



**FIRST NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**  
EDUCATING • ADVOCATING • CAPITALIZING

**Western Agency Chapters Technical Assistance  
Project:**

***Strategies for Advancing Individual Farmers and  
Ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency***

**A Final Report to the U.S. Department of  
Agriculture Office of Advocacy and Outreach**



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*About the Cover:* Photo taken by Vicky Stott. Navajo home site with a small farming area in Tuba City, Arizona.

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## Executive Summary

In 2011, First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) conducted the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project on the Navajo Nation. The goals of the project were to:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of USDA's available programs by selected Navajo Nation Chapters with farming and ranching programs located within the Navajo Western Agency;
2. Increase the pool of well-qualified Navajo Chapter applicants with farming and ranching programs within USDA's programs;
3. Increase the organizational capacity of USDA grantees and potential applicants with farming and ranching programs to carry out their programs effectively; and
4. Identify challenges that prevent individual farmers and ranchers located within the geographic location of the Navajo Nations Western Agency from participating in USDA opportunities and to identify strategies that will assist in advancing individual farmers and ranchers.

Groups targeted under this project included individual farmers and ranchers located within the geographic boundaries of the Navajo Nation Western Agency, organizations that serve them and Navajo Nation grazing officials.

First Nations' approach in achieving these goals included the provision of convenings, onsite training, outreach, and individualized technical assistance. In identifying challenges and solutions to assist in overcoming those challenges, surveys were conducted and sessions were facilitated at convenings to obtain feedback from individual farmers and ranchers, grazing officials and key stakeholders working to advance farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency.

To generate awareness and understanding of USDA's programs, First Nations collaborated with local and regional USDA field offices, the Navajo Nations Department of Agriculture, Navajo Nation Western Regional Business Development Office, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Agency Office.

To increase the pool of well-qualified chapter applicants and build their capacity to participate in USDA programs, four organizations were initially selected to receive ongoing technical assistance, an organizational capacity assessment to gain insight into the organization's skills and capacity in five key areas, and financial assistance to attend the First Nations hosted institutes. Toward the latter portion of the project a fifth organization was incorporated into the project to collaborate in the delivery of a 2-day training institute for Navajo Nation Grazing Officials.

In total the five organizations included two nonprofits, two chapters, and one 1994 land grant office. The organizations consisted of:

1. Diné College Land Grant Office
2. North Leupp Family Farm
3. Shonto Community Development Corporation
4. Tolani Lake Chapter, and
5. Tonalea Chapter

## ***Challenges Identified***

The challenges identified by individual farmers and ranchers located in the Navajo Western Agency and the organizations that serve them fell into six primary areas:

1. Resources
2. Education and Awareness
3. Processes/Strategies
4. Infrastructure
5. Access to Markets
6. Bennett Freeze

Observations made during the project also indicate that there are numerous technical assistance providers and resources available to assist individual farmers and ranchers in various capacities. Tribal programs, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and religious organizations have emerged to address the issue of agriculture, ranching, food systems, and economic development on the Navajo Nation. However, though these programs exist, complications arise from the organizations often providing similar services complicating existing processes and generating territorial areas and groups in which one can serve, creating a sense of disorganization and isolation by the individual farmer and rancher. Couple the situation with regulations imposed under the Navajo Nation Grazing Act authorized in 1957 that require consideration.

The Navajo Nation Grazing Act was authorized at a time when the population on the Navajo Nation was approximately 79,000 and 91 Chapters were officially incorporated<sup>1</sup>. Today, the population has grown to over 200,000 members and 110 Chapters but grazing regulations still reflect a population of 79,000 when livestock dipping was manageable and grazing officials could effectively manage branding and tallying the livestock. As a result, organizations and programs have emerged to address the deficiencies and needs of the individual farmers and ranchers that have gone unmet.

## ***Resources***

One of the primary barriers cited by individual farmers and ranchers was the lack of financial resources, machinery and operating equipment, limited access to resources primarily provided on the internet, and in some instances, limited access to land due to increased fractionation.

## ***Education and Awareness***

With information and resources available online, many elder traditional farmers and ranchers expressed challenges in navigating the internet due to limited knowledge of the English language. With the Navajo language remaining, in many cases, as the primary language, information, materials require translation and interpretation. Therefore, language presents a challenge that prevents them from accessing technical information.

Many of the individual farmers, ranchers and grazing officials who participated in the project were aware of the USDA programs available but unaware of the eligibility requirements. Conservation planning was also

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<sup>1</sup> *Chapter Images: 2004 Profiles of 110 Chapters*, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, LSR Innovations, April 2004.

another challenging area identified. Many session attendees were unaware that to participate in USDA programs like EQIP and other USDA programs, they were required to develop a conservation plan. Through sessions provided by USDA-NRCS Dilkon Field Office, individual farmers and ranchers were introduced to the NRCS 9-Step Conservation Planning Process. Many individual farmers and ranchers learned that NRCS was available to assist in their conservation efforts.

### ***Processes and Strategies***

Some individual farmers and ranchers indicated that strategies and processes required for obtaining a grazing permit and/or a land use plan are unclear and, depending on who is providing the assistance, the information can be misguided or incorrect. Complicate this matter with areas designated as Navajo Partitioned Lands which involve a different set of processes that are evolving as the Tribe attempts to manage these areas.

### ***Infrastructure***

The lack of infrastructure was also cited by individual farmers and ranchers as a challenge. Although roads exist, in many instances a sudden downpour or wind can make paved roads impassable due to flooding or migrating sand dunes. These roads do not include those leading to home sites, farms, or ranches, which are often unpaved and become mud packed during the winter runoff and rainy seasons.

Another component to infrastructure impacting individual farmers and ranchers is the lack of basic utilities. The lack of these basic necessities prevents individual farmers and ranchers from gaining access to the internet where potential opportunities could be identified and from making direct contact with USDA field offices. The lack of running water creates the added challenge of hauling water not only for domestic purposes but in many instances during hot dry summers, to sustain livestock and newly planted crops.

### ***Access to Markets***

All the challenges cited contribute to the individual farmer/rancher's access to market. Currently, many individual farmers sell their produce at roadside and at local community flea markets. Though numerous small convenience stores are located throughout the Navajo Nation they stock primarily packaged food items with the limited produce that is often overpriced and not in good condition. Local grocery stores could provide a market to small farmers and ranchers but, identifying strategies to access those markets is a challenge when stores are corporate owned and local employees do not have the authority to purchase from local producers.

### ***Bennett Freeze***

As a result of the Bennett Freeze, some land use permits and grazing permits previously held by farmers and ranchers in the Bennett Freeze area were revoked and only recently have the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Navajo Nation begun to implement strategies to address the issue.

With housing, infrastructure, and road repair initiated after 40 years of the Bennett Freeze, many individual farmers and ranchers struggle to identify resources, assistance, and processes required to initiate their farming and ranching efforts that have been stagnant for over 40 years.

## ***Strategies to Advance Individual Farmers and Ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency***

In addressing the challenges expressed by individual farmers and ranchers during the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, the first inclination is to reflect on the needs, deficiencies, and issues, a common approach and one that involves a great deal of financial and human resources to initiate and implement. A second approach is one that capitalizes on community strengths and assets. Assets that are currently in place and that can contribute to advancing individual farmers and ranchers strengthen the tribe and communities culturally, economically, socially, and environmentally. It is an approach that works to regain control of tribal and community assets that may include, but are not limited to the culture, land, water, community groups, leadership, community members, and language. It is an approach that First Nations has researched, supported and proven in its work to strengthening American Indian economies over the last 30 years.

In developing strategies to advance individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency, it is important to build on existing assets of the tribe, communities, and individual farmers and ranchers in order to develop sustainable long-lasting solutions. In initiating this effort, the first step is assessing a specific set of assets characteristic of American Indian communities. These assets were defined through research and case studies performed by First Nations that have proven successful in creating American Indian economies. They include financial assets, physical assets, natural assets, institutional assets, human capital, cultural assets, social capital, and political assets. Assessing these assets on a tribal, chapter, and individual level will assist in determining how each can work simultaneously to re-establish control and contribute to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. It is a means of looking inward at the community and assessing realistically the assets and capacity possessed by individual farmers and ranchers, the chapters and the tribe.

In First Nations' experience in working with Tribal communities for over 30 years, this asset-based approach has proven successful. Like many other tribal communities, the Shonto Community Governance (SGC) has utilized this approach to assess and understand community assets. In doing so, they have re-established control of their assets, begun utilizing and leveraging them, and have been successful in retaining, creating, increasing and controlling them for the betterment of their community. This successful model as defined by First Nations is community asset building based on American Indian definition of assets utilizing the elements of development that includes spirituality, kinship, individual capacity and control of assets.

Using First Nations approach, the following strategies are recommended as next steps to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency in addition to the individual farmers and ranchers themselves:

### **A. Engage Communities**

The 1-day convening conducted by First Nations during the project provided initial insight to capacity and assets possessed by the tribe, chapter, and individual farmers and ranchers. The convening provided a platform to share with the group, current projects, intent, and potential collaborative efforts as well as identify key priorities in advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency (Appendix D).

Recommendations: Continue convenings to build on the conversation initiated during the project and engage individual farmers/ranchers and other organizations and programs that were not in attendance. Engaging the communities will generate ownership and buy-in, a component required to create sustainable solutions.

## **B. Restructure Institutional Assets**

A 2-day Institute was provided to Navajo Nation grazing officials and farm board members. At the training, First Nations facilitated a 1-day session to obtain feedback on the challenges that grazing officials face on a daily basis in their efforts to assist individual farmers and ranchers. As a result, the grazing officials developed seven areas of priority required to effectively and efficiently serve farmers and ranchers. Upon review of priorities, it is evident that the role of the grazing official has transformed immensely in comparison to federal regulations outlined in the Navajo Nation Grazing Act authorized in 1957.

Recommendations: Assess existing systems in place. Revise or create structure, organization, and governing systems to decrease government instability. Create a system that reflects on current trends, community assets and the culture and, in doing so, generate community engagement and decrease frustration currently felt by farmers/ranchers and grazing officials.

## **C. Regain Control of Assets**

The first step is acknowledging and understanding existing assets. Upon identification and acknowledgement of those assets only then can the tribe, chapter, and individual farmers and ranchers begin to control, utilize, leverage, retain, create, and increase their opportunities.

Recommendations: Convene entities that work to assist individual farmers and ranchers to identify the contribution of each organization and develop strategies for collaboration. Develop strategies and policies that map out processes and resources available to individual farmers and ranchers.

## **D. Establish a Mentoring & Peer Learning Environment**

At each project convening, whether it was an onsite visit, workshop or Institute, participants were inclined to share their knowledge, experiences, and expertise with the group on topics that addressed traditional and present day farming practices and its relevance to the Navajo culture. Many participants learned about farming history on the Navajo Nation, the impact of historical trauma on farming and ranching, and historical farming patterns.

Recommendations: Opportunities for mentoring and peer learning should be further developed formally. Peer learning will assist in ensuring that history, culture, and traditional practices are acknowledged and integrated into new policies, practices, and systems, in addition to teaching new leaders best practices for navigating processes and systems. A prime example is pairing a seasoned grazing official with a newly elected grazing official to provide collaborative opportunities as well as teach best practices and share experiences that will assist in overcoming roadblocks.

## **E. Increase Capacity Building**

The Diné College Land Grant Office (LGO) was established in 1994 to promote the creation of food-secure communities and development of sustainable agriculture. Since that time, they have been working with Navajo communities to advance farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation. During the project many farmers, ranchers, and grazing officials cited the lack of education and training as barrier to participating in USDA programs. As an organization with the educational infrastructure to provide

culturally appropriate training and access to technology and resources, they are strategically positioned to serve as center for agricultural learning and research. With branch campuses, they are best suited to serve as the center of agriculture learning that builds on existing models, mentoring, and provides peer-to-peer learning in the classroom and in the field.

The Diné College LGO could serve as the center for community based teachings that can be provided to individual farmers and ranchers and the organizations that serve them.

Recommendations: Strengthen efforts that teach tribal members, farmers, ranchers, and communities the impact of agriculture on their food systems, economy and livelihood. Continuous teaching and capacity building is critical to regaining control of farming and ranching today and for the future. Organizations that serve individual farmers and ranchers should be continuously strengthened so that they can effectively and efficiently serve and become sustainable viable organizations and programs that contribute to the tribal economy.

Utilize and increase the capacity of the Diné College LGO so that they provide the learning and research environment as well as the development of mentoring and peer-to-peer learning.

#### **F. Policy**

Policy on a federal, tribal, and even agency level must be changed to reflect the asset-building initiatives, change, and capacity building that are imperative to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. Assisting individual farmers and ranchers to become successful producers benefits the individual farmer and rancher by building individual assets, but if the tribe, chapter, and/or agency does not set systems in place or support the benefits resulting from building those assets, the opportunities will flow away from the community and tribe, into surrounding non-Native border towns.

Recommendations: Consideration should be given to development of an Agriculture/Ranching and Food policy. The policy should support existing assets and identify how the benefits of building current assets contribute to the community. As a sovereign nation, the Navajo Nation has the authority to request schools serve only locally grown organic vegetables, they have the authority to request local grocery stores stock their shelves with local produce, they have the authority to request local restaurants purchase from local farms. Just as the Navajo Nation has the authority to require non-native businesses to adhere to the Navajo Preference requirement, they have the authority to mandate the food available to tribal members. Such policy will assist the Navajo Nation in regaining control, restore the food system, generate economic development, and advance individual farmers and ranchers in the process.

### ***Conclusions***

First Nations Development Institute accomplished the goals of identifying challenges, developing awareness, and increasing the capacity of individual farmers, ranchers, and the organizations that serve them. As a result of the project, conservation plans were developed by a number of organizations as the first step in participating in USDA programs, technical assistance was provided to chapter communities to advance their

efforts in obtaining LGA certification and training was provided to increase the ability to better manage financial assets, increase leadership skills, engage the community and participate in USDA opportunities.

This project initiated a shift on the Navajo Western Agency that has resonated on a tribal, community, and individual level, where ideas, information and visions emerged to become concepts and priorities to strengthen farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency, where organizations, community groups, farmers, ranchers, and tribal leaders came together to reflect on strategies to advance farming and ranching.

The outcomes of the convenings, Institutes, onsite visits, and outreach were met with enthusiasm and a renewed sense of collective thinking with project participants stressing the importance of continued efforts and research in order to develop sustainable solutions and concepts applicable to the Navajo Nation.

In developing long-lasting solutions and concepts to overcome the challenges identified during the project, the tribe, community and individual farmers and ranchers must re-establish control of existing assets that contribute to farming and ranching. Assets that can be utilized, leveraged, created, retained, increased, and controlled in order to generate economic development, restore food systems, revive healthy communities and re-establish the tribal control in manner that is consistent with the culture and traditional ways of life.

*The social and cultural world in which the Diné women and men lived encouraged them to own more livestock. A large, thriving herd testified to one's ability to work hard and to take good care of the animals.*

- Peter Iverson, *Diné A History of the Navajos*

*I say that the automobiles will displace the Navajo horse in a few more years then the time will come for the income producing animals, means a good day for their owners. So let all Indian stock owners be looking for a better type of livestock and a better method of farming that will feed the livestock.<sup>2</sup>*

- Alfred Damon, Navajo Delegate (CA 1952)

## I. Introduction

Like many other Native American tribes, the health, economy and culture of the Navajo people have been impacted by federal policy. In the last 200 years, Native Americans have experienced a reduction in control of the land and a disruption in traditional agricultural practices that has resulted in dramatically changed diets and lifestyles.<sup>3</sup>

Today the leading health concerns for the Navajo tribe are alcoholism, diabetes<sup>4</sup> and obesity, all of which are related to historical trauma, poor diet and lack of fresh foods. The majority of Navajo tribal members residing on the Navajo Nation rely on conventional food sources and food distribution centers with many traveling an average of 100 miles to obtain groceries, portraying a significant food desert, areas that lack access to farmers' markets, supermarkets, or producers selling affordable meat, poultry, and other staples. The Navajo Nation is a tribe who at the height of livestock production reported over one million sheep units, utilized sheep as a form of commerce, understood the delicate balance of land restoration and grazing through summer and winter pastures and today, still regard livestock as creatures entrusted to them by Holy Ones. It was a scenario depicting the delicate balance between culture, health, economy, and the environment and, one that defines a sustainable local food system, where food production, processing, distribution, and consumption coalesce to enhance the environment, economy and social well-being of the Navajo people.

Today, as the Navajo Nation works to address diabetes and obesity, it is essential to employ the knowledge, support and assistance of individual farmers and ranchers. Many Navajo farmers and ranchers hold the knowledge of traditional farming practices, are cognizant of the land and climate conditions required for

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<sup>2</sup> Iverson, P. and Monty Roessel, *For Our Navajo People: Diné Letters, Speeches, and Petitions 1900-1960*, 2002. University of New Mexico Press.

<sup>3</sup> *First Nations Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool*, Longmont, CO; First Nations Development Institute 2004. © 2004 First Nations Development Institute.

<sup>4</sup> The Navajo Health and Nutrition Survey concluded that the prevalence of diabetes mellitus among Navajos is four times higher than the prevalence for the United States population as a whole. According to: Will, J. C., Strauss, K. F., Mendlein, J. M., Ballew, C., White, L. L., & Peter, D. G. (1997). Diabetes mellitus among Navajo Indians: Findings from the Navajo health and nutrition survey. *Journal of Nutrition* 127 (suppl), 2106-13.

successful farming, and understand the local food preference whether it be for ceremonial purposes, consumption or market.

In 1993, the “Just Move It” campaign was initiated on the Navajo Nation to encourage and motivate community members to become physically active in order to prevent diabetes and heart disease. What started with 482 participants in 20 communities, has flourished to over 47,000 participants in 136 communities in 2009.<sup>5</sup> Community members have embraced physical activity as a way to prevent diabetes and obesity. Couple that momentum and interest in physical activity with access to fresh foods and the impact could be magnified. As such, Navajo farmers and ranchers serve as crucial link in addressing the local health issues as well as generating pathways for economic opportunities and growth. But with approximately 40.1 percent of Navajo families below poverty level (compared to the national rate of 9.9 percent), and the Navajo median household income at \$20,005 (compared to the national income level of \$40,558<sup>6</sup>), many Navajo farmers and ranchers struggle to advance entrepreneurial efforts due to lack of access to resources, capital, and assistance, for reasons associated with geographic isolation, lack of internet services and language barriers.

