

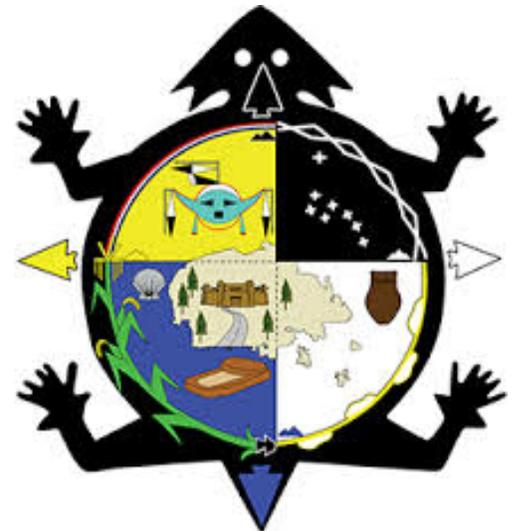
NAVAJO HERITAGE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT



YASNIŁT'ĒES 2020 - VOL.I-NO.1 NNHHPD NEWSLETTER

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A Little About the Heritage & Historic Preservation Department

By Richard M. Begay, Department Manager

Yá'át'ééh! I am Richard M. Begay, the Department Manager, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Navajo Nation. Welcome to our first newsletter that gives a little bit of a background to what we do.

The Heritage and Historic Preservation Department (HHPD) was established pursuant to the Navajo Nation Cultural Resources Protection Act (CRPA; CMY-19-1988); CRPA covers all Navajo Nation lands, including Individual Indian Allotments. We have 20 total staff members; 15 in main office in Window Rock, and five in Shiprock. We have five sections: Administration, Traditional Cultural Program (TCP), Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program (GCAMP), Cultural Resources Compliance Section (CRCS) including GIS Planning Development, and Heritage Management Services (HMS).

HHPD is the Tribal Historic Preservation Office recognized by the National Park Service on July 31, 1996. Cultural resource compliance no longer need concurrence by the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) from Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. HHPD also has a P.L. 93-638 with the Navajo Region of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). In cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) HHPD receives funding to participate in the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program.



NNHHPD Building, Window Rock, Arizona

Our office is primarily responsible for issuing “archaeological clearance” on projects all across the Navajo Nation. In 2019, HHPD CRCS reviewed approximately 942 cultural resources inventory (archaeology) reports for compliance on Navajo Nation lands, and 800 consultations for projects off the Navajo Nation. About 70% of our archaeological clearances are for Homesites. For calendar year 2019 we issued 57 Annual Permits, and 963 project-specific permits. HHPD collected over \$60,000 in permit fees for deposit into the Navajo Nation General Fund account.

We are proud of the work we do for the Navajo people. Please read the rest of the articles for additional information, HHPD can be contacted at 928-871-7198. You can also visit www.hpd.navajo-nsn.gov.



GIS and HHPD Records

By Ryan James, GIS Analyst

What is GIS?

A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface. The program uses satellites to accurately record the location of places of interest on a digital map for future use.

GIS Services: How and Why HHPD uses GIS.

NNHHPD utilizes GIS to record culturally sensitive and archaeologically significant sites across Navajo Land. Sites can be better preserved and protected when their locations are accurately documented.

Legacy Data

The Heritage & Historic Preservation Department has been collecting data pertaining to Navajo archaeology and culture for decades. Much of this data is housed within the department's paper file archive. NNHHPD wants to make this data more accessible by uploading the archive onto a local searchable server.



NNHHPD 's File Archive

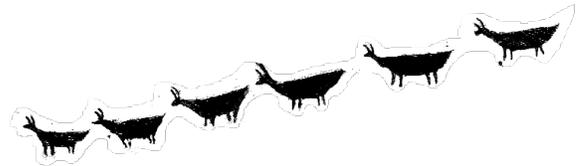
The Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department's (NNHHPD) Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Section is a two-part system which includes ArcGIS (spatial mapping), and FileMaker Pro software (data management for paper records). The primary goal of this newly established section (GIS) is to provide necessary GIS services to NNHHPD's internal sections, with spatial information, digitized documents, and accurate GIS data on needs relevant to work assisting Federal, State, and Tribal entities requiring information related to Navajo archaeology, Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs), and Highly Sensitive areas across the Navajo Nation in the most effective and efficient manner.



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Through BIA funding under the Cultural Resources Compliance Section (CRCS), NNHHPD was able to hire two individuals for this section, Ryan James GIS Analyst, and Genevie Hardy, GIS Technician. These two staff members are developing NNHHPD's GIS database to complement the FileMaker Pro system, which is the foundation of the NihiDatabase. Ms. Hardy has taken the lead in the processes involved in the scanning of legacy data (old files) and maps to be inputted into the NihiDatabase, while Mr. James is actively involved in creating shape files of surveyed areas, and recorded archaeological sites in the ArcGIS geodatabase.

