



Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Newsletter

2nd Quarter, Jan. 2023

George Arthur's Contribution to making the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project drinking water a reality for the Navajo Nation

By Becky Begay, Navajo Outreach Coordinator, Bureau of Reclamation

I had the pleasure of speaking with former Navajo Council Delegate of 20 years, George Arthur, and discussing his history on the NGWSP while eating apple pie and drinking hot coffee on a cold winter day. I learned that George grew up in the community of Burnham, New Mexico, and became interested in water issues/rights as a child while working with his father. His father worked for the Navajo Nation irrigation department in the 1950s, and George would help his father measure flow and water use of unlined irrigation ditches. His father talked to him about the importance of water for local farming near their community, years before the Navajo Agricultural Production Industry (NAPI) was created from the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project.



George worked on the Navajo San Juan River Water Rights Settlement Agreement for over 18 years, as well as the Navajo Utah and Navajo Arizona Water Rights Settlements. He spoke about how in the 1990s the late Navajo Nation President Albert Hale opened discussions to negotiate with non-native river water users throughout the San Juan River Basin in New Mexico to pave the way for the Navajo Water Rights Settlement.

In 1991 George became active with the Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA), a non-profit, non-partisan organization that provides a venue for river managers and water users to discuss Colorado River management, covering 40 million water users in the seven states and the ten tribes within the Colorado River Basin. He attended the first Colorado River Tribes meeting at CRWUA in 1992, and recalled how only a few Colorado River Tribes were allowed to attend meetings with federal partners at that time. He explained that those Tribes felt unheard and unable to voice their concerns on Colorado River Water Rights and water issues. Finally, the Colorado River Tribes formed the Ten Tribes Partnership in 1995, resulting in necessary representation of all ten Tribes.

In 2011, George became the first Native American to become the president of CRWUA. He spoke about the many challenges of negotiations with non-native water users (lawyers), Department of the Interior, U.S. Congress, and the State of New Mexico. He remained persistent and determined to fight for the Navajo People in obtaining their share of Navajo water, which required attending many meetings over long days in multiple states for many years. He is one of the key contributors that helped get the Navajo San Juan River Water Rights Settlement in place, leading to congressional approval of construction of the NGWSP. We owe George Arthur a great deal of gratitude for his persistence and dedication in helping us achieve delivery of clean and reliable drinking water for Navajo communities and are thankful for his many contributions to this cause over the last several decades.



Faces of NGWSP

Yá'át'ééh, shí éí Tódíich'íinii nishlí, Naakai Dine'é éí báshíshchíín, Ma'íi Deeshgiizhnii éí dashicheii, Tábaahí éí dashinálí

My name is Robert Kirk and I am a Principal Hydrologist with the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources (NDWR). I am originally from Kinlichee, Arizona, and now reside in Rock Point, Arizona.

I have been with the NDWR-Water Management Branch since 1991 and have worked on numerous water projects across the Navajo Nation, focusing on regional domestic water projects for current and future uses.

The NGWSP is one of our primary projects that I have worked on for over 20 years. I am especially proud to have been part of this project, working alongside the organizations and numerous leaders that have advocated for it.

With the Cutter Lateral already in operation, NGWSP is playing a critical role in addressing potable water needs for the 43 Chapters in the eastern parts of the Navajo Nation. Access to clean potable water is also critical to mitigate and fight the recent COVID pandemic on the Navajo Nation, and this is why the NGWSP is important and the completion of the project is a monumental priority. Water is a necessity to provide a permanent homeland for the Navajo Nation for future generations to come.



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



Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Update on Bureau of Reclamation Construction Contracts

By Moncef Tihami, Design and Commissioning Chief, Bureau of Reclamation

Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project construction activities are moving forward as planned with 267 out of the 300 miles of pipeline associated with the Project either installed, in construction, or under contract.

- Most recently, the Block 4C-8 pipeline was completed in September 2022.
- The San Juan Lateral water transmission pipeline is now installed from Little Water, New Mexico in the north, through Reach 13 and the Gallup Regional System in the south.
- Pipeline installation has begun on the Navajo Code Talkers Sublateral between



Site Preparation for the Pilot Study Water Filtration System of the San Juan River



Tank installation at Pumping Plant 4

Ya-ta-hey Junction and Tse Bonito, which will eventually deliver drinking water to the Window Rock/Fort Defiance areas in Arizona, as well as the Rock Springs and Tsayatoh chapters in New Mexico.

- Good progress continues with the construction on the Tooh Haltsooi (4) and Bahastl'ah (7) Pumping Plants in the Sheep Springs and Twin Lakes Chapters, respectively, which are expected to be completed by the end of 2023.
- Reclamation awarded the Tsé Da'azkání (2) and Tó Ałts'íísí (3) Pumping Plants in the Sanostee chapter in September 2022, with construction beginning in spring 2023.

- Block 4A-4B, also within the Sanostee Chapter, contains 18 miles of 42-inch pipeline and is expected to be awarded in February 2023, with construction also starting this spring.

Reclamation held an Industry Day in November to gather input from water treatment firms on the upcoming design-build contract for the San Juan Lateral Water Treatment Plant. Over the course of 2023 and early 2024, Reclamation will qualify and evaluate design-build teams with plans to award a contract in the spring of 2024. The SJLWTP is expected to be fully built and delivering drinking water to Navajo Communities in western New Mexico and the Window Rock/Fort Defiance area, along with the City of Gallup, in 2028.



Wall and roof installation at Pumping Plant 7

NGWSP DOCUMENTARY FILM

By Pat Page, Bureau of Reclamation Construction Engineer (Retired)

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project has a story to tell -- from the decades of negotiations between the Navajo Nation, the State of New Mexico, and the Federal government regarding the Nation's water rights claims in the San Juan River, to the passing of Public Law 111-11 that authorized the Project, to the ongoing progress being made and initial water service to Navajo communities, to envisioning a future where the fundamental human right of a clean reliable water supply becomes a reality in this part of the United States. The story is not just intriguing, it's vital to the long-term success of the Project to portray an accurate picture of its background, history, and purpose. With this in mind, the concept of making a documentary film about the NGWSP was born.

To help with this monumental task, in 2019 Reclamation enlisted the services of the Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, New Mexico. NTU students, under the guidance of Assistant Professor of New Media Aanor Louis, and Reclamation's Navajo Outreach Coordinator Becky Begay, began working on the documentary in 2020. To date, they have compiled hundreds of hours of construction footage, ceremonies, events, and numerous interviews of key individuals involved in NGWSP. It is a long, involved process spread out over several semesters, classes, and students. The documentary is still under production, but Reclamation and NTU are planning on completing it in 2023 and are hopeful that the film's premiere will be sometime in the near future – maybe at a film festival near you! We will provide more information about where to watch the film when it is complete and ready for release.



Ryan Gladden of Reclamation's Four Corners Construction Office gets interviewed by NTU student Wade Shannah at Cutter Dam



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