

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When my brother, Kenneth, and I first discussed this work, we both were reluctant to commit. Even though, we knew in our hearts we must somehow convey our peoples sentiments and convictions for these lands. Simply, we did not want to disappoint our Elders. How could we be sure that their words would be listened to, and not once again ignored?

However, even as all sides continue to argue about these lands, the lands continue to be desecrated. Therefore, we have chosen this time to ask for our Elders' wisdom, as so much hangs in the balance for all of our peoples. We are also hopeful our legitimate voices can serve as a bridge to foster a more successful planning process.

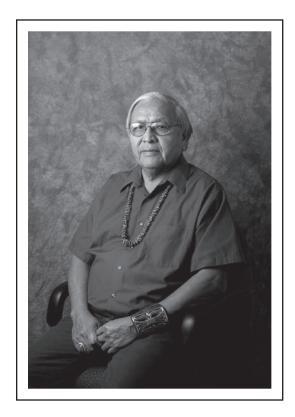
There are too many to name who contributed to this important work to fit on one page. However, I would like to specifically acknowledge the leadership of the Navajo Nation as well as the following individuals: Don Mose, Bessie Spencer, Eugene Begay, Louise Atcitty, Richard Yanito, Willie Skow, Donna Jones, Ben Whitehorse, Bessie Holiday, Clyde Benally, Dutchman Rentz, Glee Bedonie, Harrison Hudgins, Harry Johnson, Irene Ben, James Jim, Janet Chee, Joe Ben, Kenneth Maryboy, Lena Jones, Leonard Lee, Leonard Miller, Mary Lou Harvey, Mary Johnston, Rebecca Benally, Shorty Todachinnie, Bessie Jim, Briana Austin, Florence Cly, Jean Salt Fat, Ken Sleight, Jimmy Fat, Ronald Chee, Thomas Chee, Albert Howard, Dorothy Jones, Charley Todachinnie, Alex Bitsinnie, Francis Shorty, Joe Tree, Tom Atene, Forrest Cuch, Willie Begay, Edyth Tahe, Herbert Yazzie, and my mother, Clara Maryboy.

This book's design is the creation of Scott Aucutt. The beautiful photos of our people were taken by Lynn Hoffman-Brouse, and of our lands by Chris Noble.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Round River Conservation Studies very generously support this work.

It is a great honor to serve my people. A'he'hee,

Mark Maryboy
Mark Maryboy



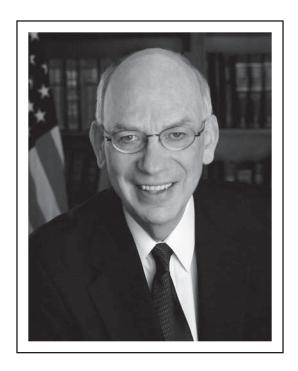
A LETTER FROM FORMER PRESIDENT PETERSON ZAH

Public lands reside in the hearts of all Americans. Unspoiled beautiful landscapes, such as these in San Juan County have inspired great visionary thinking throughout history. These snow capped mountains and red rock deserts are the ancient homelands for so many who once lived here, and all who visit today can feel their beauty, history and spiritual strength.

Much of the ancestral lands of the Navajo Nation and so many other tribes are within the public lands system. The management and care of these lands is integral to the vitality and future of all native people, when these lands are abused, Native Americans are abused.

It is with a sense of great hope and pride that I witness Navajo People sharing their memories, knowledge, and feelings about these sacred lands that so shaped and continue to enrich our culture and well-being. I trust that as Americans we can all recognize the value of hearing these voices and seeing these landscapes as places of significance to our collective future.

Peterson Zah



A LETTER FROM FORMER SENATOR BOB BENNETT

One of the greatest opportunities I had while representing the people of Utah was to travel the state and learn about people and the things that matter most to them. I learned quickly that "place" is virtually inseparable from people as we identify ourselves culturally, socially, and economically in terms that reflect our surroundings.

The people and landscapes of southeastern Utah are emblematic of our western way of life. The epic landscapes serve many purposes for a wide array of folks, in addition to providing a spectacular stage and backdrop on which people live their lives. As individuals, we do not always agree on matters related to public lands, but it is crucial that we listen to and respect all perspectives. These lands mean many things to different people; it is imperative to craft thoughtful, comprehensive stewardship plans. The common value among all involved is the hope of passing our values and experiences on to future generations.