Mr. James also serves as NNHHPD's IT specialist. Mr. James has been an asset in procuring up to date equipment, and setting up NNHHPD's internal networking infrastructure consisting of a new Network Server and various Data Backup equipment. The installation of a server-based software environment was required for NNHHPD's NihiDatabase. With the Network Server installed, all the necessary components (GIS Database, Digitized Maps, Digitized Files, etc.) will have a place to reside within the department, which creates a streamlined cultural resources compliance process and improves research of HHPD records.



Sei Tah **the Great Sand Dunes National Monument**

By Timothy Begay, Navajo Cultural Specialist

The Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department (NNHHPD) has been consulting on a government-to-government basis with the National Park Service's Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve (GRSA) under the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process. The National Park Service (NPS) received funding to conduct a Traditional Use Study (TUS) with 22 tribes who are affiliated with the Great Sand Dunes National Park, and surrounding areas. Navajo cultural traditions, such as the story of the Warrior Twins, incorporate the Great Sand Dunes as a place of great significance.



Photo by Great Sand Dunes National Park

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The Navajo Nation held pre-field discussion for the TUS with NNHHPD staff and *Hataalii* in November 2017 in Window Rock, Arizona.

The field study took place August 20-24, 2018. Parametrix (Albuquerque, NM), an engineering, planning and environmental sciences company, was contracted to work with the affiliated tribes to produce a report. The Navajo Nation shared the oral and ceremonial history and the connections between the Great Sand Dunes National Park (GRSA) and the greater cultural landscape.

The Navajo traditional representatives, and NNHHPD staff highlighted the cultural ties to the sand dunes landscape. The cultural knowledge is maintained in oral history, ceremonies, pilgrimages, and continued resource use of medicinal/ceremonial plants.

Many different cultural resources were observed and documented during the TUS fieldwork in the GRSA. These included ceremonial and medicinal plants, indigenous animals such as elk and bison, archaeological sites, artifacts such as projectile points (arrow heads), and lithic scatters. The cultural context of observed resources were provided by the Navajo representatives. The TUS demonstrated the significance the area holds in Navajo culture and why these resources must be preserved.

The GRSA Traditional Use Study provided the Navajo name for the Great Sand Dunes; *Séítah*, or “place of sand.”

Another name for the GRSA is *Séíwhíízhooosh*, which means, “sand comes back down.” *Séíwhíízhooosh* comes from the traditional narrative of the Warrior Twins, *Naayéé Neezghá* (Monster Slayer) and *Tóbáííschini* (Born for Water), when they made the journey to see their father, the Sun. The sand dunes were an obstacle on their journey to visit the Sun.

The TUS is important because the oral histories to the landscape are established. Navajo traditional history are narratives passed down through songs, ceremonies, and stories that outline the natural laws of the Navajo way of life. Our connections to the landscape need to be established, acknowledged, and understood by the Navajo people and our leaders. Our Navajo ancestors did not migrate across the Bering Strait. Navajo oral and ceremonial history begins with emergence from four previous worlds into the present, fifth world. Navajo people have always existed in the Southwest, between the four sacred mountains. The cultural history of *Séíwhíízhooosh* demonstrates our deep roots in the Southwest.

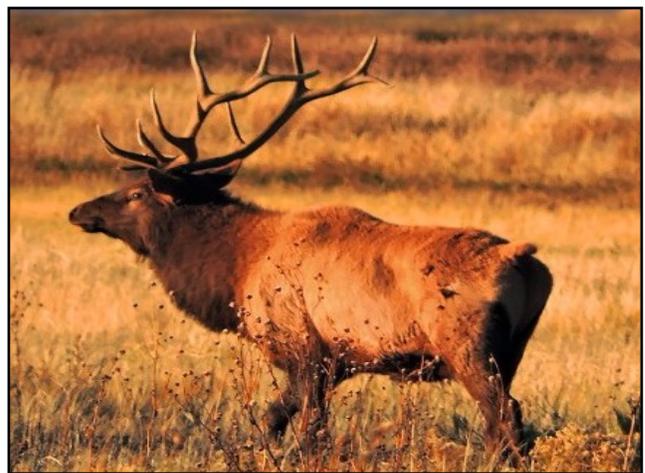


Photo by Great Sand Dunes National Park

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

By Melinda Arviso-Ciocco, Navajo Cultural Specialist

The Navajo Nation Heritage and Historic Preservation Department (NNHHPD) have a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to participate in the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP). Through the agreement, the Navajo Nation is a formal member of the GDCAMP Adaptive Management Program Work Group (AMWG), and Technical Work Group (TWG). The work groups were created through the Federal Advisory Committee Act. This program has representatives from seven states, Western Power Administration, United States Geological Survey, and Grand Canyon Research and Monitoring Center. The programs are overseen by the United States Department of Interior's Science and Water Branch Division under the Secretary of the Interior. The AMWG/TWG meets several times a year to engage in management activities.

