

Memorandum

To: File
From: D. Kidder
Date: 5/27/2026
Re: Summary of ARMP Public Input Meeting in Many Farms Chapter House

Wilson Facilitators: Tiffany Martin, Dalton Kidder, Marlene Hoskie

Location: Many Farms Chapter House

Number of Attendees: 18

Sign-In Sheet Attached: Yes

Key Themes from Attendees:

- Lives in Round Rock AZ. Have a 14-acre farm, but no water. Irrigation system does not work. Reservoir does not get recharged because the water has to go through 10 acres of invasive weeds.
 - Hydraulic system failed the year they did have water in the dam, so they couldn't get water anyway.
 - Whole system needs rehab so that they can make use of the water.
 - Some people plant and then wait for rainfall, but that's not very consistent.
- There is not enough time for the attendees. Didn't hear about the meeting until 2 months ago. Was a former NN natural resources employee, knew the ARMP was coming up, but didn't get enough heads-up about the ARMP. Thought the BIA was doing the presentation.
- Why was food sovereignty considered a first bullet item? Seems to have little to do with agriculture. Promoting sustainable land use should have been the first bullet.
- Forestry plan was compiled with a lot of information from the community.
- We as Navajo people have really left behind cultural values and traditional values.
- We have a lot of issues with people claiming land areas, but the processes around this are not really defined. Right now, we're not taking care of the land properly.
- The EIS is a lengthy process. Your timeline is really aggressive, not sure you'll be able to meet the timeline.
- We have it in our heart to help our people; we go out to help people with their conservation plans.
 - There is not much help or templates for conservation plans. We tried and tried to get the information for conservation plans to help people.
 - People go to the BIA, and they have a plan and template, even the NRCS has good information.
 - How often will updates about the ARMP be posted? My hope is that we get the information across so that we can incorporate everything into the plan.

Former Grazing Official –

- Our main priority is water. There are heavy metals in the water, which makes it so that farming is extremely difficult.

- The lakes need to be dredged from sediment buildup. Cannot dredge though because of heavy metals.
 - Have to shut down windmills because of heavy metals. All of this is due to the drought.
 - Cannot drill more wells because it will affect other wells.
- The other thing is water rights. They're talking about bringing more water for the community, but it's all potable water, which puts all the agricultural stuff on the backburner.
- There is no support for enforcement from the Navajo Nation. It makes it very difficult for grazing officials.
- I work with water resources. We work with a lot of livestock at each well. Horses come and drink from sewage spill out because of the lack of water.
 - We need watershed studies.
- Need a better idea for better assessment of the range. Need to bring the forestry plan back to the table as well.
- Been pushing for better water studies but haven't gotten any support from federal government.
 - Here is depleted brown soil. Some soils have potential but have nothing there because of no water.
- Wilson & Co has about one transect every 23,000 acres (not enough). How do you select where transects go? Random would be better than specific placement, it would tell us more.
- Wildlife is being encroached on by "exploding" Navajo populations.
- Because of drought, a lot of our medicinal plants are migrating to higher elevations, which makes them more rare.
- Our goal is to have control of every bit of range on the reservation.
- Problems with people hauling in tons of hay week after week. As a rancher, you need to manage the range, not haul hay.
- The central government needs to be educated on needs; they are our constraints.
- It is hard to manage agriculture in this heat. We are far from improving infrastructure for farming. Funding is focused on commercial farmers. There is not much support for traditional farming.
- The policies are tailored to benefit people who are not my people. Funding goes over to the commercial farmers.
- I'm afraid this study is low budget and will not be very helpful. We only have 2 years, and we need to make sure things are done right.
- Recommended earlier cut of sheep units but got bad blowback. Despite data, nothing got done because it became so political.