Challenges are similar to those experienced by other minority producers; however, the challenges of Navajo farmers and ranchers located within the geographic boundaries of Navajo Western Agency are further complicated by the complexities of the Bennett Freeze, local governance, grazing permitting, land withdrawal and relocation.

To address and assist minority producers in gaining access to USDA opportunities, the U. S. Department of Agriculture initiated the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (OASDFR) Program designed to enhance the coordination of outreach, technical assistance, and education efforts, to socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers and forest landowners in a linguistically appropriate manner and to improve their participation in the full range of USDA opportunities.

Under the USDA-OASDFR program, First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) was selected to conduct the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project. The goal of the project was to provide technical assistance, training, and outreach in order to:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of USDA’s available programs by selected Navajo Nation Chapters with farming and ranching programs located within the Navajo Western Agency;
2. Increase the pool of well-qualified Navajo Chapter applicants with farming and ranching programs within USDA’s programs;
3. Increase the organizational capacity of USDA grantees and potential applicants with farming and ranching programs to carry out their programs effectively; and
4. Identify challenges that prevent individual farmers and ranchers located within the geographic location of the Navajo Nations Western Agency from participating in USDA opportunities and to identify strategies that will assist in advancing individual farmers and ranchers.

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<sup>5</sup> Data source: Just Move It, [www.navajojmi.org](http://www.navajojmi.org)

<sup>6</sup> According to the U.S. Census 2000.

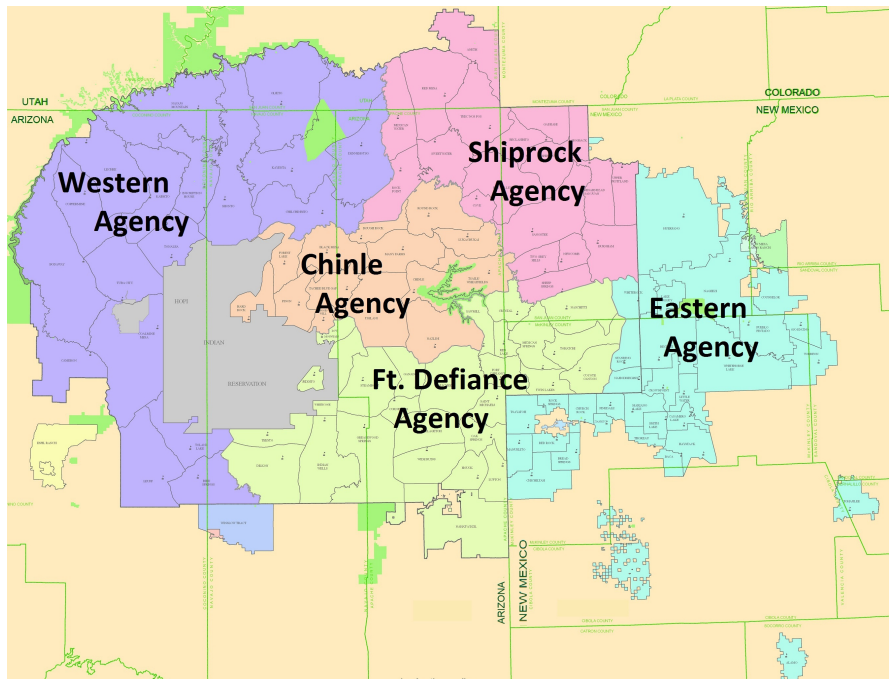
This report will summarize the activities conducted under the Navajo Nation Western Agency Technical Assistance Project and the results observed in an effort to create awareness, build capacity, and outreach to individual farmers and ranchers located within the Navajo Nation Western Agency. In doing so, the report will:

1. Provide a brief overview on the state of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation specific to the Western Agency.
2. Summarize outreach, technical assistance, and training activities provided to individual farmers and ranchers and community based organizations working to assist Navajo farmers and ranchers.
3. Showcase best practices and experiences of selected project partners in their effort to strengthen the organizational, economic, and governing infrastructure through agriculture and farming in their community.
4. Summarize challenges and barriers, as identified by individual farmers and ranchers and key stakeholders in their work to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation.
5. Summarize key priorities and strategies required to advance farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency as identified by individual farmers and ranchers and key stakeholders.
6. Provide recommendations based on First Nations’ extensive experience in working with Native communities on local food systems, food security, and food deserts and the observations and findings observed during the project.

## II. Navajo Nation Overview

As the largest reservation in the United States, the Navajo Nation has an estimated land base of 27,000 square miles occupying northeastern Arizona, extending into the southeastern portion of Utah, and northwestern portion of New Mexico and, is often compared to the size of West Virginia. The reservation is comprised of five governing agencies that are divided into 22 land management districts (also referred to as grazing districts). The land management districts are further divided into local chapters for a total of 110 Navajo Nation chapters.

Figure 1 – Navajo Nation Agency Map  
(Map provided by Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, Navajo Land Department GIS Section)



At the local chapter level, communities are governed by elected Tribal officials consisting of a chapter president, chapter vice president, secretary, treasurer and a grazing official with representation at Tribal Council through an elected council delegate. In 1998, the Navajo Nation adopted the Local Governance Act (LGA), Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code. The purpose of the LGA is to provide chapters the authority over local matters, to define legislative and executive functions of chapter officials and staff, to improve community decision making, and to instill a local governing atmosphere that encompasses chapter accountability<sup>7</sup>.

With the average age of a Navajo Nation Chapter of 53 years, local governance prior to the adoption of the LGA was provided by the Navajo Nation central government. To become a local governing chapter, chapters must meet and implement the LGA's Five Management System policies and procedures that address fiscal management, personnel management, procurement management, property management, and records management. Upon completion of implementation, the Navajo Nation will approve local governance through a certification process, thereby enabling the chapter to achieve a higher level of autonomy.

As of September 16, 2011, twenty-seven chapters had achieved LGA status, which has enabled them to reshape their governing infrastructure, become more autonomous from the Navajo Nation, and to develop local strategies to increase economic and community development.

Figure 2 below summarizes the organizational structure of the Navajo Nation agencies, their land base, land management districts, American Indian (AI) population and number of chapters per agency.

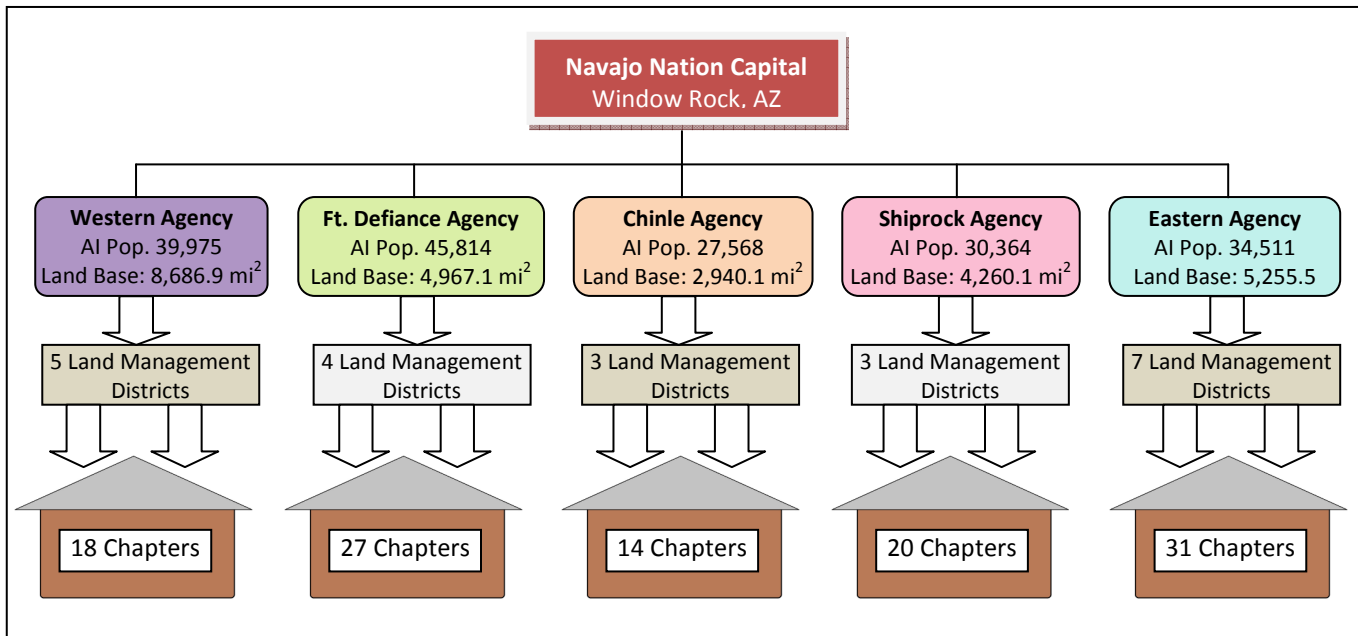


Figure 2 – Navajo Nation Agency Organizational Structure

<sup>7</sup> Navajo Nation Office of Auditor General, 2006

## ***Use of Land for Farming and Ranching on the Navajo Nation***

Since Navajo Nation land is communally owned, managed by the tribal government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), there is no private land ownership. Farming, ranching, home building, business development, and other special uses of Navajo Nation tribal lands require authorization from the BIA and the Navajo Nation.

Under the Navajo Nation, land may be withdrawn and allocated to enrolled tribal members (including individual farmers and ranchers), chapters, and businesses through a grazing permit, land use permit, and/or lease. The process of permitting land to tribal members for livestock was initiated as a result of the Livestock Reduction Program in the 1930's to control overgrazing and manage livestock on the Navajo Nation.

Land use permits are authorized for all land usages other than grazing, such as, but not limited to: home site leases, farming, governmental facilities, rights-of-way, schools, parks, business leases, etc.<sup>8</sup> Land transactions at the local chapter level are overseen by the elected Chapter Grazing Official. In this capacity, the Chapter Grazing Official is responsible for managing and monitoring land transactions within their geographic Chapter boundaries. One example of a grazing official's role may include assisting a community member and/or community group in obtaining a land use permit. The request is presented by the designated Chapter Grazing Official at the District Grazing Committee meeting. The meetings are often attended by the USDA-NRCS District Conservationist, BIA Rangeland Management Specialist, representatives from the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), and Navajo Nation Extension Agents, in addition to the Chapter Grazing Officials. The District Grazing Committee will assess the request for the land use permit. Discussion may include, but is not limited to, conservation practices, environmental impact, community benefits and economic impact. Upon approval, the request is forwarded to the Navajo Nation for further approval.

Another form of land permitting is grazing permits which authorize livestock grazing on the Navajo Nation. A grazing permit is issued and monitored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs with recommendations from the District Grazing Committee and oversight by elected Chapter Grazing Officials. Upon receipt of a grazing permit, an individual farmer/rancher is allowed to graze a designated number of livestock as noted on the grazing permit.<sup>9</sup>

Under the grazing permit, it is the responsibility of the individual rancher (permittee) to ensure they adhere to conservation requirements outlined in the authorized permit, record and report all types of livestock managed on the designated land, pay any applicable administrative and tribal fees and maintain animal identification (branding).<sup>10</sup>

The livestock carrying capacity designated on each grazing permit may be determined by range conditions, current climate and environmental factors, and the farmer/rancher's planned conservation and ranching activities. The carrying capacity is identified in terms of sheep units yearlong. Table 1 outlines livestock equivalent of sheep units.

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<sup>8</sup> *Navajo Partitioned Lands*, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 25 Part 161.

<sup>9</sup> *Navajo Nation Grazing Regulations*, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 25 Part 167, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> *Grazing Permits*, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 25 Part 166. April 1, 2011 Edition

Table 1 - Livestock Sheep Equivalent

Type of Livestock	Sheep Unit Equivalent
1 goat	1 Sheep Units
1 horse, mule, or burro	5 Sheep Units
1 cow	4 Sheep Units
* Any of the livestock listed above and less than one year of age does not contribute to the carrying capacity.	

Example: A grazing permit with a carrying capacity of 150 sheep units allows the rancher/farmer to manage any livestock scenario totaling 150 sheep units. Such as:

- 150 sheep or goats,
- 30 horses, mules, or burros,
- 37-38 cows, or
- Any other livestock combination that will result in 150 sheep units for livestock over 1 year of age.

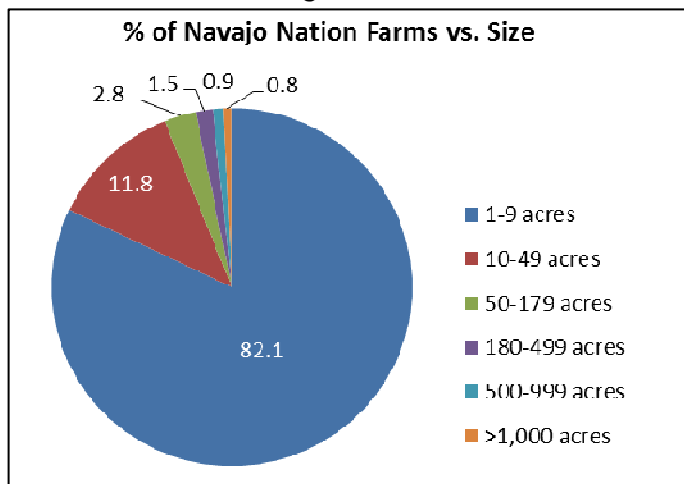
At the height of livestock production on the Navajo Nation, just prior to the onset of the Livestock Reduction program, capacity was reported at 1-2 million sheep units. In 2008, the Arizona Cooperative Extension<sup>11</sup> reported a total of 511,784 sheep units on the Navajo Nation which included horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and llamas.

Despite recent drought and fluctuating market, livestock production has historically been one of few economic enterprises that has been successfully managed on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development estimates that the value of cattle on the reservation is \$16 million, the value of sheep of \$3 million, the value of horses of \$625,000, and the value of goats of \$375,000. The total value of livestock exceeds \$20 million but the cultural importance of livestock to the local community goes far beyond its monetary value and indicative of its integration into the Navajo lifestyle for many generations.<sup>12</sup>

Based on the USDA Census on Agriculture,<sup>13</sup> 12,063 farms operated by American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) operators were reported on the Navajo Nation in 2007. They reported an average market value of agricultural products sold in the amount of \$4,948. Of the AI/AN farms operated on the Navajo Nation, a total of 3,015 (25 %) reported access to the internet compared to the national rate of 65 percent reported.

The average farm size in 2007 was 1,315 acres and as shown in Figure 3, the largest portion (82 %) of the farms ranged from 1-9 acres in size. Although land is abundant, over the years the transfer and division of grazing permits has resulted in increased fractionation of available land. As a result, challenges have arisen that potentially impact the growth of farming, ranching, community development and economic

Figure 3



<sup>11</sup> *The Navajo Nation and Extension Programs*, University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, AZ1470, October 2008.

<sup>12</sup> *Water Resource Development Strategy for the Navajo Nation*, Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources, July 2011.

<sup>13</sup> *2007 Census of Agriculture American Indian Reservations*, Volume 2 Part 5, U.S. Department of Agriculture AC-07-S-5, June 2009.

development on the Navajo Nation. These challenges arise from a reluctance to release land due to cultural significance, family ties, and historical importance.<sup>14</sup>

***The Individual Farmer/Rancher***

A total of 19,419 operators managed farms and ranches on the Navajo Nation in 2007. Of those operators, 66.9 percent considered farming their primary occupation with 78.3 percent reporting that they resided on the existing farm for more than 10 years.

Although a portion of the operators considered the farm their primary occupation, 25 percent of the operators worked outside the farm for more than 200 days in 2007.

***Navajo Nation Western Agency***

As the largest of the five agencies on the Navajo Nation with regard to land base (8,687 mi<sup>2</sup>), the Navajo Nation Western Agency consists of 18 Chapters, five land management districts, and two soil and water conservation districts (Figure 4). The Western Agency is located in the upper middle region of Arizona and expands north into the southern tip of Utah.

In comparison to the other four agencies, the Navajo Nation Western Agency had the least number of family farms reported in 2004, an indication of the impact that the Bennett Freeze on farming and ranching on the Western Agency (Table 2).

Table 2 - Navajo Nation Family Farms & Land Base by Agency

Agency	# of Family Farms Reported in 2004 <sup>15</sup>	Estimated Land Base (acres)
Shiprock	1205	2,726,438
Eastern	542	3,363,519
Ft. Defiance	884	3,178,931
Chinle	822	1,881,648
Western	380	5,559,621

The Navajo Nation Western Agency was selected for this project due to the complexities that the chapters and individual farmers and ranchers face with regard to the Bennett Freeze, in addition to challenges faced with regard to local governance, relocation and geographic location.

In 1966, the commissioner of Indian Affairs halted development on tribal land that was claimed by both the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribes while they negotiated ownership. Prior to its repeal in 2009, the freeze prevented the erection of buildings, homes and community infrastructure. Only now are Western Agency communities fully able to initiate development in this area that depended heavily on farming and ranching for their livelihood.

<sup>14</sup> 2009-2010 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy The Navajo Nation, Division of Economic Development

<sup>15</sup> Chapter Images: 2004 Profiles of 110 Chapters, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, LSR Innovations, April 2004.