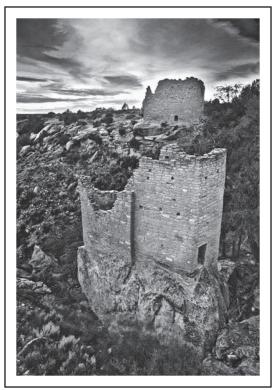
I am pleased that the Navajo people answered the call to identify and prioritize their values and land uses on public lands within San Juan County. This is not an easy task; however, it is very important. Successful land-use legislation is about people coming together, sharing their values, and creating a vision that preserves the integrity of the landscape and the diverse purposes it supports. Input from the Navajo people is critical for a successful process.

Robert F. Bennett

Former United States Senator

Robert Benney





Hovenweep National Monument.

INTRODUCTION

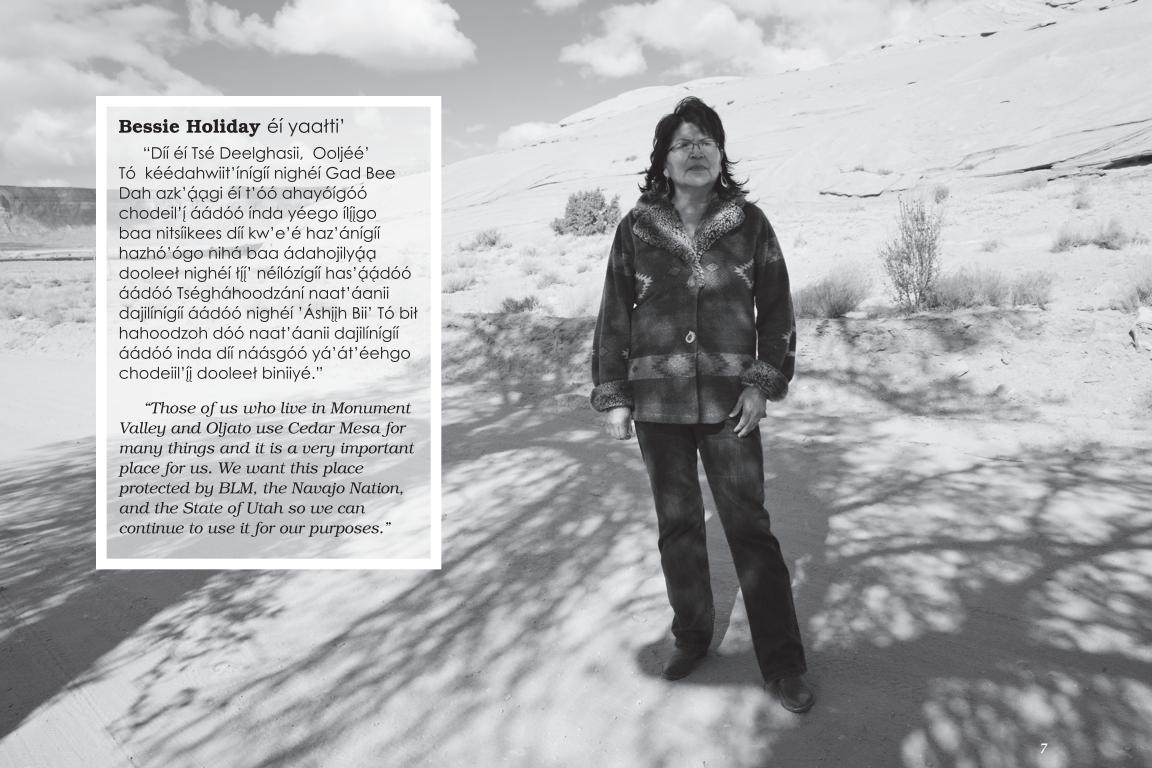
Diné Bikéyah is the land of the Navajo People. Diné Bikéyah exists as a physical being, and within the hearts of all Navajo, as it has nurtured and sustained our way of life since the beginning of our existence.

We, the Navajo, who reside in what is now the State of Utah, wish to communicate to our fellow Utah and American citizens our deep connections and commitments to these lands. These perspectives we express here are not new, but they have rarely been voiced beyond our people. As others continue to argue about the fate and appropriate use of these lands, they continue to be desecrated and dishonored. Therefore, we have now chosen to share our Elders' wisdom, as there is so much hanging in the balance for our future generations.