Chapter President –

- Study has to be from the valley to the upper elevation. There is different grass based on elevation.
- Public land needs to be studied differently than range land. Unique rangelands should be studied differently.
 - There are windmills in some, earthen dams in some, and wells in some. This leads to unique situations for the rangelands. Back in the 60s, all the windmills

worked well and were inventoried. Preventative maintenance was provided. However, that is not the case. Same thing with

- Earthen dams are never clean; they are full of silt and debris.
- Water infrastructure is just not effective as they used to be. “Water rights, we do not know how to control our water at all.”
 - The Navajo Nation does not have an operator for water infrastructure maintenance. She calls and they tell her to address the problem herself. Need more engineers, more heavy equipment operators.
- There is bad communication between NN and BIA. BIA used to be very strict in their recruitment and operations. Lack of coordination between NN and BIA leads to failure and must learn to work together. NN says “we are sovereign, we do what we want to” then BIA sees a problem and sits back saying “It’s the NN, they’re sovereign.”
 - Need collaboration to save water.
- There’s Different range management for public and range land. “On public land, it’s really hard to control.”
- A recommendation that every time there is a vaccination, there should be education about conservation plans, ecological systems, and water.
- Need ranchers to be educated on desirable vegetation, range management and grazing permits.
- It’s also hard to work with the directors from NN. It’s difficult to keep driving to Window Rock and making phone calls. “Need coordination down to the grass root.”
- Water, land and population need to be balanced because our children are off the reservation and will be back. We all need to learn to work together, and the
- Homesite and homesite clearance issues are very important “I feel the NN is misusing funds.”
 - Chapters required to pay for the homesite are a waste of money.
 - If land is disturbed, it doesn’t need to be studied. That money could be put into infrastructure that fits the needs of the community.
- By the time you’re done with the studies, there will be government changes. What will new government officials’ reactions be to your plan? What if they reject it because they weren’t on board from the beginning?
 - We did a study once, but by the time it was finished, the tribe couldn’t accept it. Even though they had different entities present, they said they weren’t a part of it. I support what you’re doing, but I think we need to get more people involved to communicate the project. I didn’t know about this meeting until yesterday. Learned about the meeting from the BIA office.

Speaker from Tolani Lake, over by Leupp -

- Have a non-profit organization over at Tolani Lake. We’re pumping water 7 miles up hill. We have been working with NRCS for the past 15 years. We’ve implemented ~15 NRCS projects. We have a whole bunch of water storage tanks.
 - One of the priorities should be that communities be allowed to start non-profit entities with their communities. Everything with my nonprofit is on a volunteer basis.
 - Trying to teach our NN ranchers about the NRCS programs available. We are doing land stewardship training again to teach our ranchers to be more self-sufficient.

- NRCS provides money for ranchers to make improvements to their areas.
- Going to be implementing a virtual fencing system this summer.
- Need better outreach for land stewardship.
- One of the constraints is that they are product killers.
 - NN department of justice came down on a project and said their chapter wasn't certified, so they axed NRCS help for individual ranchers.
- One of the goal is to continue assisting ranchers. NRCS is paying me to graze my cattle, and that's something that not a lot of ranchers are aware of. The NN gets millions of dollars. That money does not go to benefit ranchers. Right now, they're proposing to take that money that was available to our ranchers. NRCS is saying once they get the NN money, that the ranchers won't be able to do individual contracts anymore.
- Something is wrong with the NN court system.
- In this region, the NRCS will not help unless the permit is in your name. This makes it hard to capitalize on improving our land, especially with grazing permits halted.
- Permits say there should be a regional conservation plan, but there are none. That's why individual conservation plans are now required. Getting conservation plans take a long time to get approved.
- The NRCS website has all the programs on it. Some of the money the NN got from their lawsuit was supposed to go to natural resources.
- Need ARMP to meet legal requirements. You need to have a really good grasp on the legal reasons why this ARMP is being developed. It used to be that BIA would issue a lease to utilize the land without surveying the land and all the extra steps.
 - Review the IRMPA and the federal laws related to the BIA and their trust responsibility to NN. A lot of our people have good knowledge of what is supposed to be provided to the NN from our treaties.
- Recommendations for usage of funding are important. Let the money go back into agriculture so that people can get what they need, because that's what a lot of the money was originally intended for. Some of the money was suggested for alfalfa, but that is not the best use of the funding.
- The responsibility of BIA says that the conservation plan should be made by the natural resource specialist.
 - We shouldn't be asked to do something that is supposed to be someone else's responsibility. That needs to be shown to the BIA and to the Navajo people. I wanted to see if I could get a copy of those regulations at the BIA office, but the person who could have helped me wasn't there. There is always an obstacle at a higher level of authority. Who is responsible for all these things? We need to figure out who is the culprit. We need to be able to go to the right person. Sometimes, you need to learn which individuals will help you. Some are very helpful, while some should just be avoided because they are not helpful. You will find certain helpful individuals wherever you end up going.
 - The BIA does not have enough employees to support their responsibilities. When I went to the BIA office yesterday, there was no clerk, and the person there said that the phone bill wasn't paid, so the phone was cut off. So, now you cannot even call in. The lady had to give me her personal number.
- Looking at it from a watershed perspective is a very good idea.