NNHHPD participated in a bi-annual inter-agency river trip through the Grand Canyon corridor with representatives from several federal agencies, and other local tribes. The trip was nine days rafting in two motor boats (aka pontoons) with approximately twenty-five people. We visited multiple sites that Navajo Nation has been monitoring annually through the cooperative agreement. Many of the places we stopped at were archaeological sites, but other places were resource gathering areas such as the Salt Mine. We were able to stop at the Salt Mine to monitor the site, give offerings, and collect natural salt. Many of these sites are off-limits to general visitors. Only tribes who are affiliated to the Grand Canyon have direct access to areas such as the Salt Mine and the Hematite Mine.



Navajo Hogans at Crystal Creek

As stakeholders, tribes are directly involved in the management and stabilization efforts of these areas that hold cultural significance to Native people.

The relationship Diné people share with the canyon is intrinsic to our cultural identity as well as our spiritual and physical well-being. The Colorado and the Little Colorado Rivers are sacred elements in Navajo oral and ceremonial histories. The rivers are also important for domestic uses such as providing water for livestock. Oral testimonies within ceremonial, clan, and emergence stories have been passed down through generations since time immemorial. Within the Diné paradigm, it is not only our right to access and manage, but indeed a cultural obligation entered into by our ancestors and the deities that created the canyon; similarly it is the right of the river to receive the ceremonial offerings of the Diné people. The Navajo Nation must continue to be involved in all-

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aspects of the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon.

The management and monitoring of the Glen Canyon Dam heavily impact the state of the ecosystem that influences natural and cultural resources. The Navajo Nation must remain involved in the conservation-management of the Grand Canyon.

Melinda Arviso-Ciocco is with the NNC-Speaker's Office

Culturally Modified Trees

By William Tsosie, Archaeologist, Forestry

Culturally modified trees (CMTs) are common in many areas of the Navajo Nation Forests. CMTs are often ponderosa pines. They occur where a person has stripped a large section of bark and cambium (living cells between the bark and wood) from the tree trunk usually with a steel-head axe. Many of the wounds appear quite old, estimated to be from the mid to late 1800s. The axe marks can still be seen, through the trees have usually grown over much of the wound, making the oval "window" shape to the peel scars. Navajo CMTs or "peeled trees" are rarely recognized in the anthropological or ethno-botanical literature, and thus very little is known about the practice of peeling trees, including who did it and why. Yet these trees offer a glimpse into the pre-history, and the historic past, where people and the environment have intersected, interacted, and left behind rich stories. Unfortunately, these trees and the stories they will share are now threatened by drought stress, old age, wildfire, and fuel wood cutting.

We seek a greater understanding of these cultural resources. We would like to record their locations and attributes, and to precisely date the peels by dendrochronology. Tree-ring sampling removes pencil-sized pieces of wood adjacent to the peel scar. Afterward, the sampling is nearly invisible on the tree. But the data is of great value, providing rich information on when trees were peeled. Understanding more about CMTs and possible uses provides unique insight into Navajo pre-history and historic traditional life way activities.

Data gathered from CMTs will answer several key questions: (1) How are CMTs distributed on the landscape, randomly, or grouped in certain areas? (2) When did peeling trees start as a practice on the Navajo Nation, and when did it end? (3) Are peel dates evenly distributed in time, or do they cluster around traditional cultural and climatic events, such as drought or periods of cultural stress?

Culturally modified trees are valuable sources of information that must be protected to preserve the window these trees provide into Navajo history. Collecting stories from local people about the CMTs will provide us information on how to care for these trees throughout Navajo land.



CMT Photo by Will Tsosie

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL

NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

By Tamara Billie, Senior Archaeologist

The Navajo Nation Heritage & Historic Preservation Department (NNHHPD) issued a 2019 site visitation permit to the New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Department of Anthropology to allow the University to conduct the first archaeological field school on Navajo Nation lands. In May of 2019, the anthropology students conducted experiential training on how to record archaeological sites and identify architectural features, such as kivas and plazas. More importantly, the students learned a great deal about Navajo traditions and beliefs and Navajo connections to the Anasazi People.

In October, the University returned to the area they previously recorded and flew a drone over the site to collect approximately 1,500 individual images of the archaeological site. The drones 3-D camera provided high-resolution images of the site that gives a detailed view of the surface terrain and features. These aerial images provide us with information on the site we couldn't see on the ground, such as the overall site layout. These videos and maps are important for preservation and the future land management of the area. NMHU will provide the information to the Navajo Nation for management purposes. NNHHPD & NMHU hopes to train and recruit Navajo archaeologists, and help up-and-coming archaeologists better

understand Navajo viewpoints on archaeology through future field schools.

The field school was organized in coordination with the Cultural Resources Compliance Section (CRCS). CRCS coordinates consultations involving cultural resources on the Navajo Nation. The program's staff facilitates the BIA's compliance with tribal and federal preservation laws and provides technical support in cultural resource preservation to tribal members. CRCS issues permits to conduct cultural resource investigations and collect ethnographic information on the Navajo reservation. The overall function of the department is to ensure Navajo traditional concerns are addressed in undertakings as they pertain to project management, land-use planning, and cultural resource management.

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