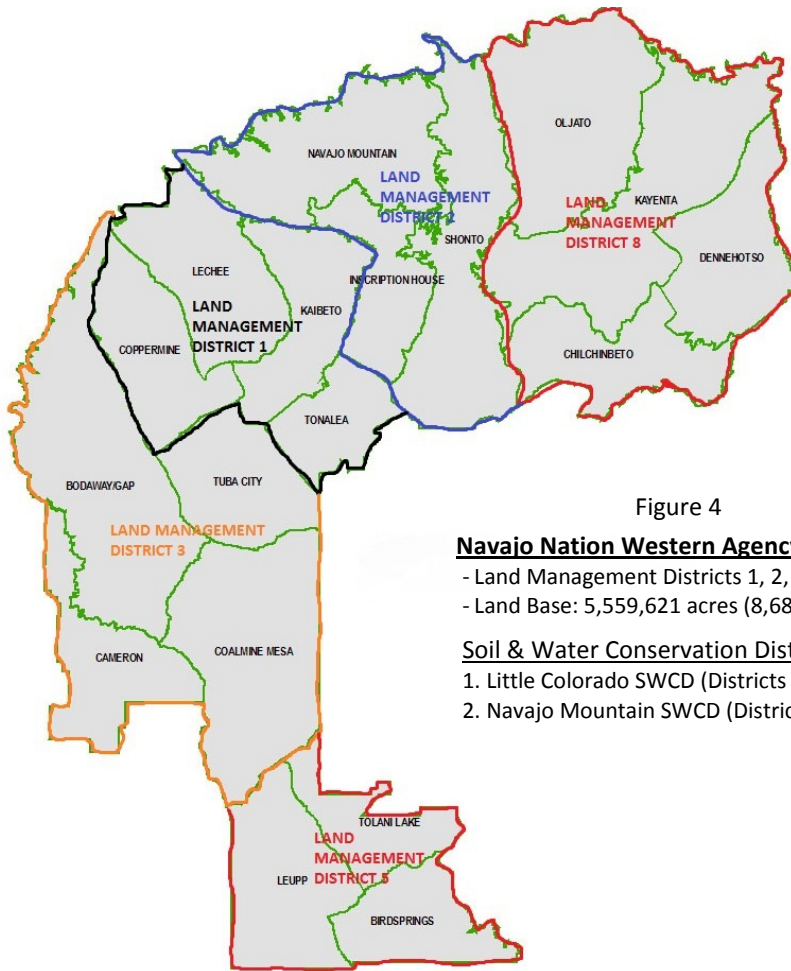


Figure 4

**Navajo Nation Western Agency**

- Land Management Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, & 8
- Land Base: 5,559,621 acres (8,687 mi<sup>2</sup>)

**Soil & Water Conservation Districts**

1. Little Colorado SWCD (Districts 3 & 5)
2. Navajo Mountain SWCD (Districts 1, 2, & 8)

In 2011, a total of 2,615<sup>16</sup> grazing permits (not including Navajo Partitioned Lands) were in place throughout the Navajo Western Agency with a total of 137,048 designated sheep units of which, 5,986 horses accounted for 21.85 percent of the total sheep units designated (Table 3).

Table 3 – Western Agency Land Management District Grazing, Farms & Land Base

Land Mgmt. District	# of Grazing Permits <sup>9</sup>	# of Farms in 2004 <sup>8</sup>	# of Sheep Units <sup>9</sup>	% of Units from Horses	Land Base (acres) <sup>8</sup>
1	532	67	26,671	20.6	920,032
2	359	71	17,218	22.5	996,360
3	666	33	40,501	19.6	1,519,392
5	357	90	22,280	20.3	655,573
8	701	97	30,378	26.6	1,468,291
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>137,048</b>		<b>5,559,648</b>

<sup>16</sup> Data provided by Navajo Nation Western Regional BIA Office, Tuba City, Arizona, January 2011.

## ***Navajo Western Agency Climate & Precipitation***

The Navajo Nation has been working to recover from a 10-year (1999-2009) drought that was considered the longest drought in recent history. Although a brief recovery period occurred from 2004-2005 it was not sufficient enough to provide sufficient recovery.<sup>17</sup>

Today, the Navajo Western Agency receives an annual rainfall of 3 inches per year<sup>18</sup>, coupled with warmer temperatures and reoccurring drought, this region is challenged with a large amount of migrating sand dunes that impact housing, transportation, farming, and ranching. This migrating sand is the result of generally shallow soils and insufficient vegetative cover as a consequence of low annual precipitation and soil water storage capacity.<sup>19</sup>

Precipitation on the Navajo Nation area occurs during two seasonal precipitation periods, winter and summer separated by a dry, windy spring. The winter precipitation occurs from December through March, and summer precipitation from July to August with 45 percent of annual precipitation resulting from the summer season.<sup>20</sup>

The Navajo Nation acknowledges the lack of adequate domestic and municipal water as one of the greatest issues facing the Navajo people and anticipates that as the problem escalates, it will also intensify socioeconomic conditions. To address the issue the Navajo Nation is working to identify water resource infrastructure deficiencies and develop strategies for addressing the deficiencies as outlined in the Navajo Nation Water Resource Development Strategy for the Navajo Nation<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, approximately 30 percent of Navajo homes lack access to domestic and municipal water and resort to hauling water for domestic, community, livestock and agricultural purposes. In a 2006 cost analysis of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project<sup>21</sup>, Dornbusch Associates summarized the economic cost of hauling water on the Navajo Nation at \$113 per thousand gallons which includes the costs for purchasing water, containers, operating a vehicle and allowing for the cost of the time required. By comparison, the current 2012 Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) general use water rate is \$5.20 per thousand gallons.

Water supplies on the Navajo Nation result from shallow aquifers which are sensitive to fluctuations in drought conditions. Therefore, if seasonal summer precipitation arrives late, the vegetation struggles to survive in the dry, hot conditions requiring many farmers and ranchers to resort to hauling water in order to maintain the rangeland and livestock. To address the lack of water resources, the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources (NDWR) works to maintain windmills, springs, and community water supply. In 2010 the NDWR reported the following water resources available within the Navajo Western Agency:

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<sup>17</sup> Redsteer, M.H. et al, *Disaster Risk Assessment Case Study: Recent Drought on the Navajo Nation, Southwestern United States*, Chapter 3, UN Global Assessment Report 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Redsteer, M.H., R.C. Bogle, and J.M. Vogel, *Monitoring and Analysis of Sand Dune Movement and Growth on the Navajo Nation, Southwestern United States*, USGS Fact Sheet 2011-3085, July 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Rhoton, F.E., Emmerich, W.E., Goodrich, D.C., Miller, S.N., McChesney, D.S., *Long-Term Soil Erodibility Database, Walnut Gulch Watershed, Arizona, USA*, Water Resources Research, SWRC Reference No.: 1900

<sup>20</sup> Redsteer, M.H. et al, *Disaster Risk Assessment Case Study: Recent Drought on the Navajo Nation, Southwestern United States*, Chapter 3, UN Global Assessment Report 2011.

<sup>21</sup> *Economic Benefit/Cost Analysis Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Planning Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Upper Colorado Region, Appendix D, Part 2, FES 09-10, July 2009.

Across the Navajo Nation the NDWR maintains approximately 900 windmills. Currently, the NDWR reports that approximately 20,000 acres of small Navajo farms utilize an estimated 100,000 acre-feet of water annually.

Western Agency Wells & Windmills

- 136 Windmills
- 100 Dug wells
- 433 Springs
- 2 Community Water Systems

### ***Local Governance on Navajo Western Agency***

Since the adoption of the Local Governance Act in 1998, seven Chapters located in the Navajo Western Agency have attained LGA certification. Achieving LGA certification provides the Chapters:

- Increased authority at the chapter level.
- Authority to restructure their local government in order to strengthen their economic, community, and political infrastructure.
- Authority to enter into contractual agreements with minimal oversight by Navajo Nation central government and,
- Oversee community land use planning.

Navajo Western Agency Chapters certified as of September 16, 2011 include:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Shonto Community Governance (09/1999)* | 5. Chilchinbeto Chapter (07/2011) |
| 2. Tuba City Chapter (12/2004)            | 6. Leupp Chapter (07/2011)        |
| 3. Kayenta Chapter (08/2010)              | 7. Birdsprings Chapter (07/2011)  |
| 4. Bodaway/Gap Chapter (12/2010)          | * <i>Month and year certified</i> |

## **III. Project Overview**

The First Nations Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance (TA) project was awarded on October 1, 2010 under the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (OASDFR) Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Advocacy and Outreach.

The goals of First Nations' project were to:

- 1) Increase awareness and understanding of USDA's available programs to selected Navajo Nation Chapters and individuals farmers and ranchers located in Navajo Nation Western Agency;
- 2) Increase the number of Navajo Chapter project participants with farming and ranching projects and community groups serving individual farmers and ranchers so that they are prepared to participate in USDA's programs;
- 3) Increase the organizational capacity of USDA grantees and potential applicants with farming and ranching programs to carry out their programs effectively; and
- 4) Identify challenges that prevent individual farmers and ranchers located within the geographic location of the Navajo Nations Western Agency from participating in USDA opportunities and to identify strategies that will assist in advancing individual farmers and ranchers.

In partnership with community-based partners, North Leupp Family Farm (NLFF), a nonprofit organization incorporated under the Navajo Nation and the Diné College Land Grant Office, First Nations worked to build on existing networks to access Navajo chapters with farming and ranching projects and individual farmers and ranchers that were interested in accessing USDA programs for programmatic expansion and business opportunities. Together the following objectives were conducted in order achieve the project goals:

- 1) Selection of four organizations communities and the Diné College Land Grant Office (LGO) to participate in the project. Organizations were targeted for assistance through this project because of their potential to fit into and take advantage of USDA programs.
- 2) Provision of individualized technical assistance to strengthen their organizational and programmatic development related to farming and ranching programs and awareness of resources available (particularly through USDA) to support these programs.
- 3) Provision of two 2-day training Institutes for representatives of the selected organizations in addition to organizations, chapters, and individual farmers and ranchers. The Institutes provided training on issues related to successful implementation of farming and ranching programs, sustainable organizational development and management, and available USDA programs.
- 4) Outreach and assistance to additional chapters and community groups located in and serving individual farmers and ranchers located in the Navajo Nation Western Agency. Through onsite visits and scheduled training sessions, First Nations' staff and consultants provided training in the areas of organizational development, conservation planning, and strategic planning.
- 5) Coordination with regional USDA field offices to provide training and technical assistance to individual farmers and ranchers, in addition to coordination with Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Western Agency, Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture, and Navajo Nation Regional Business Development Office.
- 6) Provision of one 2-day Training Institute for Navajo Nation Grazing Officials in collaboration with Diné College Land Grant Office. This Institute was specific for grazing officials so that they could learn current grazing knowledge to share with Navajo livestock producers who need this information critical to their farm and ranch operations while addressing challenges faced by grazing officials and identify solutions to assist the Dine' College in development of curriculum to address challenges identified.
- 7) Facilitation of one 8-hour convening for key stakeholders who serve individual farmers and ranchers in the Navajo Western Agency. The convening enabled participants to engage in the discussion to identify the challenges associated with advancing farming and ranching in the Navajo Western Agency and to develop recommended key strategies that will contribute to the advancement of farming and ranching.

### ***Technical Assistance***

Project partners included two Western Agency chapters, two native nonprofits and one 1994 land grant institution. They were:

- Tolani Lake Chapter
- Tonalea Chapter

- Shonto Community Development Corporations
- North Leupp Family Farm, and
- Diné College Land Grant Office

As a project partner, each organization received ongoing technical assistance (TA) provided through the provision of resources, conference calls, and onsite visits. Based on the results from an organizational assessment completed by the chapters and nonprofits, an onsite visit agenda was developed to strengthen their organizational and programmatic needs. In the latter portion of the project, the Diné LGO was incorporated into the project. They received an onsite technical assistance visit based on the needs identified in collaboration with First Nations.

Onsite TA visits were 1 ½ days in length, conducted at project partner location and open to key organizational staff members, chapter officials, board members, neighboring chapters, and other regional partners.

The purpose of the onsite TA visits was to bring the expertise, knowledge, and resources directly to the staff, partners, board members, and community members in a manner that is cost effective and enabled more people to learn, participate, and engage in discussions that may strengthen the capacity of the organization.

Technical assistance was provided by First Nations staff and consultants in manner that was linguistically appropriate as designated by project partners.

Onsite TA visits were conducted early in the project with the exception of the Diné LGO who received their onsite visit toward the latter part of the project. Conducting the visits early in the project allowed areas to be identified as needing further assistance that could be addressed during the remainder of the grant period.

Technical assistance was provided in areas that included, but was not limited to:

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Financial Management            | • Program Management & Evaluation  |
| • Recordkeeping and Documentation | • Short Term Action Planning       |
| • Grant Writing                   | • Community Engagement             |
| • Board Development               | • Nonprofit Management             |
| • Revenue Development             | • Conservation Planning            |
| • Strategic Visioning             | • Strategies for Community Farming |

In addition to the selected project partners, technical assistance was provided to the Dennehotso Chapter for a total of six onsite visits.

In total, 72 individuals received technical assistance to increase organizational capacity as a result of this project. Attendees primarily consisted of organizational staff members, chapter officials, CLUPC members, individual farmers and ranchers, and board members.

The top three areas in which technical assistance was requested included:

1. Conservation Planning
2. Financial Management and Accounting

### 3. Strategic Planning/Visioning

For a complete listing of onsite TA visits conducted, see Institute/Onsite TA Visit/Outreach Schedule in Appendix A.

#### ***Training***

Training during the course of the project was provided through three 2-day Training Institutes and workshops. To strengthen pre-existing networks and efforts on the Navajo Nation with regard to farming and ranching while providing training, First Nations collaborated with regional USDA Field Offices, Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Nation Business Regulatory Department, and other organizations working to advance farmers and ranchers on Navajo Nation.

#### **Training Institutes for Individual Farmers and Ranchers**

Training Institutes were conducted on March 17-18, 2011 at the Moenkopi Legacy Inn in Tuba City, Arizona and on August 4-5, 2011 at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Arizona. The Institutes were two days in length and intended to provide individual farmers and ranchers regional networking opportunities, generate awareness of USDA programs, introduce and present USDA regional resources and personnel, in addition to provide training on topics crucial to advancing individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency.



*Photo by M. WHITEMAN*

Training topics included:

- NRSC 9-Step Conservation Planning
- Conducting a Community Food Assessment
- Guidelines for Grazing Permits and Land Withdrawal on the Navajo Nation under BIA
- USDA Opportunities through USDA-Farm Service Agency for Western Agency Farmers and Ranchers
- Fundamentals of Nonprofit Startup
- Financial and Grant Management
- Navajo Nation Business Incorporation Requirements
- Building Strategic Partnerships
- Recordkeeping for Individual Farmers and Ranchers
- Paradigm of Dine' Philosophy in Relation to Conservation Planning
- Navajo Nation Agricultural Programs & Initiatives



*Photo by M. WHITEMAN*

Training Institutes were made available to individual farmers, ranchers, and key organizations working to advance individual farmers and ranchers located in the Navajo Western Agency.

Institute participants included individual farmers and ranchers, chapter officials, project partners, USDA representatives, extension agents, chapter staff, community nonprofits, and SWCD members.

Training sessions were provided primarily (80-90%) in Navajo language. Since a majority of the facilitators/trainers were regionally located, many were fluent in Navajo and

exceptional at interpreting federal and tribal policies and regulations in Navajo. Interpreters were also available however, they were rarely utilized. For a complete listing of facilitators, trainers, and TA providers utilized during the project see Appendix B.

In total 75 attendees, not including presenters, participated in both training institutes. Participating chapters and organizations included:

Navajo Western Agency

- Cameron Chapter
- Coalmine Canyon Chapter
- DINE, Inc.
- Dennehotso Chapter
- Inscription House Chapter
- Kayenta Chapter
- Lechee Chapter
- North Leupp Family Farms
- Shonto Community Governance
- Tolani Lake Chapter
- Tonalea Chapter
- T-2 Ranch
- Navajo Farming & Ranching Entities
- Navajo Mountain SWCD
- Diné Homeowners & Communities Association, Inc.
- Ganado Chapter
- Oak Springs Chapter
- Steamboat Chapter
- Teesto Chapter

Navajo Ft. Defiance Agency

- Ft. Defiance SWCD

## Training Institute for Navajo Nation Grazing Officials

Toward the latter portion of the grant period, First Nations, in collaboration with the Diné LGO, conducted a 2-day Training Institute specifically for Navajo Nation grazing officials and made available to all 78 grazing officials.

The purpose of the 2-day Training Institute was to provide grazing officials, farm boards, and extension agents the opportunity to receive training on conservation practices, grazing permitting, conflict resolution, the role of Diné Philosophy in Conservation Planning and their role in assisting individual farmers and ranchers' participation in USDA programs. Topics were selected in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency of the services provided by Grazing Officials to individual farmers and ranchers in their communities. During the Institute, one day was dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by grazing officials and to develop solutions that would assist the Dine' College Land Grant Office in development of curriculum to address those challenges. The technical knowledge provided at the Institute was aimed at helping Navajo farmers and ranchers gain a better understanding of the terrain, pasture, vegetation and how to determine the appropriate grazing strategy for the diverse terrain of the Navajo Nation and grazing strategies' impacts on riparian areas.

Since Navajo Nation chapter grazing officials serve as the first line of assistance to individual farmers and ranchers and manage and monitor land transactions within their geographic chapter boundaries, it was imperative to strengthen their capacity in order to advance farmers and ranchers. In their role as grazing official, they oversee land use permits, grazing permits, handle land disputes, and ensure that livestock are managed in accordance with the Navajo Nation grazing regulations. As such, elected chapter grazing officials are closely familiar with the farming and ranching projects in their communities.

Approximately 60-65 attendees participated in the 2-day Training Institute for Navajo Nation grazing officials. A total of 36 grazing officials participated representing 36 Chapters. For a complete listing of participating chapters, farm boards and SWCD's see Appendix C.

Prior to the convening, chapter officials were surveyed to obtain a snapshot of the needs, length of service, and number of farmers and ranchers served. Results are summarized in Table 4.



