

# TUTSKWAT OQAWTOYNANI

First Mesa, Arizona

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT





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# INTRODUCTION

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The Hopi Tribe, a self-governing nation, is situated in northeastern Arizona. The reservation spans over 1.5 million acres of Coconino and Navajo counties and consists of 12 villages. Despite enduring changes brought on by outside influences and historical trauma, the tribe has managed to preserve its culture, language, and religion. It is now time to honor our sacred covenant with Maasaw, the ancient caretaker of the earth, and live as humble farmers in reverence of the land and its resources.

Tutskwat Oqawtoynani, formerly known as First Mesa Annual Cleanup, started organizing cleanups as early as 2016 due to the excessive accumulation of trash on the sides of the mesa. This trash covers up ancient foot trails and ceremonial pathways surrounding the mesa that served as crucial routes for thousands of years. Sakhongvaiya, (green tobacco standing in a row) a prominent Hopi elder, Leon A. Nuvayestewa Sr., declared that if "no one was going to do anything about the trash, he would." This declaration marked the beginning of our humble efforts to clean our sacred home.

Our organization serves 1,945 people who reside in First Mesa, Arizona, from the three different villages we are cleaning. We all stand to benefit from our work, as First Mesa is where we gather for ceremonies year-round. Our primary area of service is First Mesa, Polacca, Arizona, which is located in northeastern Arizona, approximately 115 miles from Flagstaff and 70 miles from Winslow.





# MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

Dear Hopi Senom and Tewa Towa,

*Nu Ha'hay'i'mana, (mother of the katsinas). My name is Valerie Nuvayestewa. I belong to the Tewa Corn Clan from the Village of Tewa; I am of Hopi and Tewa descent. My parents are Sikyakyarru (Yellow Parrot) and Sakhongvaiya (Green Tobacco Standing in Row).*

*I am the current Project Coordinator and Financial Manager for Tutskwat Oqawtoynani.*

*For the past eight years, Tutskwat Oqawtoynani has dedicated their efforts to cleaning and restoring our mesa home to its once-pristine condition. We believe that there is a profound spiritual connection between our people and the lands we reside on; and once the health of the land is restored, the health of our people will return.*

*We believe also that each one of us carries within ourselves a seed of awakening and ability to live in harmony with the world around us. We all know right from wrong; we recognize the destruction that is happening right in front of our eyes to our mesa home, yet some of us have not fully committed to taking action and becoming good stewards of our homes, our lands and of our people. The past 40 years we have not done so well; taking a walk on our mesa trails, proves this to be true. By recommitting ourselves and placing our earth, our mother, at the center of our lives, we will begin to open up ourselves to feeling what she feels so that we can begin to change our lives; so that we do not go back to the destructive pattern that has brought us to this point in our environmental history. We must feel deeper and deeper until we remember what knowledge and truths, we hold within ourselves. We carry the bloodlines of our ancestors as well as deeply embedded wisdom that needs to be brought to the forefront.*

*Once this happens, it will bring about a conscious collectiveness. We will begin to come together once again to do the hard work on the ground. To Heal and to Restore Hope within us, and our people.*

*In this we cannot fail. We hold in our hands the fate of future generations. It is our mission to clean our Mesa Home from top to bottom, while adhering to our vision of preserving the sacredness of our Tewa and Hopi Villages through discipline and responsibility. We are committed to fulfilling our promise of protecting the planet, promoting peace and prosperity for humanity, and creating an environment conducive for healing and recovery.*

*We invite you to join us in this meaningful work, Kuna'a!*

Valerie Nuvayestewa

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Artwork by Dominic East from  
the Village of Walpi, Corn Clan



# Organizational Chart



**LEON A. NUVAYESTEWA SR.**  
- FOUNDER

**MONGWIT**  
Traditional Leadership at First Mesa, Arizona.

Obtaining approval from Mongwis (traditional leadership) is mandatory for all our projects. To ensure transparency, we keep them updated on all cleanups and events. The support of Mongwis is critical for the continuity and expansion of our organization.



