

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 24-0353 Celebrating the River Sisters' Congreso

WHEREAS, the River Sisters' Circle (RSC) flows from a 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Mayors Michael B. Hancock and Jose Enrique Reina Lizarraga, establishing a Bi-national partnership between the peoples of Denver, Colorado, and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico—two distant cities, whose fates are equally tied to the Colorado River; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2019, the River Sisters' Circle supported community members of Sun Valley, the Denver Housing Authority, and the City of Denver in their community-driven master redevelopment plan to revitalize the neighborhood—a process spanning over 10 years—and to create a new riverfront park; and

WHEREAS, the Turquoise Necklace concept represents a continuation of the ancient story surrounding the significance of Water and Turquoise. Turquoise holds cultural and spiritual importance, symbolizing mystery, and good fortune; and

WHEREAS, its association with coral in Indigenous cultures summons rain and symbolizes our connection to Rivers, the Earth, and each other. The River Sisters' Circle and the Turquoise Necklace concept aims to awaken our sense of connection, promote environmental and cultural stewardship, and honor the River and Earth and the Peoples that have blossomed from their wellspring; and

WHEREAS, the ultimate goal is to raise awareness and advance environmental justice and cultural preservation between the historical and current relationships between the River, the city and local cultures. Fostering a deeper connection with nature and advancing river and community health through the civic engagement of leadership of traditionally under-served communities; and

WHEREAS, we aim to "heal" our sister, the River, and ourselves by building access and restoring the health of Denver's only River and our open spaces, while expanding historic and cultural awareness at the local level and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the River Sisters' Circle Congreso is to convene a broad coalition of local neighborhoods, organizations, City of Denver agencies and partners supporting the Latino/Chicano, African-American and First Nation's co-creation of a Call to Action and Guiding Principles for the development of a Turquoise Necklace trail system along the South Platte. Interconnecting places along the River of historical and cultural significance to First Nations and Latinos/Chicanos and that celebrates the history and cultures of the Peoples who have lived along the South Platte. Advancing Indigenous strategies and practices in design, planning and engagement along the River; and

WHEREAS, the River Sisters' Congreso serves as an innovation and economic development zone to prove the concept of extreme weather-resilient green infrastructure practices and strategies, and reconnects the Peoples of Denver to the River as the main source of Life in the Universe; and

WHEREAS, the River Sisters' Congreso is a free event scheduled for Saturday, March 23, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Spur, Hydro Building, Colorado State University, located at 4777 National Western Drive, Denver, Colorado.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. The Council of the City and County of Denver supports the collaborative efforts of the River Sisters' Circle and the Wisdom Keepers Circle to 'Heal Our Sister the River' by raising awareness and advancing environmental, historic, and cultural preservation through the activities of the upcoming Congreso.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Nita Gonzales on behalf of the River Sisters' Circle and Cecilia Bull Bear on behalf of the Wisdom Keepers.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL March 18, 2024

PRESIDENT