*Photo by J. FRANCKE*

**Table 4 – Survey Results of Participating Chapter Grazing Officials**

Percent participation by Navajo Nation Grazing Officials (78 – total number of Grazing Officials on the Navajo Nation)	46 %
Total number of farmers and ranchers served by all grazing officials in attendance (6 did not reply).	3,385
Average number of farmers/ranchers/permittees served by grazing officials in attendance.	120 per grazing official
Total number of represented Chapters with 1-5 community members participating in USDA EQIP program.	10
Total number of represented Chapters with 6-10 community members participating USDA EQIP program.	9
Average length of service as a Chapter Grazing Official.	11 years

Longest length of service as a Chapter Grazing Official.	40 years
Shortest length of service as a Chapter Grazing Official.	3 months

As part of the survey, grazing officials were asked to rank areas they considered most challenging in their efforts to serve Navajo farming/ranching permittees in their communities. The following top five areas identified with 1 representing most challenging:

1. Lack of Resources – Technical support and administration
2. Conflict Resolution
3. Leadership Support – Tribal/Chapter
4. Access to BIA/USDA/NN Requirements
5. Educating and Engaging Community Members

During the training Institute, grazing officials were guided through a facilitated session to collect feedback and establish a baseline from which the group could proceed in a consensus-based process to discuss, define and frame their vision of what needs to happen in the arena of farming and ranching and their role as grazing officials on the Navajo Nation. During the process, the group collectively identified:

1. What currently works for them in their work in their communities?
2. What works against grazing officials in their work?
3. What are the accomplishments that give grazing officials confidence in their ability to be successful?

Upon conclusion, the group identified a series of priorities that would assist in a 5-year vision that will enable them to collectively pursue as elected grazing officials in order to advance farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation. The priority areas identified are summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5 – Priority Areas Identified by Navajo Nation Grazing Officials**

<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
<i>Management Information System</i>	Increased use of technology
<i>Compliance &amp; Enforcement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update laws, mandate regulations</li> <li>• Increase Enforcement</li> <li>• Implement dependable Enforcement</li> <li>• Revise Navajo Nation Codes Title 3: Agriculture and Livestock</li> </ul>
<i>Secure Sustainable Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the availability of resources and materials</li> <li>• Provide financial support</li> <li>• Leveraged resources</li> <li>• Budget for Grant Writing and/or Planner</li> <li>• Grants/Matching Funds for Range Improvements &amp; Quality Livestock</li> <li>• Improve Range Management</li> <li>• Rehabilitate farm land</li> <li>• Provide a better vision of what we are ALL saving, our land and elements</li> <li>• Generate Navajo Production and Producers from sustainable farming and</li> </ul>

	ranching.
<i>Stewardship &amp; Conservation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Stewardship &amp; Management</li> <li>• Alternative Energy (Green Planet)</li> <li>• Successfully develop a range unit management program</li> </ul>
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create our own Grazing/Farming Department</li> <li>• Plan for Quality Livestock &amp; Produce</li> <li>• Expand the Teesto Vet Clinic</li> <li>• Plan Range Management Units for majority of Grazing Permits</li> <li>• Increase community farms on Navajo Land</li> <li>• Conduct assessments and soil analysis</li> <li>• Assist permittees with future plans for farms and ranches.</li> </ul>
<i>Outreach &amp; Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Awareness, Education &amp; Outreach</li> <li>• Increase Professional Growth &amp; Development</li> <li>• Provide Education &amp; Outreach for permittees</li> <li>• Educate permittees so that they will be able to sustain and understand regulations on land and livestock.</li> </ul>
<i>Alliances &amp; Partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Partnerships</li> <li>• Increase Support</li> <li>• Increase Participation in conservation activities</li> <li>• Partner with BIA on maintenance for RMU Fencing</li> <li>• Partnership with Diné College to grow as a technical service provider and/or certification provider.</li> </ul>

### **Other Training & Workshops**

In addition to the Training Institutes, training was provided to individual farmers, ranchers, and organizations serving individual farmers and ranchers. Training topics included grant writing, financial management, conservation planning, and strategic planning.

The following additional training activities were conducted:

1. 2-day Grant Writing Workshop – June 6-7, 2012
  - The purpose of the workshop was to provide attendees with an overview of USDA grant opportunities and to engage attendees in grant writing activities, so that upon conclusion of the training, participants had the first draft of a USDA grant proposal they planned to submit.
  - Participating organizations included:
    - Cameron Chapter
    - Dennehotso Chapter
    - Coalmine Canyon Chapter
    - Navajo Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District
    - Tolani Lake Enterprise
    - Tonalea Chapter
2. 8-hour Financial Management Training for Individual Farmers and Ranchers

- The training provided an overview of best practices in QuickBooks accounting software. The session covered financial terms and definitions, strategies for managing financials, and navigating through the software.
- Participating organizations included:
  - Navajo Nation Western Regional Business Development Office
  - Shonto Community Development Corporation
  - Diné Homeowners & Communities Association, Inc.
  - Shonto Community Governance
  - Tolani Lake Chapter
  - T'iinasbas Dah'da'k'eh
  - Biken Hozho Community Development Corporation

### 3. Nonprofit Startup & Management and Nonprofit Financial Management

- This 1 ½ - day training guided participants through training on Nonprofit Startup & Management and Financial Management. Many community groups located in the Navajo Western Agency acknowledge nonprofits as a strategy to advancing farming and ranching in their communities. The training provided an overview on the Navajo Nation requirements for incorporation and best practices for managing a sustainable nonprofit in manner that is accountable and transparent.
- Participating organizations included:
  - Diné Homeowners & Communities Association, Inc.
  - Cameron Chapter
  - Coalmine Canyon Chapter
  - Biken Hozho Community Development Corporation

### ***Outreach***

A majority of the outreach activities were provided at the onset of the project. During this time, presentations were conducted at local chapter meetings, local farming and ranching events, and district grazing committee meetings.

The focus of the project outreach efforts was to inform local farmers, ranchers, and communities about technical assistance and training available by First Nations and the project partners under the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project. For a complete listing of outreach activities see Appendix A.

## ***Additional Convenings***

On July 8, 2011, First Nations coordinated and facilitated a 1-day convening of key stakeholders currently engaged with Navajo farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. The intent of the convening was to establish a common point of reference for group assessment of long term vision and priorities for Navajo farming and ranching on Navajo's Western Agency.

The group of approximately 25 individuals consisted of a cross-section of Navajo farmers and ranchers as well as providers who work with communities and individuals on Navajo in the area of farming and ranching. Collectively, the group was invited so that they could:

- Reflect on the historical and current landscape of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation Western Agency,
- Assess current trends and issues with regard to farming and ranching in the Navajo Nation Western Agency,
- Contemplate what is at stake, should the inventory of trends and issues continue, and
- Develop an *informal* unified vision of farming & ranching on the Navajo Western Agency.

During the facilitated process, the group identified four areas as being on the forefront to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation Western Agency. The areas were then individually addressed by identifying what needs to happen in each area to advance farming and ranching and concluded with a consensus-based vision developed by the group. The four areas identified are:

1. Economic Development
2. Education and Research
3. Policy
4. Resource Management

The different stakeholders that were represented at the July 8, 2011 convening in Tuba City were representative of the broader cross-section of participants who need to be engaged in the process of formulating a plan and strategy to support the productivity and viability of farming, ranching and agriculture on Navajo Nation. The group of 25 could easily swell to 125 - 175 if their counterparts in other agencies and individual farmers and ranchers of the Navajo Nation were convened at one time.

Overall, the group had a positive response to being in consensus with each other; they individually and collectively voiced optimism and willingness to continue to come together. That optimism, and inclusive acknowledgement of each other, made this convening a success for the group's continued work together.

During closing session, the group collectively identified possible next steps and expressed enthusiasm about maintaining the momentum and motivation generated as a result of the convening.

For a complete summary of the outcomes that resulted from the convening see Appendix D.

## ***Project Partners***

Under Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, five organizations were selected as project partners. In this capacity, they received ongoing technical assistance, training, and resources to increase their capacity to serve individual farmers and ranchers. The five organizations consisted of two chapters, two Native nonprofits and one 1994 Land Grant Institution. As a project partner, the nonprofit organizations and chapters received a small financial grant for use toward organizational capacity building activities that contributed to services and programs they provide to individual farmers and ranchers.

The chapters were selected because they directly serve individual farmers and ranchers within their communities through the elected grazing official and through the provision of information on opportunities and resources therefore, it was essential to strengthen their organizational capacity, increase their awareness of USDA opportunities and enhance their outreach efforts so that they could better serve individual farmers and ranchers. Due to their geographic location and distance from Window Rock Tribal offices, Navajo chapters serve as an extension of tribal programs located in Window Rock. The chapters assist local community members including individual farmers and ranchers in gaining access to resources, programs and services. This often encompasses interpreting paperwork in a linguistically appropriate manner, faxing information to tribal program offices and/or placing telephone calls on behalf of the community member.

Under Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, two chapters were selected to participate as project partners. They were selected for their local farming and ranching initiatives, their association and location with regard to Navajo Partitioned Lands as a result of the Bennett Freeze and for their ongoing efforts to achieve local governance certification. The selected chapters included Tonalea Chapter and Tolani Lake Chapter.

The remaining project partners included two native-controlled nonprofits located and serving individual farmers, ranchers, and tribal members on the Navajo Western Agency. Nonprofits provide an alternative means by which resources and services can be provided to individual farmers, ranchers, and tribal members.

In recent years, the Navajo Nation has seen an increase in the number of nonprofit incorporations. In doing so, nonprofits can remain independent of Tribal bureaucracy and can pursue lobbying efforts on behalf of their communities and their initiatives.

However, along with this surge in nonprofit incorporations comes the potential for mismanagement, conflicts of interests and assistance required to build an organization that exemplifies transparency, sustainability, and responsibility. Similar to other rural communities, Native nonprofits are challenged by the lack of volunteers, board development, and community engagement. Couple those challenges with daily management of limited resources, the potential for mismanagement and conflict of interests can unintentionally permeate the organization and leadership. Under the project, technical assistance and training was provided to both nonprofits to strengthen the leadership and organization in order to increase sustainability as well as assist in providing them with managing and operating strategies to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of the staff, board, and volunteers.

The two nonprofits selected for the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project consisted of North Leupp Family Farm (NLFF) and Shonto Community Development Corporation (Shonto CDC). Located on the Navajo Western Agency, both organizations serve individual farmers, ranchers, and community members. They

each have been instrumental in bringing additional resources, development, and assistance to their communities and the region through strategic partnerships and alliances.

The fifth project partner was Diné College Land Grant Office (Diné College LGO). They were selected by the USDA 1994 Program to participate toward the latter part of the project. As a 1994 Land Grant Institution their purpose, as directed by U.S. Congress, is to carry out the U.S. Land Grant mission and goals. They fulfill this mission through planning, designing and development of culturally-based informal education, the implementation of research and establishment of extension programs pertinent to the tribal communities, individual farmers and ranchers, students and organizations serving individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Nation. In this capacity they engage in the following programmatic activities:

- To initiate, develop, organize and coordinate local community based projects that improve economic development, natural environmental resources, agriculture, and livestock;
- To partner with Diné College departments to develop academic curricula that will prepare college students for careers in these fields and provide professional advancement opportunities for staff, faculty and community members, and provide student recruitment and retention; and
- To establish partnerships at all levels with governments, public agencies, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and private entities in order to pursue funding, conduct and implement projects, present educational events, carry out research, and engage in other activities that serve the Navajo people.

As a project partner, Diné College LGO assisted in the delivery of the 2-day Training Institute for Navajo Nation Grazing Officials. In addition, the organization received technical assistance and training through a 2-day onsite visit designed to assist them in developing a strategic vision in their efforts to assist individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Nation through curriculum, training, and outreach.

With the exception of the Diné College LGO, each project partner was required to implement capacity building activities and/or initiate and expand programs that contribute to advancing farming and ranching in their communities.

The following section provides an organizational snapshot of each project participant summarizing their organizational capacity, services provided, and activities performed under the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project.



## Diné College Land Grant Office

PO Box 7B, Tsaile, AZ 86556  
Tele: 928-724-6941 Fax: 928-724-6949  
Email: [landgrant@dinecollege.edu](mailto:landgrant@dinecollege.edu)  
Website: [www.dinecollege.edu/institutes/lgo/](http://www.dinecollege.edu/institutes/lgo/)



Point of Contact: Benita Litson, Director

Established: 1996

Organization Status: 1994 Land Grant Institution

Location: Diné College Tsaile Campus, Tsaile, Arizona

Mission: To serve the College and Navajo Nation stakeholders through:

- Student and professional development, research and curriculum design;
- Economic and rural development;
- Community and local development;
- Natural resource and environmental management;
- Resource and information center at the College; and
- Partnership and networks that foster community empowerment

2010-2011 Projects:

1. Youth Development Programs on the Navajo Nation
  - a. Intended to educate Native American youth between the ages of 9-15 about the dynamics of the land and water. Achieved through youth camps, school presentation and afterschool activities.
2. USDA NRCS Agreement Conservation Projects, Illegal Dumping and Agricultural Workshops
3. USDA Forest Service Agreement: Youth Camps to Incorporate a Forestry Component

First Nations Navajo Western Agency TA Project Activities:

1. Technical assistance and support in coordination of 2-day Training Institute for Navajo Nation Grazing Officials.
2. Participation in three days of assessment and development of short term programmatic and organizational strategies and future vision of the organization.

First Nations Technical Assistance Provided:

1. On November 29-30, 2011, First Nations provided technical assistance to the Diné College LGO staff and invited key stakeholders working to advance farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation. The first full day focused on assessing historical agriculture projects, current projects, strengths and weaknesses. The session was intended to assist the Diné College LGO in developing strategies for the near term and a vision for the future.
2. On Day 2, Diné College LGO staff received training and technical assistance to assist in identifying and developing strategic partnerships, leadership development and strategies to increase effectiveness of outreach efforts and community engagement.

3. On December 05, 2011, First Nations concluded the remaining portion of the onsite visit with a facilitated session summarizing organizational goals and vision.

Outcomes/Results/Achievements:

Over the last few years, the Diné College LGO has been working to increase and improve their community outreach services in youth development and rangeland, farming, and livestock management. With individual farmers, ranchers, grazing officials, and key agriculture stakeholders identifying education and training as priority to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation, the Diné College LGO with its institutional background, is strategically positioned to advance and fulfill the need for education, training, and research in the area of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation in a manner that is consistent with the Navajo culture and traditional ways.

Through the Navajo Western Agency TA Project, Diné College LGO developed a clearer understanding of their history, strengths, weaknesses and vision for the future. As a result of technical assistance and based on their existing goals and mission, the staff identified specific objectives and strategies to guide them in achieving their mission to; *“Creating Sustainable Communities through Leadership Development, Research, Partnerships, Technology and Education”*.

Short term objectives and associated strategies are to:

1. Develop Leaders through Capacity Building by
  - \* Recruiting new participants
  - \* Recruiting new mentors
  - \* Developing mentors
  - \* Designing evaluation methodology
  - \* Completing a program self- evaluation
  - \* Establish upward mobility for intern(s)
  - \* Learning style
  - \* Developing curriculum
  - \* Working with respective institutions, and
  - \* Developing culturally appropriate curriculum
2. Establish Collaborative Partnerships by
  - \* Formalizing partnerships with respective Farm Boards, schools, tribal entities, others
  - \* Partnering with NMSU and U of A, re: Research
3. Utilize Integrative Technology by
  - \* Obtaining permission to post PDF resource materials
  - \* Establishing baseline data / database
4. Implement Community-Based Projects by
  - \* Securing land for restoration project
  - \* Using assessment for project design and sites
5. Secure Sustainable Funds by
  - \* Securing alternative funding sources
  - \* Creating internal capability to write grants

6. Create Awareness through Outreach and Education by
  - \* Expanding service area
  - \* Designing activities to be more experiential and hands on
  - \* Creating resource materials
  - \* Establishing resource booklet
  - \* Increasing Professional Growth & Development for staff (range & livestock management)
7. Facilitate Culturally Appropriate Research by
  - \* Ensuring research is community driven
  - \* Identifying all culturally appropriate research that need to be completed
  - \* Establishing Advisory Board

Located on the Navajo Nation with direct access to individual farmers and ranchers and current programs in place, the Land Grant Office is strategically positioned to become a center for farming and ranching research, education, and training on the Navajo Nation.

The first step was acknowledgement by the Navajo farming and ranching community which occurred during the training Institute for Grazing Officials. Many of the grazing officials in attendance recognized the potential opportunity for education and training through the Diné College LGO, especially since they were already providing outreach to many of the chapters. With continued assistance and support, the Diné College Land Grant Office has the ability to achieve the goals identified during the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project.



## **North Leupp Family Farm**

P.O. Box 5427

Leupp, AZ 86035

Tele: 928-235-1030

Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/leuppfarm/>

Point of Contact: Bill Edwards, Business Manager

Established: 1985

Organization Status: 501 (c)(3) Organization

Location: Leupp, Arizona

Mission: To promote the creation of food-secure communities and development of sustainable agriculture. And providing for and supporting a healthy lifestyle; encouraging environmentally sensitive agricultural practices; and advocating for the revitalization of Diné agricultural traditions.

First Nations Navajo Western Agency TA Project Activities:

1. Technical assistance and outreach to individual farmers and ranchers and organizations in the Navajo Western Agency.
2. Completion of conservation plan.
3. Approval of Land Use Plan for 100 acres that increase farm area from 13 to 100 acres.
4. Participation in organizational assessment and development of short term programmatic and organizational strategies of the organization.
5. Provision of training workshops on farming practices.
6. Purchase of farm equipment.

Outcomes/Results/Achievements:

As a project partner on the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, North Leupp Family Farm (NLFF) was instrumental in the development and coordination of outreach activities, training and technical assistance. Their participation provided the organization with increased recognition of the organization's capacity as a technical assistance provider and resource to individual farmers and ranchers in the areas of agri-business development, farm technology, conservation planning, strategic planning and marketing.

In 2011, NLFF successfully obtained a land use permit for 100 acres from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for use toward the expansion of the farm. Land withdrawal of such a large portion is a significant occurrence on the Navajo Nation and quite an achievement by NLFF that enables them to expand their agricultural efforts on the Navajo Western Agency.

In addition to the expansion of the farm, NLFF was successful in the completion of their conservation plan, a first step toward participation in the USDA-EQIP and other USDA programs.

Under the project, the NLFF also purchased much needed farming equipment. Equipment will be available to farmers for their use in maintaining their farming areas.