**DELFRD LESLIE**  
Cultural Advisor

**TUTSKWAT OQAWTOYNANI VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers and community members are vital stakeholders who play a crucial role in driving the success of the organization.

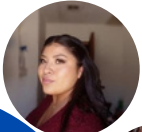


FISCAL MANAGER

This role is responsible for establishing an annual budget, monitoring expenses, reviewing pending expenditures, collecting all project expenses, and creating a comprehensive report for the Fiscal sponsor. Additionally, the individual is responsible for conducting monthly bank reconciliations and adjusting the budget balance both on a monthly and annual basis.

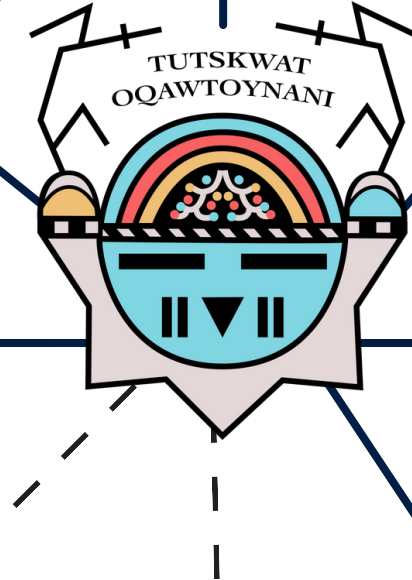
**VALERIE NUVAYESTEWA**  
Project Coordinator/Fiscal Manager

The Project Coordinator is responsible for developing effective strategies to maintain a streamlined project lifecycle. This role includes managing all paperwork, scheduling, legal documentation, grant writing, education, and communication related to the project.



**ADVISORY GROUP**

The advisory group is structured to facilitate the exchange of opinions and perspectives among individuals. They work together to examine issues and ultimately develop recommendations to the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator, in turn, collaborates with the advisory group to identify and prioritize needs for Tutskwat Oqawtoynani.



**FUNDERS**

- Colorado Plateau
- Abelard Foundation West
- Seventh Generation for Indigenous Peoples Inc.
- Justice Outside
- Native Voices Rising
- Dollar A Day Fund
- The Hopi Foundation
- United World College

They provide annual funding to support our project to create foundational stability and longevity for Tutskwat Oqawtoynani

**SUPPORTERS**

- Hopi Telecommunications
- Cellular One
- CKP Insurance
- Navajo County
- Hopi Solid Waste Program
- IHS, David Bates
- United World College
- Village of Walpi
- Sichomovi Village
- First Mesa Consolidated Villages
- Grand Canyon Trust
- Pikiyanivi Wood Haulers
- Hopi Grounds Coffee
- Sedona Mago
- Spider Grille
- Big Sky Soap
- Muchovi Gardens

**FISCAL SPONSOR**  
Seventh Generation for Indigenous People's Fund Inc.

This role entails performing due diligence on grant awards and program expenditures, overseeing all aspects of the grants process, and taking on legal and fiduciary responsibility for project activities.



**LEGEND**

--- Supporters of project.

— Direct role in decision making process



# ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



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Our organization encountered significant internal family hardships this year that necessitated prioritizing our father's recovery, which impacted our quarterly clean-up plans. However, our younger members stepped up and worked with environmental groups to coordinate clean-up events in the early part of the year. For the rest of the year, we adapted our programming and collaborated with environmental groups to schedule clean-up events according to their schedules, which, unfortunately, meant weekdays instead of weekends. We recognize that scheduling weekend clean-ups is critical to maximizing community involvement, which we plan to do for 2024. Partnering with other organizations allowed us to focus on our core volunteers to reduce burnout and promote self-care, which is vital for sustainability. Additionally, we collaborated with the villages of Sichomovi and Tewa during ceremonies to minimize trash dumping. Despite the challenges we encountered, we are proud of our organization's resilience and ability to adapt while continuing to serve our community. We were provided an opportunity to be included on the #GiveNative Native-led Nonprofit Participants List, which was published on Native Ways Federation website. They provided us with a campaign resource toolkit. We were happy to be listed among other prestigious Indigenous led non-profits from around North America that was officially launched on November 9, 2023. <https://www.nativeways.org/givenativelist/>

