

## **A Land Acknowledgement Statement from Grand Canyon River Guides**

Since time immemorial, the Colorado River has been the beating heart of Grand Canyon, the vein of life, sacred to all Indigenous tribes for whom Grand Canyon remains a cultural and spiritual homeland.

**As the traditional guardians and protectors of Grand Canyon, the Havasupai remain in their place of origin; the only tribe to still dwell deep within Grand Canyon, known as 'Ha Gtaya Jigemima (Gorge of the Great River). The Havasupai people call the Colorado River itself 'Ha Fay g'Aam (Great River Flowing By);**

**For the Hopi people, the sacred Little Colorado River known as *Palavayu* and the surrounding cultural landscape is where life begins and souls return;**

**To the Hualapai Tribe, the middle of the Colorado River is honored as *Ha'yidaa*, The Backbone, and is intimately tied to the cultural identity of the "People of the Tall Pines;"**

**To the Navajo Nation (Diné) the Colorado River is known as *Tooh, Tó Nts'ósíkooh*, and also honored as *Bits'íís Ninéézi*, The River of Neverending Life. The powerful Colorado River is woven into Navajo oral traditions and ceremonies as a life force and a protector of their people;**

**Within the traditional Southern Paiute homelands, the Colorado River (*Pia-Paxa'a*) is one of their most powerful water sources, and the Grand Canyon itself is called *Piapaxa 'Uipi*, Big River Canyon.**

**The Yavapai-Apache Nation is the modern amalgamation through the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, of two historically distinct People; the Yuman speaking Northwestern Yavape' (People of the Sun) and the Athapaskan speaking Dilzhe'e Apache, known to other Western Apache groups as the HUNTERS. The Yavape' call the River *Ha Khwata* (Red Water) and the Apache term is *Tu'L che'e*, The Red River.**

**In the interconnected Zuni universe, the sacred Colorado River is called *K'yawan' A:honanne*. The Zuni place of origin, *Chimik'yana'kya dey'a* or beautiful Ribbon Falls, flows into the Colorado River;**

As an organization dedicated to protecting Grand Canyon and the Colorado River experience, Grand Canyon River Guides acknowledges, honors, and deeply respects the sovereignty of the homelands belonging to the eleven affiliated tribes of Grand Canyon: Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, the Navajo Nation, the Southern Paiute bands (Kaibab, Las Vegas, Moapa, Paiute Indians of Utah and the San Juan Southern Paiute tribe), the Yavapai-Apache Nation, and the Pueblo of Zuni.

Furthermore, GCRG acknowledges:

*These eleven tribes are the traditional stewards of this rich cultural landscape that transcends the boundaries of Grand Canyon National Park and the paradigms of Western understanding.*

*Tribal ancestors and the places where they dwelled are not vestiges of the past. These spirits are still present within these Indigenous homelands. Consequently, our actions and activities in Grand Canyon, both positive and negative, may affect the past, present, and future of Indigenous peoples.*

*These interconnected tribal homelands encompass not only ancestral sites, sacred places, and traditional cultural properties, but also resources such as water, rocks, minerals, animals, fish, and plants. Together, they have a symbiotic, holistic relationship with the Indigenous peoples of Grand Canyon, embodying*

*cultural and religious significance that is interwoven with their unique lifeways, ceremonies, and tribal histories.*

*Celebrating and sharing Indigenous voices, traditional ecological knowledge, and the true history of the Indigenous caretakers of Grand Canyon is grounded in respect, and builds an inclusive narrative.*

*As river guides and the river running public, we must commit to listening, learning and understanding from the tribes themselves, not only their deep histories and enduring connections with this sacred landscape of Grand Canyon, but also their contemporary challenges and future needs.*

*We must work together to address systemic racism and dismantle equity barriers.*

*Respect must be the foundation for moving forward towards a more positive, just, and inclusive future for all, and for the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River.*