

Community Relations Update May-September 2025

- Community Relations staff attended the May 2025 DUNE Collaboration Meeting at Fermilab and presented about Black Hills history—an area of interest for many collaborators. Approximately 65 people attended.
- Community Relations provided tours of Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ three days per week during the summer months.
- Community Relations worked with the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Library to host two storytimes at Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ on July 16 and August 13. Each story was connected to a STEM activity.
- The Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center (SLHVC) flower beds will be updated and replanted this spring. Plants were purchased from South Dakota State University's Native Plant Initiative. All the plants are native to South Dakota and will add to learning opportunities at the SLHVC.
- Community Relations staff met with Fermilab staff in Communications and Public Engagement to discuss areas of collaboration.
- Community Relations worked with the Institute for Underground Science to schedule tours of at Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ during CETUP*, the Center for Theoretical Underground Physics and Related Areas workshop hosted each June at SURF.
- Executive Director of Lakota Funds, Tawney Brunsch, and staff presented at SURF in June about their efforts on the Pine Ridge Reservation.
- Community Relations and the SURF Institute for Underground Science presented at the DUNE I&I Meeting about SURF outreach and events as well as area tourism options for DUNE collaborators and contractors.
- Community Relations worked with Environmental staff to develop a training pertaining to recycling efforts at SURF in relation to the Respect the Land Standard.
- Community Relations and SLHVC staff continue to work on the development of a science graphic novel academy to provide students with an art-based opportunity to interact with science phenomena. The team is scheduled to implement the academy with students from Ateyapi, an after-school program based in Rapid City.
- Community Relations worked alongside Human Resources and Underground Operations to outfit the underground well-being space.
- Community Relations worked to coordinate a tour of SURF for partners at the Crazy Horse Memorial on May 14.
- Over 200 attendees visited Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ, the ethnobotanical garden at SURF, during Neutrino Day. The garden featured Lakota hoop dancer Starr Chief Eagle, Lakota rock band The Wake Singers, and the Northern Hills Master Gardeners.
- Community Relations hosted a clean-up event at SURF on June 11. Over 400 buffalo grass plugs were planted at Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ and over 200 native plants were placed in the flower beds at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center.
- Community Relations Chair Rylan Sprague presented to CETUP* scientists at Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ on July 9.

- Community Relations Intern Brooke Lammle developed several educational activities about Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ and its plants. These activities will soon be available at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center.
- A group of primarily middle school students from Sicangu Co., and economic development corporation on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, visited SURF on June 20. Students engaged with CETUP* scientists, participated in a surface tour, and learned about Lakota cosmology during their visit.
- The Cheyenne River Youth Project had staff and students visit SURF on June 5. Students learned about SURF and participated in a surface tour during their visit.
- Community Relations staff presented about tribal history and culture in the region to the SURF summer interns in their inaugural week on site.
- SURF outreach staff visited with Fermilab outreach staff on July 10 to discuss possible areas of collaboration. Community Relations also provided the Fermilab staff with a tour of Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ and the Yates Hoist Room.
- Tawney Brunsch of Lakota Funds, a Native Community Development Financial Institution, was the Deep Roots speaker for June.
- Community Relations hosted an open house event for Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ on August 21st. Participants learned about Lakota ethnobotany from Community Relations Committee Chair Rylan Sprague followed by ice cream and a tour of the garden.
- Community Relations and Education and Outreach hosted a group of Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings teachers from Rapid City, SD on August 1. The group held their professional development day at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center, and SURF staff presented on available educational opportunities through SURF.
- The Master Gardeners held an event at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center on September 6 followed by a tour of the garden.
- Community Relations staff presented at the Particle Physics and Cosmology Conference regarding Lakota culture and history on June 26.
- Staff from the Journey Museum in Rapid City, SD visited Čhaŋgléška Wakǵáŋ on September 3. Possible areas for collaboration between SURF and the Journey were also discussed.
- Community Relations staff attended the American Indians in Science and Engineering Society's national conference in Minneapolis, MN, October 2-4. A small award through the Black Hills Area Community Foundation helped SURF support six students from Black Hills State University to attend the conference.