Land Acknowledgement for Graham and Greenlee Counties

We respectfully acknowledge that we gather on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Western Apache peoples, specifically the San Carlos Apache Tribe, whose connections to these lands continue to the present day. These mountainous regions, river valleys, and desert landscapes have sustained Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

Graham County Acknowledgement

We specifically recognize in Graham County:

* The San Carlos Apache Tribe, whose reservation encompasses a significant portion of the county
* The ancestral presence of other Apache bands who lived throughout this region
* The historical connections of the Zuni and Hopi peoples to this area
* The profound significance of Mount Graham (Dzil Nchaa Si'an), which remains sacred to Apache people

This region holds particular significance as:

* Home to the sacred mountain Dzil Nchaa Si'an (Mount Graham)
* The location of the San Carlos Apache Reservation
* A landscape rich in traditional gathering places and sacred sites
* The valley of the Gila River, which has sustained communities for millennia

**Greenlee County Acknowledgement**

We specifically recognize in Greenlee County:

* The historical presence of the San Carlos Apache people
* The traditional territories of various Apache bands
* The significance of the Blue River and San Francisco River valleys
* The continuing importance of these landscapes to Indigenous peoples

This region holds particular significance as:

* A traditional Apache homeland
* An area rich in natural resources important to Indigenous peoples
* A landscape marked by sacred sites and historical places
* A region where traditional ecological knowledge helped people thrive

**Shared Indigenous Heritage**

We acknowledge for both counties that:

* These territories maintain deep spiritual and cultural significance
* The rivers and mountains remain central to tribal identity and traditional practices
* Indigenous knowledge of mountain and desert ecosystems continues to inform environmental stewardship
* Native communities are vital contributors to our region's cultural and economic life

**Geographic and Cultural Significance**

These regions are characterized by:

* Sacred mountains and peaks
* Life-sustaining river valleys
* Traditional gathering places for medicinal plants and foods
* Historic trading routes and cultural exchange corridors
* Landscapes that remain significant for ceremonial practices

**Sacred Sites**

We specifically acknowledge:

* Mount Graham (Dzil Nchaa Si'an) as a sacred Apache mountain
* The spiritual significance of the region's waterways
* Traditional cultural properties throughout both counties
* The continuing importance of these places for ceremonial practices

We commit to:

* Honoring the sovereignty of tribal nations
* Supporting Indigenous-led initiatives for cultural preservation
* Learning from traditional knowledge systems
* Promoting awareness of both historical and contemporary Indigenous presence
* Understanding that land acknowledgment is only a first step toward meaningful action

**Contemporary Recognition**

We recognize that:

* Indigenous communities continue to maintain strong connections to these lands
* Traditional practices and knowledge systems remain vital and relevant
* Tribal sovereignty is fundamental to respectful relationships
* Native peoples are active participants in shaping our region's future
* Indigenous perspectives are crucial for understanding and protecting these unique landscapes

**Language and Cultural Preservation**

We honor:

* The preservation of Apache language and cultural practices
* Traditional ecological knowledge passed down through generations
* The ongoing spiritual connections to these landscapes
* The resilience of Indigenous communities in maintaining their traditions

**Apache Language Note**

We acknowledge the importance of proper pronunciation of Apache places:

* Dzil Nchaa Si'an (Mount Graham): "Jill N-chah See-ahn"

*This acknowledgment is a living document that reflects our ongoing commitment to respect, understanding, and collaboration with the Indigenous peoples of this region.*