Challenges:

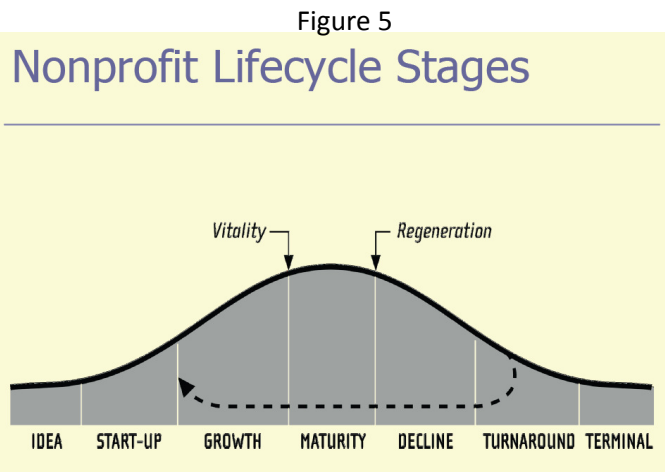
As a community-based organization, NLFF has maintained their mission since 1985 in promoting the creation of food-secure communities and development of sustainable agriculture. But like any other community-based nonprofit they struggle to balance opportunities for growth, existing projects, organizational development and adapting to constant change, in an environment of limited financial and human resources. In such circumstances, nonprofit leaders have to consider trade-offs to meet the needs of the community.

In Nonprofit Lifecycles (S.K. Stevens, 2001), the author depicts seven stages of a nonprofit lifecycle as a framework to assess organizational development (Figure 5). Based on historical information provided by NLFF, it is estimated that the organization has managed to turnaround and regenerate on a number of occasions over the course of 25 years. Driven by volunteers with support from various funders, NLFF’s priorities are to its mission with daily priorities to the farm, production, education and regionalization. Led by dedicated community members and volunteers, the organization is strategic in developing partnerships that enables them to continue their mission with minimal administrative costs.

Based on observations and activities achieved during the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, NLFF is once again undergoing a growth phase. A phase that Stevens’ defines as one in which the mission and programs have taken hold, but where service demand could exceed current structural and resource capabilities.

Solutions:

During the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project with Tolani Lake Enterprise, NLFF took efforts to develop a strategy for the future through the development of a conservation plan, participation in strategic planning sessions, and capacity building of new and existing leadership. While each nonprofit organization has a unique representation of organizational maturity, the reinvention of NLFF’s organizational maturity is yet to



*“Nonprofit organizations frequently are on the frontlines of representing community interests, they are a community-based resource that cannot be taken for granted. They require continual renewal to maintain their value and effectiveness. Leadership is a particularly important factor. Each generation must train and mentor the next generation to understand the important role and mission that nonprofit organizations play in expressing community interests.”*

Carol J. DeVita et al.  
Building Capacity in Nonprofit Organizations  
The Urban Institute 2001

achieve full potential. As they look to the future, they remain mindful of the impact and importance of collaborative partnerships, accountability, and planning to success. With the approval of the 100-acre Land Use Permit, NLFF is set to make an impact in the community and serve as resource to individual farmers and ranchers.



## Shonto Community Development Corporation, Inc.

P.O. Box 7701  
Shonto, AZ 86054  
Tele: 928-797-0519 Fax: 928-672-2862  
Email: shonto.cdc@gmail.com



Point of Contact: Phefelia Herbert, Board President

Established: September 2005

Organization Status: 501 (c)(3) incorporated October 2010

Location: Shonto, Arizona

Mission: To positively advance the economic and social development of the Shonto community and surrounding region while maintaining respect for local culture and customs.

First Nations Navajo Western Agency TA Project Activities:

1. Leveraged First Nations funding and provided a two-day comprehensive hands-on boot camp covering the essentials of grant seeking and grant writing strategies conducted by Dr. Beverly Browning.
2. Participated in technical assistance provided by First Nations to strengthen the capacity of leadership, staff, and Shonto Community Governance committee members.
3. In collaboration with the San Juan County New Mexico Soils Sustainable Agriculture, provided workshops on soil health.

Outcomes/Results/Achievements:

In April 1999, Shonto Chapter became the first Navajo Nation Chapter to achieve Local Governance Certification under the Navajo Nation Local Governance Act (LGA). Since then the community has worked to gain control of their own assets and build their capacity to determine their economic future in a manner that best fits the culture and needs of the community. To assist in their efforts they have conducted a number of strategic initiatives that have included but not limited to:

- Restructuring their governing systems;
- Engaging community members in the planning and implementation process;
- Building leadership capacity across the community;
- Conducting community planning sessions to allow for community-wide input; and
- Establishing strategies to minimize political interference.

Their diligence and steadfast commitment to their community building efforts has led to strategic partnerships, regional opportunities and the establishment of the Shonto Community Development Corporation (CDC) as a means to advancing economic and social development in the Shonto community and surrounding region.

Established in 2005 by the Shonto Community Governance, the Shonto CDC achieved IRS 501(c)(3) status in 2010. LGA certification coupled with nonprofit status has enabled Shonto to advance economic development

in their community through the CDC. In 2011 a number of projects were underway, which included the development of an artist and travel plaza, a public service and housing complex, and an electrification and renewable energy project.

Under the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, the Shonto CDC, in keeping with its mission to advance the economic and social development of the Shonto community and surrounding region, leveraged existing funding from First Nations to provide a two-day comprehensive grant writing boot camp conducted by Dr. Beverly Browning, nationally renowned author of *Grant Writing for Dummies*, in addition to numerous other best-selling publications on grant writing. As a part of the training, attendees developed an actual community project proposal throughout the 2-day course with guidance provided by Dr. Brown. Upon conclusion of the training, attendees had completed 95% of the proposal, which was to be completed upon return to their Chapters.

In addition to the grant writing boot camp, Shonto CDC also provided workshops in collaboration with San Juan County New Mexico Soils Sustainable Agriculture on soil health. The workshops emphasized proper irrigation methods, best practices for farming in the local ecosystem and techniques for reseeding.

#### Challenges:

As a community development corporation and nonprofit, the Shonto CDC experiences many of the similar challenges that other Native nonprofits do; limited human and financial resources and time. The organization's strengths lie in its leadership, programs/projects, and dedicated community members, indicative of the maturity stage in S.K. Stevens' depiction of nonprofit life cycles (Figure 5).

As is characteristic of the maturity stage described by S.K. Stevens, Shonto CDC has become well-established, a part of the community, has set administrative systems in place for program management and decision making, and has become a leader among its peers. Many Navajo Nations Chapters view the Shonto community and the CDC as a model on how to leverage the LGA certification to gain control of their assets to rebuild their community. However, at the maturity stage the organization can become challenged with maintaining the stamina that has propelled them to the current level of success. In this case, leadership must maintain motivation, financial resources, prevent programs and deliverables from becoming the organization's priorities, and continuously work to increase capacity. A scenario as defined by S.K. Stevens as "regeneration". The point of organizational reflection comes between the maturity and decline phase. It's when leadership becomes mindful of the organization's identity and impact in the community, and is willing to adapt to changes that will prevent becoming comfortable with the status-quo, which if left unattended could lead to decline.

#### Solutions:

Like many other Navajo Nation communities, Shonto was once a thriving farming and ranching community, today the community's goal is to become self-sufficient in a place where farming and grazing activities are in balance with residential needs, and where the traditional Navajo way of life is balanced with modern opportunities. In the last seven years, the Shonto CDC has been working toward that goal. To ensure success they have been strategic in the development of the organization's growth, mission, identity in the community, and partnerships. They acknowledge that the impact of their efforts is not solely based on their community but on the success of their neighbor communities as well. They look to increase economic and social development

by building leadership throughout the community, engaging community members, and in essence, they are rebuilding their community from the bottom up.

*“It is simply not enough to own assets – community must have the means to ensure that those assets are put to use in a sustainable, culturally compatible manner for the betterment of the individual and collective interests of the society. Therefore, to truly promote an asset-based approach to sustainable development as an effective strategy, one must address the ability of individuals and communities to access, control, and manage their assets.”*

Rethinking Asset-Building in Indian Country  
First Nations Development Institute



## Tonalea Chapter

P.O. Box 207  
Tonalea, AZ 86044  
Tele: 928-283-3430 Fax: 928-283-3435  
Website: <http://tonalea.nndes.org/>

Point of Contact: Betty Tso, Community Services Coordinator

Chapter Established: 1964

Organization Status: Navajo Nation Chapter (*Non-LGA certified*)

Location: Tonalea, Arizona

Chapter Farming & Ranching Goals: To provide traditional culturally oriented farm programs for youth in the community. To develop a commercial farm to plant and grow organic crops for resale to local businesses, residents, and provide employment.

First Nations Navajo Western Agency TA Project Activities:

1. To engage high school and college students in the development of a community garden. The students will clean the designated site and plan corn, squash, green beans, watermelon, and cantaloupe.
2. Reactivate the farm board and develop a small business plan to implement commercial farming.
3. Provide training and education on traditional farming techniques to youth and community members.
4. Recruit farm board members.
5. Increase organizational capacity building to advance the Chapter in the LGA certification.

Outcomes/Results/Achievements:

In 1982, the Tonalea Chapter established a community farm and allocated 96 acres of land for that was used as a commercial farm and by community members. At its height the farm provided opportunities for local farmers to grow specific crops that were marketed and sold to grocery stores and Purina. Crops included corn, beans, peaches, apples, apricots, and grapes.

Under the First Nations Project, Tonalea Chapter took the first steps in reviving the farm with the appointment of new board members, initiating a planting process and assessing soil conditions. With the new farm board in place, the chapter's intent is to conduct the first planting season in the summer of 2012 with five acres of corn and two acres of beans, followed by revitalization of the orchard, irrigation systems, and addition of other crops.

In addition to providing economic opportunities for the community, a portion of the harvest will also be prepared and stored for community use and emergency purposes.

To advance the chapter's organizational capacity, the Tonalea Chapter received technical assistance to advance their efforts in achieving LGA certification. Through the project, First Nations assisted the chapter in the development of records management plan.

Challenges:

As a noncertified chapter, activities conducted by the Tonalea Chapter remain under authority of the Navajo Nation. All fiscal matters remain governed by the Tribe and operating procedures are those enforced by the Tribe.

In the process to become a certified chapter, Tonalea Chapter must implement processes and procedures outlined in the LGA Five Management System. Upon completion, the chapter will have policies and procedures in place to address fiscal management, personnel, procurement, records, and property. The challenge lies in the fact that since the chapter's incorporation in 1964 (48 years ago), the Navajo Nation has managed and maintained oversight of these activities. Therefore, creating and implementing nearly 50 combined policies and procedures from the beginning can be an overwhelming task for an office staff of 1-2 people, who are also required to respond to the daily needs of the community and ensure continued progress of existing community initiatives and projects.

As the chapter looks to revive the farm board and the farm, they encountered the challenge of engaging the community. Under the First Nations project, they worked to identify members for farm board and near the end of the project were able to identify local farmers to participate.

#### Solutions:

The strength of the Tonalea Chapter lies within the leadership and their commitment to advancing the community through farming opportunities. The achievement of LGA certification will greatly assist in their efforts to restore the farm to commercial status as it was in the past.

In looking within the community and relying on existing assets that consists of leadership, the farm, the people, farming skills, historical knowledge and the culture, the Tonalea Chapter has the capacity to re-establish control of the community.



## Tolani Lake Chapter

HC 61, Box 3001  
Winslow, AZ 86047  
Tele: 928-686-3285 Fax: 928-686-3287  
Website: <http://tolanilake.ndes.org/>

Point of Contact: Valerie Kelly, Chapter Manager

Chapter Established: 1955

Organization Status: Navajo Nation Chapter (*Non-LGA certified*)

Location: Tolani Lake, Arizona

Chapter Farming & Ranching Goals: Tolani Lake Chapter has had a strong history in farming and ranching, but in the last few years farming on the local farm, Sands Springs Farm, has been dormant. In addition to the Sand Springs, the North Leupp Family Farm is located nearby and provides farming opportunities for local community members. A goal of the community is to revive the Sands Springs Farm, which is located on Navajo Partitioned Land and consists of 13 acres, down from 99 acres.

First Nations Navajo Western Agency TA Project Activities:

1. To increase the capacity of the Chapters financial management controls in preparation for the Navajo Nation LGA certification.
2. To increase the capacity of Chapter staff, leadership, and other chapter committee members in their knowledge regarding grant writing.
3. To revive the farming area and develop strategies to assist individual farmers and ranchers.
4. To participate in First Nations training that will strengthen chapter knowledge on conservation planning, farming practices, and farm management.
5. Host farming seminar for local farmers and ranchers, conducted by Tolani Lake Enterprise.

Outcomes/Results/Achievements:

Under the First Nations project, Tolani Lake Chapter was provided an organizational assessment that resulted in the provision of the ongoing individualized technical assistance in the area of financial management. Technical assistance enabled Tolani Lake Chapter to gain control and implement processes for managing their accounting software, activities that contribute to advancing their effort in achieving Navajo Nation LGA certification.

Training was provided to chapter committee members, local community members and other regional chapters on the topics that included understanding financial statements, grant writing and best practices for farming in the Tolani Lake area.

Capacity building efforts included the purchase of office equipment that assists in the expansion of programmatic efforts in serving individual farmers and ranchers, as well as local community members.

### Challenges:

Tolani Lake Chapter is pursuing LGA certification and anticipates achieving this goal in 2012. In the meantime, the chapter is working to implement the processes and procedures outlined in the LGA Five Management System. Like the Tonalea Chapter, the challenge lies in the fact that since the chapter's incorporation in 1955 (57 years ago), the Navajo Nation has managed and maintained oversight of these activities. Therefore, creating and implementing nearly combined policies and procedures from the beginning can be an overwhelming task for an office staff of 1-2 people, who are also required to respond to the daily needs of the community and ensure continued progress of existing community initiatives and projects.

### Solutions:

Within the community of Tolani Lake Chapter exists a nonprofit, Tolani Lake Enterprise, that works to strengthen economic development. The Chapter and Tolani Lake Enterprise share a mutual initiative in strengthening the community. In doing so, they have developed a partnership that benefits the community. Tolani Lake Enterprise works to bring in resources and shares opportunities with the chapter. An example of this partnership is the development and installation of a greenhouse for use by the Tolani Lake Chapter senior center. Through its collaborative efforts with North Leupp Family Farm, Tolani Lake Enterprise has worked to provide resources that advance farming and ranching in the community through workshops, training, and assistance in collaboration with Tolani Lake Chapter.

The strength of the Tonalea Chapter lies within the leadership and their commitment to advancing individual farmers and ranchers. The Tolani Lake grazing official works closely with the USDA-NRCS Dilkon Field Office in providing assistance to individual farmers and ranchers. Through their collaborative effort, they have been working to assist farmers and ranchers in the development of range units and conservation plans so that they can participate in USDA opportunities.

## **IV. Challenges to Advancing Farming and Ranching on the Navajo Western Agency**

The current approach in advancing individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Nation thus far has been through a model of central government, in which resources, processes, strategies and vision take a trickle down approach through Federal Government, Navajo Nation, Agency, Land Management District, Chapter, and finally to the individual farmer and rancher. This trickle down approach has left little regard for community empowerment, cultural integration, and the identification of the issues and needs at the grassroots level of the individual farmers and ranchers.

In efforts to reverse this trickle down approach and empower communities to regain control at the local level and re-establish authority over local matters, the Navajo Nation adopted the Local Governance Act in 1999. The current state of transition from central government to local governance is a factor that contributes to the challenges of individual farmers and ranchers, where resources, processes, strategies and assistance fluctuate between central government, agency and chapters. Another factor contributing to the challenges are the complexities resulting from the Bennett-Freeze, not only with regard to relocation, land transfer, but also in regards to allocation of resources, processes, infrastructure and vision.

In assessing current challenges observed under the project, six areas emerged as primary categories in which individual farmers and ranchers experience challenges to increasing their participation in USDA programs and to expanding their farming and ranching efforts. They are:

1. Resources
2. Education and Awareness
3. Processes/Strategies
4. Infrastructure
5. Access to Markets
6. Bennett Freeze

Additional observations made during the project indicate that there are numerous technical assistance providers and resources available to assist individual farmers and ranchers in various capacities. Tribal programs, nonprofit organizations, community groups and religious organizations have emerged to address the issue of agriculture, ranching, food systems, and economic development on the Navajo Nation. However, though these programs exist, complications arise from the organizations often providing similar services complicating existing processes and generating territorial areas and groups in which one can serve, creating a sense of disorganization and isolation by the individual farmer and rancher, coupled with the current regulations imposed under an outdated Navajo Nation Grazing Act authorized in 1957. The Navajo Nation Grazing Act was authorized at a time when the population on the Navajo Nation was approximately 79,000 and 91 Chapters were officially incorporated<sup>22</sup>. Today, the population has grown to over 200,000 members and 110 Chapters but grazing regulations still reflect a population of 79,000 when livestock dipping was manageable and grazing officials could effectively manage branding, and tallying the livestock. As a result, organizations and programs have emerged to address the deficiencies and needs of the individual farmers and ranchers that have gone unmet.

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<sup>22</sup> *Chapter Images: 2004 Profiles of 110 Chapters*, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, LSR Innovations, April 2004.

## ***Resources***

Individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency cited lack of resources as the primary barrier. Resources that include financial resources, limited machinery and operating equipment, limited access to the internet, and in some instances, limited access to land due to increased fractionation occurring on the Navajo Nation. An example of this challenge is the USDA-Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). During the project, a number of farmers, ranchers, and organizations indicated that they had been selected to participate in the USDA-EQIP. However, as a cost-share program a contract is developed between the farmer/rancher and NRCS. Upon completion of work, the farmer/rancher is paid the contracted amount when the work is implemented. The challenge in this scenario is that a majority of the individual farmers and ranchers do not have the financial resources upfront to complete the work. Nor do many of the individual farmers and ranchers have the financial capacity to qualify for a loan through a local bank. Lastly, the lack of vendors willing to conduct the work contributes to the challenges.

## ***Education and Awareness***

During the Navajo Western Agency project, training was provided through 2-day Institutes and onsite visits and primarily in the Navajo language due to the fact that the Navajo language still serves as the primary language spoken by many individual farmers and ranchers. With a large portion of the resources now available online, many of the older traditional farmers and ranchers are challenged with the skills to navigate the internet and may lack knowledge of written and spoken English, thereby increasing barriers that prevent them from accessing technical information that could assist in developing and advancing their farming/ranching efforts.

