

# Tribal Tourism in the Outdoor Recreation Economy



Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation  
Agritourism on the Golden Eagle Farm



# 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

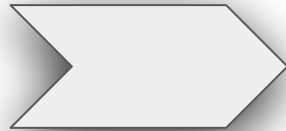
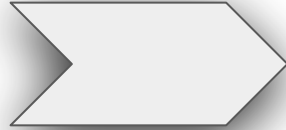
***Indigenous Sovereignty***

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.”**

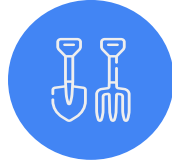
**– Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, Mali, 2007**

**WE ARE RESILIENT AND  
THRIVING DESPITE  
CHALLENGES**

**...AS IS THE LAND...**



# Maat = The Land and The People Reconnect

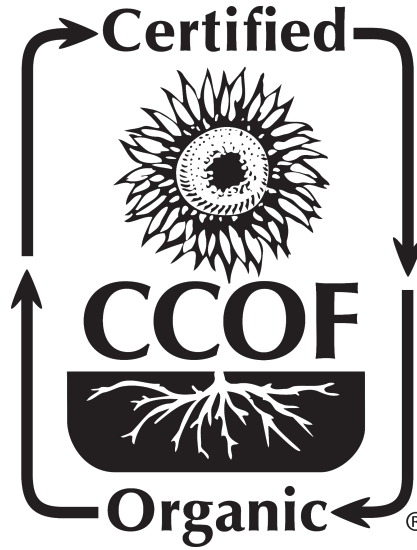


# Certifications and Awards

Intertribal Ag Council



USDA Certified Organic



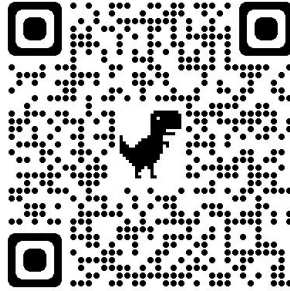
CDFA Award



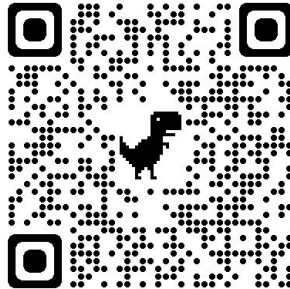
# Please Connect With Golden Eagle Farm



[www.facebook.com/GoldenEagleFarm.MesaGrande](https://www.facebook.com/GoldenEagleFarm.MesaGrande)



[https://www.instagram.com/goldeneagle\\_farm/](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