Contrary to the beliefs of many, southeastern Utah was not an empty place waiting to be inhabited by Mormon settlers or discovered as a playground for city people, but rather it was our home and the home to many Paiute and Ute people as well. Each of these tribes, as well as others like the Hopi and Zuni, occupied this land and to this day maintain strong ties to this region called San Juan County, Utah. Furthermore, several distinct civilizations over thousands of years were here before us, and their uniquely intact archaeological record is sacred to all Native American people and of great significance to American history.

This beautiful expanse of land between our four sacred mountains, Mount Blanca, Mount Taylor, San Francisco Peaks, and Mount Hesperus is our place of origin. Here our spiritual traditions are rooted. Today, we continue to rely on and utilize public lands for practicing our ceremonies, gathering herbs, firewood, and cedar poles, hunting for game, rejuvenating our spirits and caretaking of our sacred places. Our oral traditions, our stories, spring from the canyons and mountains of San Juan County.







Chief Manuelito (1818-1893) photo courtesy of the Bridgeman Art Library.

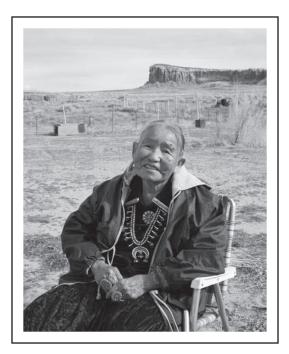
DINÉ HISTORY

Every Navajo child learns about our legendary Chief Manuelito who was born north of Cedar Mesa in a Diné village at Bears Ears. His bravery and leadership rescued many Navajo from being captured by the United States government, earning him a strong place in history. Likewise, many Navajo are tied to the region north of the San Juan River as their ancestors also resided here. Presently administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service, Cedar Mesa is open to livestock grazing, hunting, mineral exploration, firewood collection, and all forms of motorized use, all with no recognition for its significance to Diné People. This is only one example of many areas we have an obligation to see preserved and protected for future generations. Therefore, we now recognize our voice must be heard and we must reestablish ourselves as effective stewards for these lands.

Unfortunately, we do not believe Washington DC decision makers, Salt Lake City environmental groups, or even many other residents of San Juan County understand and appreciate how Navajo people view public lands or utilize its resources. We are therefore skeptical and even fearful for what we might yet lose from our traditional places. The historical relationship between our people and the United States and Utah governments has not often been favorable toward our interests. There are very few examples where our participation has led to outcomes respectful of Diné perspectives, or were sympathetic to the desires of our people. Therefore, it is with a guarded sense of hope, that our Elders discuss these lands and the role they play in the lives of Diné People.







Clara Maryboy éi yaałti'

"Laanaa niidzin saad bii' doodzoh díí kéyah bee hazáaniígií nihił nilinígií biyi' yisdzoh dooleeł háálá nihikéyah bitsáaji' kónihi'di doolníłígií éi dooda. T'áá íiyísí éi ílíjgo baa nitsídeikees nihimá nahasdzáán t'áá beelt'éego haala éi bee hinii'ná."

"We would like to see language included in the lands bill to protect Navajo interests. We do not want to be excluded from the land. It is very important, essential, that we continue to belong to mother earth for our survival."

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Globally, there is a growing recognition of the pragmatic and ethical necessities to recognize the rights of indigenous populations and to fully involve them in processes of land use planning and management. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations in 2007 and recently signed by President Obama, calls for indigenous peoples' participation in all decisions that affect our lives; recognizes subsistence rights and rights to lands, territories and resources; outlaws discrimination against indigenous peoples; and defends our right to remain distinct and to pursue our own visions of economic and social development.

Here in America, Native Americans occupy a unique legal position. We too are American citizens, entitled to the same legal rights and protections under the Constitution that all other citizens enjoy, as well as members of self-governing tribes. Native Americans are descendants of peoples who possessed their own inherent rights. These rights are of particular importance with respect to decisions regarding public land management designations that may permanently affect our use of and access to these lands. Vast portions of federal and state public lands constitute the ancestral territories of Native American tribes. These lands remain sacred and in many cases economically, culturally, and spiritually vital to the tribes. Federal and state government have an obligation, both legal and moral, to involve native tribes in major decisions affecting access and use.

