

Memorandum

To: File

From: T. Martin

Date: 4/23/2026

Re: Summary of ARMP Public Input Meeting on 4/23/2026

Wilson Facilitators: Tiffany Martin, Blaine Nez, Marlene Hoskie

Location: Fort Defiance Chapter House

Number of Attendees: 60+

Sign-In Sheet Attached. Yes

Key Themes from Attendees (Simplified Summary)

Water & Infrastructure

- Strong concern about lack of water availability and declining water tables.
- Questions about whether ARMP assessments will include water resources, aquifers, and drought conditions.
- Requests for clarification on assessment methods, including whether fieldwork will be conducted or if analysis will rely primarily on satellite imagery.
- Concerns that land productivity cannot improve without adequate rainfall and water access.
- Interest in reviving water harvesting techniques such as swales and improving water infrastructure.
- Requests for more site-specific evaluation and direct engagement with landowners to understand localized conditions.

Grazing, Permits & Regulation

- Concerns regarding the grazing permit pause by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), with attendees questioning the purpose and differences between the ARMP and previous plans.
- Frustration with lack of clarity about interim processes during the ARMP development period. Perception that the permitting system contributes to ongoing land management challenges.
- Concerns about potential reductions in grazing units and how policies may be implemented before community input is fully incorporated.
- Questions about whether unused permits will be revoked and whether public input will meaningfully influence decisions.

Livestock & Animal Management

- Concerns about improper livestock management, including abandonment of domestic animals and impacts on the environment.

- Recognition that livestock practices (e.g., grazing reseeded areas too early) contribute to land degradation.
 - Discussion of differences in feed efficiency among livestock types (goats, sheep, horses).
 - Need for improved livestock education and reintroduction of programs such as tagging, vaccination, and herd management training.
 - Prairie dogs identified as a significant issue impacting forage.
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Land Use, Environment & Stewardship

- Identification of both natural (e.g., drought) and human-caused impacts (e.g., land misuse, overgrazing, dumping).
 - Strong interest in sustainable land management practices, including:
 - Rotational grazing
 - Permaculture and land “zoning” strategies
 - Reseeding and restoration efforts
 - Rewilding concepts (e.g., beaver reintroduction)
 - Concerns about trash dumping in washes and tributaries.
 - Desire to restore ecosystems, including wetlands and wildlife populations such as antelope, elk, and deer.
 - Emphasis on the need to rethink current land use approaches and improve long-term stewardship.
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Community Capacity & Support

- Concerns about declining land health and reduced productivity compared to previous generations.
 - Loss of traditional knowledge related to livestock care and agriculture among younger generations.
 - Desire for renewed training and education at the local level.
 - Requests for more direct community involvement and practical, hands-on support.
 - Recognition that past federal programs provided more direct assistance and engagement than current systems.
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Governance, Trust & Accountability

- Strong frustration with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and broader governance structures for lack of follow-through and transparency.
- Concerns about past plans and watershed studies that were completed but not implemented.
- Perception that decision-makers are disconnected from local realities.
- Concerns about nepotism, corruption, and inconsistent enforcement of regulations.
- Questions about long-term planning, including lack of accessible information on previous 10-year plans.

- Desire for greater accountability, consistent enforcement, and meaningful engagement with local communities.
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Cultural Values & Community Priorities

- Strong emphasis on traditional Diné values, particularly K'é (relationships, responsibility, and care for one another and the land).
 - Belief that stewardship of land and livestock is an inherent cultural responsibility.
 - Reflection on historical land management changes and their long-term impacts on community and land.
 - Concerns that cultural teachings are not being passed down to younger generations. Emphasis on restoring balance between traditional values and regulatory systems.
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Education & Communication Needs

- Requests for clear explanations of ARMP processes, timelines, and assessment methodologies.
 - Need for plain-language materials and improved communication strategies.
 - Desire for greater transparency regarding how input will be used in decision-making.
 - Recognition that complex technical and regulatory language creates barriers to understanding and participation.
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Key Messaging by Wilson Staff

- The ARMP will be developed with community input and reflect the needs of the Nation.
 - The Bureau of Indian Affairs will review and approve the plan.
 - A draft ARMP will be shared for public review prior to finalization.
 - Community engagement is critical to ensuring the plan is accurate and effective.
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Observations

1. High level of engagement and detailed feedback from attendees across a wide range of topics.
 2. Strong emotional and cultural connection to land and livestock influenced many comments.
 3. Widespread frustration with existing governance systems extended beyond ARMP-specific concerns.
 4. Repeated emphasis on the need for practical, locally informed solutions rather than broad, generalized plans.
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Of Interest

- Strong recommendation to:
 - Incorporate field-based assessments alongside technical analysis
 - Increase direct engagement with landowners and local communities
 - Provide clear explanations of assessment methods and ARMP processes
- Repeated calls for:
 - Improved water planning and infrastructure
 - Greater transparency and accountability from agencies
 - Stronger enforcement of existing regulations
 - Integration of traditional knowledge into land management practices