

Fort Chambers / Poor Farm Project

Engagement Window 4: Input Compendium

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Open Response Question Results

Below are all full responses to 'open response' questions included in the EW4 Questionnaire. The results of all other questions are available in the **EW4 Questionnaire Results Summary** document.

Q5. What about the design (Design Concept 1) most resonates with you? Please explain why.

1. Just another example of City of Boulder telling people what to think.
2. I like the perspective shift because it represents the evolution of awareness of the historic facts while showing respect.
3. leaving the historic stone marker...material evidence that can/should lead to pause/reflection. My question is why it's called the "Discovery" area? Without knowing more, sounds "Columbus" like, which I believe is the opposite of what this site is for.
4. the reflection wall, which reinforces that history is a series of interpretations rather than "facts" appeals to me
5. Shielded marker, allows visitors to enter at own pace with different depths to the experience. Good accessibility.
6. The retention and re-incorporation of the historic marker is a great idea. I like the idea of explaining its history too,
7. The interpretive wall panel dividing the space, as well as the use of the same sod and poles from the decompression area resonate with me. The slats in the wall allow you to see the maker without immediately revealing it, and the repetition of the sod and poles

gives the space some continuity. I also appreciate the new plaque, which gives the marker some context.

8. Angling the marker and making it not initially viewable.
9. While this is an interesting design to me as a descendant of European settlers, it's my understanding that the descendants of the Indigenous who lived here would like to see a replica of the fort that was erected by the soldiers.
10. I like how the original marker is treated so reverently.
11. I like the "shift" of the marker from its traditional vertical orientation. By removing it from its original position it maintains the history of the object while also indicating that message is a relic of what WAS, not the current thoughts/feelings about this site.
12. The parallel sod and sticks dehumanize, neutralize the whole experience. They impose a time line and end result that is inaccurate. There were no Indians left at the end. Settlers are not sod and Indians are not sticks. The Indians' and "settlers'" experiences were not equal or equally valid/right/legal in any way. Why are you trying to make them seem like they were? Anyway, what were they settling? The land was already settled/occupied by sovereign Indian Nations/Tribes/Arapaho and Cheyenne. "Settlers" were invaders, or more like squatters - occupying land illegally. You need to avoid the generic term "indigenous." I know it's in vogue, but more that style is at stake here. "Indigenous" is more of a racial classification. Here you are talking about Indian Nations, Tribes. You need to say Arapaho and Cheyenne and Tribal Nations.
13. Having a hard time coming up with anything that resonates. The design choices and the approach and in particular the reference to this as a "healing trail" all fail to integrate the feedback I gave and heard from fellow advocates during several community input sessions. I urge OSMP and the design team to pause and revisit that feedback.
14. I'd like to see the marker actually at a double angle ... to indicate its in a state of "falling" in our understanding....on its way OUT!
15. The angled original marker does not "[suggest] a shift in how its inscription is understood today." It reinforces the centrality of this view, even today. I hope that the reflection wall contains archival, contemporary, and oral traditions from Native Peoples.
16. Don't put the benches opposite the entrance. Perhaps put them outside the circle on the sides so that people can reflect without being in the line of sight for those viewing the exhibit. Highly possible that encountering this information will trigger people unexpectedly and they'll need a private moment. This happened to me at the Ead's site. I didn't expect to breakdown in tears at the station where the signage showed where the volunteers slaughtered the horses. I couldn't stop crying. I wish there was a bench off the path for me to lose it. There were discrete benches in other places, wish they had them in all of the stations. This is very difficult information. In my case, my grandfather was a vet in Sheridan WY. He worked with rodeo horses for the Crow and Cheyenne,

bronco breeding. My grandfather came from Pennsylvania (estate) and trained to be the vet for pure bred race horses. He wanted to win the Kentucky derby, but due to economics, ended up in WY. Finding out about the slaughter of the horses unexpectedly hit a nerve about the same attitudes back then in our own families today. My grandfather might have slaughtered those horses, even if he wouldn't have slaughtered the people, but then again, who knows. He was pretty racist and said many mean things about the Crow and Cheyenne he worked with. My brother now works on the Crow reservation, and I am working very closely with N. Cheyenne, including Traditional Chief Phillip Whiteman, Jr. Deep into the reality of Chief White Antelope, his ancestor, and the peace medal he got from President Lincoln for the peace he created in East Boulder. Even though I know this story better than most people, I did not expect how emotional it still is for me. Perhaps have "Friendship Benches" - like they do in Zimbabwe - to have trained Elders available for conversations. I bet I'd be one of the recipients, especially with Cheyenne Elders who might be coming down from Lame Deer to be available to us with this information, especially with the contrast of the efforts of Chief White Antelope and the sabotage of the prominent men, influenced by Grandville Berkley Sr. and the various others who were sabotaging peace, like Grandville Berkley Jr. with the homemade cannonballs from the mining shot at cottonwood trees that Chief White Antelope was camped in, likely at Hogan-Pancost next to the East Boulder Community Center. You don't need to get into that level of detail, but the real news from the Peace Medal is very hard.

17. I like how the marker is being presented. Creative and combines settler and Native American voices.
18. The marker is not sitting upright as it originally was placed. The marker is therefore not viewed as intended. The marker is disrespectfully placed.
19. the old marker lying in repose, not buried. It exposes the misconception, while in repose shows that idea has passed on - dead but not forgotten.
20. this version shows a focused place of reflection and contemplation with the symbolism of the sod/poles with the marker's statement. It's an intimate space with other panels/information around it. There is seating for people to "wait their turn" to enter the space, keeping it intimate and personal.

Q7. If you have additional comments about this design (Design Concept 1), please share them here:

1. We have a budget shortfall. Spending money and staff time on this vanity project is insulting. Fix the potholes and give the \$\$ to South Boulder Rec
2. I appreciate all 5 design elements. Including Sod and Poles will create an emotional reaction about the history and perspectives.

3. Consider adding benches for visitors that want to rest/stop or gather before passing the wall - a place to stop part-way through the area.
4. Is this ADA accessible? How do children relate to this site and the information?
5. Too much focus on the marker, not enough focus on what actually happened at the fort, at Sand Creek, and afterwards. The marker is important, but this design makes it the MAIN thing, which I think it isn't.
6. I'm not sure if I like how the marker is somewhat celebrated and elevated. Also, the use of the sod and poles is a little bit strange here, since they represent indigenous and settler perspectives. I don't believe they were unified over this marker, and having the strongest use of these materials in this way at the marker feels off, unless it's reinstallation is highly collaborative and includes many voices.
7. The whole idea of the approach with the diminishing sticks and rising sod seems oversimplified, and implies a deterministic process, which insultingly replicates historical events in a way that seems to "naturalize" conquest and injustice. The sod is strange since there were no sod houses around here, and the sticks seem demeaning to Native Americans, at least as presented in the design. The whole thing seems wrong-headed. Also, having parallel voices seems problematic. Are there going to be a bunch of people arguing for settlement and elimination of Indians from the Rocky Mountain News? Are those going to be framed in any way as problematic? Or do we just get competing/comparative voices. If I went to Auschwitz, would they just present Jewish and Nazi voices from the 1930s as somehow equivalent and alternative perspectives? If so, it would represent a moral travesty. Not sure what voices will be in this, but I'm highly dubious.
8. It seems like there is false equivalency of experiences between the Indigenous and the settlers throughout this design and narrative. Have you listened to the Indigenous folks who are anxious to have a meaningful representation of what happened here?
9. I like the addition of the seating areas for contemplation. I also like the idea of discovering the site incrementally, first via glimpses through the larger panels, and eventually in full as you round the first panels.
10. I don't know what else to say. How did this ever get so far off the mark of telling the true story - the real history. This is more of a justification for white wrong doing. Consider the theme of "fear;" at play throughout. Whose fear? Tribes' fears, Indians' fears are never mentioned. And fear is used as a justification for violence. How about putting this fear in context. You could use this from the Boulder.gov website:
<https://bouldercolorado.gov/fort-chambers-and-sand-creek-massacre> Summer 1864: Exaggerated and false claims of Indigenous violence helped fan anti-Indigenous hatred among settlers in the Boulder area.(10) A man who participated in the Sand Creek Massacre wrote that the sentiment in 1864 was that "At the time the 3d Colorado regiment was raised, the idea was very general that a war of extermination should be

waged; that neither sex nor age should be spared; and women held to these views in common with men."(11)

11. To me the current design and overall theme make me think of the first Sand Creek exhibit installed years ago at History Colorado. It was themed "a clash of cultures" and this approach with its sod and pole elements echoes it in many explicit and implicit ways. The approach needed here is one of truth-telling and owning the story of what happened at Fort Chambers, how it connects to Sand Creek and what it represents as a local and state chapter in the wider genocidal project of settler-colonization and westward expansion. Nowhere in the design as it is, do I see reflected the repeated tribal requests to include some sort of replica or partial replica of the fort. Nowhere in the design as it is, do I see reflected an honest retelling of history. I see instead unhelpful symbolism that purport to leave interpretation up to participants but ultimately mask the truth.
12. Please see the comments submitted to Kacey French et al.
13. I am writing a separate letter about how the Native Perspective and Presence is poorly represented.
14. The Native story and viewpoint have been stripped out at this point. The deliberateness of continuing to remove Native voices is offensive.
15. I like incorporating the themes of the poles for the Cheyenne (and Arapaho like Chief Niwot who were there to assist, and George Bent, who was camping at Sand Creek). Perhaps with the exhibit with Chief White Antelope, peace medal, etc. having poles, and the fake news of the article in the Rocky Mountain News of 1890 making the prominent men war heroes. And the real news of the US Congress investigation of 1865. Perhaps the motivation which was to create CU and start an elite playground which eventually ended up with Chautauqua and the Sanitarium. All these white founding fathers of "Boulder City" at the time were in on it. It was premediated. Cheyenne intermarried with the settlers. Valmont was becoming a town that was bigger than Boulder City (where the founding fathers of Boulder City wanted to put CU). There's a way to use the stacked sod and lumber to represent the gaslighting now and then with the marker as a good example in contrast to what really happened, a reaction of the success of Chief White Antelope and the Bent family as an alternative power structure in Colorado. Now the Indians are removed to WY, MT and OK. Why? Nobody left to tell the truth. I think you're on to a very good way to use the stacked sod and poles throughout, just not as a grave for the fake news marker because we haven't told the truth and we haven't put this history to rest.
16. The beautiful landscape of the site should be a focus. The land and the river have been important to all peoples. The panel placement and height should not obstruct the landscape.
17. See above

Q8. What about the design (Design Concept 2) most resonates with you?

Please explain why.