Additionally, the primary technical assistance provider at the local level, the elected chapter grazing officials, may lack access to appropriate information needed to assist individual farmers and ranchers in navigating the processes in order to advance their efforts.

Many of the individual farmers, ranchers, and grazing officials who participated in the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project were aware of many of the USDA programs available but unaware of the eligibility requirements. A particular example is an individual farmer who was familiar with USDA-FSA loans but was unaware that one of the eligibility criteria required evidence of managerial ability, experience-owner/operator of a farm/ranch for one full marketing cycle within the last five years. This individual farmer has been farming for approximately ten years and was unaware of the importance of record keeping in preparation for his participation in USDA programs.

Throughout the project conservation planning was an area that many attendees lacked knowledge. Many session attendees were unaware that to participate in EQIP and a number of other USDA programs, they must develop a conservation plan. Through sessions provided by USDA-NRCS Dilkon Field Office, individual farmers and ranchers were introduced to the NRCS Nine Step Conservation Planning Process and technical assistance provided by NRCS to assist in their conservation efforts.

## ***Processes and Strategies***

Some individual farmers and ranchers indicated that strategies and processes required for obtaining a grazing permit and/or a land use plan can be unclear and, depending on who is providing the assistance, the information can be misguided or incorrect. Complicate this matter with areas designated as Navajo Partitioned

Lands in which requirements may involve a different set of processes which are evolving as the tribe attempts to manage these areas.

With regard to individual farming and ranching strategies, many farmers and ranchers have no financial records or business/strategic plan for implementing their farm or ranch. Through training opportunities they were provided with best techniques for recordkeeping. Although the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) requires permittees with grazing permits to submit an annual tally, many were unsure what information was required and the strategies for managing expenditures which could be reimbursed at the end of the year.

### ***Infrastructure***

Challenges experienced by individual farmers and ranchers can also be attributed to lack of infrastructure. Although roads exist, in many instances a sudden downpour or wind can make paved roads impassable as a result of flooding or migrating sand dunes. These roads do not include those leading to the home site, farm, or ranch, which are often unpaved and become mud packed during the winter runoff and rainy seasons. This presents a challenge in seeking out assistance, and retrieving supplies for livestock and farm.

The lack of basic utilities is a factor that prevents individual farmers and ranchers from gaining access to the internet where potential opportunities could be identified and from making direct contact with USDA field offices. Additionally, the lack of running water creates the added challenge of hauling water not only for domestic but also to sustain crops and livestock.

Relative to the other four Navajo Nation agencies, individual farmers and ranchers located in Navajo Western Agency experience increased challenges in gaining access to water resources. Farmers and ranchers in this Agency rely on the Colorado River and small creeks that provide in the spring and fall. As a result they turn to hauling water in between the two seasonal precipitation periods, December through March, and July to August.

### ***Access to Markets***

All the challenges previously described contribute to the individual farmer/rancher's access to market. Potential markets exist on the Navajo Nation but, strategies to access those markets are not available.

A potential market is the grocery stores that stock primarily packaged food items and limited produce that are often overpriced and outdated. Such markets exist for small farmers and ranchers but, identifying strategies to access those markets is a challenge when stores are corporate owned and local employees are not given authority to purchase from local producers.

### ***Bennett Freeze***

As previously mentioned, on May 8, 2009 President Obama signed a law repealing the Bennett Freeze. This monumental event set the stage for development in areas located within Bennett Freeze on the Navajo Western Agency. Prior to the signing, communities were prevented from building homes, infrastructure and repairing roads for over 40 years. During that time, a majority of farming and ranching in the Bennett Freeze area came to a standstill due to the uncertainty associated with allocation of Hopi and Navajo Tribal Lands.

As a result of the Bennett Freeze, some land use permits and grazing permits previously held by farmers and ranchers in the Bennett Freeze area were revoked and only recently have the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Navajo Nation begun to implement strategies to address the issue.

With housing, infrastructure, and road repair initiated after 40 years, many individual farmers and ranchers struggle to identify resources, assistance, and processes needed to initiate their farming and ranching efforts. An example is a farmer/rancher who indicated that prior to the Bennett Freeze his family previously farmed near Coalmine Mesa, during the Bennett Freeze they could not farm and were encouraged to leave the area, at the time of the project he was in the process of identifying what was the status of their grazing permit and how he could return to their family farming area.

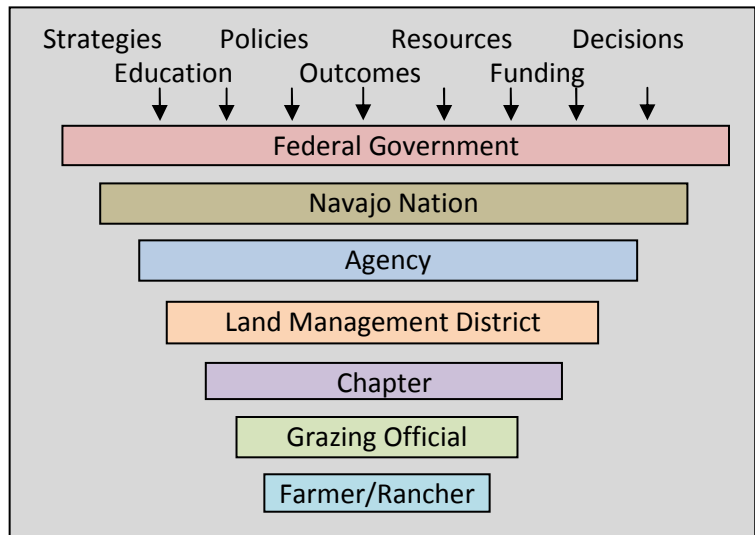
## **V. Strategies to Strengthen Individual Farmers and Ranchers in the Navajo Western Agency**

In order to advance individual farmers and ranchers, the Navajo Nation along with the farmers and ranchers must confront some fundamental questions: What is the current state of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation? How can Navajo farmers and ranchers contribute to the economy, food system and environment? What barriers currently inhibit their contribution? How can USDA work to integrate hozho (harmony), K'e (kinship solidarity) and K'ei (clan system) into their efforts? How can Navajo farmers and ranchers expand agri-entrepreneurial ventures and capitalize on USDA opportunities? What is required to strengthen the organizational, systematic and economic infrastructure, to increase expertise, resources, capacity and skills needed to advance individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency?

In addressing these questions and the challenges expressed by individual farmers and ranchers during the Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project, the first inclination is to reflect on the needs, deficiencies, and issues, a common approach and one that requires extensive financial and human resources to initiate and implement. A second option is one that capitalizes on community strengths and assets. Assets that are currently in place and can contribute to re-establishing sustainable agricultural that strengthens the tribe and communities culturally, economically, socially, and environmentally. It is an approach that works to regain control of tribal and community assets that contribute to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation. Assets that may include, but are not limited to the culture, land, water, community groups, leadership, community members and language.

Thus far, strategies to advance individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Nation have taken the first approach and focused on needs, deficiencies and issues from the top-down with processes, requirements, and control straining at each stage under pressure to fulfill obligations imposed by the upper level oversight groups. Coupled with the impact of the Bennett Freeze, relocation, decentralization, and social/economic challenges, the efforts to advance farming and ranching and the ranchers and farmers themselves has become a complex process that is disengaging and isolating community members and those that the programs are intended to assist. This approach prevents long-lasting change and sustainable development from occurring at the community level (Figure 6).

Figure 6



The alternative approach is to re-establish control of existing tribal, community and individual assets that contribute to sustainable agricultural ventures and opportunities. It’s an approach that First Nations has researched, supported, and validated in its work to strengthening American Indian economies over the last 30 years.

In developing strategies to advance individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Western Agency, it is important to build on existing assets of the tribe, chapter communities and individual farmers and ranchers in order to develop sustainable long-lasting solutions.

In initiating this effort, the first step is assessing American Indian assets as identified in Table 6 on all three levels (tribe, chapter and farmer/rancher) to determine how each can work simultaneously to reestablish control of assets that contribute to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. It is a means of looking inward at the community and assessing realistically the assets and capacity possessed by individual farmers and ranchers, communities and the tribe.

Assets as defined from the perspective of strengthening American Indian economies include financial, physical, natural, institutional, political, cultural, human, and social capital whereas mainstreams views assets as property and investments and other monetized or financial assets (Table 6).

Table 6 - First Nations Identification and Definition of American Indian Assets

Financial Assets	Most common form of a community’s or individual’s wealth, including: stocks, bonds, savings, trust funds, and other forms monetized investments. Financial assets are the most liquid form of assets and can be readily used or exchanged to acquire other assets.
Physical Assets	The physical infrastructure within tribal communities, such as transportation, utilities, and technological systems critical for economic activity. Although primarily important as a means to enhance the productivity of other assets, physical assets can generate income streams for a community and increase access to information and expand communication.
Natural Assets	Land and natural resources, including: oil, gas, minerals, agriculture, wildlife and forest are the assets that build the basis of economic development in Native communities and demand a form of production and use of resources that is sustainable.
Institutional Assets	The institutions and organizations within a community can attract resources to the community and recycle them there. Such institutions may include the creation of financial intermediaries, nonprofit organizations and philanthropic institutions.
Human Capital	The skills, knowledge, education and experience of people within a community are human capital. Nurturing the productivity, innovation and creativity of people is foundation to community well-being.
Cultural Assets	These refer to the customs, traditions and indigenous knowledge that are specific to the tribal community. Language is a cultural asset, as tribal intellectual property. Cultural assets are often “intangible” elements that underpin a community. However, the material expressions

	of culture can generate income and other assets.
Social Capital	Social relations and networks (e.g. clan systems) within a community can support the building and maintenance of assets, but do not themselves generate income. Leadership development, community empowerment and social justice are ways of increasing the social assets of a community.
Political Assets	The legal rights and claims that a Native community may have can support the ownership and control of economic assets. Similarly, “political” assets, such as sovereign status, tax immunity or decision-making power can create economic opportunities.

In First Nations’ experience in working with Tribal communities for over 30 years, this asset-based approach has proven successful. A proven example is the Shonto Community Governance. The Shonto Community Governance (SGC) has utilized this approach to assess and understand community assets. In doing so, they have re-established control of their assets, begun utilizing and leveraging them and have been successful in retaining, creating, increasing and controlling them for the betterment of their community. They have done so by regaining control of their political assets and decision-making powers, they strengthen their social capital on a regional, Tribal, and state level by establishing networks and partnerships, they have leveraged their cultural assets to generate development, they understand the capacity and expertise of community members and work to nurture and retain local human capacity and they have worked in institute organizations within their community that can contribute to the building institutional assets that contribute financial assets.

This successful model as defined by First Nations is community asset building based on American Indian definition of assets utilizing the elements of development that includes spirituality, kinship, individual capacity and control of assets.

Using First Nations’ approach, the following strategies are recommended as next steps to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency in addition to the individual farmers and ranchers themselves

As a result the following strategies have evolved as recommended next steps to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency in addition to the individual farmers and ranchers themselves:

**A. Engage Communities**

The 1-day convening conducted by First Nations during the project provided initial insight to capacity and assets possessed by the tribe, chapter and individual farmers and ranchers. The convening provided a platform to share with the group, current projects, intent, and potential collaborative efforts as well as identify key priorities in advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. For a summary of the outcomes of the 1-day convening see Appendix D.

This group of 25, with the knowledge, experience, and cultural connection to individual farmers and ranchers located on the Navajo Western Agency, shared information that contributed to the development of four priority areas that should be addressed in order to advance farming and ranching. The enthusiasm and willingness to assist in advancing individual farmers and ranchers was observed, but as noted the convening lacked other key stakeholders which could easily result in a group of 50-75 people.

Recommendations: Continue convenings to build on the conversation initiated during the project and to engage individual farmers/ranchers and other organizations and programs that were not in attendance. By engaging a collective view of assets and capacity that each possesses can be defined in addition to generating ownership and buy-in.

## **B. Restructure Institutional Assets**

A 2-day Institute was provided to Navajo Nation grazing officials and farm board members. At the training, First Nations facilitated a 1-day session to obtain feedback on the challenges that grazing officials face on a daily basis in their efforts to assist individual farmers and ranchers. As the first line of assistance to individual farmers and ranchers, collectively the grazing officials identified seven areas of priority required to effectively and efficiently serve farmers and ranchers. Upon review of priorities, it is evident that the role of the grazing official has transformed immensely in comparison to federal regulations outlined in the Navajo Nation Grazing Act.

Recommendations: Assess existing systems in place. Revise or create structure, organization, and governing systems to decrease government instability. Create a system that reflects on current trends, community assets and reflects on the culture, in doing so will generate community engagement and decrease frustration currently felt by farmers/ranchers and grazing officials.

## **C. Regain Control of Assets**

The first step in regaining control is acknowledging and understanding existing assets. Upon identification of those assets only then can the tribe, chapter and individual farmers and ranchers begin to control, utilize, leverage, retain, create and increase their opportunities.

Like many other tribal communities in addition to Shonto Community Governance have proven, regaining control of assets and building assets is necessary in order to create economic development.

Recommendations: Convene entities that work to assist individual farmers and ranchers, identify the contribution of each organization and develop strategies for collaboration.

## **D. Establish a Mentoring & Peer Learning Environment**

At each project convening, whether it was an onsite visit, workshop or Institute, participants were inclined to share their knowledge, experiences and expertise with the group on topics that addressed traditional and present day farming practices and its relevance to the Navajo culture. Many participants learned about farming history on the Navajo Nation, the impact of historical trauma on farming and ranching and historical farming patterns.

Recommendations: Opportunities for mentoring and peer learning should be further developed formally. Peer learning will assist in ensuring that history, culture and traditional practices are maintained and integrated into new policies, practices, and systems, in addition to teaching new leaders best practices for navigating processes and systems. A prime example is pairing a seasoned grazing official with a newly elected grazing official to provide collaborative opportunities as well as teach best practices and share experiences that will assist in overcoming roadblocks.

## **E. Increase Capacity Building**

The Diné College Land Grant Office (LGO) was established in 1994 to promote the creation of food-secure communities and development of sustainable agriculture. Since that time, they have been working with Navajo communities to advance farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation. During the project many farmers, ranchers and grazing officials cited the lack of education and training as barrier to participating in USDA programs. As an organization with the educational infrastructure to provide culturally appropriate training and access to technology and resources, they are strategically positioned to serve as center for agricultural learning and research. With branch campuses, they are best suited to serve as the center of agriculture learning that builds on existing models, mentoring, and provides peer-to-peer learning in the classroom and in the field.

The Diné College LGO could serve as the center for community based teachings that can be provided to individual farmers and ranchers and the organizations that serve them.

Recommendations: Strengthen efforts that teach tribal members, farmers, ranchers, and communities the impact of agriculture on their food systems, economy, and livelihood. Continuous teaching and capacity building is critical to regaining control of farming and ranching today and for the future. Organizations that serve individual farmers and ranchers should be continuously strengthened so that they can effectively and efficiently serve and become sustainable viable organizations and programs that contribute to the tribal economy.

Utilize and increase the capacity of the Diné College LGO so that they provide the learning and research environment as well as the development of mentoring and peer-to-peer learning.

## **F. Policy**

Policy on a federal, tribal, and even agency level must be changed to reflect the asset-building initiatives, change and capacity building that is imperative to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. Assisting individual farmers and ranchers to become successful producers, benefits the individual farmer and rancher by building individual assets, but if the tribe, chapter, and/or agency does not set systems in place or support the benefits resulting from building those assets, the opportunities will flow away from the community and tribe, into surrounding non-Native border towns.

In 2011, the Navajo Nation adopted the 2011 Navajo Nation Energy Policy outlining how resources will be developed and the potential for renewable energy. This policy sets provides boundaries to external stakeholders and prevents them from stripping the Navajo Nation of its resources and assets. In essence, provides the Navajo Nation with control over how resources will be developed and the use of renewable energy.

Such a policy should be considered for Food integrated with farming and ranching at a tribal, agency, and even chapter level. The policy should support existing assets and identify how the benefits of building these assets contribute to the community. This is not merely the advancement of farming and ranching, but also addresses the existing food system that currently contributes to the overwhelming number of Type 2 diabetes cases diagnosed and obesity in Native communities. As a sovereign nation,

the Navajo Nation has the authority to request schools serve only locally grown organic vegetables, they have the authority to request local grocery stores stock their shelves with local produce and they have the authority to request local restaurants purchase produce from local farms. Just as the Navajo Nation has the authority to require non-native businesses to adhere to the Navajo Preference requirement, they have the authority to mandate the food available to Tribal members.

Recommendations: Consideration should be given to development of a Food Policy that includes the contributions by individual farmers and ranchers along with potential markets available on the Navajo Nations. Such a policy will assist the Navajo Nation in regaining control of the food system, generate economic development and advance individual farmers and ranchers in the process.

## **VI. Conclusions**

First Nations Development Institute accomplished the goals of identifying challenges, developing awareness and increasing the capacity of individual farmers, ranchers, and the organizations that serve them. As a result of the project, conservation plans were developed by a number of organizations as the first step in participating in USDA programs, technical assistance was provided to chapter communities to advance their efforts in obtaining LGA certification and training was provided increase the ability to better manage financial assets, increase leadership skills, engage the community and participate in USDA opportunities.

This project initiated a shift on the Navajo Western Agency that has resonated on a tribal, community, and individual level, where ideas, information and visions emerged to become concepts and priorities to strengthen farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency, where organizations, community groups, farmers, ranchers, and tribal leaders came together to reflect on strategies to advance farming and ranching. Each gathering and convening was met with enthusiasm and a renewed sense of collective thinking with project participants stressing the importance of continued efforts and research in order to develop sustainable solutions and concepts applicable to the Navajo Nation.

This report has provided strategies to advance individual farmers and ranchers but the momentum initiated during the project requires continued effort with research to develop models and strategies that are uniquely applicable to the Navajo Nation and that can be replicated effectively. Models that will assist individual farmers and ranchers in gaining access to resources, assistance, markets and decrease cost. There are organizations and groups are in place, they have the potential and with the appropriate strategies and resources they can evolve into successful thriving organizations. Therefore, it is important to continue to provide opportunities to convene, to reconnect, and to establish collaborative efforts in order to regain control of farming and ranching in order to advance individual farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Nation Western Agency.