Tutskwat provided an end of the year retreat for volunteers as a way to thank them for their help. We spent the weekend in Pinetop, Arizona where we celebrated all our achievements in 2023. Gas stipends were provided for those who brought their own vehicles to the retreat.

Other noteworthy highlights from 2023 are listed below:

## Capacity Building

Youth Leadership  
Retreat, Mineral Hills,  
New Mexico July 25-  
28, 2023

Seventh Generation  
for Indigenous Peoples  
Keeping the Home  
Fires Burning May 26-  
28, 2023

Colorado Plateau  
Learning Community  
August 17-18, 2023

## Social/Educational

Seeds of Radical  
Renewal Abridged  
Leadership Course

2023 Indigenous Women  
in AG 2nd Gathering  
September 27, October 4  
and 13, 2023

Mental Health-Project  
Coordinator is now a Peer  
Support Specialist Level 1  
-University of Arizona

## Technical Support

Website upgraded to  
WIX- Donna Chimera  
Wolfstar PR

Melvin Consulting  
facilitated 2024  
Annual Planning  
Meeting

Resilia Platform  
HOPA Mountain  
Dollar a Day  
Justice Outside  
Seventh Generation Staff

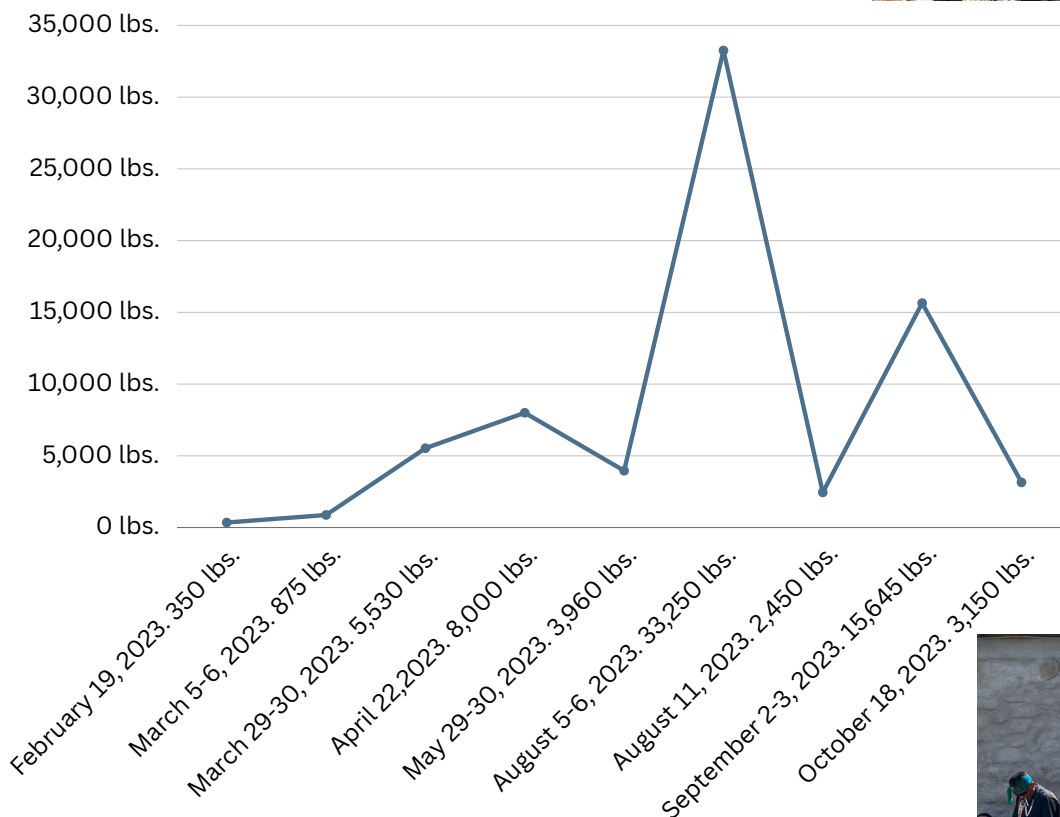
Grand Canyon Trust  
Placemaking Grant-  
Created signage Fall  
2023