Over the last few decades, the U.S. government has taken important measures to ensure that Native Americans' claims on public lands are recognized, especially where designations impose restrictions on the general citizenry, as is the case in wilderness and similar types of protected areas. Thus, international treaties, precedence, and U.S. policy support the participation and co-management arrangements that we, the Diné people, are now seeking.







Yucca in bloom.

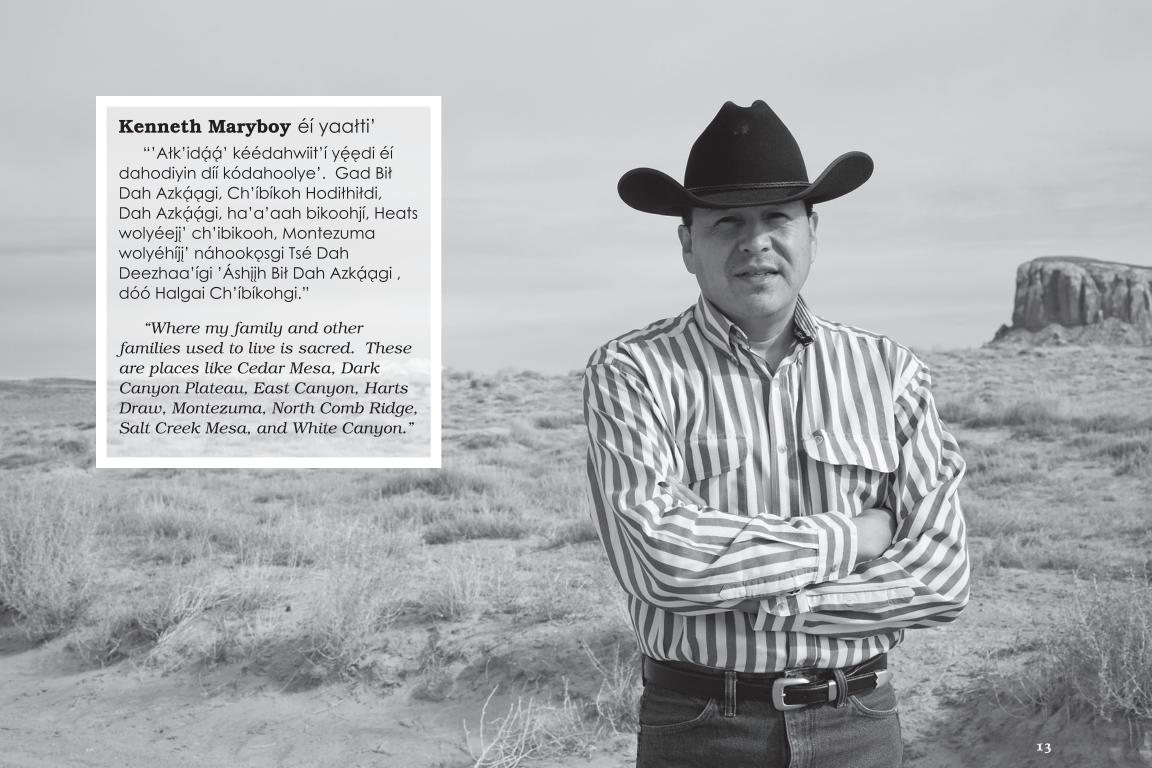
SAN JUAN COUNTY LAND PLANNING

A legislative process was initiated in February 2010 by former Senator Bob Bennett to resolve the debate over public lands and wilderness protection in San Juan County. This course of action was modeled on recent legislation in Washington County, Utah in which the local communities and other stakeholders collaborated to end decades-old bickering that had kept many lands in a permanent state of limbo and uncertainty. The Washington County Bill resulted in designating some lands as wilderness, creating special management areas to protect biologic, scenic, recreational, and other values, auctioning lands off for private development, and in general, zoning the land to guide future use.

In San Juan County, Navajo Nation Council Delegate and County Commissioner Kenneth Maryboy represents Diné interests. Through discussions with our Elders and in consultation with his brother Mark Maryboy, Commissioner Maryboy has launched this effort to gather information on Navajo historic and current land values to truly represent Navajo interests. This small book describes our big effort and our goals for a land planning process. We are thankful to Kenneth and Mark Maryboy, as they possessed the wisdom and foresight to initiate this process through the direction of our Elders.