As observed, the Navajo people do hold the capacity and ingenuity to ensure the sustainable, economic, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of their communities. They just require the appropriate resources.

## **VII. Appendices**



## Appendix A

### 2010-11 Navajo Western Agency TA Project Institute/Onsite TA Visit/Outreach Schedule

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December 6, 2010	<u>Outreach:</u> Tolani Lake Chapter Meeting* Tolani Lake Chapter
January 6, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> District 3 Grazing Committee Meeting Tuba City Chapter, Tuba City, AZ
January 7, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Cameron Chapter Cameron, AZ
January 7, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Little Colorado SWCD Meeting Tolani Lake Chapter
January 10, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Birdsprings Chapter* Birdsprings Chapter
January 21, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> NPL Public Mtg. Integrated Resource Management Tonalea Chapter
January 23, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Cameron Chapter Meeting* Cameron Chapter, Cameron, AZ
February 11, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Birdsprings Conservation Day* Birdsprings Chapter, Birdsprings, AZ
March 1, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Bodaway/Gap Chapter Meeting* Bodaway/Gap Chapter House
March 17-18, 2011	<u>2-day Training Institute</u> for Individual Farmers & Ranchers Tuba City, Arizona
May 12, 2011	<u>Outreach:</u> Navajo Mountain SWCD Meeting* Kaibeto Chapter
May 16-17, 2011	<u>Onsite TA Visit:</u> Tolani Lake Chapter Tolani Lake, AZ
May 18-19, 2011	<u>Onsite TA Visit:</u> Shonto Community Development Corp. Shonto Community Governance
June 6-7, 2011	<u>Training:</u> Grant Writing Workshop Navajo Western Agency Business Regulatory Dept.



## 2010-11 Navajo Western Agency TA Project Institute/Onsite Visit/Outreach Schedule

*Cont'd.*

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<b>June 10-11, 2011</b>	<b><u>Onsite Visit:</u> North Leupp Family Farm Flagstaff, AZ</b>
<b>July 8, 2011</b>	<b>Forum for Western Agency Farmers &amp; Ranchers Tuba City, AZ</b>
<b>July 12-13, 2011</b>	<b><u>Onsite TA Visit:</u> Tonalea Chapter Tonalea, AZ</b>
<b>July 13, 2011</b>	<b><u>Training:</u> Financial Management for Farmers &amp; Ranchers Tuba City, AZ</b>
<b>July 14-15, 2011</b>	<b><u>Onsite TA Visit:</u> Dennehotso Chapter Dennehotso, AZ</b>
<b>August 4-5, 2011</b>	<b><u>2-day Training Institute</u> for Individual Farmers &amp; Ranchers Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, AZ</b>
<b>August 23-24, 2011</b>	<b><u>Training:</u> Dine Homeowners Assoc. &amp; Communities Moenkopi Legacy Inn, Tuba City, AZ</b>
<b>November 2-3, 2011</b>	<b><u>2-day Training Institute</u> for Navajo Nation Grazing Officials Diné College, Tsaile, AZ</b>
<b>November 29-30, 2011</b>	<b><u>Onsite TA Visit:</u> Diné College Land Grant Office Diné College: Tsaile, AZ</b>

\* Conducted by project partner.

## *Appendix B*

### **Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project Facilitators/Trainers/TA Providers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Areas of Training &amp; TA</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Asa Begaye	Organizational Development, Facilitation Services, Action Planning, Strategic Planning, Organizational Visioning	Director	William Holmes Begaye, Inc.	505-463-8986
Leona Canyon	Leadership Development, Conflict Resolutions	Project Director	Shonto Community Development Corp.	928-797-0518
Terrie Bad Hand	USDA Opportunities for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers (SDFR's), Community Engagement, Mobile Slaughter Units.	Co-Director	Taos County Economic Development Corporation	575-758-8731
Johnson Dennison	Diné Philosophy with Regard to Farming and Ranching, Traditional Planning Practices	Consultant	Consultant	928-349-0467
Michelle L. Desjarlais	Nonprofit Board Assessments, Board Development, Business Development, Business Performance, Business Operating Systems & Management	Consultant	Consultant	505-238-8836
Bill Edwards	Project Outreach & Awareness, Farm Planning, Conservation Planning, Project Development, Revenue Development	Business Manager	North Leupp Family Farm	928-286-6101
Tina Farrenkopf	Grant Writing, Grant Management, Funder Relations	Senior Program Officer	First Nations Development Institute	303-774-7836 Ext. 19
Jackie L. Francke	Program Evaluation, Program Management, Program Administration	Senior Program Officer/ Project Officer	First Nations Development Institute	303-774-7836 Ext. 17
Casey Francisco	Navajo Grazing Permit Process, Farmer/ Rancher Livestock Requirements/ Rangeland Management	Rangeland Management Specialist	BIA/Western Navajo Western Agency - BNR	928-283-2252

**Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project  
Facilitators/Trainers/TA Providers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Areas of Training &amp; TA</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
Katherine Minthorn Good Luck	Financial Management for Individual Farmers and Ranchers	Regional TA Specialist	Intertribal Agriculture Council	541-278-6811
Tiffany Hammer	General Practice, Nonprofit Advising, Small Business Advising	Principal	The Hammer Law Group	505-862-2215
Brett Issac	Opportunities through the Local Governance Act (LGA)	Project Manager	Shonto Community Development Corp.	928-797-0518
Jynell Jones	Bookkeeping, Financial Statements	Principal	Simple Bookkeeping	505-715-7983
Lesley J. Kabotie	Organizational Development, Program Planning, Facilitation Services, Community Development	Principal	Kabotie Consulting	303-275-0563
Dolly Lane	Business Startup, Navajo Nation Business Incorporation, Business Site Leasing, Nonprofit Startup	Principal Economic Development Specialist	Navajo Nation Western Regional Business Development Office	928-283-3010
Claudia Lucas	Grant Writing, Business Proposals, Workforce Development, Revenue Development for Small Businesses	Principal	The Written Edge	505-292-0343
Harriet Mann	USDA Farm Service Agency Loans, USDA Financial Opportunities for Farmers and Ranchers	Farm Loan Officer	USDA-FSA, Navajo/Gila County FSA Office	928-524-3214
Pati Martinson	USDA Opportunities for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers (SDFR's), Community Engagement, Mobile Slaughter Units.	Co-Director	Taos County Economic Development Corporation	575-758-8731
Felix Nez Jr.	Conservation Planning, USDA Programs, Farm/Ranch Development	NRCS District Conservationist	USDA-NRCS, Dilkon Field Office	928-657-3251
Ferdinand Notah	Navajo Nation Agricultural	Sr. Program/	Navajo Nation	928-871-6605

**Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project  
Facilitators/Trainers/TA Providers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Areas of Training &amp; TA</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
	Programs, Farm Boards	Project Specialist	Dept. of Agriculture	
Jamesita Mae Peshlakai	Navajo Western Agency Community Food Assessments	Lead Coordinator	DINE, Inc.	928-606-4998
Ashley Sarracino	Nonprofit Board Development, Revenue Development, Nonprofit Management	Principal	Ashley Sarracino Consulting	505-908-8628
Jacques Seronde	Outreach, Conservation Planning, Strategic Planning, Project Development, Grant Writing, USDA Programs	Director	Native American Development Associates	928-607-1115
Thomas Tso	Conservation Planning, Technical Assistance to Navajo Farmers & Ranchers	Soil Conservation Technician	USDA-NRCS, St. Michaels Office	928-871-4528
Montoya A. Whiteman	Leadership, Nonprofit Development, Board Development	Senior Program Officer	First Nations Development Institute	303-774-7836 Ext. 18

## *Appendix C*

### **2-Day Training Institute for Navajo Grazing Officials Represented Chapters, Farm Boards, and Soil & Water Conservation Districts**

#### **Participating Chapters**

Birdsprings Chapter  
Black Mesa Chapter  
Blue Gap/Tachee Chapter  
Bodaway/Gap Chapter  
Cameron Chapter  
Chilchinbeto Chapter  
Coalmine Canyon Chapter  
Crystal Chapter  
Dennehotso Chapter  
Ganado Chapter  
Houck Chapter  
Indian Wells Chapter  
Jeddito Chapter  
Kaibeto Chapter  
Kayenta Chapter  
Klagetoh Chapter  
LeChee Chapter  
Lukachukai Chapter  
Lupton Chapter  
Many Farms Chapter  
Navajo Mountain Chapter  
Nazlini Chapter  
Pinon Chapter  
Rock Point Chapter  
Rough Rock Chapter  
Round Rock Chapter  
Shonto Community Governance  
Steamboat Chapter

Teesto Chapter  
Tsahbiikin Chapter  
Tolani Lake Chapter  
Tonalea Chapter  
Tsaile/Wheatfield Chapter  
Tselani-Cottonwood Chapter  
Whippoorwill Spring Chapter  
White Rock Chapter

#### **Participating Farm Boards**

Crystal Farm Board  
Teec Nos Pos Farm Board  
Western Navajo Farm Board  
Round Rock Farm Board

#### **Participating SWCD's**

Navajo Mountain SWCD  
Tselani SWCD

#### **Other Organizations**

BIA – Western Agency Office  
Diné College Land Grant Office  
First Nations Development Institute  
Indian Nations Conservation Alliance  
Local Governance Service Center-Western  
Agency Officer  
Navajo Nation Dept. of Agriculture  
North Leupp Family Farm  
USDA-NRCS

## ***Appendix D***



# First Nations Development Institute Summation Report

For the

## *Convening of the Navajo Nation Western Agency Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers*

Moenkopi Legacy Inn  
Friday, July 8, 2011 Tuba City, Arizona

Prepared by Jackie L. Francke  
Senior Program Officer, First Nations Development Institute  
Navajo Western Agency Technical Assistance Project

A USDA Project funded through the Office of Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged  
Farmers and Ranchers (USDA-OASDFR) Grant 592501-10-013



## ***Process and Intent***

This report summarizes the data collected by First Nations Development Institute at the July 8, 2011 convening for *Navajo Nation Western Agency Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers*.

The information summarized in this report is the outcome of facilitated discussion and input provided by attending participants representing key stakeholders conducting and implementing farming and ranching projects in the Western Agency. The intent of the one-day convening was:

1. To reflect on the historical and current landscape of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation Western agency,
2. To assess current trends and issues with regard to farming and ranching in the Navajo Nation Western Agency,
3. To contemplate what is at stake, should the inventory of trends and issues continue, and
4. To develop an *informal* unified vision of farming & ranching on the Navajo Nation.

The goal for the group was to establish a common point of reference for group assessment of long term vision and priorities for Navajo Farming and Ranching on Navajo's Western Agency. The group consisted of a cross-section of Navajo farmers and ranchers as well as providers who work with communities and individuals on Navajo in the area of farming and ranching.



## ***Participating Organizations***

BIA/Western Agency Navajo Agency-BNR

Grand Canyon Trust

Naadaa/NAU Four Corners Sustainable Agriculture Initiative

Navajo Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District

Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture

Navajo Nation Navajo-Hopi Land Commission

Navajo Nation Traditional Agriculture Outreach, DINE, Inc.

Tolani Lake Enterprises, Inc.

Tolani Lake Chapter

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

USDA-NRCS, Dilkon Field Office

Facilitator: Lesley J. Kabotie, Kabotie Consulting

Approximately twenty-five participants were in attendance. While many attendees work with the above listed organizations many are also individual farmers and ranchers located on the Navajo Nation Western Agency.



## Content Overview

The session began with a group process to identify the history and evolution of farming and ranching practices, protocols, organization and management on Navajo. The group identified the timeline for the discussion, as well as the data discussed along the timeline.

After the group reviewed the collective history held within the group, they collectively identified and discussed the information known to impact the current environment in which the group is asked to consider identifying priorities for the future:

- What is the factual information establishing the baseline of knowledge relative to farming and ranching practices and efforts in the Western Navajo Agency?
- What are the trends/shifts/changes that are taking place that need to be considered because of the:
  - ❖ adverse or negative effect they create for farming and ranching or
  - ❖ supportive or assisting effect the trends have on farming and ranching in Western Navajo?
- What are the advantages held by this group to be successful in identifying the vision and priorities for farming and ranching in Western Navajo now?
- What are recent accomplishments that give the group confidence in their ability to be successful?

The environmental data provided the baseline information from which the group could proceed in a consensus based process to discuss, define and frame their vision of what needs to happen in the arena of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation Western Agency. The group participated in a workshop process to define their long term vision and then identified which element of the vision was at the forefront of eliminating obstacles and creating new opportunities to support other elements of the vision.

*“How do we pull our resources and talents together, how do we maximize our potential as a Tribe?”*

Participant



## ***Navajo Historical Timeline***

Based on their personal, historical, and professional knowledge, attendees provided input on historical activities that included people, situations (environmental, cultural, social, and educational), policies, relationships-partnerships, funding, and programs that have resulted in the current state of farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation.

<b>1492</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ BC-1492</li> <li>❖ 3,000+ Indian Nations</li> <li>❖ Self-Governing</li> <li>❖ Self-Sufficient</li> <li>❖ Practiced Full Stewardship</li> </ul>
<b>1868</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Treaty of 1868: Navajos were brought under federal control.</li> <li>❖ Navajo Tribe of Indian &amp; Federal Government</li> <li>❖ Navajo Reservation Established</li> <li>❖ Treaty resulted in loss of Natural Resources</li> <li>❖ Navajo people have self-discipline and live an "Active Life"</li> <li>❖ Less health problems.</li> <li>❖ 1868 Treaty land base was established.</li> </ul>
<b>1890</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reservation Reapportionments (added to borders) 1868-1930's Happening</li> </ul>
<b>1900</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Winter's Doctrine 1908-Aboriginal Water Rights: Sufficient Land &amp; Water for the Establishment of Reservation - 1st Rights to Water</li> <li>❖ Teddy Roosevelt – Established National Parks &amp; Monuments.</li> <li>❖ Traders Establish on the reservation &amp; can goods become a source of the food supply.</li> <li>❖ 1903: Forest land 1st to issue grazing permits.</li> </ul>
<b>1920</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1928 Synder Act - Authorized BIS to expend dollars for existing irrigation system.</li> <li>❖ 1922: Colorado River Compact: Among 7 states; leaving out Indian Country</li> <li>❖ Great Depression</li> <li>❖ Chapters NN Council "leaders" (1922-1924)</li> <li>❖ Navajos became US citizens</li> <li>❖ 1920's-1950's Moonshine Bootlegging Era</li> </ul>
<b>1930</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Federal Agency Introduction on the Navajo Nation (USDA-SCS-NRCS-FSA)</li> <li>❖ Stock Reduction led John Collier</li> <li>❖ 1932: Leavitt Act - Repayment of Federal irrigation defined. (Deferred)</li> <li>❖ 1930's: Fruitland &amp; hogback Irrigation System Constructed.</li> <li>❖ 1930's: Livestock reduction after the dust bowl &amp; depression.</li> <li>❖ Boarding School</li> <li>❖ 1939: BIA &amp; USDA power struggle that resulted &amp; BIA took over all.</li> <li>❖ Council increased from 3 to 12 members.</li> <li>❖ Oil &amp; gas exploration began on Navajo.</li> </ul>
<b>1930 cont'd.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ FDR Work Programs, ie: Dams</li> <li>❖ Churro Sheep Relocation</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1933: Soil &amp; Conservation projects</li> <li>❖ 1928 Taylor Grazing Act - Federal Resources Management</li> <li>❖ World War I</li> <li>❖ Navajo Grazing Permit (350 Sheep Units)</li> <li>❖ 1933 Congressional Act establishing Utah as trustee for Utah/Navajo beneficiary. Re: Oil royalties @ 34 1/2 %</li> <li>❖ Great Depression – Soup lines everywhere but Navajo. Re: No mutton stew line – Navajo people develop a dependence on livestock.</li> <li>❖ Livestock reduction due to "over grazing".</li> <li>❖ 1939: Soil Conservation Services leave the Navajo Nation.</li> </ul>
<b>1940</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Grazing Permits Issued</li> <li>❖ Carrying Capacity</li> <li>❖ Stock Allocation</li> <li>❖ World War II</li> <li>❖ Changed course of the Little Colorado River</li> <li>❖ Commodity Cheese becomes a staple of Navajo diet.</li> <li>❖ 1945: NN 200,000 acres irrigation project due to drought &amp; livestock reduction.</li> <li>❖ Navajo men go to war.</li> <li>❖ Development of jobs as a result of dams and energy.</li> <li>❖ Navajo women become the grazing permit holders (70%).</li> <li>❖ 1948: Navajo people receive the right to vote.</li> </ul>
<b>1950</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Navajo Grazing Regulations established in 1956.</li> <li>❖ District Grazing Committees Farm Boards established in Tribal Codes.</li> <li>❖ Onset of Tractors (people don't help each other).</li> <li>❖ Gambling: Fills open time w/ men - horses, cards, trading games.</li> <li>❖ Droughts cyclical.</li> <li>❖ 1958-62: Navajo Dam constructed off reservation. Realigned NN boundary w/ land exchange that resulted in the loss of farming &amp; grazing land.</li> <li>❖ Uranium mining issues start.</li> <li>❖ Glen Canyon Dam: Farm &amp; Grazing land Exchange.</li> <li>❖ Medicine Man Class Action Suit about flooding sacred site: Rainbow Bridge.</li> <li>❖ A paradigm shift away from farming &amp; ranching as a basis of the economy occurs.</li> </ul>
<b>1960</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Navajo Nation Tribal Council increased to 64 members.</li> <li>❖ Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute in progress.</li> <li>❖ Civil Rights era</li> <li>❖ Maurice McCabe water rights.</li> <li>❖ USDA commodities.</li> <li>❖ The start of the welfare initiative that resulted in the Navajo people slow/stopped working- no motivation to work.</li> </ul>
<b>1970</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1974: Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act-Relocation started.</li> <li>❖ Funding &amp; involvement in irrigation declines. Farming projects go into disrepair.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Traditional knowledge required to survive.</li> <li>❖ Traditional science still active.</li> <li>❖ 1972: Self-determination Act- unable to handle opportunity.</li> <li>❖ More Snow/rainfall.</li> <li>❖ Movement to urban areas.</li> <li>❖ Established Rangers,</li> <li>❖ Tribal government is turmoil.</li> <li>❖ Assimilation-value for economic development &amp; stopped being turned into tradition &amp; culture.</li> <li>❖ Farming &amp; Ranching has become a hobby and no longer necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>1980</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ USDA Programs on Navajo land are limited in comparison to before.</li> <li>❖ Biggest NN Council in history by the increase to 88 members.</li> <li>❖ Increased &amp; Advanced Technology</li> <li>❖ Churro Sheep Program - Dr. McNeil</li> <li>❖ Utah District Court decides case against plaintiffs.</li> <li>❖ Soil Conservation service active on NN again. SWCO's</li> <li>❖ Taxation NN Authority approved on NN by U.S. Supreme Court.</li> <li>❖ Navajo/Hopi Land Dispute relocation occurred.</li> </ul>
<b>1990</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1989: Three branches of govt. established.</li> <li>❖ Change in NN (Chairman-President)</li> <li>❖ 1996: Development of Grazing Act Efforts</li> <li>❖ Technology increases. Kids become lazy and less active.</li> <li>❖ No agriculture taught in class.</li> <li>❖ Established Community Land Use Planning Committees (CLUPC) driven by HUD.</li> <li>❖ 1991: Class action suit on Utah/Navajo Beneficiary</li> <li>❖ Another major drought.</li> <li>❖ No action by Navajo Nation Council Grazing.</li> </ul>
<b>2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Earth dams can't be repaired: there are 1,000's of dams on NN</li> <li>❖ 2001: Navajo grazing act fails.</li> <li>❖ 2008: Utah relinquishes Utah Trust responsibilities for Oil Royalty Beneficiary Management.</li> </ul>
<b>2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 2010: Council reduced from 88 to 24 members.</li> <li>❖ Increased health problems amongst Navajo people.</li> <li>❖ Sedentary lifestyle observed by Navajo people. Diets high in "Processed foods"</li> <li>❖ Population 300,000+</li> <li>❖ Water "Settlement" - San Juan (Domestic water/no agriculture)</li> <li>❖ 2011: Too many horses - They've lost their value.</li> </ul>



