KIOWA COUNTY, CO –Native American descendants of the victims of one of the darkest chapters in U.S. history gathered with supporters and other park visitors Saturday and Sunday to recognize those brutally killed 150 years ago at the Sand Creek Massacre.

The weekend activities drew more than 1,000 people, about half of whom were members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes of Montana, Wyoming and Oklahoma. The historic site, dedicated in 2007 and administered by NPS, preserves the place where their ancestors were brutally attacked by U.S. troops on Nov. 29, 1864.

The weekend observance at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in southeastern Colorado, included Tribal ceremonies, history programs by the National Park Service (NPS), screenings of two new documentary films and the start of a four-day, 180-mile journey of spiritual healing from the massacre site to Denver.

“The event exceeded our expectations,” said Alexa Roberts, NPS superintendent of the site. “This year marks a real watershed for Sand Creek. It is a turning point for public awareness and for a more forward-looking dialogue about the massacre and its meaning.”

Native participants in the memorial events came from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe (Montana), the Northern Arapaho Tribe (Wyoming) and the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes (Oklahoma) and included tribal representatives, elders and chiefs. Other attendees and speakers included U.S. Rep. and Senator-elect Cory Gardner of Colorado, Colorado State Sen. Ellen Roberts, Bishop Elaine Stanovsky of the Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church, David Halaas former Colorado State Historian and Byron Strom, descendant of Captain Silas Soule, a military officer that refused to participate in the massacre. The church has conducted an ongoing process of public atonement and reconciliation because the massacre’s two key instigators were prominent Methodists.

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On Friday, tribal members erected tepees on the park's Monument Hill and near a grove of cottonwoods at the site's administrative complex. Saturday morning, they conducted private ceremonies on the windy bluff above Sand Creek while other visitors attended NPS history presentations at the park picnic grounds about the massacre and its key figures. At the conclusion of the tribes' observance, dignitaries spoke at a public ceremony. Speakers included Northern Cheyenne Tribe President Levando Fisher, Chief Reginald Killsnight, Chief Phillip Whiteman Jr., Robert Little Wolf, Roger Kills Night and William Walks Along, Northern Cheyenne Tribal Administrator. Southern Cheyenne speakers included Alan Fletcher, a chief and legislator, and Karen Little Coyote, the tribe's Sand Creek Committee representative.

A Saturday dinner for spiritual run participants was held in Eads, CO. Sponsors included the Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation, Denver Indian Christian Center, Crow Luther Cultural Events Center in Eads and NPS.

Early Sunday, participants in the healing run braved bitterly cold winds on Monument Hill for a ceremonial sendoff led by Otto Braided Hair of the Northern Cheyenne, Joe Big Medicine, and Eugene Blackbear Jr., of the Southern Cheyenne and Gail Ridgely of the Northern Arapaho Tribe. Also on Sunday morning Nelson White, Crawford White and Richard Antelope of the Northern Arapaho Tribe offered an additional blessing to runners and the public. The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run, led by Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal members and dedicated to Steven Brady Sr., concludes Wednesday in Denver on the steps of the Colorado State Capitol.

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