1. It reminds me how much \$\$ is being wasted on absolutely nothing of consequence.
2. No 2 marker frame. This is an excellent way to present the history. Will the side panels have information that represents both sides of the history?
3. whole thing feels intentional
4. this doesn't resonate with me; it feels like abstract art
5. Puts the visitor in the "picture"
6. Shielded marker, layered interpretation.
7. I like the suspended marker between the frames, as well as the open view to the water behind past the marker. It gives a sense of looking forward to the future, and works well with the surroundings. The note about the corten steel is nice.
8. Rusting metal and passage of time seems to ISOLATE the event from the present, make it just something of the past, reduces its contemporary relevance. I don't like that at all.
9. It's important that this marker be within this site, but it almost seems like this design is meant to protect the feelings of non-Indigenous visitors.
10. materiality is cool and timeless.
11. I like the usage of materials that will change over time.
12. Instead of subtly referencing 19th century fort construction, why not depict an actual representation of the fort. What are people supposed to be doing in this area besides looking at the words on the marker, which are not contradicted or put in context in any way. The marker shows what white people still believed in 1859 and is an intentional reinforcement of the lie. The truth needs to be presented more plainly and honestly.
13. Again, I find "subtle references" and "suggestions" unhelpful and contrary to the purpose of this project in the first place. This interpretive frame should not be subtle. We need to tell the truth, own it and repudiate it, and identify better pathways forward from Fort Chambers.
14. I don't understand where this fits in --didn't have time to figure that out given my time available. I like the idea of somehow depicting settler NARROW understanding and how FEAR constricts the mind ... and it MESSED with actual friendships between Natives and Settlers: which should be depicted in a more expressive way! Some photos of interactions -- then maybe a lightning bolt of FEAR in the next panel separating the two people!

15. Depending on the accompanying text, the marker placement suggesting framing and holding layered histories is an improvement.
16. Actually, talking to the Soldier Descendents, they weren't doing this because they were afraid. Just like today, there was an emerging class of gold and miner support wealth, and a class of prominent men who promised access to "refinement" by joining in. Soldiers of Company D got many perks - land - opportunities relatively free education for their children paid for by the public. Sweet deal. And they could be a war hero, so fake news about what they're training for. Also, this doesn't capture the cannons and homemade cannonballs. These soldiers weren't doing this because they were afraid of the peaceful Cheyenne. They were doing it to chase them out of East Boulder and then finish them off out of sight. They were destroying the connective tissue of the plains so they can get the buffalo hides for the industrial belts and not have problems with the trains. Company D were prominent men, or wantabe's.
17. Very interesting way to present the marker. I like the materials but it might be too modern.
18. The interpretive panels must display ACCURATE information. Interpretation must include the information that the vertical slits were placed for DEFENSE of the settlers, including women and children, who were sheltering inside of the fort.
19. It's less formal than the first design. Some of the design might get lost on some people and seem a bit disorganized? It allows more free wandering with people being able to view the marker from various perspectives.

Q10. If you have additional comments about this (Design Concept 2) design, please share them here:

1. Congratulations on all your work on all the designs for all parts of the space. The wonderful graphics make it easy to understand the design concepts
2. This looks too uninviting and difficult to follow. Is this ADA? It creates more of a impact on the natural area than design 1.
3. I really don't think visitors would understand the meanings that the designers hope to create in this design.
4. So we go from silly sticks idea for Native Americans to the opposite -- a bunch of rusting metal that doesn't reflect any Native cultural or design elements. Were any Cheyenne or Arapaho artists consulted for this project??
5. I like the use of the rusted steel elements.
6. I wouldn't know where to start—it's hard to define a sense of hierarchy from this design option.
7. This design feels a little more decentralized than the first option.

8. See comments submitted to Kacey French
9. Needs a lot more work and sensitivity. See above.
10. How many of us listen to anything registered in our bodies? Perhaps some will recognize that moving around awakens an intentionality in learning about the past. I suspect that the cerebral functions of reading will wipe out any body understanding that is implied.
11. This design would further the fake news.
12. The 1800 pound marker was not created to be off the ground between two panels. This display is misleading and not historically accurate. The marker was placed upon a base and stood upright for many years until it was removed by city staff with a backhoe and broken off of its base - which resulted in damage to the historic marker. The removal was done without public due process. The broken section of the marker must be reattached and the marker base excavated so that the entire historic marker is once again intact. Interpretive signage should include the story of the destructive removal of the marker and its expert restoration.
13. let the marker lie in repose

**Q11. What about the design (Design Concept 3) most resonates with you?
Please explain why.**

1. 'Forcing intentional viewing'. Total BS
2. No 4. This design helps the modern population, who cares and is knowledgeable about Native culture, experience elements that show respect and appreciation for Indigenous culture.
3. like the idea of incorporating a medicine wheel
4. the idea of a sundial and the possibility of introducing Native interpretation via a medicine wheel appeals to me
5. Seems too close together
6. The cardinal directions which are central to Tribal traditions. This design pays respect to those concepts. The open design is also helpful
7. Being able to wander through different panels and around the marker is appreciated. I'd like to be able to move through the space, instead of having to stand still and read. I feel like this also takes advantage of the location and the surroundings.
8. The sun dial effect is interesting.
9. This plan feels the most organized and easily understandable. I'm not sure I'd pick up on cardinal directions- is there a specific reason for that? Could the center marker be

elevated or treated a little more reverently in some way? in this design it feels like it was found in the ground and everything else was built around it. Maybe that's the intention.

10. I like the circular nature of the panel arrangement. It feels more influenced by Native American traditions.
11. Why a sundial, and what is the point about the cardinal directions? And please don't use the term "Indigenous". Whose medicine wheel are you talking about? Arapaho? And slabs similar to the marker? Why?
12. Moving freely helps and should include space along the treeline east of the farm.
13. I'd like to see further exploration of the Indigenous Medicine Wheel HEALING and various perspectives -- each one needs to have a different format instead of all of the markers being the same. When one walks the Medicine Wheel, one SEES from different perspectives.
14. "Interpretive elements with contemporary perspectives." I hope these include contemporary Native perspectives. The potential use of a medicine wheel seems gratuitous and to be cultural appropriation; such use needs sufficient context for the religious and spiritual aspects of the medicine wheel. The medicine wheel is principally an experience. It's presence here could be that, but the text shows no indication that would happen.
15. The Traditional Chief Phillip Whiteman Jr. teaches a four directions workshop. If this design is chosen, you should reach out to him directly to design it. That would be very authentic and powerful. He is doing a peace gathering in June. You and your interpretive designer should go to it if you can. There will be Soldier Descendents there as well as invited guests. I'm sure we can get you an invitation.
16. Very cool! Great connections to place
17. The panels are supported by stone forms. The marker is set on the ground as it historically was. The original base needs to be excavated and placed on the ground. The broken base of the stone and the upper stone marker must be restored. The story of the removal and subsequent damage must be included as part of the story of miscommunication, lack of due process and hatred which resulted in the damage to the marker and it's removal. The language on the marker does not refer to the "Indian Uprising" as the Sand Creek Massacre. Were there Indian Uprisings in other parts of Colorado that contributed to the fear of the settlers which led to the construction of the fort by settler families as a safe shelter??? There is space to walk between the panels, the landscape might be more visible.
18. It seems like an intentional design that allows some flow in the general space. I like the directionality of the placement of the panels and can tell a story in its form. I think I like this design second compared to Design #1, with Design #2 last place.

Q13. If you have additional comments about this design (Design Concept 3), please share them here:

1. Incorporating a Medicine Wheel would be wonderful
2. This and design 1 are good, however if you are using this design you should consult more with the Tribe on the appropriateness of mirroring the sacred directions.
3. It's hard to include Indigenous elements (sundial, cardinal directions) in this area where we need to focus on what happened at the fort and at Sand Creek and afterward. Maybe it could work as a subtle reminder that Native people were here and their cultures continued throughout this horrible time. If the Arapaho and Cheyenne representatives like this idea, that's important.
4. What's the point of the sun dial? And do you really want to suggest a Sun Dance circle? That seems like potential misappropriation of a ceremonial emblem.
5. Overall this seems like the most successful approach with maybe a few adjustments to the actual marker- like lifting it up and maybe identifying what it is on a base of some kind. The circular pillars are neat and inviting for exploration.
6. While the marker is circled by panels that provide context and different views, it feels uncomfortable to me to have it be the center element in this circular formation.
7. This whole design is so obscure as to be meaningless. Say what you mean. Don't lead visitors around some fantasy land of stereotypes.
8. Please see comments submitted to Kacey French
9. Still not clear if you are offering a variety of approaches and trying to see which is preferable. I lack time to figure this out! Mentioned in my separate letter.
10. Seems pretty random, perhaps symbolic of where White people are now, randomly trying to figure out our relationship to this historic violence of indigenous peoples.
11. The Cheyenne teach circular thinking. But linear thinking is also very important. You need a display that uses both methods of thinking. When becoming familiar with the information, linear is better. When processing the information emotionally, circular is better. Think about how you'd do a blend of both, perhaps repeating the same content from two different angles, which is natural for the Cheyenne. Go back and forth between logic and emotional intelligence. Again, benches for reflection should be available and potential for conversations - Friendship Benches - google Dr. Dixon Chibanda. The Friendship Bench is a global, community-based mental health initiative that trains older adults to provide free, peer-to-peer talk therapy. The movement takes mental health support out of clinical settings and places it on literal benches to foster trust, empathy, and problem-solving. I think having these available at all locations is essential regardless of the design chosen...
12. Ditto

Q14. What about the design (Design Concept 4) most resonates with you?

Please explain why.

1. More nonsense
2. No 3. an exit view of the wetlands will be peaceful and provide some emotional relief after experiencing the quotes and other material
3. I like the framed view of the wetlands
4. Some elements are good. But too linear. I like circular design better.
5. Layered interpretation, accessibility, benches at different depths.
6. Too large and uninviting to this natural space.
7. If the gateways tell the story in chronological order, that is useful. I like the last gateway opening to reflection, as long as the reflection/contemplation area provides challenging questions about the meaning of this history for the people of Boulder today.
8. I appreciate the framing of the marker, similar to design 2. Also, there's something metaphorical about framing the marker in new information and with reinterpretation that I like. This one feels quite large, but I do like how much visitor has to interact with the environment.
9. There is an elegance in the perspective view of seeing through multiple gateways.
10. I like the simple and modern nature of the gateways, and that you are forced to go around the panels to read the inscription.
11. Gateway to what? Healing? For whom? Facing away? Looking at swamp lands? I don't understand. I thought this would be about facing our past and having the truth presented so that we never do this again. Looking away will not help.
12. There is an appeal in moving through doors of understanding perhaps here allowing various perspectives from the past and then moving into contemporary understandings. And perhaps murals on each "wall" around the door ... bringing history "to life" and color.
13. Places too much emphasis on the old way of thinking embodied in the original marker.
14. I love this design to frame Valmont Butte and the other location. However, if you have a lot of information in the exhibit about gaslighting, then it is my favorite. It shows how the fake news influenced events leading to a massacre, which is very relevant for today.
15. Nice way to present the space and create interesting areas.
16. I think this one is ok, but not as strong as the others. I like the gate imagery but the marker is maybe not clearly understood to be there until you get deeper into the space.

