

Memorandum

To: File

From: D. Kidder and L. Domenici

Date: 6/17/2026

Re: Summary of ARMP Public Input Meeting at Tuba City Chapter House

Wilson Facilitators: Tiffany Martin, Dalton Kidder, Marlene Hoskie

Location: Tuba City Chapter House

Number of Attendees: 3 (3rd attendee did not sign sign-in sheet)

Key Themes from Attendees:

Anna Begay from Tolani Lake:

- Role of Department of Agriculture
- Where is the Department of Agriculture during these meetings, and why are they not present?
- Many chapters do not have Wi-Fi, and some individuals do not have computer or internet access.
- **BIA**
 - o Why is the BIA not at these meetings?
 - o The presentation recently provided by BIA was well received.
- **Range Management Units**
 - o Participant Anna Begay indicated she has a fenced Range Management Unit (RMU).
- **Permits**
 - o When permits were first issued, households reportedly had ~250 sheep units.
 - o Window Rock is stating there are too many permits contributing to land degradation; however, participants emphasized livestock is a primary livelihood, especially for elders.
 - o Window Rock does not see that there is a purpose and need to have livestock.
 - o Concern that decision-makers in Window Rock do not recognize the importance of livestock to local livelihoods.
 - o Permits have not been updated since their original issuance.
- **Concerns**
 - o Concern expressed about the ARMP and how “amendable” it is once finalized.
 - o Concern that once incorporated into CFR regulations, changes may be difficult.
 - o Emphasis on understanding CFR implications prior to finalization.
- **Land**
 - o Participant noted living on Navajo Partitioned Land (NPL) and Hopi Partitioned Land (HPL).
 - o Participants follow ordinances for both Hopi and Navajo jurisdictions.
 - o Hopi system described as assigning “units” differently than Navajo sheep units.

- Hopi conducts annual range health inventories and adjusts permits based on results.
 - Navajo system described as lacking equivalent annual adjustment structure.
 - Concern that some individuals fall through administrative gaps on HPL/NPL lands.
- **Livestock**
 - Sheep units are difficult to understand, particularly for elderly permit holders.
 - Participants may spend extended time locating livestock due to extensive grazing areas.
 - Reductions in livestock can result in defensive responses due to economic reliance.
- **ARMP**
 - Will this plan apply equally across different land types (e.g., HPL, NPL, Navajo Lands)?
 - Will the plan apply broadly or primarily to “Big Navajo”?
- **Water**
 - Water access is essential.
 - Earthen dams are used within RMUs to retain water during dry periods.
 - Declining water availability has led to herd reductions.
 - Requests for livestock water lines.
 - Many individuals rely on water tanks, but water costs are burdensome.
 - Water scarcity is a regional issue, not limited to Navajo Nation.
- **Constraints**
 - Concern regarding administrative “red tape” from Window Rock and BIA.
 - Perception of excessive regulation, particularly related to water development.
 - Competition over water and land resources.
 - Livestock reductions are a constraint on livelihoods.
 - Livestock represents income and financial stability for many households.
- **Goals**
 - Encourage local food production and gardening.
 - Concern about affordability of food and unfamiliarity with external assistance programs.
- **Homesite Leases in the Former Bennette Freese Area**
 - Housing is being developed, but approval processes through Window Rock are slow.
 - Probate processes are slow.
 - On NPL, some individuals lack grazing permits.
 - Lack of grazing permits may restrict access to certain benefits.
- **Rangeland Health Inventory**
 - Uncertainty regarding whether Navajo Nation conducts regular inventories.
 - Hopi reportedly conducts annual inventories with BLM participation.
 - NRCS has provided strong support in Tolani Lake, including funding for water structures.

- EQIP program is also noted as beneficial.

Tony Robbins (Western Resource Management, BIA)

Water

- Water exists on the Navajo Nation, but the primary issue is access and delivery.
- Colorado River litigation may provide future clarity and funding.
- Water development requires coordination with grazing management plans.
- Efforts have been made to coordinate permit holders for shared water management.
- Use of existing infrastructure (e.g., windmills) can be effective when collaboration occurs.
- Long-term adoption of new systems can be challenging.
- Livestock management practices are central to water planning.
- Brackish groundwater is suitable for livestock but not human consumption.

Rangeland Health Inventory

- Intended to occur every ~10 years, but implementation is limited by cost.
- Some grazing districts require >1,000 transects, requiring specialized expertise.
- Plant identification expertise is critical due to overgrazing conditions.
- Hopi uses utilization studies in addition to range health inventories.

Grazing Permits

- Western Navajo reportedly manages ~2,000 permits.
- Efforts are underway to identify and cancel unused permits.
- Conservation planning is being implemented for active permit holders.
- Goal is improved understanding of rangeland conditions.
- Many lands are currently in poor ecological condition.
- Grazing systems have shifted from historical livestock use patterns (sheep/horses) to modern cattle systems.
- Horse overpopulation is identified as a growing issue.

Enforcement

- Limited prosecution of grazing violations is reported.
- Law enforcement restructuring has reduced enforcement effectiveness.
- Funding constraints impact enforcement capacity.
- Past enforcement included fines and livestock reductions for violations.
- Current enforcement is perceived as less consistent.

Importance of ARMP

- Need for coordination among Navajo Nation, park rangers, and grazing officials.
- Grazing systems have shifted from mobile to more stationary use.
- Livelihoods now reflect mixed economic and cultural dependence on livestock.

Feral Horses

- Horses compete with livestock for forage.
- Contribute to worsening drought impacts.

Goals

- Rangeland conditions are no longer sustainable in some areas.
- Younger generations are less dependent on livestock as primary income.
- Livestock remains important supplemental income.

Customary Use Rights (CUR)

- CUR may be tied to active grazing permits.
- Concerns about loss of permits if livestock is not maintained.
- Concerns about outside development purchasing or influencing permits.
- Grazing permits are generally free-use on tribal trust lands.

Housing

- Approximately 50% of Navajo citizens live off-reservation.
- Concerns about returning population and housing capacity.
- Chapter governance structure described as overlapping with social services roles.
- Chapter membership is not strictly residency-based.

Funding

- Most funding is federal and not geographically restricted.
- Homesite leases may be available to non-Navajo individuals if beneficial to the community.
- Public institutions invest in housing for workforce needs.

Land Use

- Land regulations allow conversion of grazing land for conservation or development.
- Need for streamlined conservation designation processes.
- Restoration efforts include riparian rehabilitation and beaver reintroduction discussions.
- Concern about loss of grazing land for conservation designations.

Other Attendee:

- Water scarcity is the primary issue.
- Windmills are drying up as drought continues.
- Wind erosion and soil degradation are increasing.
- Groundwater level data would be useful.
- Observed vegetation recovery in fenced/ungrazed areas via Google Maps.
- Concern about uneven grazing practices across areas.

Key Messaging by Wilson staff:

- The ARMP is intended to be a plan developed for and by the Navajo Nation.
- BIA will approve the ARMP, but it will remain the Nation's Plan.
- The proposed project area is based on Navajo Nation mapping and includes lands within the Nation.
- A draft ARMP will be made available for public review to ensure community input is accurately reflected.
- Presentation will be provided to the Chapter.

Observations:

1. Anna Begay indicated she would not have known about the meeting without Marlene's notification.
2. No additional chapters were specifically invited; clarification needed on outreach coverage for Tolani Lake.

Of-Interest:

- Tony Robbins is a very well-informed member of the community, especially when it comes to natural resources.