This is an effort to share our collective interests with others. We also invite the Ute, Paiute, Hopi, and other tribes who share a history and future stake in these lands to contribute, as well. Our research and mapping will result in an articulation of the recommendations of the Diné people with regards to the future management of the lands within San Juan County. Many politicians and bureaucrats have told the Utah Navajo that our interests will be considered as land planning proceeds. We want to believe them. If our voice is not recognized as legitimate, then whose is? We very strongly believe our voice deserves to be heard and acted upon.







Leonard Lee éi yaałti'

"Bilagáana éí ádaaní aná'iildééh áádóó t'áadoo bohónéedzáa da áádóó ájídin jileehgo éí háadishíí yádiłhiłdi óolaa bee hahodét'éego áadi éí hooghan hool'áágóó haghan łeh. Nihidine'é éí ádaaní anída'iildeehgóó éí t'áá kóó nihimá nahasdzáán bik'áa'gi hait'éego ájídin jileego ako hwii'sizíinii ních'i nahadzan bii' hólóo łeh. Adinídíín doo biyi'ji' cha'hałheł dóó biyigi tó dó' áádóó níyol biyi'gi hojílóo łeh jíní."

"White folks say heaven is beautiful and somewhere in the sky. When you die, you live in a city of gold forever. But to our people, heaven is here on Mother Earth and when you die your spirit remains on earth, in the sunlight, dark night, water and wind."







Dutchman Rentz éi yaałti'

"Díí 'Áshjih Bii' Tóoji' Diné nihidiníjij' níléí tíí' neilózígíí bikéyah bik'áa'ji' éí t'óó ahayóígóó éí íit'í áádóó díí kéyah bikáa'ígi éí nihi'iina' háálá éí ch'iiyáán áádóó hooghan bee dahoozdoh, danihi'éé' atdó' doo nihinidahaga' biniiyé."

"The Utah Diné have activities going on these public lands all the time... We still live off the land, utilizing the resources available for food, heating, clothing and ceremonial purposes."

WILDERNESS AND ECOLOGICAL VALUES

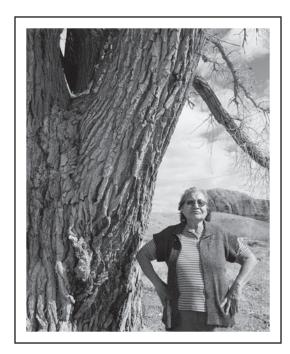
Wilderness designations or the presence or absence of roads have been central to the debate over land management in San Juan County. Even though the Wilderness Act does not mention native people, its inherent restrictive measures do ensure protection from development and recreation impacts better than other federal land classifications. Thus, we are favorable toward designating wilderness to protect the natural character, wildlife values and cultural heritage of these landscapes.

Another priority concerns our ability to access areas for hunting, gathering, ceremonial, and spiritual reasons. Therefore, the continued use of select roads is very important to Diné People. Likewise, some existing roads that are facilitating damage should be decommissioned.

This effort is largely characterized as describing and mapping areas that are important for cultural reasons. It should be understood that much of our culture evolved and stems from the animals with which we share this land. We do not separate the land from the animals it supports. Because the land-use debate in San Juan County has focused so much on the presence or absence of roads, many other important land-use factors have been ignored. As well, we are hopeful that we can help to broaden the discussions to better include a greater suite of ecological values.







Bessie Spencer éi yaałti'

"T'áá ałk'idą́ą' diné binahagha' éí ch'il nanise' chodeiniil'í níléí náhooko sjí daholó háálá éí yéego dadiyin t'áá Diné bił hahoodzoh bikáagi t'éíyá hóló' áko díí ch'il nanise' choidił'jįłígíí áadi t'éiyá nanise' hóló."

"Most traditional Navajo ceremonies require plants north of the reservation because of the scarceness of vegetation on the reservation; and some of the herbs required for the ceremonies only grow in these areas."

