



# Proposed Rio San Jose Water Rights Settlement Agreement



March 2024

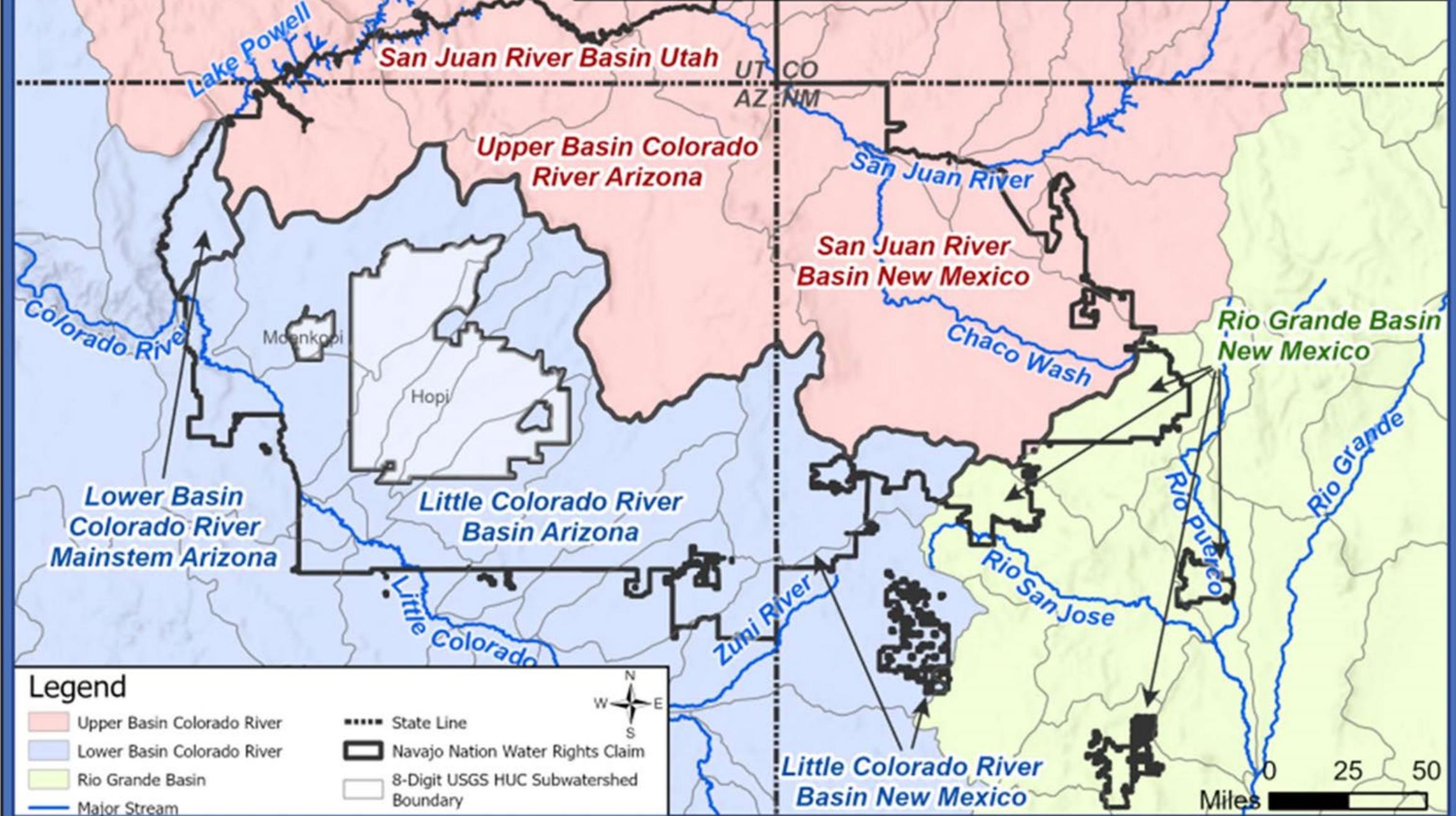
For Public Discussion Purposes

# Water is Life – *Tó éí iiná áté*

- Dine creation stories talk about Tóyiisdzáán – Sacred Water Woman – controls all water on earth and sky. Our stories include Male and female Rivers. Water is sacred.
- Our sacred mountains like San Francisco Peaks and Mt. Hesperus are female mountains and it is believed that Mt. Hesperus gave birth to our four sacred rivers – one of them is the powerful Colorado River.
- Since Navajo creation, water has served as a fundamental element to Navajo life. *Tó éí iiná at'é* (water is life), and it is elemental to *Hózhó*, the Navajo Way of Life.
- We pray to these sacred waters. We use our *tadidíin* and make offerings. We pray to *Diyin Dine'é* to bring us rain and fill our rivers so our crops, animals, land, and people can grow and thrive.
- We need water to survive, clean and bathe, feed our animals, grow our crops – we need water to live a sustainable life – like our ancestors did.

