

Tribal Tourism in the Outdoor Recreation Economy



Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation
Agritourism on the Golden Eagle Farm



1891
TEKAMUK



History

- In 2017, Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation (BDC) was chartered by the Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, the same year the band purchased The Golden Eagle Farm.
- In 2018, two tribal leaders received scholarships to attend Shakopee Mdewakanton Seeds of Native Health Conference.
- In 2019, the BDC began the Fee to Trust process and was awarded a Native American Agriculture Fund grant to kickstart the farm project, with generous support from other partners in years ahead
- In 2022, the BDC was awarded a CDFA grant to expand Beginning Farmer and Workforce Development and renovated its unique historic ranch house for future vacation rental
- In 2023, Golden Eagle Farm earned CCOF Organic Certification; and the BDC was chosen by the IEDC as one of 65 host communities to be matched with an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow to advance its economic development agritourism project
- In 2024, the BDC was awarded the CDFA Farm to School Incubator grant
- In 2025, the Golden Eagle Farm became US federal trust reservation land

WE ARE STILL HERE

574

Federally Recognized Tribes

334

Reservations

35

States

78%

of Americans have limited
knowledge of Native Americans

40%

of Americans believe that Native
Americans no longer exist

INDIGENOUS TOURISM AND AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Tourism:

Indigenous Tourism Industry in 2024 _____ \$15.7 BILLION

AIANNH hospitality businesses _____ 40,618

Agriculture:

Ag products sold by Native Operated Farms (2022) _____ \$6.2 BILLION

Native Operated Farms _____ 58,336

Native Producers _____ 78,316

ECO

-SYSTEM

-LOGY

-NOMY

The word “eco” originates from the Ancient Greek word “oikos,” meaning “house,” or “dwelling place,” or “habitation,” or the study or management thereof.

MAAT

Kumeyaay word translates as...

-BODY

-EARTH / LAND

#LANDBACK MOVEMENT

Advocates and promotes the return of traditional and unceded Indigenous lands and rejects colonial concepts of real estate and private land ownership while recognizing

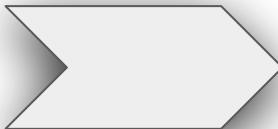
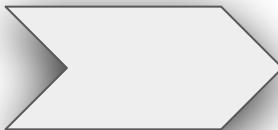
Indigenous Sovereignty

Return of land is not only economic, but a rekindling of inherent relationships forged since time immemorial between the Earth, its inhabitants, and their self-governance

The Land Returns to Its Original Stewards



Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians #LandBack



Challenges to Developing Tribal Agritourism

- Tribes must often purchase #landback, but lands are often lacking in or are fraught with aging and deteriorating infrastructure and equipment
- Until lands are federal trust lands (reservation land) they are subject to regional/county/state zoning and policy limitations (≠ sovereign)
- Difficulty accessing capital or startup funding for economic development, infrastructure repair or replacement, marketing

Aging Infrastructure & Equipment Challenges



Aging Infrastructure & Equipment Challenges



Growing Knowledge & Skills

Regenerative Practices and Resilience

Greenhouse Growing

Workforce Development

Organic Certification



Growing Amazing Organic Food



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

– Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, Mali, 2007

**WE ARE RESILIENT AND
THRIVING DESPITE
CHALLENGES**

...AS IS THE LAND...

Maat = The Land and The People Reconnect

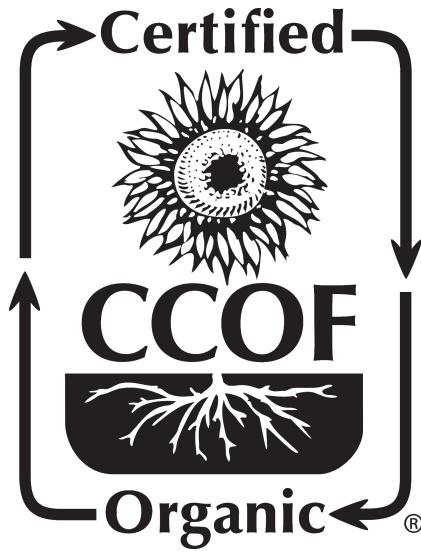


Certifications and Awards

Intertribal Ag Council



USDA Certified Organic



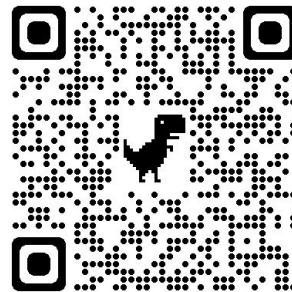
CDFA Award



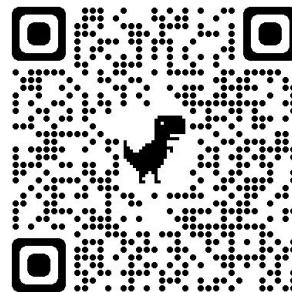
Please Connect With Golden Eagle Farm



www.facebook.com/GoldenEagleFarm.MesaGrande



https://www.instagram.com/goldeneagle_farm/



Questions?

Mayahaa Shiwiiw lipay Umaat Enyaa Kwachuur

Creator Watch Over the Land that Takes Care of the People
- Prayer of Elder Jane Dumas, Jamul



Remember to feed the Star People