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Northern Cheyenne Breakout Monument



Executive Summary

The Fort Robinson Northern Cheyenne Breakout Committee, established in June 2001, has begun the planning and construction of a new historical monument in Nebraska, near Fort Robinson State Park. The purpose of the Northern Cheyenne Breakout Monument is to remember and honor the Northern Cheyenne who fought bravely and gave their lives so the rest of the Cheyenne People could return to their homeland in the North. The Monument is located west and adjacent to Fort Robinson State Park.

The Fort Robinson Northern Cheyenne Breakout Committee consists of Tribal members, elders, professionals and supporters who are committed to establishing a place of remembrance, respect, honor and healing to acknowledge the sacrifices made by their Cheyenne ancestors. One of the main goals of the organization is to educate tribal members, young and old, to maintain the traditional values of respect, knowledge, wisdom and Cheyenne spirituality. Furthermore, it is the hope of the Committee that educating non-Indians of this significant Cheyenne plight will create the opportunity for cross-cultural healing to occur. The Committee believes these remembrance endeavors will enable the Cheyenne perspective to be heard and empower more Cheyenne People to play an active role in the way their histories are written, taught and passed on to others.

Historical Background

On the cold, winter morning of January 9th, 1879, after 4 days without food or water, Chief Dull Knife and 149 Cheyenne People fought their way out of their place of imprisonment at Fort Robinson, Nebraska and began their long dangerous journey back to their home in the north. In their fight to survive, 39 Cheyenne men and 22 women and children lost their lives. The death toll, as devastating as it was, did not break the strength of the Cheyenne spirit. Although outnumbered by soldiers and virtually weaponless the Cheyenne were able to fight for their freedom and because of the courage and determination of those who fought and died, the Cheyenne People continue to exist today.

The Monument Project

The Monument is sited on the north side of Highway 20, adjacent to Fort Robinson State Park, on land generously donated by T.R. Hughes and his wife, Kay. At this very same location, in 1879, the Cheyenne escaping from Fort Robinson crossed the creek bottom and sought refuge in the buttes above. Years later while excavating, anthropologists would find sufficient evidence to confirm this is

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indeed the place where the Cheyennes had crossed. In 2004, descendants of those fallen Cheyenne and now elders, Edna Seminole and Rose Eagle Feathers, accompanied by fellow Northern Cheyennes, selected this spot for the Monument to be built. Although the planning and construction efforts began in 2001 the Monument was half finished when existing funds ran out. It is the desire of the Committee to finally finish the Monument for all people to visit and remember what happened at Fort Robinson with the hopes it will provide a chance for people to heal from the senseless tragedy.

Fundraising Efforts

Funds are currently being sought to finish the construction of the Northern Cheyenne Breakout Monument. The goal is to raise \$150,000 to complete all aspects of the Monument, walkways, signage and seating area. Over the past 13 years many organizations have donated to the Monument development efforts: Chief Dull Knife College (\$18,500), Northern Cheyenne Tribe (\$16,200), Western Energy (\$10,000) and St. Labre Indian School (\$3,500). In addition, a number of other companies and individuals provided donations of funding, services and/or materials: Jay and Sherrie Mullins, Rick Hull, Redstone Project Development, Heritage Living Center and the Nebraska Land Trust.

In order to expand fundraising efforts the Committee worked with Redstone Project Development, Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC) and the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) to establish an agreement to allow funds to be raised in Montana, where the Northern Cheyenne Reservation is located, and in Nebraska, where the Monument is located. In 2014 the **Northern Cheyenne Breakout Legacy Fund** was established as an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation. For more information on the Northern Cheyenne Breakout Legacy Fund please go to www.nebcommfound.org/fund/northern-cheyenne.

Monument Supporters

The Committee would like to thank the following supporters who, over the years, have helped to make this dream possible: T.R. & Kay Hughes, Ralph & Marcia Redfox, Chief Dull Knife College, Dr. Richard Littlebear, Western Energy, St. Labre Indian School, Dave Sands, Jerome (Jay) and Sherrie Mullins, Ellick & Cindy Roberts, Jim Miller & Luann Pronchinske, Wilson Molina, Rick Hull, Major Robinson, Jason Su and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

Donations and Contact Information

All donations are tax deductible and can be mailed to: Nebraska Community Foundation, attn: Northern Cheyenne Breakout Legacy Fund, PO Box 83107, Lincoln, NE 68501-3107. For additional information on the Northern Cheyenne Breakout Monument project please contact:

Montana
Nebraska

Major Robinson
Dave Sands

406.438.1420
402.438.5263

redstonemt@gmail.com
dsands@nelandtrust.org

Prepared by:

redstone
www.redstonemt.com

