



# Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Newsletter

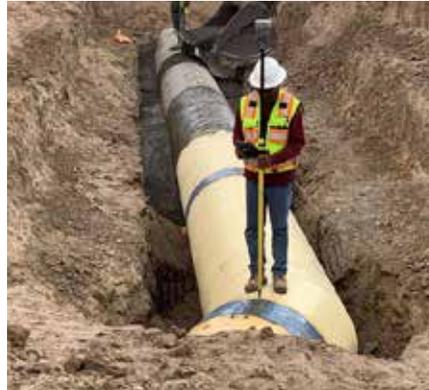
3rd Quarter, April 2021

## Reclamation Employees Continue Working During Pandemic

By Hilda Castillo Smith, Civil Engineer, Bureau of Reclamation

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March of 2020, the Bureau of Reclamation, along with most other federal agencies, implemented a maximum telework policy. As a result of these precautions, most employees are working from home, but what happens when you have a construction project that is essential for the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico?

Fortunately, under public health orders issued by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham public works and water infrastructure projects, like the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, are considered essential businesses, allowing construction of this vital project to continue. During construction, many of the Four Corners Construction Office employees continue to work remotely. Their commitment to the project and construction support to the field employees ensures the success of the NGWSP.



Reclamation Surveyor Nelson Kinsel, checking grade and line of a 42" steel pipe for NGWSP. February 10, 2021. Photo by Hilda Castillo Smith.

Every morning, 25 field employees, whose responsibility is to oversee and assure the quality of construction, gear up to perform their jobs without hesitation. They do this to guarantee that this important drinking water project continues. Now more than ever, water is crucial to the Navajo Nation and the other Project Participants.

Their job requires them to be at the construction site 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, pandemic or not they are always ready to perform their duties. Some of their responsibilities includes construction inspection, materials testing, field engineering, and surveying.

Question asked to Reclamation employees: Now that everything is more challenging and complicated, what motivates you? Is it worth it?

- “Absolutely, I’m here for my people and my sacrifice is worth it.”
- “I do this job because I’m a dedicated civil servant and I’m proud of being part of this project.”
- “I have a responsibility to the Navajo people to ensure that this job gets done correctly.”
- “Water is life, we have a responsibility with the Navajo people. We must continue.”

This very important essential work is not without a great deal of risk and sacrifice. However, these dedicated FCCO employees continue to press forward in the face of these challenging times.



### Faces of NGWSP

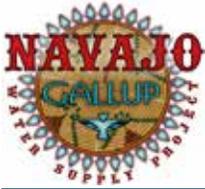
Ya’at’eeh - my name is Tamara Billie. My clans are Tsenahabillnii (Sleeping Rock People), born for Kinyaa’aanii (Towering House People), my maternal grandparents are Ashiihi (Salt People), and my paternal grandparents are Taneezahnii (Tangle People). I come from a small community called Twin Lakes, New Mexico.

For the past 23 years I have worked for the Navajo Nation’s Heritage and Historic Preservation Department, Cultural Resource Compliance Section in Window Rock, Arizona. In my current position as a Senior Archaeologist, I oversee the Tribe’s Cultural Resource Compliance and Permitting Section. I perform cultural resources management activities at all levels on Navajo Nation lands in compliance with federal and tribal laws and policies. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the NNHHPD closely consults with the Bureau of Reclamation on the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, which may affect cultural resources (archaeological sites, traditional cultural properties, burials, ceremonial areas, etc.) on Navajo Nation lands. My goal is to help preserve and manage the Navajo people’s cultural heritage, while providing clean safe drinking water to many Navajo communities.



If you would like to learn more visit our website at <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/navajo-gallup/>.





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## Update on Cutter Lateral Water Deliveries

By Jim Magnuson, Operations Manager, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority

October 27, 2020 was a significant milestone for the NGWSP - that was the day the Project began delivering potable water to Navajo Tribal Utility Authority customers. This water delivery continues in 2021 along the Cutter Lateral transmission pipeline of the NGWSP as more NTUA community water systems replace existing groundwater sources with water treated at the Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant. The Carson – Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle system was the first NTUA system to receive water and now the list of communities receiving NGWSP water includes Nageezi and Counselor. The latter two NTUA systems were each served on December 28, 2020 and February 11, 2021, respectively.

It is expected that the Jicarilla Apache Nation will also begin to receive water later this summer. The offset in the delivery schedule allows NTUA to conduct flushing operations in each community water system as the CLWTP treated water replaces existing groundwater within the distribution piping network. The other benefit from the NGWSP delivering water to the NTUA systems is the delivery capacity from the NGWSP

exceeds the existing systems' source supplies, thereby increasing overall service capacity and affords NTUA the opportunity for system-wide flushing operations, not limited by lower production capacities of the existing well sources.

### These are the scheduled dates for water delivery on the Cutter Lateral waterline

1. Ojo Encino – March 8, 2021
2. Torreon – April 14, 2021,
3. Whitehorse Lake – May 19, 2021

## Navajo Technical University Filming Documentaries of the NGWSP

By Becky Begay, Navajo Outreach Coordinator, Bureau of Reclamation

The Bureau of Reclamation is partnering with the Navajo Technical University New Media Students in filming three documentary films over the next three years on the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

The documentary films are being funded through a grant from Reclamation's Native American Affairs Program. The films will tell the story and document the history and the progress of one of the largest Native American water rights settlement agreements in the history of the United States.



Reclamation employee Ryan Gladden being interviewed by NTU student Wade Shannah at Cutter Dam, New Mexico.

The documentary will be used by Reclamation, Navajo Nation agencies, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, Navajo chapters, Council Delegates, and other NGWSP Project Participants to educate the public on the importance of the NGWSP, and the need to plan and prepare for how the Navajo Nation and other communities are going to use the drinking water.

The NTU Media students will be using the documentary as a part of their senior capstone project for their degree program. The students working on the film are Bernice Coho from Tseyato, New Mexico, Wade Shannah from Standing Rock, New Mexico, Antawne Temple from Crownpoint, New Mexico, and Merial Simpson from Crownpoint, New Mexico. They are mentored by Aanor Louis a lecturer of new media at NTU.

Filming began in October 2020 at the Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant pre-commissioning tour with Reclamation's Commissioner Brenda Burman. The NGWSP documentary film is a very important film to help educate the public and provide a glimpse of how critical drinking water is on the Navajo Nation. Be on the lookout for the documentary at a film festival near you in the coming years.



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