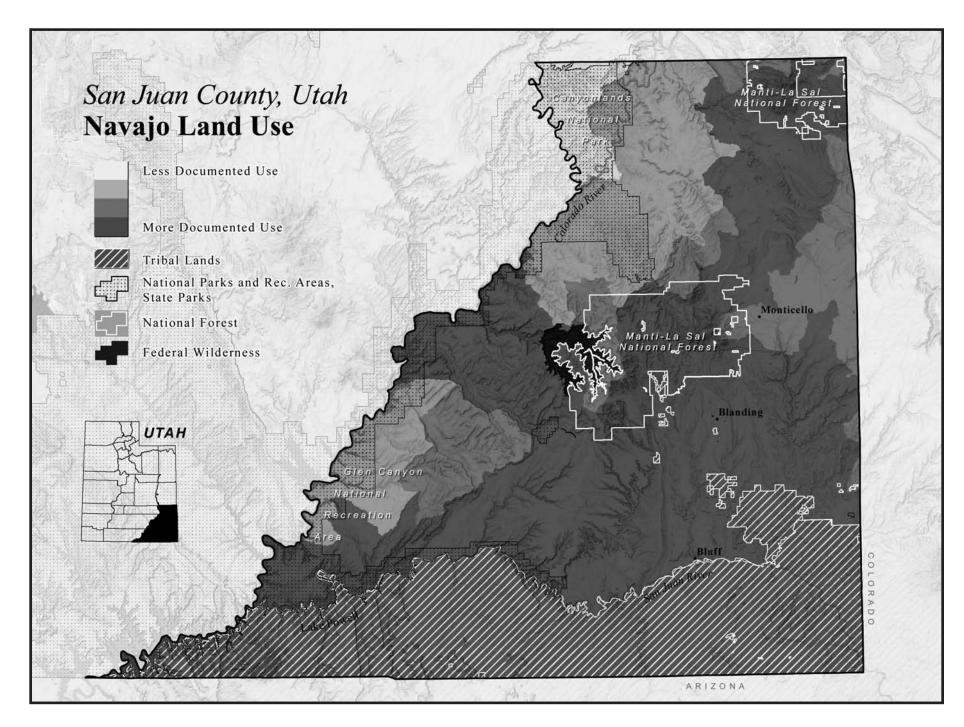
UTAH NAVAJO LAND PLANNING

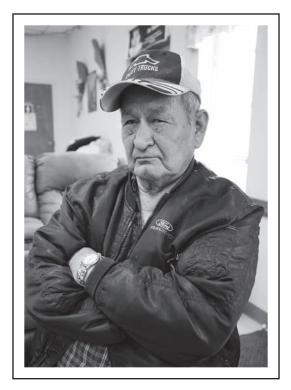
To identify Navajo interests on public lands within San Juan County our proposal is being developed based on a series of interviews and mapping exercises with Utah Navajo Elders and Medicine Men. Additionally, available data sets on wildlife habitats within the county are being collected and a biological assessment completed. The resulting interview and biological assessment will be combined to best depict a Diné Bikéyah National Conservation Area.

Due to limited time and resources, this research and our results may not fully represent a comprehensive review of all sites, regions, and uses that are important. Therefore, in addition to providing the recommendations in our proposal, the Utah Navajo hope to work jointly with county, federal, and state agencies, as well as others to develop a comprehensive, long-term management plan for the county that recognizes and addresses present and future Navajo interests and needs.

Although our work is ongoing, several important points can be made. Protection of the rich cultural heritage sites within San Juan County is a top priority for the Navajo. Diné Elders speak clearly and consistently about their desires for a voice in determining land management in San Juan County. Development, recreation, and grazing impacts are negatively affecting cultural sites and land uses of the Diné people. Federal agencies have not been able to protect these resources alone. Therefore, we seek stronger policies, and the means by which we can assist with monitoring and enforcement activities related to antiquities protection.







Joe Ben éi yaałti'

"T'áá'íídáá' t'óó ahayóí nida'asztiin. Díí kojį' nihił hahoodzooígíí County bi'dinínígíí biyi'. 'Atiin aniidí ánídadoolniił ha'nínígíí éí nichǫ' áádóó díí nida'aztiin nihik'éí dóó nihichóoni' kéédahat'ínígíí t'óó dadazhdi'doołkał."

"We have enough roads in the county. New ones do not need to be built. Roads where our ancestors use to live would be the right places to close off the roads."