## **Participant Expectations**

A convening with such a diverse cross-section of stakeholders conducting farming and ranching projects on the Navajo Western Agency or serving Navajo farmers and ranchers occurs very rarely. The participants included chapter officials, individual farmers and ranchers, nonprofit organizations, NRCS conservation specialists, rangeland specialists, extension agents, and grazing officials. Participants were asked, “*What expectations and/or outcomes did they hope to gain and/or achieve from the convening?*”

1. *To help the Group – leave with vision we can all work toward.*
2. *Enhance capability for Navajo Ranching to be successful: competing with mainstream.*
3. *What’s FNDI about & how are they involved with helping Navajo Ranchers and Farmers?*
4. *Clarity of a cooperative vision & positive networking*
5. *How to involve younger generation in farming & ranching ~ how to survive.*
6. *Identify opportunities to help maximize our potential as Navajo people.*
7. *How work around issues to do what we need do to help and provide resources to the Navajo people.*
8. *Take information to share with people working with tradition, culture, and food security.*
9. *Look at stewardship of the land.*
10. *Pinpoint how grassroots level people can derive benefit, economic development – Put ourselves in their hat. Leave with an idea on how to help realize revenues for farming/agriculture.*
11. *How to communicate and educate information to farmers and ranchers.*
12. *Open minded to what future has in store for Navajo people.*
13. *What-Where are resources? Education & Communication with elderly, too. What is it we can do?*
14. *This is start of many more meetings to come up with strategic plan to address issues.*
15. *How to educate policy makers, council.*
16. *Create more partnerships with others.*
17. *Indigenous science related agriculture and animal management and husbandry.*
18. *How to bridge and communicate what wants to happen to bring help.*
19. *All of us work together and help all of the people – ongoing conversation and set goals.*



## ***Baseline Information***

Attendees participated in a facilitated discussion to collectively identify and discuss the information known to impact the current environment. The group was asked, “*What is the factual information establishing the baseline of knowledge relative to farming and ranching practices and efforts in Western Navajo Nation?*”

- Census count 2010 – 240k Navajos
  - Know livestock carrying capacity
  - Navajo Nation land base is 24 million acres
  - Navajo Nation livestock & agriculture census – 2007 (NASS)
  - Production pounds per acre
  - Crop yield – Investigation underway
  - Livestock tallies
    - o Navajo Housing Authority – Aerial survey of whole reservation
  - Median Age: 24
  - Premise livestock ID
  - 12,000 Grazing permits
  - 110 Chapters, 5 agencies
  - Checkerboard area in eastern Navajo
  - Organic locally grown is value-added product
  - Navajo Nation has a lot of horses
  - Mapping system of Navajo Nation (GIS) row fences
  - Water Table – How much water?
  - Surface water (acre/feet)
  - PPT data for Navajo Nation
  - Navajo Nation precipitation has mineral information livestock
  - Adaptive genetics of crops/LS to the Navajo Nation Geographic area.
- Dispersed not aggregate
- o Amount & location of water available
  - o Census breakout for elders and youth
  - o Livestock #'s and locations
  - o Acres and farmland (dry land, irrigatable, irrigated)
  - o Condition and acres and rangeland
  - o Tribally owned ranches (acres, water, capacity)
  - o Soil inventories – farm and range
  - o # of people now interested & location per community

## Trends

Attendees participated in a facilitated discussion to collectively identify and discuss the trends/shifts/changes that are taking place that we need to be aware of because of the:

- ❖ adverse or negative impact they create for farming and ranching or,
- ❖ supportive and assisting impact the trends have on farming and ranching in Western Navajo?

Trends-Working for Us - Helping	Trends-Working <u>Against</u> Us - Hindering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People want local food (grown)</li> <li>- Tapping into Global Economy (Agri-tourism)</li> <li>- Traditional foods is a plus</li> <li>- World population has an interest with traditional culture.</li> <li>- Navajo traditional values agriculture/work ethic</li> <li>- Current producers using organic methods (Crops/L/S)</li> <li>- Navajo Nation has a young population (Dilkon is forever young)</li> <li>- NN received a multi-million dollar grant for fiber backbone.</li> <li>- Navajo baby boomer (YOB) 1948 Retiring</li> <li>- Movement to green economy (food &amp; energy)</li> <li>- Awareness of health (quality of life)</li> <li>- Cultural revival</li> <li>- Recovering, protecting, preserving natural resources (i.e., water rights)</li> <li>- Technology – Computers, gps, drip irrigation, solar/wind power</li> <li>- Farmers’ markets</li> <li>- Farm2school, Farm2table</li> <li>- Rez2Rail</li> <li>- Navajo Nation bull program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global Warming</li> <li>- Quantity over Quality</li> <li>- Big over small</li> <li>- Lack of trust, lack of trust worthiness</li> <li>- Low local market prices</li> <li>- We import most of our food</li> <li>- What we value has changed               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education system; Policy makers</li> <li>▪ Global economy – unsustainable demand</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Kids value computer games more than outdoor activity (parents)</li> <li>- Losing language and culture – traditional lifestyle</li> <li>- Status quo on Grazing Policy</li> <li>- Climate Change</li> <li>- Unemployment – Outsourcing</li> <li>- Overgrazing – feral horses</li> <li>- Red tape (Government to Government)</li> <li>- No Work Ethic (couch potatoes)</li> <li>- Population grow</li> <li>- Isolation</li> <li>- Lack of infrastructure (Irrigated lands)/Fencing</li> <li>- Increased Development/Housing.... Etc.</li> </ul>



Trends-Working for Us - Helping	Trends-Working Against Us - Hindering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recycling</li> <li>- Antinuclear, anti-uranium, programs, policies</li> <li>- Indigenous food policy sovereignty justice</li> <li>- Rangeland Monitoring</li> <li>- Weather Pattern</li> <li>- Drought pattern</li> <li>- Livestock and crop sales</li> <li>- Continue education Retirement in vision next 5 years.</li> <li>- Increase in the number of casinos</li> <li>- Navajo Agriculture Products Industry farm</li> <li>- Water Settlement</li> <li>- Environmental Awareness</li> <li>- NN involved in Indigenous rights globally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unorganized growth/sprawl</li> <li>- Lack of enforcement of Natural Resource protection</li> <li>- Big corporations manipulate state/federal to their advantage</li> <li>- Decrease state/federal/NN/Private money sources</li> <li>- Health problems (obesity, diabetes, uranium, mental-lack of direction)</li> <li>- Backlash (legislation, court ruling, AZ)</li> <li>- Decreasing land base for agriculture and ranching</li> <li>- Loss of respect for traditional leadership</li> <li>- PETA – against livestock management</li> <li>- Decline sheep units</li> <li>- Increasing home site/prime land</li> <li>- Recreational Vehicle usage</li> <li>- Recreational performance animals</li> <li>- Noxious weed</li> <li>- Infrastructure – power line, etc., taking over</li> <li>- Grazing disputes/farming</li> <li>- Lack of planning &amp; Action</li> <li>- Soil erosion</li> <li>- Overgrazing</li> <li>- Land is becoming desert – deteriorating.</li> </ul>

*“We are stewards of the land and should be thinking of our children. We should be managing for our future generation. I am here today to serve as Legal Council for native plants.”*

Rangeland Management Specialist

## Current Advantages

Understanding the strengths of the group assists in future planning and resource development efforts. In this session, attendees collectively identified and discussed the advantages that the Navajo Nation holds with regard to farming and ranching. Participants were asked, “*What are the advantages that Navajo Nation and this group has going into planning for 2012?*”

- Grazing Association
- Cooperative for Farming
- Record Keeping Beef Quality Assurance/Sheep Quality Assurance
- Herd Health
- Organic food (cattle/crop)
- Teamwork/communication
- Partnership/Networking
- USDA program and services
- 3 B’s (Big, beautiful, bad)
- Establishment of Indian Affairs under Obama
- Undergraduate and graduate education
- Knowledgeable of current issues with farming

- We live and work in our communities
- We value tradition/language and culture
- We have a large land base
- We have knowledge of past failures
- Partnerships can work
- Tools to organize & work together
- Diversity of NN land, geography
- Diversity of resourceful people in diverse geographies
  - Farmers & ranchers familiar with problems in all areas
  - Navajo professionals
- Every farmer/rancher will have a range inventory report & ecological site descriptions
- Some irrigation systems
- Some range water developments
- Adaptability
- Traditional culture, practices, and beliefs

- Educated (know strategic planning)
- Implementation of Navajo law
- Positive Navajo policies (economic, energy, investment)
- We have water, people, land, resources... (but don’t make good use of it)
- Seeds (traditional)
- Increasing number of nonprofits
- University, knowledge, network
- Elders’ knowledge, language
- We are now aware of the problems that face us.
- Technologies – equipment



## ***Accomplishments***

Building confidence and motivation derives from reflecting on collective accomplishments. The facilitation process has reflected on the history, positive and negative trends, and advantages that currently exist. In this session participants collectively reflected on the farming and ranching accomplishments that have been achieved by the Navajo Nation and key stakeholders implementing farming and ranching on the Navajo Western Agency. Participants were asked, *“What are recent accomplishments that give the group confidence in their ability to be successful?”*

<b>Accomplishments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ NAPI</li> <li>❖ Ganado Irrigation Delivery System/Red Willow</li> <li>❖ Partnership w/ USDA</li> <li>❖ Restructure of NN Govt.</li> <li>❖ Purchase of Big Boquillas &amp; other private lands</li> <li>❖ NN Veterinary Program &amp; Clinics/Veterinarians</li> <li>❖ NN Grazing Regulations</li> <li>❖ USDA/NN Agriculture Status Info</li> <li>❖ NN surrounded by potential markets</li> <li>❖ Newberry Water Pipeline (Tolani Lake)</li> <li>❖ Navajo farmer/rancher still in business despite droughts ... etc.</li> <li>❖ Products (Agriculture) not taxed by federal Govt.</li> <li>❖ Outside buyers want Navajo Products</li> <li>❖ Grazing/ 7 Boundary Fence/ Tolani Lake &amp; Birdsprings Fence</li> <li>❖ Navajo Water settlement</li> <li>❖ Implementation of gaming (revenues, use of local produce)</li> <li>❖ Navajo-Hopi land settlement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Establishment of Navajo Green Commission</li> <li>❖ Educational outreach</li> <li>❖ Renewed interest in Agriculture</li> <li>❖ Development of school gardens</li> <li>❖ Rez2Rail, EQ wellness</li> <li>❖ Satellite Marketing-Cattle</li> <li>❖ Re-issue new grazing for NPL (Navajo Partitioned Lands)</li> <li>❖ 167 – Big Navajo</li> <li>❖ IRMP/AIRMA (Integrated Resource Mgmt. Plan/American Indian Resource Mgmt. Act</li> <li>❖ Internet outreach</li> <li>❖ Range &amp; Soil Inventory report</li> <li>❖ NN Fairs (3) youth involvement</li> <li>❖ Ag Days</li> <li>❖ Outstanding legal court system</li> <li>❖ More Navajos in professional technical arenas</li> <li>❖ Interest in traditional lifestyle (farming)</li> <li>❖ Establishment of the Navajo Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>❖ Streamlined Navajo government</li> </ul>

## Visioning

The environmental data provided the baseline information from which the group could proceed in a consensus based process to discuss, define and frame their vision of what needs to happen in the arena of farming and ranching on western Navajo. The group participated in a workshop process to define their long term vision and identified which element of the vision was at the forefront of eliminating obstacles and creating new opportunities to support other elements of the vision.

### *Economic Development*

- Develop Navajo food supply for Navajo people
- Develop model Agriculture projects: Farm2School Greenhouses, School Gardens, Seed Bank
- Develop NN-Organic Certification & Meat Inspection
- Consider Living wind breaks
- Uniformity Livestock Production
- More Navajo producing the crop management. (organic)
- Establish local organic Food Markets (110-one in each community).
- Model: Range – livestock- meat processing, marketing, cooperative association
- Value added agricultural products to be accepted by Navajo Nation Leadership.
- Increase crop production across the Navajo Nation.
- Provide Navajo Nation farmers & ranchers with first opportunity to sell products to local people.
- Establish a network of producer association controlling cow/calf production, feed & lot placement, slaughter, marketing to regional/global level.
- All runoff water to be conserved and put to beneficial use of range & farm.
- Improve the efficiency of irrigation systems to 95 % & increase irrigated agriculture.
- Harvest ground & surface water to maximize use of farmland & water.

As a result of the visioning process, four areas were identified by the group as being on the forefront to advancing farming and ranching on the Navajo Nation Western Agency. They are:

- 1. Economic Development**
- 2. Education and Research**
- 3. Policy**
- 4. Resource Management**

Each area was individually addressed by identifying what needs to happen in each area to advance farming and ranching and concluded with a consensus based vision developed by the group.

### *Vision for Economic Development*

*To benefit from local Ranching and Agricultural assets through sound sustainable farming practices.*

## Education & Research

- Develop a Navajo A & M University (Collaborate with the University of Arizona Extension Program & Tuba City)
- Establish a Navajo farming and ranching research center (addressing crops, stories, food, and herd improvement).
- Encourage ranchers and farmers to take full responsibility for their land, water, and plants.
- Develop a curriculum for farming & agriculture to be provided in a school setting.
- Research greenhouse in place.
- Establish an Agriculture Institute
- Increase the number of extension to deliver education programs
  - Ag/Natural Resources
  - 4-H/ Youth Development
  - Home Economics
- Increase access to technology to create innovation in Agriculture (Marketing, Techniques, Planning, .... etc.)
- Establish a Navajo Youth Agriculture Corps
- Increase Outreach Programs for opportunities in Agriculture & Natural Resources.
- Increase agriculture in the classrooms in schools.
- Increase Agriculture data compilation & access.
- Incorporate technology to control “unorganized-sprawl” by local government that has immediate access.

*“My expectations are more “wishful thinking/goals. I would like to hear some scientific information that is similar to indigenous farming, horticulture. A lot of the things we discuss are not a result of our doing, the drought, for example. We are led to believe these this but it is not our doing.”*

Extension Agent

### Vision for Education & Research

*To Establish a Center for Navajo Agriculture, Research, & Development*



## *Policy*

- Adopt and implement the Grazing Act (one more time).
- Revisit Navajo Nation Laws so that they are aligned & practicable with current farming and ranching practices.
- Farming & Ranching will be privilege-not a right
- Leadership within all levels will walk the talk.
- Establish a Navajo Regional & Tribal Food Policy
- Permittees to combine grazing permits to establish a Grazing Association.
- Access ground water for farming & livestock.
- Update grazing regulations

### *Vision for Policy*

*To establish Navajo Nation law and policies that support appropriate integrated Agriculture resource management.*

## *Resource Management*

- Navajo Nation takes over BIA Natural Resources
- Generate a Navajo Nation Farm Bill within the US Farm Bill
- Ten 501 (3) (c) organization collaborate to secure grants at \$150 million

### *Vision for Resource Management*

*To take control of funding for agricultural resources on the Navajo Nation.*

*“When we deliberate we need to put ourselves in the farmers and ranchers place.”*

Mr. Nez  
Navajo-Hopi Land Commission



## ***Summary and Next Steps***

The different stakeholders that were represented at the July 8, 2011 convening in Tuba City are representative of the broader cross-section of participants who need to be engaged in the process of formulating a plan and strategy to support the productivity and viability of farming, ranching and agriculture on Navajo Nation. The group of 25 could easily swell to 125 to 175 if their counterparts in other Agencies and individual farmers and ranchers of the Navajo Nation were convened at one time.

Overall, the group had a positive response to being in consensus with each other; they individually and collectively voiced optimism and willingness to continue to come together. That optimism, and inclusive acknowledgement of each other, made this meeting a success for the group's continued work together.

In closing, the group collectively identified possible next steps and expressed enthusiasm about maintaining the momentum and motivation generated as a result of the convening.

### *Next Steps*

1. Engage BIA in the conversation.
2. Prepare young people to be involved.
3. Develop and submit the Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) to BIA.
4. Involve and educate the Council on what's happened here today.
5. After this summary, identify and engage key players not here and bring them to table.
6. Utilize the internet to coordinate & come together.
7. Conduct another Western Agency convening and invite to educate leaders & policy makers.