- I work at a nonprofit that focuses on organizing plans that exist. The NN puts a lot of money into these plans, but they don't get executed. When I worked on the NN, we were severely understaffed. I believe that it should be the community that helps implement the Plan. We need to try to lessen the burden for everyone involved. There are programs that do work, and there are resources available.
 - Getting the community more involved is very important. The community needs to be invested.
- My aunt still practices traditional, migratory grazing. There is a complacency among communities waiting on the government. It seems like traditional knowledge is almost shunned.
- People don't want to act, using lack of education/authority as an excuse. My grandma supported herself entirely on her own. She would have extra grain. With progress comes new laws.
- A lot of times, the emphasis is on a number for overgrazing. However, overgrazing is more about the plant than the animals. There does not seem to be an awareness of the difference between the number of animals with overgrazing.
 - Animals naturally migrate, maybe we can make it work if we utilize the number of animals to our advantage to rehab certain vegetation.
- Our best dam is the land. Under the NN Surface Water Quality Standard, they said anyone can nominate and acceptable water of the NN. Conditions need to be appropriate, but you can use that to bring protection back to some of the waterways. It's good to start at the top of the watershed and work your way down. We got a small grant to repair some headwaters. Since our project is in a forested area, we are trying to get it under the blanket forestry EIS.
- We need people to help implement this plan. How can we make this plan a local economy for this plan. Could each chapter have their own specialist for the plan?
 - The goal for me would be to have everyone help implement these strategies.
- Watershed evaluation would be beneficial. We're using a document that's called listening to watersheds. We had local days at schools to talk about watersheds. The kids were excited about contributing to the watershed. Chapter meetings are where motivation was lacking. By the time things get put in place anyway, those kids will be grown up.
 - It's helpful to alleviate bureaucracy. My goal is to see our water flourishing again and for people to pay more attention.
- I think people (Navajo people) don't understand our practices. Need laws that match stewardship and what would benefit the land.
- See a lot of barren lands because of overstocking. You'll find that some of the top officials are culprits of overstocking. Some of them were doing it without permits. That's a concern.
 - But who addresses it with somebody who is a high-level official?
 - Another thing that I see is that some high-level officials ignore the processes and just go to the directors to skip the process.
 - We need to have better accountability for these officials so that people can know who is not complying with the right procedures. The people that are in violation of these things would not come to these kinds of meetings. The people that you see here are the ones that are trying to comply.
- A lot of law gets put in place because people use it to get what they want.

- More inclusion of the community is important. A lot of times there's changes in the government, but the common theme is saying no, you can't do that. It would be better if we explored how it can be done. Having a more inclusive review team would be better.

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".
- Presentation will be sent to Chapter.

Observations:

1. Quality of the presentation is poor. Need a better projector; presentation fuzzy. Some were adamant that we needed printed copies of the presentation.
2. Complaint that the meeting is not what I expected. What is your goal to utilize the information for this Plan? Need more clarification on what the input sessions are to communicate goals of the meeting more effectively.
3. People believe the permit process is not in favor of Navajo.
4. There was a request that this conversation be given to the Navajo Nation president (and just generally all higher ups in the government). "My demand is that the NN straighten up."
5. A lot of elderly people don't have the internet and need printed documents to review.
6. Chapter president asked that all of Marlene's notes be tracked and incorporated in the notes.

Of-Interest:

- A few attendees claimed to work for non-profit organizations. They spent some time advocating for their services.
- The group included a Chapter president, secretary and former grazing official.
- A few people talked about the importance of implementation of the plan.