Q16. If you have additional comments about this design (Design Concept 4), please share them here:

1. This seems to have less interpretive space for contemporary reflections/ historical perspectives
2. Are the contemporary perspective/quotes from Indigenous folks?
3. It's a little unclear if you are or are not supposed to walk through the gate ways.
4. This exhibit is not about healing, it is about making white people feel better about stealing Indian land and resources, running the Indians off, and then killing them, once rounded up at Ft Lyons.
5. Please see comments submitted to Kacey French
6. Again is this in addition to other elements or one needs to prefer of the several presented?
7. If emphasizing "what were the soldiers thinking" this shows unemotional linear means-to-end inhuman thinking. And you could present why. Land grab, don't want interference from peace and cooperation (Zillow real estate "curb appeal" today), get rid of what doesn't fit with the lawns and education and elite playground. Use the invalidation of real news and result in the Rocky Mountain News article glorifying the Soldiers in 1890. Pretty obvious ignoring the Congressional Report of 1865. Emotions get tossed aside. This was "just business".
8. Marker is not readily visible. Large wall - like structures.
9. Ditto

Q22. If you are dissatisfied with the proposed representation [of Fort Chambers], please explain why:

1. Stop telling people what to think and stop wasting \$\$ on projects when there is a budget shortfall.
2. I would like to see Fred Mosqueda's idea of having visitors pass through a reproduction of the gate of the fort at the end of the Decompression path. It would connect well with Discovery design #4. The effectiveness of any of the designs depends very much on the content of the exhibits. We need to have a visceral experience of what the fort represented to the settlers and to the Native people and their descendants. The most important thing is to change the Decompression design entirely because it is factually inaccurate and offensive in both directions (as visitors walk into the site, and walk back).

3. I think this is an inaccurate portrayal that could be severely misunderstood by visitors. The portrayal of the sod and sticks makes a number of incorrect assumptions: On the front end of the experience, the decreasing sticks assume that Indigenous presence gradually diminished over time. This ignores the punctuated forced removals, massacres, and treaty violations that actually occurred. On the back end of the experience, the increasing sticks (and decreasing sod) assumes that Native people have been able to fully reconnect with their homelands, and that settler colonial society and structures have diminished. Neither of these are true.
4. What?? The sod is disappearing around here? News to me -- Euro-American domination of the landscape continues apace. And Native American "sticks" are reappearing, even to the point of replacing the sod?? I'm non-native, but teach at CU and am very involved in Native issues (and work with tribes), and this idea of the sod and the sticks at the end seems like grotesque misrepresentation of the place and role of Native Americans in Boulder County -- as if we're actually reversing 150+ years of colonization and genocide. Surely there's a better way to convey the idea of changing attitudes.
5. Is this design and information approved by the Indigenous folks who have supposedly been consulted in this process? Is their truth honored and lifted up in this design? You have obviously put a lot of thought into these possible designs. Have you honored the input of the Indigenous folks who wish to lift up the truth of the deep history of this place? Does this design honor the fact that the Indigenous lived here are cared for this land for centuries before settlers arrived and attempted to erase them and their culture so they could steal everything in sight? What do they think about these possible designs. I have read that they really want to have a replica of the fort that was here when the murderous soldiers gathered and trained together before they participated in the Sand Creek Masacre. I hope you will engage in true conversation with them and really listen to what they would like to see here. It's their history that has been nearly erased. We descendants of settlers should honor their story.
6. Going back to the previous page (s) What Indian presence? At the end, there's none. The entire representation works very hard to equalize and justify what happened at Ft Chambers. That misguided effort leads to inaccuracies such as using sod and sticks to suggest parallel experiences of actual people along imaginary timelines, and such as Indians miraculously reappearing at the end, just before visitors are invited to gaze out at the wetlands. The theme of fear does not include Indians' fear of losing their land, homes, crops, villages, food sources, resources, their lives. The "settlers" fear seems to be of losing what they stole. Fear doesn't justify, excuse or atone, or even explain really, against the facts, what the "settlers" did. There are not two equal sides to this story. There are not two "rights". There is a huge wrong that needs to be righted. This exhibit doesn't begin to point the way.
7. See prior responses. And using "fear" as the anchor for telling this story is a poor choice. Again this echoes the "clash of cultures" approach History Colorado had to abandon and revisit to create the current Sand Creek exhibit.

8. Please see comments submitted to Kacey French
9. I am writing an additional letter. I don't have sufficient time as of the eve of 5/15 with very little preparation; I lack spending time, like days, to digest the material offered. In general there isn't in this design an adequate understanding of Native / Indigenous Knowledge, relation to the Land itself in contrast with the very limited perspectives of the Settlers. I think you've done a good first effort sharing your ideas and asking our input. I'm not getting enough reflection that Native people on this continent all go back in their presence and cultural development over 10,000 years and what that implies.
10. Need to accommodate different thinking styles. Need to have more respect for private moments for emotional processing that aren't embarrassing or in the line of sight. Like the metal and rammed earth for the Soldiers and the poles for the native americans. Overall very thoughtful and it just needs some more work.
11. There is no accurate account of the sod. Any thing you would create cannot be accurate of what was there!
12. somewhat satisfied, but still need the Cheyenne perspective of the settler/ indian situation back then. Cheyenne were the prime focus of the deception and massacre. Need to get the perspectives of the soldiers - talk with the soldiers' descendants,
13. No. It seems to have all important elements in place.

Q24. Which of the following words – provided by participants in previous engagement opportunities – should we consider for the future trail/trailhead name of this site? Select all that apply. [OTHER responses]

1. Forced feeding designed by staff who don't even live in Boulder
2. Fort Chamber Reflection
3. Reconciliation and Truth are both commendable terms, as long as the experience can accurately represent them both. At present, this accurate representation of truth and reconciliation is not achieved.
4. The words above are just wishful thinking, as if walking this trail can undo 150 years of harm to Native Americans.
5. Telling the Truth should be the goal. Healing is a process that begins with telling the truth. This exhibit falls short of the first step in healing. Needed are statements that the Tribes were sovereign nations who owned (yes owned, "the valley was [] owned") lands as a sovereign owns lands. The U.S. recognizes Arapaho and Cheyenne territory (which they owned/own as sovereigns) in treaties with them. Treaties are the Supreme Law of the Land. (US Constitution). Only a sovereign can decide how its land is used and by whom. The Arapaho had full authority to allow the miners to stay as guest and then

leave at the designated time. The settlers became invaders when they did not leave. Everything the settler/invaders did from there going forward was in violation of the treaty of Fort Laramie, US and Arapaho law. Every thing. The settler/invaders decided to stay and pretend the land was theirs. They made laws and put words of ownership on pieces of paper and called the papers "deeds". They put the papers in boxes they called files, and put the files in a building they called the "Land Office", all to document and justify their existence on land that was not theirs. And the settler/invaders were willing to exterminate the Indians in order to keep what wasn't theirs. By now they knew the story of Indian Removal, and about the stealing of Indian lands. They were not acting out of ignorance or innocence. Fast forward 160+ years, those pieces of paper - those made up "deeds" survive. But so does the treaty, the Supreme Law of the Land, that recognizes and guarantees the Tribes' ownership of the very same land represented in the pieces of paper. This is the truth. Some important things to note for improving the exhibit: -Tribes, Tribal Nations, Native Nations, Indian Nations are sovereigns, Peoples; a tribe is not a group of Indigenous people. -Indigenous is a much broader term that shouldn't be used when referring to tribes and their citizens in the US. -Use the names of the tribes- Arapaho, Cheyenne, etc. -Indian, Indian Tribe, Indian Nation are perfectly acceptable terms and in fact are legally correct terms. -It is not true that no one "owned" Boulder Valley, that Indians only existed in "relationship" with the land. That's romantic, euphemistic language. Tribes had/have control of their territory. They "owned" land in the way that sovereigns hold land. The Arapaho knew their territory, other tribes knew Arapaho territory. They used each other's territory with permission. Would anyone just write themselves a deed to federal land? I don't know where to put all my comments. But here's a suggested start to the exhibit that provides a better, fuller context for Fort Chambers: For more than 14,000 years, Colorado has been home to Indigenous peoples who hunted, traded, held ceremonies, raised families, and who have lived and died here. Boulder Valley is the homeland and within the territory of the Arapaho and Cheyenne people. The United States recognized tribes as sovereign nations and in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, it recognized the territory of the Arapaho and Cheyenne, including Boulder Valley. In 1858 when white miners arrived in the Boulder Valley and asked to spend the winter, Arapaho Chief Niwath said they could stay but must leave after winter. Instead, that next year, the white guests became intruders when they founded the town of Boulder against the wishes of the Arapaho and in violation of the Treaty. Miners and intruder-settlers repeatedly violated the terms of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, and the territorial government refused to enforce it. As Civil War broke out in the East, hostilities, raids, and attacks between settlers and Tribal warriors escalated in the West. In the summer of 1864, Colorado's territorial governor John Evans authorized settlers to kill, quote "hostile Indians", and he raised a volunteer army of "Indian fighters." Although Boulder Valley intruder-settlers were never directly threatened by Indian attacks, in 1863 they built a sod fort on the homestead of George W. Chambers to defend themselves. In 1864, when Governor Evans issued his call for volunteer "Indian Fighters," 111 Boulder Valley men mustered at Fort Chambers. They were designated as Company D of the 3rd Colorado Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, under the command of David Nichols, who resigned his position as Boulder County sheriff to

accept a captain's commission. In late summer of 1864, the one hundred and eleven men of Company D began training for war. The Boulder men joined Colonel John Chivington's U.S. military forces to carry out the Sand Creek massacre. More than 230 Arapaho and Cheyenne people – including Chief Nawath -- were murdered.

6. Native People-White People Witness to Fort Chambers
7. Gaslighting, brainwashing, prominent men, heartless

Comment Form Submissions

An open comment form is available on the Fort Chambers / Poor Farm project webpage for members of the public to submit feedback through at any time. Responses received since our last engagement window (EW3) are found below.

Received March 27th, 2026

I have previously signed up for updates but never get any?

What is the current status?

Is the property open for visiting?

Thanks,

Karl Ford

Longmont

Received May 17th, 2026

My 2nd and 3rd Great Grandfathers Granville Berkley and Sr arrived in Boulder City in 1863 from Berkeley Virginia in 1863. My great great uncle Junius Berkley had understood Boulder was an extremely valuable opportunity to make establish an aristocratic government by involving the wealthy like minded entrepreneurs to take the land granted to the Cheyenne People in the 1861 Treaty of Laramie. Using totally false claims of atrocities and dehumanizing stories, fear of all native Americans spread throughout Denver and Boulder. Cheyenne Chief White Antelope had returned from Washington DC wearing a 3 inch peace medal given to him by Abraham Lincoln for brokering peace with the miners in Boulder with Cheyenne and Arapaho in Boulder. Chief White Antelope was murdered and horribly mutilated at Sand Creek while wearing the Peace Medal.

Cheyenne and Arapaho People's were getting along with miners settlers and farmers. Marriage to Cheyenne women was common. They were peaceful, talented and helpful with the growing white population. Peaceful coexisting was the philosophy of the Cheyenne and Arapaho People's.

Gov John Evans, US Cavalry Colonel John Chivington, both men preachers, Granville Berkley sr, and prominent judge, lawyer and Cavalry Captain viewed the Cheyenne and Arapaho as impeding future growth in commerce, land speculation, mining and water rights.

The next step was an order to insist a US Military force. Governor Evans enlisted 100

men, 3rd Calvary Company D Boulder Volunteers, 46 who served in the Sand Creek Massacre. They quickly built a mostly sod fort Called For8 Chamber and began training and maneuvers. With the expert traning of Captain George Laird Shoup artillery practice took place.

Ft Chambers was the jumping off place for the genocide of 230 innocent human beings ordered by the US Military in US history.

The story of denial in my family persisted until late March 2026. My cousin told me my 2nd great grandfather Granville Berkely Jr was on a hill miles away from the massacre until I texted a 1910 photo with Granville with a Medal of a cannon on his chest. There are no hills anywhere near near Sand Creek.

