



Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Newsletter

4th Quarter, July 2023

Reclamation celebrates major milestone for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and Reclamation's 120th birthday

On June 9, the NGWSP celebrated the acquisition of the San Juan Generating Station water conveyance system which was purchased from the Public Service Company of New Mexico for \$8 million. The acquisition of the water conveyance system included a reservoir which was renamed the Frank Chee Willetto Reservoir during the ceremony.



(L-R) City of Gallup Mayor Louis Bonaguidi, PNM President and Chief Operating Officer Don Tarry, Navajo OPVP Executive Administrator Arvin Trujillo, NGWSP Program Manager Bart Deming, Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, State Engineer Mike Hamman, Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton, Honorable Delegate Rickie Nez, and Navajo Nation Water Rights Commissioner Dr. Lani Tsinnajinnie

Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton and New Mexico Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez joined Navajo Nation, State, and local leaders at an event celebrating the acquisition of the water system and the continued progress and collaboration on the NGWSP.

"Water is crucial for the health, safety and empowerment of Tribal communities. This is especially important within the Navajo Nation, as many residents are finally receiving water that has long been promised to them," said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton. "This acquisition continues the commitment and progress that the Interior Department and Reclamation have made towards the fulfillment of our trust responsibilities to the Navajo Nation and Jicarilla Apache Nation through the Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement."

"The acquisition of the Reservoir and Water Conveyance System is a major milestone, which will be a tremendous asset for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project," said

Reclamation Four Corners Construction Office, Construction Engineer & Manager Bart Deming. "Its incorporation represents a significant cost savings to the project while also increasing operational flexibility and reducing operational risk by providing off-river storage, allowing increased drought resistance to support a sustainable water delivery system. The storage in this reservoir gives us the ability to shut down the river intake and continue water deliveries in the event of another Gold King Mine Spill, until river water quality improves."

During the ceremony, Reclamation and Navajo Nation leadership unveiled a new name for the former San Juan Generating Station Reservoir. The reservoir is now named after Frank Chee Willetto, a member of the Navajo Nation who proudly served as a Navajo Code Talker during World War II and was recognized with a Congressional Silver Medal in 2001. Willetto was born in Crownpoint, New Mexico, of the "Bit'ahnii (Folded Arms Clan), born for Tódich'ii'nii (Bitter Water Clan). His maternal great grandfather was Ta'neeshahnii (Tangle Clan) and his paternal family was Naakai dine'é (Mexican People Clan). Willetto also served on the Navajo Nation Council from 1974 to 1986 and held various other positions, including Navajo Nation Vice President from August 1998 to January 1999. Willetto remained active in his Tribal community and attended the signing of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which authorized the NGWSP, of which he was a huge proponent. He died in his home in Pueblo Pintado, New Mexico, on June 23, 2012, at the age of 87.

In honor of Frank Chee Willetto



"He always said that helping his community receive clean drinking water and have community members finally receive running water was one of the proudest moments of his life," said Willetto's daughter, Marcella Willetto.



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<https://www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/navajo-gallup/>.



Reclamation's Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant Project wins national award

Representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, Navajo Nation, and design-build contractor, Jacobs, were presented with the Best of the Best award in the Water/Environment category at the 2023 Engineering News Record Awards of Excellence ceremony in New York City on April 13. The national ENR award was for the design and construction of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project's Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant.

"We are honored to win this award, which is helping shine a national spotlight on the lack of drinking water availability on the Navajo Nation," said Reclamation Construction Engineer Bart Deming.

"With the commissioning of the water treatment plant, the Navajo Nation has received the long-awaited benefits of a long-term supply of potable water into eight eastern Navajo Chapter's public water systems, including Carson Huerfano, Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle, Nageezi, Counselor, Ojo Encino, Torreon, and Whitehorse Lake/Pueblo Pintado," said Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources Director Jason John.



Pictured from Left: Ryan Gladden, Reclamation Deputy Construction Engineer, Barbara Crockett, Jacobs Vice President/New Mexico Client Account Manager, Bart Deming, Reclamation Construction Engineer, Wayne Pullan, Regional Director for Reclamation's Upper Colorado Basin Region, Ted Michaelidis, Jacobs Design-Build Manager

Reclamation is using the same design-build process to construct the second NGWSP plant, the San Juan Lateral Water Treatment Plant, with a contract award planned for spring 2024.

What happens to Fish When Diverting Water from the San Juan River

By Chico Quintana, Civil Engineer and Eric Creeden, Southern Lands & Group Chief

Protecting and minimizing threats to fish, especially endangered species like the native Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker found in the San Juan River, is an important part of Reclamation's mission and a priority for the NGWSP. The routing of fish into water diversion facilities like canals and the trapping of fish on infrastructure like trash racks, are common threats to fish in the western U.S. Reclamation plans to make fish friendly upgrades to existing infrastructure as part of a recent acquisition of the Public Service Company of New Mexico's water conveyance system associated with the San Juan Generating Station.



Colorado pikeminnow (Endangered San Juan River Fish)



Razorback sucker (Endangered San Juan River Fish)

Reclamation plans to reconstruct the pumping station and install a new fish barrier weir into the diversion and intake, similar to a previously installed weir at the Hogback Diversion. This will allow for a few inches of water to flow over the crest of the weir while the remaining water flows through the diversion and back to the river. Reclamation coordinated the weir design with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the upgrades further the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's endangered fish recovery efforts. Improvements will be made over the next five years.



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