



Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Newsletter

4th Quarter, July 2021

Navajo Code Talkers Sublateral: Reaches 12.1 and 12.2

By Ryan Seamus Royer, Civil Engineer PE Design Group FCCO

Reaches 12.1 and 12.2 of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, better known as the Navajo Code Talkers Sublateral, will begin construction later this year, or early 2022. Construction is expected to be completed in early 2024. The reach consists of 17 miles of water transmission pipeline running along the north side of Highway 264 from Ya-Tah-Hey Junction to Tse Bonito, Arizona. This portion of the project will deliver a reliable source of clean drinking water to the Rock Springs and Tsayatoh chapters in New Mexico, and eventually to Window Rock, Ft. Defiance, and surrounding communities in Arizona.



The view looking northwest from NM 264 into Tsé Bonito, New Mexico, where the Code Talkers Lateral will end near the Arizona state line.

To install the pipeline, permission from the landowner is needed. For the bulk of the 300 plus miles of pipeline on the entire NGWSP, the land is governed by the Navajo Nation. However, the Navajo Code Talkers Sublateral is unique, having the greatest variety of non-Navajo land on the entire project. Land status on this sublateral includes Navajo Trust and Fee lands, individual Indian allotment lands, State Trust lands, and private lands.

The groundwork to obtain the right-of-way began nearly a decade ago. To construct the water pipeline across the allotted lands, a majority of allottees on each allotment must consent to the construction of the water pipeline across their allotment. Similar consent must be obtained from the Navajo Nation for Tribal Trust and Fee lands. The consent gathering process is completed and the Bureau of Indian Affairs has granted the Bureau of Reclamation the right to construct, operate, and maintain the pipeline across the allotted, trust, and fee lands. Land acquisition on the remaining parcels is wrapping up.



Faces of NGWSP

Yateeh, my name is Bidtah Becker. Kinlichíinii' nishle, Bilagaana baashishchiin, Tódichíinii' da shicheii, doo Bilagaana da shinalí. I am from Fort Defiance, Arizona and work as an Associate Attorney at Navajo Tribal Utility Authority. I'm helping NTUA to eventually take over operations and maintenance of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. We also work closely with the Navajo Nation, who is party to the Navajo San Juan Water Right Settlement with the United States and State of New Mexico. The NGWSP is a cornerstone of that settlement and I have had the privilege of working on the project ever since I came back to work for the Navajo Nation; first as an attorney for the Department of Justice, and then with Division of Natural Resources where I had the privilege of serving as the director until 2019. After taking a six-month break, I returned to work for NTUA because I could continue to work on NGWSP.

Water is life. The NGWSP will help in providing the opportunity for improving the public health and economies of the communities served by the project. COVID-19 has reminded people of the privilege of having clean, safe water delivered to a home and how vital it is to giving us the ability to help control future health pandemics – a privilege Navajo people do not – and will not – take for granted.



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

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





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National Construction Safety Week Celebrated on NGWSP

By Mark Gray, Supervisory Construction Control Representative, Bureau of Reclamation

In recognition of National Construction Safety Week, May 3-7, Reclamation’s contractor Archer Western, who is constructing pumping plants #4 and #7 on NGWSP, conducted a series of safety training events for employees.

- Day 1 was “Equipment Operator Training for Non-Operators” designed to give employees who work close to equipment, the opportunity to experience what it is like to be an operator; to see what they see (and more importantly, don’t see).
- Day 2 was a demonstration of new types of hand tools to show the changes in technology involving dustless and cordless hand tools. Employees learned that dustless tools protect against potentially dangerous contaminants in the air, such as silica dust and cordless tools allow work to be performed in wet locations, which allows for a safer work environment.
- Day 3 involved demonstrations and training on ladder safety, including how to set up a ladder properly, and how to read and understand weight limitations on ladders. Multiple ladders were used for the demonstrations.
- Day 4 focused on fall protection equipment. Construction of the pumping plants will require employees to work at heights. The training provided employees with the knowledge on how to select the proper fall protection equipment needed to perform their job. The Newcomb Fire Department also visited the site and detailed the services they provide to the area.

Training opportunities like this help to prevent accidents and injuries, protect employees’ health, and save lives. Reclamation’s Field Engineering Division Manager Rick Reese praised Archer Western and summed up the week by saying, “It is refreshing to see a contractor take safety as seriously as we do here at Reclamation.”

Senator Heinrich Visits Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant

By Four Corners Construction Office, Bureau of Reclamation

New Mexico Senator Martin Heinrich and his staff stopped by the Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant as part of a planned visit to the area in early May. Senator Heinrich, a long-time and avid supporter of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, got to spend time with Reclamation personnel, as well as staff from the design-build contractor Jacobs, who is also currently operating the plant during the one-year commissioning process.

The Senator toured the control room where operators were monitoring water treatment and deliveries to downstream Navajo communities, and also visited the water treatment process building and the treated water pumping plant to see first-hand the modern features of the new facility. Soon after his visit, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority introduced water to Pueblo Pintado and Whitehorse Lake Chapter’s public water systems, bringing the total to eight communities in seven chapters that are now receiving Cutter Lateral water.

“Given his mechanical engineering degree and experience and past involvement in municipal water utilities, the Senator was very interested in the innerworkings of the plant and asked some great questions throughout the tour;” said Project Construction Engineer for the Four Corners Construction Office Pat Page.

At the end of the tour, the group rewarded themselves by enjoying a fresh, cold drink of water produced by the water treatment plant, which they said tasted great.



From left: U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich and Reclamation Construction Engineer, Patrick Page, enjoy a cold drink of water from the state-of-the-art Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant on May 3, 2021.



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