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HISTORIC SACRED LAND FRONTING THE RIO GRANDE DONATED TO PEOPLE OF LA JUNTA FOR PRESERVATION, NEWLY FORMED NATIVE-LED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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Redford, Presidio County, Texas

People of La Junta for Preservation, a Native-led and newly formed nonprofit organization based in Presidio, Texas, is excited to announce a generous land donation in El Polvo, a historic town in what is now known as Redford.

Situated along the northern banks of the Rio Grande, El Polvo is a site of historical, cultural, and archaeological significance characterized by the remains of one of the known original La Junta villages and an ancestral home to the Native communities of La Junta.

The donated land is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a State Antiquities Landmark—both designations provide this important site with legal protections.

The donation to People of La Junta for Preservation was given by David Shane Duke. For almost two decades, Mr. Duke has been the caretaker of this site, “El Polvo is an incredibly special place to many, especially to me. I have a very deep connection to this land. As I move forward in my life, I had hoped the next stewards for this historic and sacred land would be able to provide the protection and preservation that I have tried but have been unable to accomplish. I knew immediately People of La Junta for Preservation would be better suited to honor, protect, and preserve as descendant families. The chapter of my brief ownership is closing, and I am excited to see what the future will bring.”

Tapalcolmes is an ancient migration pathway, meaning the “place of the conch” in the Concho language as shell fragments and fossils have been found in the area throughout time. Archeological and ethnographic evidence strongly suggests that the site was also the location of an early Spanish mission called San Pedro de Alcántara de los Tapalcolmes. “El Polvo is an ancient ford, hence the name Redford. It was always a community fording place. Tapalcolmes and El Mulato, a neighboring community across the river, were both part of the Hacienda Purisima de Tapalcolmes y Terrenos del Mulato. By acquiring this land, People of La Junta preserves this ancient pathway for the community,” said Oscar Rodriguez, descendant.

People of La Junta for Preservation intend to work with various nonprofits in the region and through community collaborations to restore native vegetation to the site and preserve a 250-year-old adobe home on the site with the goal to create space for public access. Christina Hernandez, Executive Director, and Descendant, “We would like to thank David for entrusting People of La Junta for Preservation and returning the land to Native stewardship. As with our other project, Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes, this site has faced encroachment that has had devastating effects on the natural ecology. Access points have created avenues for runoff contributing to erosion. Land has been compacted by vehicles creating a barrier to vegetation growth. The site is not without complexities and working to restore native habitats and creating safe access for the public is an exciting new project for us to tackle.”

People of La Junta for Preservation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to creating educational opportunities that advance regional cultural knowledge, while protecting and conserving sacred lands in Presidio, Texas, and the surrounding Far West Texas region.



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