Speaking as a soldiers descendant we will be funding Ft Chambers with Open Space and Mountain Parks. We want everyone to know what really happened and why.

Robert Batchelder

***A third comment was received on May 16th, 2026 that contains the same content received by the project team via email. This text is available in the following section.*

Email Compendium

Below are emails and email attachment content received by the project team during Engagement Window 4.

Received April 6th, 2026

Dear Kasey;

My nsme is Catherine Sundvall. I have talked several times with Katie Knapp about my work with Sand Creek Massacre Soldier descendants represented by Robert Batchelder and N. Cheyenne Chief Phillip Whiteman.

I am encouraging the interpretive trail talk about the efforts of Robert's ancestor Grandville Berkley Sr to orchestrate Boulder to become a magnet for prominent people to concentrate their wealth around a State University to be built in Boulder. Competing with this aspiration was the lived experience of pioneers who had experienced the Cheyenne at Ft Bent.

When settlers first came to Valmont, they co-existed with the Cheyenne who were established in the high water table Cottonwood bottoms of East Boulder near the East Boulder Rec Center. Evidence of the hydrology that supported the dense cottonwood grove for the horses and encampment is seen in flooding basements today.

During the Ft. Chambers training period, Grandville Berkley Jr. had cannons that were not standard issue. These might not have been located at Ft. Chambers. I was told by Soldier descendants and

Cheyenne historians that the cannons were shot at cottonwood trees to scare the Cheyenne and their horses. These cannons were later taken to Sand Creek.

There were many “fake news” accounts from the campaign against the Cheyenne at the time and later. Those who knew that Chief White Antelope had been given a medal of peace by President Lincoln were likely confused by the accounts at the time because there were people in Valmont especially who had been working with the Cheyenne, including Chief White Antelope.

I am hoping that the interpretive trail talks about how the Soldiers became prominent, and spun a tall tale that is still in the minds of many today. The interpretive trail should follow the careers of the Soldiers in their formation of CU, and in other real estate promotions like the following article in 1890 in the Rocky Mountain News.

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=RMD18900504-01.2.383&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7CtCO%7CtTA-----0----->

It answers “Why?”

Kind Regards;

Catherine Sundvall

April 6th, 2026

I have been working with the Soldier descendants represented by Robert Batchelder. I have also been working with N. Cheyenne tribal members, led by Traditional N. Cheyenne Chief Phillip Whiteman. Chief Phillip spoke at a recent Parks and Rec. Advisory Board Hearing.

Chief Phillip Whiteman at 31:50 -38:10 , followed by Nicole Schubus. Both are compelling speakers in favor of the land and the Cheyenne, and the botanic garden proposal at Hogan-Pancost. Both mention Ft. Chambers.

<https://youtu.be/RP-5jsyGfhI>

Received April 9th, 2026

Kacey, greetings & good day - hello from Interior, Alaska!

I captured your email from this site,...

<https://bouldercolorado.gov/projects/fort-chambers-poor-farm-management-plan>

& please forgive me for not sending, sharing this more timely, like right after I sent it the other day, honestly,...

But, nevertheless, "now is as good of a time as any ",... I continue to get opportunities to test & say, ...
:)

Laurie Rugenstein has replied with a very respectful notice, simply acknowledging the message & that they would respond once there was chance to take more in,...

"Of course! ", eh?

Indeed!

&, it's the same, Kacey,...

I would be happy to have a chat, to make that better introduction, etc.,...

Perhaps, Bill, the three of us might "compare notes", maybe, in case anything of my work & experience might help others "in the Boulder area" yet, & the work you each are engaged in, too,...

"Here for it", & even with these tools, it is not "virtual work" we are engaged in, eh?

Geographies, horizons, presence & 'current reality',...can change!

Well-beings & finally, this is just an "FYI" & offer, really,...

"Many threads; 'no strings!'"

Thank you & THANK YOU, for all that very, very "care-fully tended" consideration & work you are nurturing! I am in support of "best practice", including the time, work, commitment, etc., to "see it through",...

Onwards!

Good day!

---Ramey

Received May 27th, 2026

"Community Engagement" & how any agencies & grants, foundations & funders do their "Measurement & Evaluation",...

The NSF's "Navigating the New Arctic" program will be having their "Community" conference in Fairbanks this coming September;

This last week, too - <https://nna-co.org/index.php/outreach/webinar/evaluation-focus-sessions-0>
(Nearly half of the attendees were in Boulder, which, again, happens to be where I was born, & half were in Fairbanks,.... <shrug> "Particulars", eh? <bow>

I had another meeting on Friday with Howie,.... <https://evsc.as.virginia.edu/people/howard-e-epstein>
<https://epstein.evsc.virginia.edu/>

He's on his way this weekend to the North Slope for field work season,...

Later today, 27 May, the "Community Engagement" webinar below, it is maybe by itself what's of interest,...

As it happens, too, "respecting particulars", I thought I might as well also share some of what I'm aware of too, how "disparately close & similar" "this work" we & so many are right now engaged in & with,....
<bow>

& offer some of the horizons I've scouted, one might say, maybe, too, re: however any of us are aware is where we are, "Presently", all the things happening, eh?! <bow>

"Many threads; 'no strings!'"

When, as, should, if,.... I look forward to following-up & to keeping things as grounded & respectful as .. as we need & want, finally, eh?!

Good morning!

---Ramey

Received April 29th, 2026

Good morning, Dan,

Since Katie Knapp is no longer with your department as the Poor Farm contact, who should we be talking with about the current status of the plans there?

I met the consultant who is designing the trail at the last public meeting. I requested that Valmont descendants would be able to review and offer ideas on the plan. The property is connected to our history – we have knowledge of the history of the property and past physical association with property that the general public attending meetings and offering input does not have. We have not been contacted by the consultant or staff.

Much has been said about the “healing trail”. No interpretation of the site would be complete if the entire history of the site is not included.

What is the plan for the marker? Is the marker still protected and in storage in the house?

What are the plans for the historic house and the outbuildings which I listed on the National Register of Historic Places? The marker is also included in that listing. My listing was informed by long association with the owners of the property, oral history from those owners, and many hours spent at the property, both on social visits and in a lengthy examination of the property for the listing document.

Looking forward to your response.

Thank you,
Carol Affleck
Shirley Schaller

Received May 5th, 2026 from Robert Batchelder

Ft Chambers is the location where 100 US 3rd Cavalry Company D were trained how to build a makeshift fort, aim and fire 12 lb. Howitzer cannons and practice military maneuvers. Most importantly the soldiers were indoctrinated by their military commander Colonel John Chivington, Cap David Nichols troop recruiter, and future CU Alum and Cap George Laird Shoup, artillery instructor and future first Governor of Idaho Territory and first Idaho Senator and only Senator to have two statues in Statuary Hall in the DC Capitol. The indoctrination included dehumanizing the Cheyenne People by falsely declaring Cheyenne attacks on Boulder civilians and calling all Native Americans Savages. Gov. John Evans issued two proclamations in July and in August first saying you can murder any native if you suspect they are Hostiles and the second saying anyone can hunt down a Native American and murder them. This is after Chief White Antelope made two trips to Washington DC to seek peace. On the second trip Chief White Antelope was given a Peace Medal by Abraham Lincoln. He was murdered at Sand Creek wearing the Peace Medal. It was decided at Ft Chambers 3rd Cavalry Company D to terrorize the Cheyenne and remove them from Boulder City permanently.

Chief White Antelope was making good news in the Boulder Valley News of Valmont. My great great uncle Junius Betkley stole the newspapers printing press to slander all Native Americans. The Cheyenne don't care about Ft Chambers as an historical location. They have been wondering why this genocide happened and what were the soldiers thinking. Maybe we can find out through Truth and Reconciliation in a peaceful meditative Boulder Botanical Gardens. Thank you all for reading this short presentation. This was the first historical event of its kind and will make a relevant statement about learning from history.

Received May 6th, 2026

Dear Kasey;

I sent you a copy of the Congressional Report. I think this statement should be highlighted in a display.

“All the testimony goes to show that the Indians, under the immediate control of Black Kettle and White Antelope of the Cheyennes, and Left Hand of the Arapahoes, were and had been friendly to the whites, and had not been guilty of any acts of hostility or depredation. The Indian agents, the Indian interpreter and others examined by your committee, all testify to the good character of those Indians. Even Governor Evans and Major Anthony, though evidently willing to convey to your committee a false impression of the character of those Indians, were forced, in spite of their prevarication, to admit that they knew of nothing they had done which rendered them deserving of punishment. “

I think it's important in the exhibition to highlight the psychological use of what's in modern day called “gaslighting” where untrue tales like the Rocky Mountain News article I sent you became “fact” and the Congressional investigation was erased from memory, along with the Cheyenne people who lived in East Boulder.

Chief White Antelope had received a peace medal from President Lincoln for his efforts in what's now East Boulder. I think there should be a display of this, perhaps one of the City historians visiting the Lincoln Presidential library in Springfield Illinois to get the original information. Of course why did prominent men led by Grandville Berkley Sr. orchestrate what led to the massacre? Why? That's for Robert Batchelder to explain. I think there should be an exhibit on why the prominent people orchestrated this and how. We can get all of that for you.

Catherine Sundvall

Received May 6th, 2026

Good Afternoon Kacey,

I have a few questions regarding proposed 'Healing Trail' on the Fort Chambers / Poor Farm property. Where will the trail start, and how far is the trail going to be? Looks like it will extend to the east, and I am curious where the loop will end. I know some of the property owners on Valmont, and wonder if their properties will be affected. From what I understand, the Fort Chambers stone marker will be placed there, but will it be changed since it inaccurately states that Fort Chambers was used in "Indian Uprising".

I look forward to seeing future plans and someday visit the finished trail!

I looked over the completed Planning Guide and completed the questionnaire, but forgot to ask the above questions. Thank you for your time and have a great day!

Annie Rieker

May 15th, 2026

Hi Kacey,

Thank you so much for getting back to me so promptly. I am sorry for my late response-your email got lost in the shuffle!

The photos were extremely helpful! Thank you for sending these to me !

In Photo #1 Ecological restoration I noticed the ponds, former gravel mines, do you know what gravel mine it was? The reason I am asking is because there once was a gravel pit in that general area that was owned by the Pastore Family, and I have been trying to locate it. Rumor has it that there was a "park" there named after the family. I am not sure how big it was, and assume it was pretty small. There might have been a plaque there.

In Photo #2, I noticed Sawhill ponds, near a property line. I know the Sawhill's owned a great deal of property from 61st to 75 th at one time. The Keeter Family is a descendent of the Sawhill's. I am wondering if the property line is the property line of the Keeter Family. Do you know if this is the case?

We are family friends of the Keeter's, and I wonder if their property will be affected by this. Do you have any info on this?

Thanks again for all your help !

Received May 15th, 2026

Dear OSMP and Studio Tectonic Friends (note that we don't have email addresses for Studio Tectonic consultants, so we'll rely on OSMP staff to forward this message -- thanks!):

Please see the attached letter with feedback from Right Relationship Boulder on the proposed design of the Fort Chambers so-called "healing trail." Note that we hope to meet with OSMP staff and Studio Tectonic consultants as soon as possible to talk about the issues we address here. We look forward to hearing from you.