# 2023 Trash Collection/ Data

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In 2023, our efforts resulted in a significant impact by removing an estimated 36 tons of trash.



**5,448**

**Volunteer hours in 2023**

Volunteer Hours can be counted as in-kind on behalf of Tutskwat Oqawtoynani in the amount of \$75,454.80 for financial reporting. [5,448 Hours X \$13.85 per hour (2023 hourly wage in Arizona) = \$75,454.80

**116+**

**Volunteers helped in 2023**

**In-kind support**

**Technical support-\$9,750**

## Key takeaways from this report:

- **Key Statistics:** In 2023, an estimated sum of \$950,000.00 was utilized to continue with clean-up efforts. Top three expenses: 1. Project Coordinator salary, Supplies, Meetings and Travel.
- **Key Findings:** An estimated 25 tons of trash removed during this period was household waste.
- **Report Cards:** All three villages demonstrated proactivity in preventing illegal trash dumping. Security guards/staff from villages were instrumental in monitoring trash bins during ceremonies.
- **Timelines:** This report indicates that cleaning the entire mesa extends beyond 10-12 years IF we continue at this pace. Shortening the time will be dependent on community involvement and continued funding.



**20%**

An estimated 86.29 tons of trash removed in a short 1/4 mile behind, below the back of First Mesa. 20% of trash has been cleared from the mesa in a span of 8 years.



# 2024 Project Budget

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In 2024 we have secured grants in the amount of \$150,000.00 to continue our work.

**Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples  
\$50,000.00 and Affiliate award of \$20,000.00**

**Colorado Plateau Foundation  
\$50,000.00**

**The Hopi Foundation  
\$10,000.00**

**Justice Outside  
\$20,000.00**





# NEXT

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## STEPS Where do we go from here?

In reviewing the underlying issues, what impediments do we face in advancing forward and developing impactful programming for community revitalization? These are some steps we have identified to bring us toward collective action.

1

### Strengthen Data Collection and Monitoring

Enhance data collection methods and systems to ensure accurate and timely monitoring of yearly progress. Data collected can help us create strong proposals!

2

### Foster Multi-stakeholder Collaboration

We can foster collaboration among villages, community members, recycling entity, businesses, academia, organizations, and other stakeholders to unite and address the litter issue prevalent on our mesa. We can work together to clean up and reduce the trash on the mesa. We are stronger together!

3

### Integrate Strategic Strategies

Restore pride in our communities through education and outreach- Capture meaningful data, (stories) quarterly newspaper articles, billboards and visible signage to deter trash dumping.

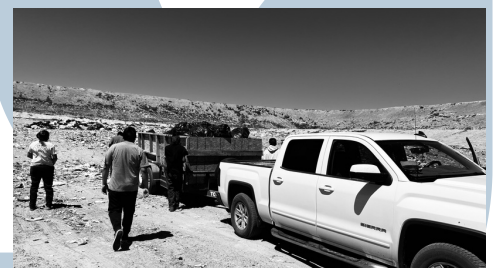
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### There are other projects that are directly linked to cleanups.

