



# Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project Newsletter

2nd Quarter, January 2019

## Pre-Construction Blessing Ceremony Held for Water Treatment Plant

By Pat Page and Paul Denetclaw - Four Corners Construction Office

On October 22, 2018, representatives from the Navajo Nation, the State of New Mexico, the State of New Mexico's Congressional delegation, local Navajo chapter officials, and the Bureau of Reclamation and their contractors, met near the Navajo community of Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle, south of Bloomfield NM. The purpose of the gathering was to witness and participate in a traditional Navajo prayer and blessing ceremony to mark the beginning of construction of the Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant, a key feature of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. The ceremony was performed by Hataalii (medicine man) Mr. Richard Anderson, a United States Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War.



Participants of the Blessing Ceremony listen as Hataalii, Richard Anderson explains the prayers he used and their significance. Bureau of Reclamation photo by Clint Stone

without delay so that the Dine people could benefit by having access to clean drinking water. Lastly, he prayed that families would be well taken care of and have a long life in complete harmony with the universe.

The event would not have been possible without the help and support of many. The overall coordinator and master of ceremonies was Bert Sandoval, Navajo Nation Water Rights Commissioner, long-time advocate of the Project, and friend of Reclamation. Employees from Reclamation's Four Corners Construction Office performed site preparation, parking coordination, food preparation (Twyla Begay's awesome mutton stew!) and service. Souder Miller & Associates provided food and beverages.

The significance of the ceremony and the milestone in which the ceremony was centered around was not lost on those in attendance. The Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant, when completed in 2020, will be a state-of-the-art facility that will provide a clean, reliable water supply to the eastern Navajo Reservation and the southwestern corner of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation. The contractor, Jacobs Engineering, started construction a few weeks after the ceremony.



Photo courtesy Jon Austria/The Daily Times

### Faces of NGWSP

Ya'at'teeh, my name is Johnny Johnson, Bit'ahnii nishlii, To'baazhn'azhi baa'shishchin, To'bahnii'azhii Dashicheii, Dzitl'aahni dashin. I am from Tse'ii'ahi (Standing Rock).

I serve as the Tse'ii'ahi (Standing Rock) Chapter President. I am in my nineteenth year as the chapter president. One of the many projects that I have lead my chapter to accomplish is to fund and conduct a feasibility study to connect 55 homes to the upcoming Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project waterline. This study will lead to families who currently haul water for basic needs to having a fully functioning home. The State of New Mexico, Indian Health Service/OEH, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and the Navajo Nation are working together to make this project a success.

NGWSP is important because it directly affects the various projects we are working to complete for the families in my community, as well as, surrounding communities in Eastern Navajo Agency. It also provides an opportunity for economic development.

If you would like to learn more about the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, you can visit our website at <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/navajo/nav-gallup/>.

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## How to stay informed on the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project

By Pat Page, P.E.

Reclamation started this quarterly newsletter to provide timely information on the status of the project and to help answer questions about the project, but there are other means of staying up to date on what's happening on the project. First and foremost, there are meetings – plenty of meetings – that are open to the public. The Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources, along with local Navajo Chapters, hold regular meetings to give updates on the progress of the project, get input from community members, and provide information on funding opportunities.

The Beacon Bisti/ Navajo Route 9 (BBN9) Cutter Lateral Group covers the area served by the Cutter Lateral as well as the chapters served by the Crownpoint Lateral (10.1, 10.2, and 10.3).

The 491 Chapters Group covers the area served by the San Juan Lateral.

The NGWSP Project Construction Committee meetings are held quarterly to provide updates to Project Participants,

cooperating agencies, and interested individuals. In addition, Reclamation and Navajo Nation representatives participate in fairs and conferences throughout the year to provide updates and information on the project.

Want more information? Visit the NGWSP website at <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/rm/navajo/nav-gallup/> or call Reclamation at (505) 324-5027, or the Navajo Nation DWR at (928) 729-4004.



**491 Chapters Group** will meet Tuesday, Feb 12 at 10 a.m. in the Sheep Springs Chapter House



**BBN9 Cutter Group** will meet Wednesday March 20 at 10 a.m. in the Becenti Chapter House



**Project Construction Committee** will meet Thursday Feb 21 at 10 a.m. at the El Morro Theatre in Gallup



**Navajo DNR Summit** will be June 19 to 21 at the Twin Arrows Resort

## Spotlight – Cultural Resources Compliance

By Ernie Rheume

On a construction project the size of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, the protection of cultural resources becomes a top priority. Reclamation archaeologists, project managers, and design engineers have been working with the Navajo Nation Heritage & Historic Preservation Department to address effects to archaeological and sacred sites important to the Navajo Nation. When working on Navajo Nation lands, Reclamation is following the provisions set forth in the Navajo Nation Cultural Resource Protection Act. This requires a full archaeological and ethnographic inventory of the project area. Since 2013, Reclamation has fielded teams of archaeologists and ethnographers to identify prehistoric and historic sites along the proposed waterline, as well as interview individuals living in the project area to document traditional cultural properties.



The surveys have identified multitudes of archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties in the project area. In consultation with NNHHPD, Reclamation has proposed realigning portions of the pipeline to avoid major effects to important sites. When avoidance is not possible, NNHHPD and Reclamation have devised minimally intrusive testing and data recovery plans for sites within the project right-of-way. The cultural information being obtained through the archaeological and ethnographic surveys of the project will provide information on the prehistoric and historic use of the landscape by the Navajo people. NNHHPD's work to protect these resources will allow the important

water project to completed, while ensuring that the Navajo cultural history is preserved for generations to come.

While Reclamation's work with NNHHPD on Navajo Nation land and resources is highlighted here, Reclamation also consults with twenty-three other tribes and agencies on cultural resources located in the project area. The cultural resources work and tribal consultations will continue throughout the construction of the project allowing Reclamation and the Navajo Nation to build for the future while protecting the past.

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