With much appreciation for your work on this important project,

Jerilyn DeCoteau, Marrton Dormish, Tim Harnos, Paula Palmer, Laurie Rugenstein
(Representing Right Relationship Boulder)

Email attachment content

Date: May 16, 2026

To: OSMP Staff and Studio Tectonic Consultants: Dan Burke, David Ford, Seth Frankel, Kacey French, Hailey Malone

CC: Tribal Representatives: Crystal C'Bearing, Fred Mosqueda, Chester Whiteman

City of Boulder Equity Officer Aimee Kane

From: Right Relationship Boulder: Jerilyn DeCoteau, Marrton Dormish, Tim Harnos, Paula Palmer, Laurie Rugenstein

Re: Feedback and Recommendations on Fort Chambers Design Proposal

Right Relationship Boulder members met with Hailey Malone during the open feedback session on May 6. We request a follow-up meeting with Kacey French, Seth Frankel, and David Ford at your earliest convenience. Some Right Relationship Boulder members may have filled out the online survey, but the survey questions are very limited in scope. For that reason, we are addressing our serious concerns about some elements of the Design in this memo.

Right Relationship Boulder has been collaborating with the Arapaho and Cheyenne people on many projects since 2016. We have been educating the Boulder community about the history of Fort Chambers and the many questions it raises since 2018. We urged the City to develop the Fort Chambers property as a Site of Conscience in 2023, and we are gratified that the City's Equity Officer and OSMP pledged to follow this course.

These are our concerns and recommendations:

- 1- "Healing Trail." There was strong consensus against this term during the Fall 2025 Community Consultation. No one is healed by walking this trail. Healing is a much longer process. Emphasis should be on learning the full truth of what happened on this land, and asking ourselves how our community needs to respond and change. What would "right relationship" with Native peoples, and specifically the Arapaho and Cheyenne, look like in Boulder today?
- 2- Focus should be on the goals of Sites of Conscience: Truth, Justice, Reconciliation. These three things occur in sequence, not all at once. The Fort Chambers site should focus on the first of these: Truth. It should also raise questions about what Justice would look like. Bringing about Justice and Reconciliation is a long-term process.
- 3- The Big Idea (and throughout the document):
The Design's message is that fear was instilled in settlers, manipulated by leaders, and this led to the violence at Sand Creek. But fear is not the starting point. Before fear there were forced removals of entire tribal nations, military attacks on Native peoples, Settler violations of treaties and laws that prohibited settlement, shrinking of Native nations' land base, betrayal of Chief Nawath by miners in Boulder, rape of Nawath's wife and daughter in Denver, etc. The violence at Sand Creek started with Settler/US government violence against Native peoples. The Settlers who came to the Boulder Valley were well aware of all these crimes against the Arapaho and Cheyenne. They were well aware of the treaties and laws that prohibited their invasion and occupation of treaty land. But they saw the Native people as "savages" and they saw themselves as "rightful" owners of this land. All this is well documented. They feared that the Arapaho and Cheyenne would return Settler violence with violence against them. The current Design risks "excusing" Settler violence by explaining that Settlers were afraid, representing them as "innocent victims" of manipulation by Evans and the Rocky Mountain News.

Missing from the Design: The Arapaho and Cheyenne were also afraid. What were their fears? Losing their homeland. Losing the land where their ancestors were buried. Losing access to essential hunting grounds in the Boulder Valley and the foothills (facing hunger). Losing their freedom. Losing their whole way of life. Losing their lives.

The Design presents "parallel" stories of Settlers and Native Peoples. These are false equivalencies. It reminds us of the first exhibit on the Sand Creek Massacre at History Colorado, which presented the massacre as a "clash of cultures." That exhibit was taken down because Sand Creek was not a "clash of cultures." It was an intentional

massacre of innocent people by murderous perpetrators. Similarly, the Fort Chambers site is a site of violence and injustice committed by Settlers against the Arapaho and Cheyenne. This needs to be clearly stated throughout the Design. Settler descendants who visit the site need to unequivocally own this truth. Native people who visit the site need to see their ancestors' experience of forced removal from the Boulder Valley, rape, betrayal, and murder reported accurately, giving no excuses to the Settler perpetrators. Truth is the only path toward justice and reconciliation.

4- Arrival:

The chronology of the Design should start with 13,000 years of Native life in the Boulder Valley. Then Settler/US government crimes and violence against Native peoples. Then the 1859 Settler invasion of the Front Range. Then Settler fear and manipulation, leading to more violence at Sand Creek.

5- Decompression:

This segment should not be parallel depictions of Native and Settler lives. The path should begin chronologically, first showing 13,000 years of Native presence on this land prior to Settler Invasion. Along this path we need to hear Arapaho and Cheyenne languages (add an audio element). We need to be able to imagine Chief Nawath's winter camps and the traditional activities of women, men, and children. We need to see buffalo, elk and other game in the Boulder Valley. The exhibits should show Arapaho place names in the Boulder Valley and foothills.

The images of gradually increasing Settler presence and gradually decreasing Arapaho and Cheyenne presence are inaccurate. The Settler invasion was not gradual. When gold was discovered, within 6 months 100,000 Euro-Americans poured into the Front Range in violation of existing laws and treaties. Bam! And the removal of Nawath's band of Arapaho also was not gradual either. Nawath led his people out of the Boulder Valley to avoid conflict with the Settlers. They were here in the Boulder Valley for hundreds of years, then they were gone.

The image of a bunch of poles representing the Arapaho and Cheyenne people is offensive (harkens back to the "wooden Indian" stereotype). The gradually decreasing number of poles harkens back to the false narrative of the "Vanishing Indian." Please don't represent the Arapaho and Cheyenne people with wooden poles.

It would be better to have the first segment of the path representing 13,000 years of Native presence in the Boulder Valley. Then an entry through the gate of the fort (as Fred Mosqueda suggested), marking the abrupt arrival of Settlers in 1858. Here we need to learn about the Settlers. Who were they? Why did they come? What were their beliefs about Native people, "savages"? What were their beliefs about Manifest Destiny, white supremacy, their own "entitlement"? How did Settler violations of laws and treaties and violence against Native peoples produce fear in them, leading to construction of the fort?

6- Throughout -- Use active voice, not passive terms like "westward expansion, agriculture, mining" – these are faceless concepts that hide the fact that people did these things. Say: miners, farmers, land speculators, railroad builders, did x,y,z, etc.

“Westward expansion” is not neutral language. It is Settler language. The Indigenous experience of “westward expansion” was “Invasion.” Point this out. Make it explicit. Include “Invasion” every time you mention “westward expansion.”

7- Discovery:

This circular area needs to be much larger to accommodate more important information. There is room to the north to expand this area.

Make clear that the city of Boulder and other Front Range cities were founded in violation of treaties. Property deeds for land that was stolen from the Arapaho and Cheyenne were sold to the Settlers.

We need to see what actually happened at the fort (troops drilling, muskets, bayonets, make it real that they were preparing to kill Indians (exhibit the poster for “Indian Fighters,” Evan’s Proclamations calling for killing Indians, etc.)

Be explicit about what happened at Sand Creek and how the Cavalry’s “victory” was celebrated in Boulder.

Name names. Real people were killed. Real people killed them. We have their names. Exhibit both sets of names to make this real. (Consider the power of the names of US soldiers on the Vietnam monument in Washington DC).

Show comparative outcomes/consequences for Native People and for Settlers: What did the Arapaho and Cheyenne lose? Where did they go? They were forced onto reservations and their children were removed to boarding schools. They have struggled to sustain their language and culture. What are their current economic and health statistics in OK and WY? (NOTE: For an important assessment of the economic losses to tribes that were removed from Colorado, please include information from the TREC reports posted at peopleofthesacredland.org)

Contrast the Arapaho and Cheyenne data to the outcomes for the Settlers and their descendants who live in Boulder today. Note that some of the Sand Creek perpetrators became wealthy and “honored” civic and business leaders in Colorado (name them). Contrast the current value of Boulder land and economic and health stats for Boulder County residents vs. Arapaho and Cheyenne stats in OK and WY. Show clear comparative data.

8- Re-emersion:

The image of decreasing sod walls (purportedly portraying decreasing Settler presence and dominance) and increasing poles (purportedly portraying increasing presence and influence of Native people in the Boulder Valley) is pure fantasy, totally inaccurate. Boulder has not returned one inch of land to the Arapaho and Cheyenne and there is no plan to do that. What is the Native population in Boulder County (maybe .01 percent)? Are Native people represented on City and County boards, commissions, staffs, and elected positions? No—and why not? We need to ask ourselves these hard questions, not congratulate ourselves for supposed progress

toward justice and reconciliation. Visitors to the site should leave feeling challenged by these questions and motivated to make changes in their lives and in the community. The current “feel good” design is self-serving and offensive.

Walking back to the parking lot, visitors should be asked a series of questions to think about and to write about (cards, pens and a box, and/or audio recording equipment should be provided, and there should be a process for OSMP/City staff to continually review the submissions). Possible questions:

What feelings came up for you during your visit to this site?

Why is it important to understand this history?

How are you connected to this story?

What would justice for the Arapaho and Cheyenne look like in the Boulder Valley?

What would reconciliation look like in the Boulder Valley?

How would you like Boulder to be different in 5 years? in 10 years?

- 9- Provide visitors a card or a QR code taking them to recommended resources so they can continue learning. Include resources for different age groups. Right Relationship Boulder can help you put this together.

Thank you for your work on this very important project and for considering our concerns, criticisms, and recommendations. We look forward to meeting with you in person as soon as possible.

Received May 15th, 2026

I have filled out the questionnaire but needed to write my comments separately. They are attached.

Thank you

Sincerely yours

Tod Smith

Email attachment content

Comments – Proposed Interpretive Experience Questionnaire

Rather than provide comments to each specific design comments in the questionnaire, I am providing this letter to set out my general thoughts and suggestions regarding the entire design proposal. They apply to the entirety of the proposal and are not limited to any specific design aspect. I must start by saying that generally I find the proposal and the language used in describing the proposal to be a whitewash, an attempt to ignore the

brutality and illegality of what happened. Unfortunately, it seems to suggest – there were good people on both sides.

1. A Brief Summary Legal Comment: While I recognize that use the term “Indigenous” has become popular in response to the idea that we should “de-colonize” the history, using “Indigenous,” “Indigenous groups,” or even “Indigenous Tribes” undermines and threatens the unique legal status of Indian Tribes or Indian Nations (as used in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie) in the United States. The Indian Nations, including the Arapaho and Cheyenne who were parties to the 1851 Treaty, were (and are) sovereign governments, who occupied, controlled, and governed a vast territory which included the lands that were ultimately reserved for their exclusive use in the 1851 Treaty including the Boulder Valley. The United States recognized these Tribes as governments when they negotiated the Treaty with the Tribes. The Tribes or Indian Nations are not simply a group of Indigenous people or an Indigenous group, they are political sovereigns that governed the territory and the people who lived within that territory prior to the arrival of Euro Americans. They controlled and owned the land. And, the 1851 Treaty recognized that the Arapaho Tribe would continue to do so without interference or settlement by Euro Americans.

