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Fort Apache Heritage Foundation and White Mountain Apache Tribe Receive a Prestigious, \$100,000 *Our Town* Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

Fort Apache, White Mountain Apache Tribe Lands—The Fort Apache Heritage Foundation has been approved for a \$100,000 *Our Town* grant for *Engaging Apache Cultural Preferences and Community Creativity in Site Presentation and Visitor Experience*

Planning for the Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School National Historic Landmark. This is one of 63 grants nationwide that the agency has approved to support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities to strengthen communities and advance local economic and community development; ultimately laying the groundwork for sustainable systems change. Only a few of these important grants have ever gone to tribes or tribal organizations.

“As the country works toward a post-pandemic world, the National Endowment for the Arts is proud to announce this *Our Town* funding. These awards will support cross-sector partnerships such as the one lead by the Fort Apache Heritage Foundation that demonstrate the power of the arts to help communities create a better future for themselves.” said NEA Acting Chairman Ann Eilers.

The Fort Apache Heritage Foundation is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) chartered by the White Mountain Apache Tribe to preserve the Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School National Historic Landmark and advance education, health and wellness, cultural perpetuation, and economic development for the White Mountain Apache People and Tribe. Tribal Chairwoman Gwendena Lee-Gatewood said, “empowering Apache cultural practitioners, artists, entrepreneurs, and creators of all sorts (including TR School staff and students) to direct the professional architectural and visitor experience designers is just what’s needed. This work will lay culturally appropriate foundations for the first complete effort to present and interpret Fort Apache and TR School to local and non-local visitors. Our community needs and deserves a safe and beautiful place to commemorate our history and create the next chapters in our collective lives.”

Our Town funding will enlist Apache cultural precepts and communal creativity in determining how Apache and non-Apache visitors will experience Fort Apache and Theodore Roosevelt School. Consultations among Apache elders, artists, entrepreneurs, students, and thought leaders will mobilize White Mountain Apache values and preferences for place-making and place-using. Resulting designs for site presentation and visitor experience will restore Fort Apache to service as the vital cultural and community center for the Apache people, for current Fort Apache users, and for the Tribe’s guests and future users.

Fort Apache Heritage Foundation CEO Krista Beazley said, “we’re thrilled to see this much-needed funding for deeper community engagement. The project builds on hard work by Foundation Board Chair Rochelle Lacapa, Board Secretary John Welch, and our amazing design team from Swaback Architects and Planners, and the Thinc Tank in New York. This effort is going to put Fort Apache on maps it’s never appeared on before. Stay tuned”

For more information on the projects included in the Arts Endowment grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

