

ANNUAL REPORT



Where Community, History, and Education Meet



2025

JANUARY-DECEMBER

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jeremy Fricke

At the Naco Heritage Alliance, our work is rooted in a simple but powerful idea that the stories of the borderlands matter, and that too many of them remain unseen. Camp Naco continues to inspire this work, reminding us that a single place can hold layers of history that connect people across time and experience. Through our programs, partnerships, and preservation efforts, we are committed to revealing the complexity of human experience in this region, shaped by movement, encounter, resilience, and change. These stories ask us to think more deeply about how communities are formed and how understanding can grow across differences. As we look ahead, we remain focused on building opportunities for people to engage with the borderlands in ways that feel meaningful, thoughtful, and connected to a larger shared story.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Margaret Hangan

Camp Naco gives us a powerful opportunity to reflect on the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers and the broader story of Black history in America. Their presence here speaks to courage, service, and perseverance, but also to the complicated realities they lived through. As a board, we care deeply about making sure these stories are not only preserved, but shared in ways that feel real, accessible, and meaningful to people today. When we take the time to understand this history more fully, it helps all of us see our shared past and each other with greater clarity and respect.

2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

13 FELLOWS SELECTED

- Launched a cohort of 13 interdisciplinary Borderlands Fellows whose projects explore topics centered on or connected to Camp Naco, Buffalo Soldiers, and the people, histories, and lived experiences of the Borderlands.
- Supported research, storytelling, education, and creative arts projects.
- Expanded community-centered historical interpretation initiatives.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Hosted 19 public events engaging 880+ attendees from the local community and across the country.
- Expanded partnerships through film, cultural, youth, and educational programming
- Strengthened Camp Naco as an active community gathering space

CONSTRUCTION & PRESERVATION

- Completed Phase I infrastructure improvements (site development, including utilities, grading, and foundational site preparation)
- Advanced Phase II rehabilitation work (building restoration and structural improvements)
- Invested \$1.88M in site development and preservation
- Supported 156 construction jobs across Southern Arizona

FUNDING & INVESTMENT

- Secured \$825,000+ in new and leveraged funding supporting preservation, programming, and infrastructure
- Expanded operational capacity through new general operating support
- Advanced major capital restoration projects for historic Camp Naco structures

NEW CAPACITY. STRONGER FOUNDATION.

- Added new staff and expanded internship programming
- Strengthened partnerships through formal agreements and collaborations
- Refreshed branding and clarified organizational mission

**CAMP NACO CONTINUES TO
GROW AS A LIVING SITE OF
HISTORY, EDUCATION, AND
COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP.**

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, Camp Naco advanced its mission through a vibrant series of public programs that brought history, education, and community engagement directly to the site and across the borderlands. Programming included film screenings such as *The Warrior Tradition* and *Chulas Fronteras*, hands-on experiences like *Adobe & Gingerbread* in partnership with Sky Island Alliance—introducing adobe construction and featuring gingerbread replicas of the Camp Naco barracks—and *A Taste of African American History*, developed with the African American Museum of Southern Arizona Fellow Program, which explored Black cultural holidays through food and contributed to a community cookbook. These programs strengthened Camp Naco's role as a living site of history, learning, and community connection.



Programs were made possible through partnerships with community organizations including the Legacy Foundation of Southeast Arizona, Central School Project, Sky Island Alliance, and the African American Museum of Southern Arizona, with additional support from the Mellon Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona.

“It's an artist's dream to be able to use your imagination guided by the hand of history.”
Margarita Ramirez Loya

FELLOWSHIP SPOTLIGHT

We launched a cohort of 13 fellows exploring the history and cultural significance of Camp Naco and the surrounding borderlands. Completed work includes research and exhibit development by John Langellier and public programming by the African American Museum of Southern Arizona, including “Taste of African American History” events and a published cookbook. Additional projects remain in progress, including youth chess, filmmaking, oral history, and binational artistic commissions.



Fellowship Social Day



Students engaging in strategy and focus during the afterschool chess program at the Naco School library, led by Nick Mueller.



“No matter if there are walls or obstacles, art always wins.”
Vianney Ramirez

“This fellowship affirms the importance of collaboration in preserving and sharing the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers and a history of a people that is often lost. It allows us to amplify their untold stories and ensure their contributions are recognized and honored by future generations.”

Beverly Elliot

PRESERVING HISTORY, BUILDING PROGRESS

**19
Community
Events**

**2
Construction
Phases
Advanced**

**13
Fellows
Selected**

**880+
People
Impacted**

**190
Jobs
Supported**

**Historic
Preservation
in Action**

1/30/2025 – Groundbreaking on
Phase I

Construction began on Phase I site
development, including utilities, parking,
circulation, grading, and drainage.

3/22/2025 – John Langellier Fireplace
Chat & Book Signing

Hosted historian John Langellier at the Bisbee
Mining & Historical Museum for a
presentation on Buffalo Soldiers in Arizona.

5/2025 – Community Foundation for
Southern Arizona Grant Award
Received \$30,000 in operating support to
strengthen sustainability and growth.

5/29/2025 – Clues of the Past
Internship Presentation

Cochise College interns presented research
from their year-long archaeology internship.

8/2025 – National Park Service Save
America's Treasures Grant

Awarded federal preservation funding for
Buildings A2, A3, and A8.

10/7/2025 – Freeport McMoRan
Foundation Grant Award
Received \$35,000 for a shade structure in the
eastern quadrangle.

10/14/2025 – Phase II Construction
Begins

Started rehabilitation of Buildings A2, A3, A5,
and A9.

12/5/2025 – Chulas Fronteras
Screening

Partnered with Central School Project for a
community film screening.

2/2025 – Fellowship Program
Announced

Launched Fellowship Program and selected a
review team to evaluate proposals.

4/29/2025 – The Original Cactus
League: Baseball on the Border

Hosted a baseball field tour and presentation
on the historic all-African American Cactus
League.

6/2025 – Fellowship Cohort Selected
Selected 13 fellows for the inaugural program
cohort.

6/2025 – Cochise County Community
Enhancement Fund Award

Received funding for a Flag Pavilion honoring
four Buffalo Soldier regiments.

9/30/2025 – Phase I Substantial
Completion

Completed major Phase I site infrastructure
improvements.

11/8/2025 – Taste of African
American History Events

Supported fellowship-led history events in
Tucson and Bisbee.

11/11/2025 – The Warrior Tradition
Screening

Hosted a film screening honoring Native
American military service.

We are deeply grateful to our donors whose support makes this work possible. Through your generosity, Camp Naco continues to grow as a place of learning, connection, and shared history in the Borderlands.



Photograph
taken circa
1919

Photograph taken in
advance of the
groundbreaking
ceremony



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