I do not see any references in the documents prepared by Studio Tetric to the report prepared by the Sacred Land’s Truth, Restoration, and Education Commission (TREC), in particular the portion of the report that addresses “The Legal and Political History of Colorado Tribes.” I strongly recommend that the Studio Tetric staff working on this project review that document and particularly the chapter dedicated to “The Expulsion of the Arapahos from Colorado 1851-1864,” which provides a more detailed explanation of the sovereign status of the Arapahos, the terms of the 1851 Treaty, and the establishment of illegal towns and communities barely seven years after the Treaty.

2. The interpretative trail should not start with the initial arrival of Euro Americans; it should start, at the latest, in 1851 with the Treat of Fort Laramie. That Treaty recognized that the Indian Nations, the Arapaho, with respect to what is now known at the Boulder Valley, had exclusive control over their territory, and that Euro Americans could pass through but not settle in that territory. From there you would move on to the invasion by Euro Americans in unfettered violation of the Treaty and the United States’ obligation to enforce the Treaty’s terms and prohibit the Euro Americans from settling on the land. Chief Nawath (Left Hand) recognized that the Arapahos owned, controlled and governed land when he told the initial wave of Euro Americans looking for gold that they could stay for the winter but then had to leave.

3. Sticks (poles) – I can’t imagine a more stereotypical depiction of the Indian people who governed and occupied the land. The questionnaire suggests they depict “Native American structures” – ahh tepees – and ingenuity. Beyond tepees what “ingenuity” is depicted?

4. Reduced quantity of sticks (poles) to represent a “reduced trial presence over time.” This depiction is a complete fallacy. Tribal extirpation was immediate. Between 1858 and 1861 (3 years), 100,000 illegal Euro Americans, more that 30 times the entire Arapaho population, arrived at the foot of the Rockies. And, by the summer of 1864 (6 years), the Arapahos in the Boulder Valley were gone, forced south to Sand Creek. See TREC Report.

5. The word “fear” is used 34 times in the “Fort Chambers Interpretative Framework.” In every instance it is used to describe the Euro American experience. While there is a recognition that the fear was based almost exclusively on exaggerated or mostly false claims of violence by Indians, it is, in my view, put forth as a justification for the Euro American response to what was (and is here) referred to as the “Indian problem.” A more honest description would be that conjured fear was used to justify the removal, and called for extermination of entire Indian Nations so that the settlers (invaders) could insure that the illegal taking of the land would be unopposed and sanctioned by the United States.

6. If you are going to talk about fear, you need to discuss the very justifiable and very real fear of the Arapaho people. They were quickly overwhelmed by a mass influx of illegal settlers. They quickly understood that they had placed their faith, their survival, in the hands of the United States which was not going to enforce the terms of or provide any of the protections required under the 1851 Treaty. It was clear, in fact, that the United States was going to support the illegal taking of the Tribes' land and the displacement of the Indian people. They knew they could not defend themselves from what can only be described as an invasion. And, they watched as a military installation (Fort Chambers) was constructed on their land, without their permission, by the Euro Americans who had illegally occupied and taken their land. Who, one might ask, was rightfully fearful.

7. The Questionnaire states that the Discovery Area is “located near where Fort Chambers likely stood.” It appears that the proposal now relies upon the marker placed in 1959, which, quite simply, states a lie, to represent the Fort. I suggest that after the entry area (Decompression Area), a wall with an entry door is constructed that clearly represents the Fort. It is the Fort that represents the immediate and overwhelming destruction and loss suffered by the Arapaho Nation. It represents that the power the Tribes had placed their trust in was not there to enforce the 1851 Treaty but to enforce the removal of the Indians in completely disregard of that Treaty. A marker, created in 1959, does not represent either the purpose or the message of the Fort. You would then walk through the entry into the “Discovery Area.”

8. The 1959 marker should be a part of the Discovery Area. But, rather than trying to utilize an interpretative tool (lying at an angle in what looks like a manger) to claim that it is now being reinterpreted – how do you reinterpret a lie – place another marker next to it which provides a truthful explanation of why the Fort was constructed. I suggest you consider the language from the City of Boulder website <https://bouldercolorado.gov/fort-chambers-and-sand-creek-massacre>: “100 Boulder County Residents mobilized into Company D of the Third Colorado Cavalry at Fort Chambers. The Company drilled at Fort Chambers until the 16th of September 1864.’ As stated by a participant in the Sand Creek Massacre “At the time the 3d Colorado regiment was raised, the idea was very general that a war of extermination should be waged; that neither sex nor age should be spared; and women held to these views in common with men.” Additionally, an interpretive stop should state, as noted on this website: “U.S. accounts from the Sand Creek Massacre indicated Company D men killed at least 25 people and participated in the killing of women, children, elders and children.”

9. If my understanding of the proposal is correct, after walking on the Contemplative Trail, people will walk back through the Decompression Area (now called the Re-Emergence Area) where, viewed in reverse, the sticks (poles) will increase in number showing “the increase of Native American voice and the continuity of the Tribes.” I’m not sure what this means. It seems designed to just make people feel good as they leave. As you entered, the Indians disappeared and as you leave, they are back or, at least their voices are back? Where do you indicate the status of the Arapaho after they were displaced and removed, after many including Chief Nawath were killed at Sand Creek. Those who survived the slaughter ran and hid but most were subsequently corralled and forced onto reservations in Oklahoma now known as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma or the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. There descendants live there today with no land in Boulder County.

10. Finally, please do not call this a Healing Trail.

Sincerely

Tod Smith

May 16th, 2026

I have just completed the survey and reading the design proposal. I acknowledge the obvious time, planning, and effort spent on this design as described in the Studio Tectonic document. However, as a White Woman, it strikes me as being limited in perspective; it seems too one sided (that is, too White), oblivious to the overall context of the situation, and unknowing about the timeframes necessary for authentic healing (as implied by the terms Contemplation and Re-Emergence).

Here are some specific comments that occurred to me as I read these sections.

ARRIVAL AREA

- Although this is the Fort Chambers “site,” a structure on the order of a century and a half old, the actual context is 10 of thousands of years of indigenous life. I don’t get a sense of that Native timescale from the Arrival Zone.
- What is remembered about this land by both White settlers AND Native Peoples?
- History Colorado’s Ute Museum in Montrose has an enviable exhibit about Native life and traditions. Something similar would add much needed context to the Arrival Area.

DECOMPRESSION AREA

- Native Americans continued to exist in Boulder County and the state of Colorado after the massacre. The last “nothingness” of the teepee poles in contrast to the sod representation of the fort in the paired walkway reinforces this misperception. The continued existence of Native Peoples in Colorado, even at the time, has to be acknowledged by something tangible in that last position and not just words on a plaque.

DISCOVERY AREA

- Where are the oral accounts of the Native Peoples reactions on these plaques and markers in this area?

- Where is the line item in this document that addresses the oral traditions of Native Peoples in t

- What about the fear of the Native Peoples? Their dismay at the treaty violations? The sinking feeling in the pit of their stomach that their way of life was being destroyed? Their grief at the impending loss of culture? Such accounts are not “prescriptive moral framing” any more than the stories in the written historic accounts of White people are. These fears and reactions need to be included.

Here are two general comments.

- White people are named throughout this exhibit. Massacre victims also have names and those names call out to be part of this exhibit.

- In reference to one of my first comments about timeframes for authentic healing, the “be heard Boulder” website, Fort Chambers/Poor Farm Site Planning page refers to this as a “Healing Trail.” I object to this characterization. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa created actual healing in the aftermath of apartheid. I don’t think the City of Boulder is prepared to follow this model.

Again, I applaud you all for the time, effort, creativity, and thoughtfulness that went into the planning so far. It’s truly monumental. But I can’t help but think and feel it emphasizes the White perspective and loses the Native perspective, Native dignity, and Native presence in the process. And that is a huge loss.

Cecilia Girz

Received May 17th, 2026

Hello Kacey,

Thank you for the opportunity for us to discuss the new Fort Chambers/Poor Farm Design with Seth Frankel at the meeting at the Municipal Building. We learned from him and briefly shared some of our perspectives.

We have studied the information that was provided regarding the interpretive experience.

We responded to the survey.

We have not been able to find the Fort Chambers/Poor Farm Project Comment Form.

Therefore, we are responding with this email. We respectfully request a meeting with you and Mr. Frankel ASAP to discuss our concerns with proposed text to be included on the exhibits. We have information regarding the building and use of the fort by settler families that should be included in the exhibits.

We have information that should be shared regarding the marker. We want the entire story of the marker to be correctly presented, including the event that broke the marker stone. This is a story

of a family privately funding the purchase of a monument to recognize the history of their ancestors and the area. There was no malice intended. The story of the marker being repaired and reset will be a story of restoration and shared communication, of healing of brokenness.

We would like to suggest wording for an interpretive sign about the marker telling the rest of the story. We believe that it is possible to move the original base of the marker with the broken stone part and to reattach the marker to it's base. The physical saga of the marker and its potential repair is a story all of it's own.

We would like to share information that might be included about the era of George Chambers ownership of the land. George Chambers did not go to Sand Creek. He was a multitalented man: husband, father, co-founder of the Valmont Presbyterian Church, farmer, miner, school teacher, County Commissioner and so much more...

We would hope to be included to share information from oral conversations and research about the Poor Farm era.

We have information to share about the house and outbuildings.

We suggest the name Trail of Remembrance which honors all people and all history. We are concerned regarding some of the quotes in the document that may incite anger and hate.

We are aware of the serious continued vandalism in the Valmont area. We believe that continual monitored security is essential to protect the trail, the interpretive signage, the monument and the property, including the historic home and outbuildings from vandalism. Will there be cameras and a gate? The beauty of the site is spectacular. Folks will want to go there.

Respect and privacy for the contiguous neighbors must be included in the plan.

A lot to talk about. We would appreciate an appointment with you and Mr. Frankel as soon as possible.

Thank you.
Carol Affleck
Shirley Schaller

Received May 17th, 2026

Dear Kacey and OSMP team,

Thank you for the dedication and care you have put into the Fort Chambers Interpretive Plan, and the ongoing opportunities for public comment.

I am Deputy Director for Community Engagement at the Museum of Boulder and I work extensively in exhibits and programs that address intergenerational racial trauma. This includes a current exhibit, "Colorado's People of the Sacred Land" featuring the Truth, Restoration, and Education Commission Reports. I find it infinitely difficult to share the most personal and traumatic histories in ways that do justice to those who live the impacts of those histories. I am

hopeful that there is some time to make some major changes, though, and believe your team has the best of intentions to do justice to this site.

My main concern about the Plan is that I am hearing strong negative reactions from Native leaders whose knowledge and perspective I respect immensely. These reactions include offense, shock, and dismay.

First and foremost, settler narratives and perspectives seem far over-emphasized. The violence that the site represents should center the impacts of Company D and the Sand Creek Massacre on Cheyenne and Arapaho people.

I have spoken to members of Right Relationship Boulder and agree with their critiques. In particular I agree that the name "Healing Trail" has seemed widely criticized by Native people, yet it has stuck. I also agree that the names of the people killed at Sand Creek as well as the names of Company D should be included. And I agree that attempting to frame an uplifting message of the Native population increasing at the end of the exhibit inhibits further exploration into ongoing barriers and impacts of these histories.

I do want to quote part of the response Right Relationship had shared with me and reiterate my agreement: "Exhibits should contrast the outcomes of the Sand Creek Massacre. The Arapaho and Cheyenne were forced out of their homeland, confined on reservations, and their children were taken away to boarding schools. They remained determined to preserve their languages and cultures and govern their nations. In contrast, Boulder "Indian fighters" are honored as "founding fathers" of Colorado. Boulder is one of the country's wealthiest communities. We need to see data comparing health and economic indicators and ask: how do we feel about these contrasting outcomes?"