To strengthen resource mobilization within our organization, it's essential to forge effective partnerships for wood hauling, erosion control, and soil restoration, given our identity as a family, farming community,



First Mesa, Arizona



Tutskwat Oqawtoynani 2024 Report



# CONCLUSION

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**A review of the highlights and a renewed commitment to continue working towards our vision of restoring health and healing to our First Mesa Villages.**

## Key Achievements

- Strengthened Partnerships with outside Environmental Organizations
- Estimated removal of 36 tons of trash in 2023
- We were awarded additional funding for winter projects, wood hauling, home weatherization for volunteers.
- Revamped Website for transparency and communication.
- Capacity Building (Youth Leadership Retreat, training for volunteers and Project Coordinator in mental health, selfcare)
- Moving forward with cleanups despite family challenges.
- Project Coordinator took on the role of in-house Financial Manager position, formerly held by Leon Nuvayestewa Sr.
- Youth Leadership Retreat
- Volunteer Retreat
- Support from local businesses

## Persistent Challenges

- Lingering inequalities in community healthcare, including substance abuse, domestic violence, and other post-pandemic effects, which affect the mental state of residents and hinder their participation in clean-up efforts.
- Environmental degradation and persistent littering by villagers, despite cleanup initiatives.
- Systems don't reflect the creativity of our people-Tuhisa
- No volunteers for unbalanced benefits
- Understaffed- which affects data collection, reporting, grant writing.
- Illegal dumping ordinance is not enforced.
- A need to incorporate generational knowledge and experience into programming.

### **A reminder to all of us!**

***By cleaning the trash, we are helping the earth to breathe and thus bringing forth natural food to grow again. Hopi has a symbiotic relationship with our plants, animals and cannot have a complete ceremony without them. We must clean our lands for the sake of future generations. Let us work together on a decade of implementation so we can walk into the future, with the earth as our foundation. Our father, Sakhongvaiya quoted Woody Allen saying that "Eighty percent of Success is showing up".***





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would like to thank everyone who helped us in one way or another with our cleanup efforts, past and present. We also want to acknowledge the local businesses who support us and provide donations or discounts for our volunteers, more importantly, we want to thank our First Mesa Mongwit for their continued support of our efforts. Eskwali, Kuna'a!

*To Leon and Eva Nuvayestewa Sr., our parents and our Foundation-It was our Father's Vision to see First Mesa cleaned from top to bottom that set us on this path to restoring our mesa home back to its pristine state of health. We dedicate this report to our parents. Even if we are the only ones cleaning, as Sakhongvaiya stated, "we will show the people that we are committed to seeing this through."*

**Advisory group**-Bonnie Secakuku, Maree Mahkewa, Erin Eustace, Wilma Dengavi

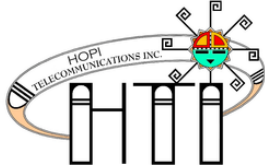
**Team Leads**-Jerry Johns, Erin Eustace, Maree Mahkewa, Lori Nuvayestewa

**Local and supportive Partner Organizations**- Tipi Risers, United World College staff and students, Abundance in Motion, First Mesa Villages, Walpi, Tewa, and Sichomovi, Big Sky Soap, Spider Grille, Hopi Grounds Coffee, HOPA Mountain-Bonnie Sachatello, Wolf Star PR-Donna Chimera, Native Voices Rising-Joy Persall, Melvin Consulting, KUYI Radio Station-88.1-Samantha Honani, Delfred Leslie, Pikyunavi Haulers, and to all our committed volunteers/cooks who show up year after year, rain, wind, or shine. This work would not be possible without your support! Kuna'a!



JUSTICE  
OUTSIDE

DOLLAR A  
DAY FUND  
FOR INDIGENOUS  
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



THE HOPI FOUNDATION  
Lomasumi'nangwtukwsiwmani

"Strengthening Communities through Collaborative Actions"

**Report Created by:**

**Valerie Nuvayestewa, Project  
Coordinator/Financial Manager**

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oqawtoynani

<https://www.healingthemesa.org/>

"We thank you for your  
continued support in our  
efforts to clean First Mesa".

