

Petition filed to ensure Tribal input in official renaming process for Mt. Evans in Colorado

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes call for Evans to become Mt. Blue Sky during ceremony marking 156 years since Sand Creek Massacre

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Eads, CO (November 30, 2020) – Yesterday, in a remembrance ceremony at the [Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site](#), the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes announced an official petition to rename Colorado’s Mt. Evans. The petition has been filed with the U.S. Board of Geographic Names.

“One hundred and fifty-six years ago, Territorial Governor Evans devised the strategy for the massacre at Sand Creek for political gain and now the victims, the Cheyenne and Arapaho People, will continue to be known in Colorado through the renaming of that mountain as Mt. Blue Sky,” said Fred Mosqueda, Arapaho Coordinator of the Culture Program of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, along with The Wilderness Society, are proposing the official renaming of Mt. Evans as Mt. Blue Sky as it signifies the Arapaho who were known as the Blue Sky People and the Cheyenne who have an annual ceremony of renewal of life called Blue Sky.

Governor Evans created the conditions that led to the Sand Creek Massacre and tried to cover up his involvement in the attack. In 1865, Governor Evans was forced to resign in disgrace. In 1993, Congress designated the Mt. Evans Wilderness. A number of conservation organizations and others urged Congress to adopt that legislation without the recognition of the hurt the name would continue to cause tribal members.

“It is time to rename Mt. Evans and remove the stain of this name from our public lands,” said Paul Spitler, director of wilderness policy at The Wilderness Society. “No name can undo the pain and suffering caused by the Sand Creek Massacre, but removing the name of the man most responsible for the massacre honors the very tribes that Evans sought to destroy. There is no place to honor perpetrators of atrocities on America’s public lands.”

In early 2021 the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board is expected to convene to begin reviewing proposed name changes for a number of sites in Colorado, including Mt. Evans. The Colorado board will make a recommendation to the Federal Board on Geographic Names, which has the authority to rename Mt. Evans. The Colorado board includes a diverse membership of state and local elected officials, state agency representatives, and non-governmental organizations, and their recommendation to the Federal Board on Geographic Names will ultimately impact the final decision of the Federal board.

“I recognize the atrocities caused by Governor Evans at Sand Creek and consider it wholly unacceptable for such a prominent place as Mt. Evans to be named for a man responsible for such horrific acts. I fully support the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, as victims of the Sand Creek massacre, in their effort to rename the mountain,” said Randall Wheelock, Clear Creek County Board of County Commissioners, Chair. “Clear Creek County recently rescinded our previous opposition to the renaming of Mt. Evans, and as that process moves forward, I look forward to engaging with our community stakeholders, including the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes due to their historic connection to the mountain.”

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