

Memorandum

MEMORANDUM

To: File
From: B. Nez
Date: 05/22/2026
Re: Summary of ARMP Public Input Meeting on 5/18/2026

Wilson Facilitators: Liliana Domenici, Jared Seff, Marlene Hoskie, Blaine Nez

Location: Oaksprings Chapter House

Number of Attendees: 7 attendees

Sign-in sheet Attached: Yes

Key Themes from Attendees:

General Meeting Feedback

- Attendees appreciated the open discussion format and the opportunity to raise concerns directly with Wilson staff.
- Several attendees requested hard copies of presentations, stating that projected slides were difficult to see.
- Questions were raised regarding prior agricultural planning efforts, including references to older “10-year plans” and forestry management plans that some attendees were aware of but had never seen publicly discussed.

Permitting and Grazing Concerns

- Multiple attendees raised concerns regarding grazing permits, allotments, and trespass issues within the Eastern Agency area.
- Speakers described confusion and frustration regarding district boundaries, unfenced allotments, and livestock trespass citations being issued where district lines are not physically fenced.
- Attendees stated that many allotments contain numerous ownership names, making grazing permit administration difficult and discouraging permit transfers.
- Concerns were raised that current permitting systems and communication processes through BIA are difficult to navigate and poorly communicated.

Standard Operating Procedures / Workflow Recommendations

- Strong recommendations were made for the ARMP to include clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and workflow charts for:
 - Grazing permit transfers
 - Permit closures
 - Permit approvals
 - Conservation planning requirements
- Attendees emphasized that current processes are overly complicated and time consuming.

Conservation Planning Concerns

- Several livestock permit holders expressed frustration regarding requirements for permittees to prepare their own conservation plans.

- Speakers stated that proper conservation planning requires professional expertise in range science, vegetation analysis, wildlife management, and hydrology, and should not be expected from everyday permit holders without technical support.
- Concerns were expressed that many plans and policies affecting Navajo grazing lands were developed externally by non-Navajo consultants with limited local understanding.

Livestock Management and Open Range

- Public comments reflected mixed opinions regarding Open Range versus RMU systems.
- Some attendees supported Open Range in certain areas, while others favored RMU systems for better livestock control.
- Speakers noted that unrestricted grazing contributes to livestock wandering into residential areas and highways, increasing nighttime roadway hazards and vehicle accidents.
- Concerns were also raised regarding livestock management rules limiting enclosed holding areas and fencing flexibility for permit holders.
- Suggestions included:
 - Creating multiple rotational grazing areas based on permit-specific carrying capacities
 - Allowing permittees greater flexibility to contain and monitor livestock
 - Improving coordination between grazing policy and practical livestock management realities

Feral Animals and Wildlife

- Feral horses were repeatedly identified as a major concern affecting grazing lands and communities.
- Feral cattle were also mentioned as an issue.
- Prairie dogs were identified by attendees as causing problems within grazing areas.
- Concerns were raised regarding changing wildlife migration patterns and increased animal presence along highways.

Fire Risk and Forest Management

- Significant concern was expressed regarding wildfire risk following the Oak Ridge Fire and ongoing drought conditions.
- Speakers discussed:
 - Heavy fuel loading
 - Drought stress
 - Cheatgrass and invasive weeds contributing to wildfire risk
 - Concerns regarding careless woodcutting practices and disabled spark arresters on chainsaws
- Attendees requested updates regarding post-fire rehabilitation and BAER-related planning efforts, stating that little information has been communicated publicly since the fire.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the long-term impacts of wildfire on livestock, natural resources, and grazing lands.

Overgrazing Studies and Range Assessments

- Several attendees challenged previous overgrazing studies conducted by outside contractors.
- Speakers stated that agency-wide range studies are too broad and fail to account for local grazing conditions at the district or unit level.

- Attendees argued that many areas currently contain healthy grass recovery despite drought conditions and that overgrazing conclusions were overstated.
- Speakers emphasized that localized analysis should be conducted rather than relying on reservation-wide averages.

Additional Observations

- Attendees discussed historical lifestyles centered around livestock, farming, fencing, and traditional subsistence practices.
- Concerns were raised regarding proposed changes to livestock branding systems and possible removal of state brands for cattle.
- Several speakers emphasized that agricultural planning should reflect local realities, community knowledge, and the practical needs of permit holders rather than broad outside assumptions.

Key Themes Identified

- Need for clearer permitting procedures and communication
- Concerns regarding grazing permit enforcement and trespass issues
- Desire for locally informed conservation planning
- Wildfire preparedness and invasive species management
- Mixed support for Open Range and RMU systems depending on location
- Frustration with broad overgrazing claims and outside contractor studies
- Ongoing concerns regarding feral horses, livestock management, and roadway safety

Key Messaging by Wilson staff:

- The ARMP is to be the Nation's Plan.
- BIA will approve the ARMP, but it will be the Nation's Plan
- Proposed Project Area is based on Nation's mapping and being part of the Nation.
- A draft ARMP will be made available for "your" review "to see if we got it right".

Observations:

1. Multiple people expressed frustration with grazing permits and the lack of enforcement for herd and land management.
2. There are recommendations to address feral horses, permittees not using their permits but still having them, prevention of wildfires and improper timber harvesting, and the suggestion to include CLUPCs.

Of-Interest:

- More enforcement and education for those who have a permit.