UTAH NAVAJO LAND PLANNING CONTINUED

The public lands of San Juan County are our home, yet often we perceive that federal agents, recreationists, and outside hunters do not welcome us. In order to play a larger role in the management of lands critical to the future well being of the Navajo, our proposal will put forward a measure to collaboratively manage sites important to the Diné and other Native American tribes. Collaborative management offers a more equitable approach for addressing the interests of those affected by land use designations, and creates opportunities to capitalize on our knowledge of the area and its values. We believe these advantages are persuasive in light of inadequate funding for management activities, and in the face of limited compliance or outright opposition to management regulations from local interests.







Florence Cly and Ronald Chee, Blanding Westwater community

DINÉ BIKÉYAH NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

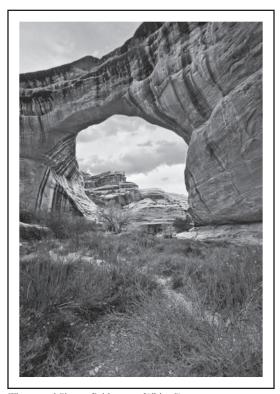
The Utah Navajo is proposing the creation of the Diné Bikéyah National Conservation Area extending north along the border of the Navajo Reservation. A National Conservation Area provides the best management approach to this region, as it allows for a diversity of uses and designations of the land, while directing resources towards the priority management issues, such as cultural and natural resource protection.

The goals we propose for the Diné Bikéyah National Conservation Area are to:

- Provide clear management prioritization toward the protection of cultural and biological resources over other land-uses;
- Increase funding allocation to improve management of resources for this region;
- Create a process that recognizes the legitimate interests of the Utah Navajo on federal land; and
- Provide a means of incorporating the extensive and valuable knowledge of the Navajo into land management decisions.







The sacred Sipapu Bridge over White Canyon.

NAVAJO ROLE

To honor the deep history and continuing interests of the Navajo Nation in this region, we will be proposing that the Utah Navajo have a formal role in planning and managing the Diné Bikéyah National Conservation Area. Because the Utah Navajo actively use and rely upon these lands, management of the area should incorporate Navajo input to effectively protect the diverse resources encompassed by the National Conservation Area.

For the Utah Navajo, the opportunity to collaborate in the management of the Diné Bikéyah National Conservation Area ensures that these lands will be managed in a manner that protects our interest in San Juan County. Federal agencies will also benefit from Navajo contributions to planning and management due to more diverse input to inform decision-making, and increased resources for management and enforcement.

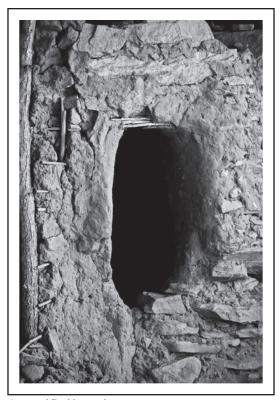




"Diné dóó Anaasází dabighanéegi éí dahodiyin dóó íiyisíí ílí. T'áá haa'ída hooghan ál'iihgo t'áá áko éí nahaghá ál'iih. Haashíí nízáádgóó nihimá nahadzáán bikáá' kééhwiitíi dooleeł biniiyé díi jóhonaa'éí nídídááh, nídadiyoł dóó tó nídadinahígi át'éego ákót'éego éí Diné 'íílí. Si'ah naaghái bibee haz'áanii bik'ehgo éí díí ałk'idáá' dah hooghan yéegi t'áá íiyisíí éí dahodiyin."

"Residential sites of the Diné and ancient sites are sacred and important. Whenever we build a hogan on a location, we conduct a ceremony to live in harmony with mother earth as long as the sun shines, the wind blows and the river flows. According to this natural law, all the former residential sites are sacred."





Ancestral Puebloan ruin.

MOVING FORWARD

Diné people have long been observers in the debate over management of public lands in southwestern Utah. This is not because we do not care, or do not want to play an active role in the stewardship of these lands and natural resources. Simply, no one asked. We care a great deal about these lands. This is our time to share our concern and to help maintain these lands in their natural state for generations to come. We have centuries of knowledge that has been passed down through generations. Collectively we have an obligation to see that the beauty, sacredness, and abundance of life within these lands be restored and maintained.

The Native American history in San Juan County is of global significance. The era of looting, vandalism, and development of these sites should now end. Native people will have a role in protecting these sites. Our perspectives will improve the future management of these lands through ancient values and conservation practices informed by native wisdom of the tribes that have occupied this landscape for millennia. Navajo People believe this path forward with lead to healthier lands, stronger people and communities throughout San Juan County.