Thank you for considering my comments,
Emily Zinn
Deputy Director for Community Engagement
Museum of Boulder

Received May 19th, 2026

Dear Kacey, Dan and David,

I hope you will accept and read my letter with comments (more than I was able to put in the survey) on the Fort Chambers Project plan. As you will see I spent considerable time on it. I know you will hear the frustration in my comments, as Hayley most certainly did when Paula and I talked with her in person a couple of weeks ago.

I hope you will take my comments in the spirit intended of being supportive, but very concerned about the proposal's tone and message and about what is omitted.

At the end of my letter, I suggest a meeting with RRB, and OSMP and consultants, including Richard Williams, Karen Wilde and possibly others.

I hope this can happen.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerilyn DeCoteau

Email attachment content

Subject: The Fort Chambers Design proposal.

I am writing to OSMP to comment on the Fort Chambers Design Proposal as a longtime resident of Boulder and Eldorado Springs, a member of Right Relationship Boulder, a tribal member (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa) and an Indian law lawyer who is fully immersed in Indian law, history and policy.

To begin, I wish to acknowledge and thank OSMP staff for their work, their research, their leadership on this project and their generosity in the time they have spent talking with RRB and other members of the community. I appreciate the time and resources that have gone into telling this important part of Boulder's history and on-going story through the proposed project. I see your commitment to making this an impactful project.

I know that OSMP engaged regularly with representatives from the Arapaho and Cheyenne Tribes. Representatives from these tribes have repeatedly said this is Boulder's story to tell. I am writing here, not to contradict any input by tribal representatives, but as a community member, a tribal member, and a lawyer steeped in Indian law, history and policy.

So you know a bit more about me as a commenter, I will share a bit about myself.

I was born on my reservation, where I lived a good portion of my life. I graduated from Turtle Mountain Community School and, after college, returned to help found Turtle Mountain Community College, where I worked for seven years before leaving to become a lawyer. I have more than 40 years of experience as an Indian law attorney, law professor, and tribal judge. My roles have included senior staff attorney at the Native American Rights Fund, Trial attorney in the U. S. Department of Justice, Indian Resources Section of the Natural Resources Division, visiting adjunct professor at Yale University, visiting professor at the University of Denver Law School, and Director of the University of Colorado Law School's Indian Law Clinic. Although retired from legal practice, I now serve as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Pueblo de San Ildefonso, and as a Justice of Kiowa, and Tonto Apache Tribes' Supreme Courts. I previously served as an appellate judge for my own tribe.

I have long been active in the Boulder community, serving on numerous boards, including the Museum of Boulder's, and I currently serve on the External Board of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies (CNAIS). I was a member of the ad hoc committee that drafted the Indigenous Peoples Day Resolution, and I presented it to the City Council on the committee's behalf; the Council adopted it unanimously in 2016. I also helped found Right Relationship Boulder to support the City's implementation of the Resolution and to build meaningful, lasting relationships with the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute, and other tribes who were in this area, as well as with Native people who live here today. RRB's projects include an annual Arapaho Language Camp and an Arapaho Culture Camp for tribal members from Oklahoma and Wyoming, helping reconnect them with their homelands.

RRB members have done substantial work documenting the history of Fort Chambers and bringing it to the attention and understanding of the Boulder Valley community, in part, so that they are able to have meaningful input into the management plan for Fort Chambers. Some of you may have seen our slide presentation on Fort Chambers.

RRB members have met with OSMP many times over the years to discuss Fort Chambers and knew we had some differences about what should be included in the plans, most

notably whether to include a representation of the Fort. We think a physical representation of the fort is essential to understanding what happened at Fort Chambers; OSMP have said they couldn't locate the fort with certainty, so wouldn't include a physical representation in their plans.

I put many comments in the on-line survey. I got more frustrated as I worked through the questions, which seemed focused on details and the scenarios, all centered on the monument, instead of the Fort. The survey did not invite or provide space for commenting on the large picture, the "Big Idea." So I will start there.

The Big Idea

The "Interpretive 'Big Idea'" put forth in the OSMP's plan is that Fort Chambers was built because of "a shared and systemic fear" of Indians. The word fear appears 34 times throughout the concept plan, but only as settler fear; the Indians' fear is not mentioned. The idea that the settlers acted only out of fear, no matter how unfounded, serves to excuse their illegal occupation of Arapaho land and their desire to exterminate the Indians who might get in the way of their illegal acts.

What do you think the "settlers" told themselves as they invaded Arapaho territory? Can you imagine the scene on arrival in the Boulder Valley: Martha: "George, there are people here, they have homes, and gardens and children. They live here, George." George: "Oh Martha, those aren't people. Those sticks and cloth aren't houses. They don't live here. They're off chasing buffalo leaving this land unused. We know what to do with this land. And the government will take our side." Martha: "Oh George, you always know the right thing to do." It is worthy of note that in 1864, the "settlers" on the front range outnumbered the Tribes 30 to 1 (100,000 to about 3,000) and the buffalo were being systematically destroyed to deprive the Indians of their main resource for living.

As part of the Big Idea, OSMP seeks to "avoid[] sensationalism" "avoid speculation, narrative inflation, or prescriptive moral framing." OSMP strives for neutrality and wants people to make their own moral judgments. The problem is, OSMP avoids telling the truth in favor of equalizing the experiences of the "settlers" and Tribes. The experiences were not equal, behavior and intent on each side were not equally good. There is a right and wrong side here; the harms caused need to be understood and acknowledged. There is a wrong that needs to be righted.

An example of an untruth in the plan jumps out: The Indians disappear through abstract representation by diminishing numbers of wooden sticks in parallel with increased "settler" presence represented by increasing stacks of sod bricks. In the reverse of this scenario, as you exit the exhibit, the stick Indians reappear, despite no Indians being left in the area, and the sod bricks diminish in number, despite the rapid rise in "settler" population. This is an exercise in artistic expression and license, not in truth telling. And it avoids having to say what actually happened to the Indians, where they ended up – that they were murdered at Sand Creek and the survivors forcibly removed, the Arapaho to Oklahoma and Wyoming, and the Cheyenne to Oklahoma and Montana. Those voices are no longer heard in Boulder Valley.

The project would be improved, to my mind, if you change the overall tone and give up your effort to equalize the experiences of the "settlers" and Tribal Nations and their citizens. Changing the tone would require giving up the Big Idea. The Big Idea of settler fear is a big problem - it sounds catchy, but it is misguided and leads the project way off point.

How about the Big Idea being “Truth” or the “True (or real, or accurate, or honest) Story of Fort Chambers: How learning it can help Boulder move toward reconciliation and eventually toward healing.

Truth brings historical wrongs to light. This project should focus on uncovering those historical wrongs (truth) and foster mutual understanding (reconciliation through acceptance and understanding of the truth). We must move through these first two stages before we can begin to envision what healing might look like.

Much of what OSMP omits from the plan is critical. It does not state that the Arapaho were, and remain, a sovereign nation whose territory includes the Boulder Valley. It fails to say that, in the 1851 treaty, the United States recognized Arapaho sovereignty and territory and pledged to protect that territory from incursions. The Arapaho allowed the settlers to remain through the winter of 1858, with the understanding that they would leave afterward. Instead, they stayed and became “intruders” who “founded” Boulder against Arapaho instructions and in violation of the treaty. OSMP’s plan does not present these facts. After Boulder was “founded,” the Arapaho moved farther south to avoid conflict, not to surrender their territory. The settlers then built Fort Chambers to protect themselves from supposed “Indian uprisings,” even though it is widely acknowledged that no such threat existed in the Boulder Valley.

Meanwhile Boulderites were “legitimizing” their land theft by platting land and issuing deeds. Today, 160+ years later, Boulder Valley residents “own” their property by virtue of these illegal deeds handed to European ancestors. Those deeds still stand. But so does the Treaty. That is the truth. But the plan does not tell it, so the plan can’t provide the understanding (reconciliation of truth) and present the necessary question: how are we going to move forward in the face of this truth and the harm caused?

Telling the Truth should be the goal. Healing is a process that only begins with telling the truth. This exhibit falls short of the first step in healing.

Some other important things.

The plan uses the term “Indigenous” throughout. This is a term that has become popular and is sometimes carelessly used because it feels more inclusive. To be clear, a Tribe is a People. Arapaho and Cheyenne Tribal members are citizens of their Tribes, not parts of an amorphous Indigenous group. Tribes’ names should be used whenever they are referred to. Indian Nation, Native Nation, Tribal Nation are appropriate for general references.

For more context and deeper understanding of potential consequences: there are Indigenous people in all parts of the world and many have lost their lands and their sovereign authority, effectively turning these indigenous people into a category of race, or racial minorities. It is of critical significance that in the United States Tribes are recognized as sovereign nations. Lumping Tribes and their citizens into the category of Indigenous persons can undercut tribes’ status as political bodies with sovereign authority, and that can lead to decisions and treatment of tribes as a racial category, rather than as the sovereign nations they were in 1851 and remain today.

For example, the Indian Child Welfare Act, a hallmark of Tribal sovereignty, could be viewed as based on race, rather than polity, with the result that it would be struck down as a violation of the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause. It was recently upheld by the United States Supreme Court because it is not a race-based law, but one based upon the political standing of Indian tribes.

This is such an important point, I hope you will eliminate the use of the term "Indigenous" when referring to Tribes and their citizens.

Another comment about the term Indian. It is ok to use the term "Indian." "Indian" is a legal and politically correct term. Most legal and historical documents say, "Indian Tribe" and "Indians." Most tribes and tribal people accept the term. My tribe is the "Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians." I would say that I am an Indian. I don't say I am "indigenous." It is just not an adequate term for citizens of sovereign tribal nations.

There are several people in the Boulder area who have studied and have in depth knowledge of the history of Fort Chambers. To name a few, Tim Harnos, Paula Palmer, Laurie Rugenstein, Christie Yoshinaga Itano (she recently moved but is still involved in RRB and easily accessible), and Karen Wilde (Muscogee Creek), Boulder County's Native American-American Indian Relations Manager. Karen was the Tribal Liaison for the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

Richard Williams (Oglala Lakota) has produced the only in-depth history of Colorado Tribes, "The Legal and Political History of Colorado Tribes," a report by People of the Sacred Land's Truth, Restoration, Education Commission (TREC). OSMP staff and consultants should read, quote from and cite the TREC report in OSMP's plan. All these people could provide deep understanding and perspective that comes from committed study of Colorado's Indian history, and especially the Sand Creek Massacre and Fort Chambers. Are their voices reflected in the project plan? The stick/sod interpretative design would indicate they should be.

To return to a critical point -- show the fort and what took place there. Don't make it an artistic abstraction. This was a real fort where real people trained to commit murders of real people, whose descendants bear the scars of this trauma to this day.

