

History of School Trust Lands

- School trust lands were set aside as states entered the Union for the intergenerational benefit of public schools.
- Colorado was “granted” 4 million surface acres of land upon statehood for the School Land Trust. What is left is 2.8 million surface acres (the other surface acres have been sold). The trust includes 4 million sub surface acres.
 - Every township in Colorado was “granted” 2 sections of land to support public education.

Source: [*“Colorado’s Hidden Treasure” Presentation – Colorado PTA 2021*](#)

History of School Trust Lands

- The Colorado State Land Board manages the lands
- The School Land Trust consists of two parts:
 - The trust itself, often referred to as the “Permanent Fund”. As of 2021 this fund contained \$1.26 Billion.
 - The trust is inviolate, meaning that any revenue deposited cannot be withdrawn.
 - Interest generated from the Permanent Fund is spent as specified by the Legislature.
- Revenues generated from the use of these lands – from leases for agriculture, oil & gas, etc. – are allocated as determined by the Legislature.

Current Trust Land Holdings

- According to findings from the Truth, Restoration, Education Commission (TREC) [report](#) much of the current land holdings were never lawfully ceded.
- Documentation from the following sources support this claim:
 - Horse Creek Treaty of 1851
 - Treaty of Fort Wise of 1861
 - ❖ 1862 Commissioner of Indian Affairs report recognized that land north of the South Platte River was never lawfully ceded.
 - This remains an unresolved issue.

Recommendations for Resolution

- The 2023 [final report](#) of a working group convened by Colorado State Treasurer Dave Young under House Bill 22-1146 stated:
“...the sovereign nation tribes with historic ties to the state of Colorado who are the original inhabitants of the land and requested that the State Land Board work with these tribes and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs to examine the State Trust lands that were ‘given’ to the state by the federal government and the wealth built from those lands.”
- A portion and/or percentage of revenue generated should be dedicated to Indian Education in Colorado

Why is this important?

- The history of the violent eradication of Colorado's original inhabitants has been largely buried over the past 100+ years
- Most Coloradans attend or have attended schools that disregard or insufficiently address Native history in the state which leads to promotion of damaging narratives
- Data from CDE shows that Native students consistently have the lowest graduation rates (often 10 points lower than the next closest ethnicity or race)
- Native students in Colorado also have the highest dropout rates, usually exceeding other ethnicities or races by at least one percentage point