Using the marker to serve as the heart of the exhibit says loudly "they were fearful" when the heart of the exhibit should convey the murderous preparations being made there. I know the Tribal consultants wanted the marker and I agree it should not be removed but put it in the context of the lie it represented up to 1959 and until was removed a couple of years ago. Don't elevate it to a place of honor by coddling it in a manger type scene, where it appears to be cradled by the stick Indians, who presumably were no longer there. Don't hint at changed attitudes by tipping the marker a bit to one side. The artistic renderings and abstractions are confusing. Say the marker represents the thinking of the community up to at least 1959 and if this thinking still lingers because of lack of knowledge of accurate history, this project is here to correct that lie.

Say that tribes are sovereigns with full authority over their territory, which includes Boulder Valley. This is an essential understanding. It is likely that people looking at the plan do not know that Tribes are sovereigns, that treaties are the Law of the Land, and under the U.S. Constitution and by treaty, Boulder Valley still belongs to the Arapaho. Discuss the Treaty of 1851 recognizing Arapaho (and other tribes') sovereign status and promising to protect the tribes and their territory. This is critical understanding as well. When and why was the treaty violated? Did the settlers violate the rights guaranteed to the Tribes in the treaty? What is the status of the settlers' deeds in the face of the treaty? These are valid and important questions.

Land ownership: please correct the eternally incorrect assumption that Tribes did not own land. It is not true that no one "owned" Boulder Valley or that Indians only existed in "relationship" with the land. That's romantic, euphemistic language. Tribes own lands as governments own land. They control their territory as governments do. The Arapaho knew

their territory. Other tribes knew Arapaho territory and used it only with the Arapaho's permission. The United States recognized and confirmed Arapaho territory in 1851. Imagine if you tried to give yourself a deed to federal land.

Say how settlers came to "own" their land. Here's how they established ownership. They made up deeds in this way:

The settlers became invaders when they did not leave. Everything the settler/invaders did from there going forward was in violation of the treaty of Fort Laramie, U.S. and Arapaho law. Every thing. The settler/invaders decided to stay and pretend the land was theirs. They made laws and put words of ownership on pieces of paper and called the papers "deeds". They put the papers in boxes they called files and put the files in a building they called the "Land Office", all to document and justify their existence on land that was not theirs. And the settler/invaders were willing to exterminate the Indians in order to keep what wasn't theirs. By now they knew the story of Indian Removal, and about the stealing of Indian lands. They were not acting out of ignorance, or innocence, or justifiable fear. Fast forward 160+ years, those pieces of paper - those made-up "deeds" survive. But so does the treaty, the Supreme Law of the Land, that recognizes and guarantees the Tribes' ownership of the very same land represented by the pieces of paper. This is the truth.

Show the names of volunteer Boulder militia, names of the Arapaho and Cheyenne victims. Tell us the names and fortunes of those who participated in the massacre. They became wealthy and respected leaders of the community and society.

Finally, the opening paragraphs of the plan in the shaded area of the first page fail to place the project in any historical context. A fuller, more honest opening statement might look something like this:

For more than 14,000 years, Colorado has been home to Indigenous peoples who hunted, traded, held ceremonies, raised families, and who lived and died here. Boulder Valley is the homeland and within the territory of the Arapaho and Cheyenne people. The United States recognized tribes as sovereign nations and in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, it recognized the territory of the Arapaho and Cheyenne, including Boulder Valley.

In 1858 when gold seekers arrived in the Boulder Valley and asked to spend the winter, Arapaho Chief Nawath said they could stay but must leave after winter. Instead, that next year, these "guests" became "intruders" when they founded the Boulder Company town against the wishes of the Arapaho and in violation of the Treaty. These intruder-settlers repeatedly violated the terms of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, and the territorial government refused to enforce it.

As Civil War broke out in the East, hostilities, raids, and attacks between settlers and Tribal warriors escalated in the West. In the summer of 1864, Colorado's territorial governor John Evans authorized settlers to kill, quote "hostile Indians", and he raised a volunteer army of "Indian fighters."

Although Boulder Valley intruder-settlers were never directly threatened by Indian attacks, in 1864 they built a sod fort on the homestead of George W. Chambers to defend themselves. In 1864, when Governor Evans issued his call for volunteer "Indian Fighters," Boulder Valley men mustered at Fort Chambers. They were designated as Company D of the 3rd Colorado Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, under

the command of David Nichols, who resigned his position as Boulder County sheriff to accept a captain's commission. In late summer of 1864, the one hundred and eleven (111) men of Company D began training for planned attacks on Indians. The Boulder men joined Colonel John Chivington's U.S. military forces to carry out the Sand Creek massacre. More than 230 Arapaho and Cheyenne people – including Chief Nawath -- were murdered.

I appreciate your reading my comments. I want to be respectful, but also to share fully and make comments I hope will help present the truth.

I would like to suggest a meeting with RRB folks, Rick Williams, Karen Wilde and possibly others to talk about the survey and letters you receive.

Also, I hope you will allow more time for survey. The plan is complicated, and the questionnaire is also complex. It takes far more than the suggested 15-20 minutes to complete.

Sincerely yours,

Jerilyn DeCoteau

Received May 22nd, 2026

Hello,

I am attaching a letter concerning the Ft. Chambers project for your consideration.

Best regards, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have,

Andrew Cowell

Director, Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies

Professor, Linguistics

University of Colorado

Email attachment content

I am currently the Director of CU's Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies (CNAIS). I'm also a professor of linguistics, and have worked extensively with the Northern and Southern Arapaho Tribes, and also have relationships with Northern and Southern Cheyenne tribal members. I am taking this opportunity to share some thoughts on the proposed Ft. Chambers installation, beyond the narrower responses that can be provided through the survey that is open through May 17. I did fill out that survey, but doing so inspired me to write some further comments.

First of all, I would like to thank OSMP for pursuing this project. I think it is an important effort on behalf of the people of Boulder County. Also I would like to thank you for providing an opportunity for individuals to respond via the survey. And of course thanks to all who have contributed to the proposed designs. Any

project of this sort is bound to be complex, time-consuming, and fraught with many challenges.

My main purpose for writing is to raise certain concerns -- or in other cases, queries -- about aspects of the project. The first one regards the use of the sticks and sod to represent Native Americans and settlers, and also the way in which the exhibit presents linear declines and inclines of these respectively, in the first portion, and then reverses these directionalities in the second section. I want to acknowledge that I don't know the full thoughts of the artists or designers involved, and these thoughts might be shared more fully within the exhibit, in ways which would alter my understanding and reaction. But based on what I know now, the design seems to represent a false narrative of Native recuperation in Boulder County. The initial linear rises and falls of the sod and sticks admittedly captures a historical reality to some extent, but it seems to me to "naturalize" the process of settlement as inexorable, irresistible and inevitable -- and thus just "a process that happened, or happens," in a mechanistic fashion. Then at the end of the exhibit, the process reverses. This is supposed to represent a rising consciousness of Native history and issues, roughly speaking. But the two metaphors on each end are not equivalent: if the rising sod represents rising Euro-American presence, wouldn't the falling sod logically represent a subsequent decline of presence again? But that is certainly not the case actually, and the rising sticks seem to me to convey a false sense of robust Native return and recuperation, which ignores the reality of continuing inequality, disadvantage and exclusion related to Native nations in the area.

I would add that the use of sticks also seems problematic. From the plans, these represent tepee poles. But they aren't obviously tepee poles, they're just sticks, right? While the sod clearly represents the agency of "sod-busters," the sticks or wood don't clearly capture the agency involved in carving them into tepee poles. While the sod captures the *agency* and *results* of the sod-busters, the broken(?) sticks represent the Native peoples *themselves*, and their work on the environment, as primitive and fragile.

Again, I want to stress that I don't have access to all the discussions and thoughts that have gone into this project, and I could be lacking important information that would alter my interpretation of the installation. I don't doubt the seriousness and good intentions of those involved. But based just on what I saw in the survey, this is my reaction as a scholar deeply involved in Indigenous Studies.

A potential concern -- or at least a query -- involves the competing voices that will be presented. The survey doesn't provide details on these. But I wonder how these voices will be contextualized? Does the installation intend to suggest that Natives had one set of views, settlers other sets of views? This would be what I would call a "neutral" view of the confrontation. Or does it intend to take a stand and suggest that the events subsequent to and connected with Ft. Chambers

(Sand Creek) were wrong and condemnable – which I think was clearly the case, and which was stated even at the time in hearings and so forth? If the latter is the approach, then reading settler voices advocating harsh treatment, removal and even genocide in relation to Native Americans doesn't seem like a productive way to make that case. If such views were included, they would need to be very carefully framed and contextualized, in order to avoid a simplistic “two sides, difficult issues” kind of approach. So I urge careful consideration of how this framing of voices of the time is done.

Related to the end section of the installation, several proposed designs were presented, ranging from stones to rusting metal. These were suggested to evoke various concepts, from medicine wheel circles to the passage of time, showed via the rust on the metal. All of the designs seemed quite lugubrious to me, and not very representative of some kind of redemptive Native presence. They seemed to suggest ruins, cemeteries, abandoned industrial sites and so forth. I understand the idea that they represent the passage of time, but this leads me back to my initial concern: by focusing on distance in time, it suggests the events of Ft. Chambers and Sand Creek are now in the past and far removed from us. Yet the harms produced by Native expulsion are very real and very ongoing, as the CU Boulder Land Acknowledgement makes clear (<https://www.colorado.edu/about/land-acknowledgment>).

That Acknowledgement also makes clear that non-Natives have an ethical responsibility to not only recognize the ongoing harms, but to act to mitigate them. The installation on the other hand seems to me to diminish the *ongoing* nature of the harms, and to claim that mitigation has *already* occurred (as the sticks increase in number again). Thus rather than being an installation that encourages redemptive action and consciousness, it risks leading merely to a sense of false forgiveness which removes the onus of mitigation from present viewers.

I hope this letter is useful feedback. At a minimum, it provides you with an example of one possible “reading” or response to the installation – and likely not one which you want to nurture. Again at a minimum, I suggest that some very careful (re)framing of the installation would need to be done to guide visitor experience toward the most productive outcomes. More radically, it is perhaps necessary to fundamentally revisit aspects of the installation. Of course mine is just one, non-Native voice. I would hope that OSMP has sought broad feedback from the local Native community – and of course they may have different perspective from mine.

Best regards, and thank you for considering my thoughts,

Andrew Cowell
Director, Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies
CU-Boulder

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Introduction: The Truth and why the Fort Chambers plan is unacceptable to the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho.

Two years ago, the Truth Restoration and Education Commission Report was released to the public. On numerous occasions, there have been public discussions about the TREC report and its **recommendations**. The continuing failure of the officials in Boulder County to recognize the Truth is insulting. They have, from the beginning, chosen to work with the Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho, who did not legally own the land. READ the Fort Wise Treaty of 1861, it was made with the Cheyenne and Arapaho of the Upper Arkansas River, not with the owners of the land, the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho, who NEVER signed a treaty giving up the land.

It is time to stop the misinformation and establish a legitimate process to address the land theft issue.

Please read the attached document. In the two years since the introduction of the TREC commission report, NOT a single person has challenged its facts. Instead, the report has received awards for its contribution to the Truth about Colorado's history.

Please read the attached document to understand the issue of doing something with land that was never ceded to the Federal Government legally. There is NO Treaty with the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho that ceded the land to the government and there has never been a payment for the land.

Rick

Richard B. Williams
People of the Sacred Land
President

Email attachment content

Attachment contained 24-page "Summary Of the Land Taken From the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapahoe Without A Treaty" from People of the Sacred Land.