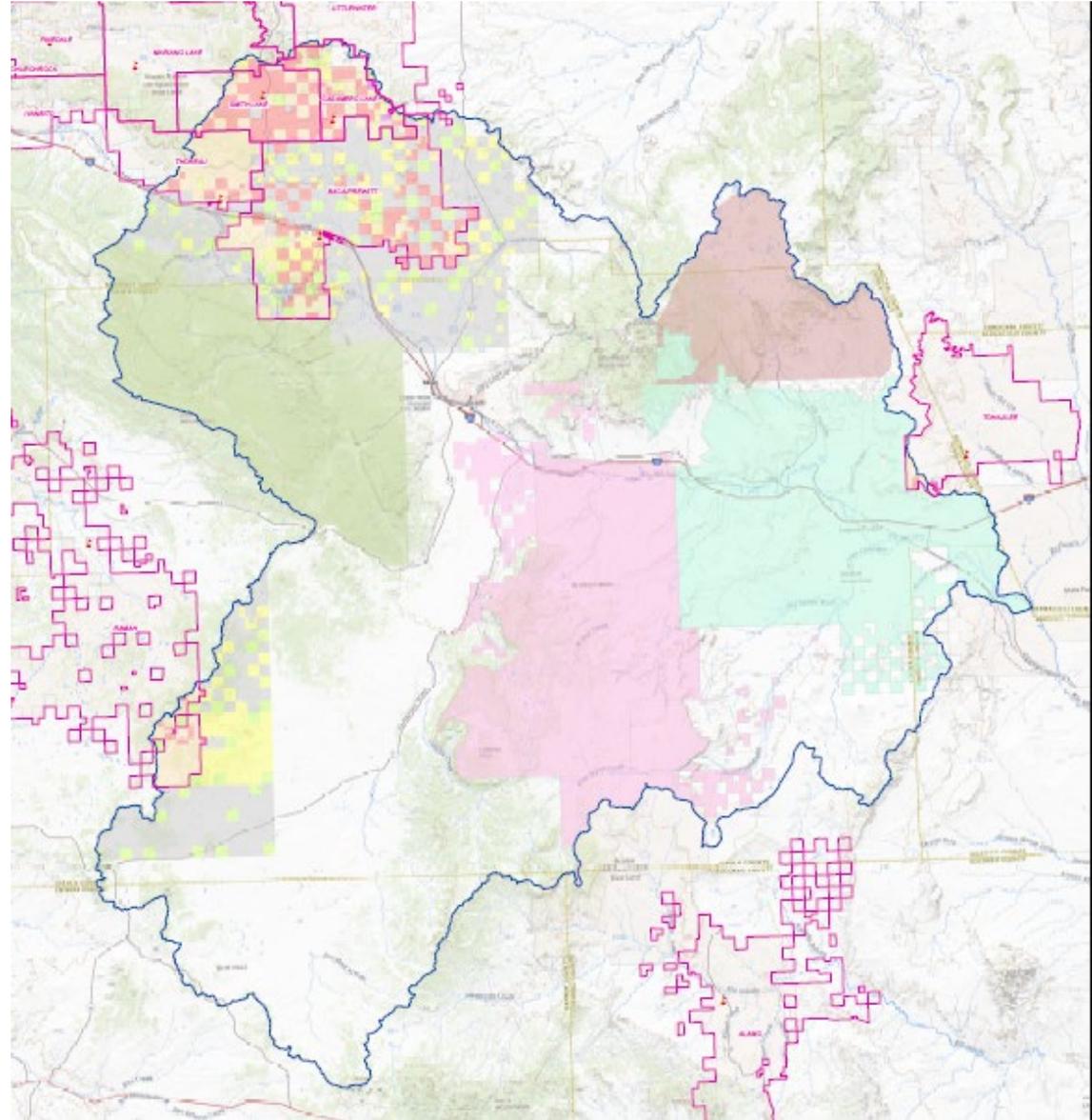


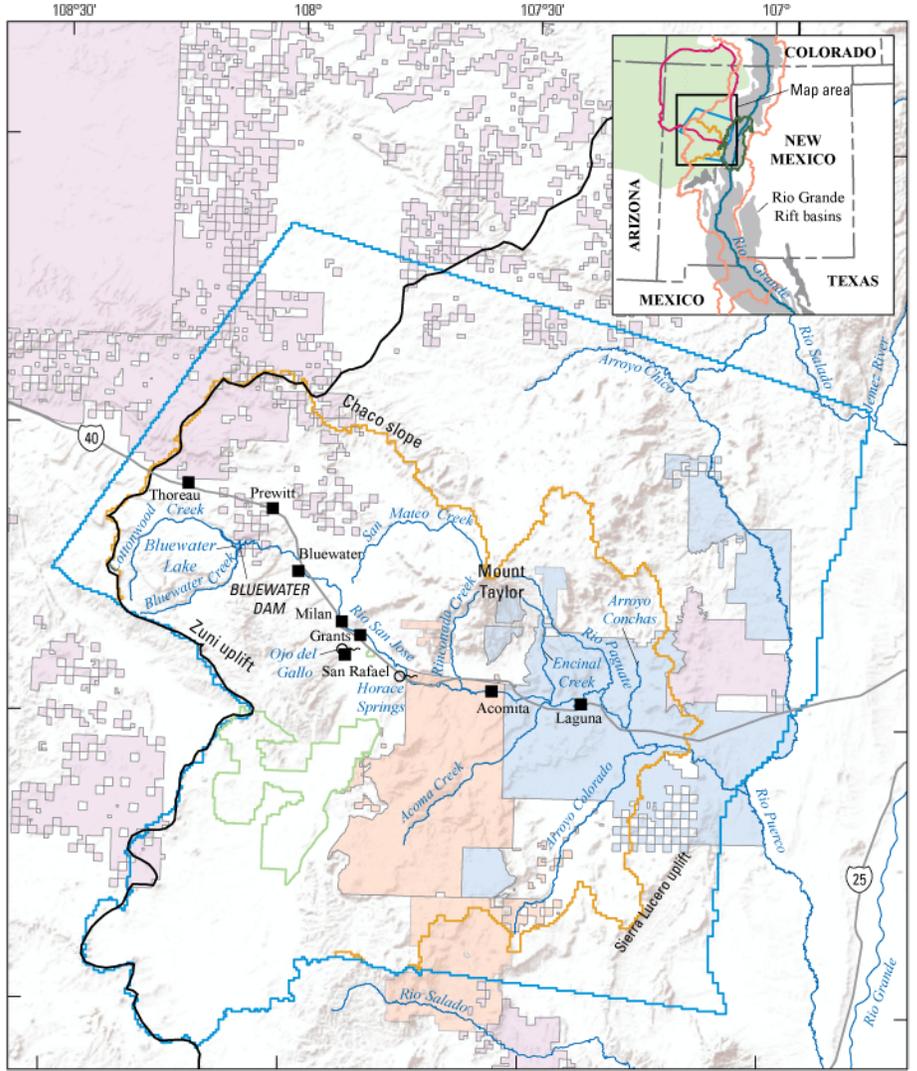
# Map of Navajo Nation Water Rights Claims



# Settlement Parties

- **Navajo Nation and Tóhajiilee Band (trust land)**
- Pueblo of Acoma
- Pueblo of Laguna
- United States of America
- State of New Mexico
- City of Grants
- Village of Milan
- Nine individual acequias and community ditches





Base from U.S. Geological Survey digital data  
 Map image is intellectual property of Esri and is used herein under license. Copyright 2020 Esri and its licensors. All rights reserved  
 Universal Transverse Mercator projection, zone 13N  
 North American Datum of 1983

0 5 10 15 20 MILES  
 0 5 10 15 20 KILOMETERS

**EXPLANATION**

El Malpais National Monument	Colorado Plateaus physiographic province	Upper Rio Grande Basin boundary
Native American Tribal Land	Rio San Jose Basin boundary (defined in this report as the surface-water drainage basin; active Precipitation-Runoff Modeling System area)	Middle Rio Grande Basin boundary
Acoma Pueblo	Active MODFLOW-NWT area boundary	San Juan structural basin boundary
Laguna Pueblo	Continental Divide	Select spring location discussed in report
Navajo Nation	Horace Springs	

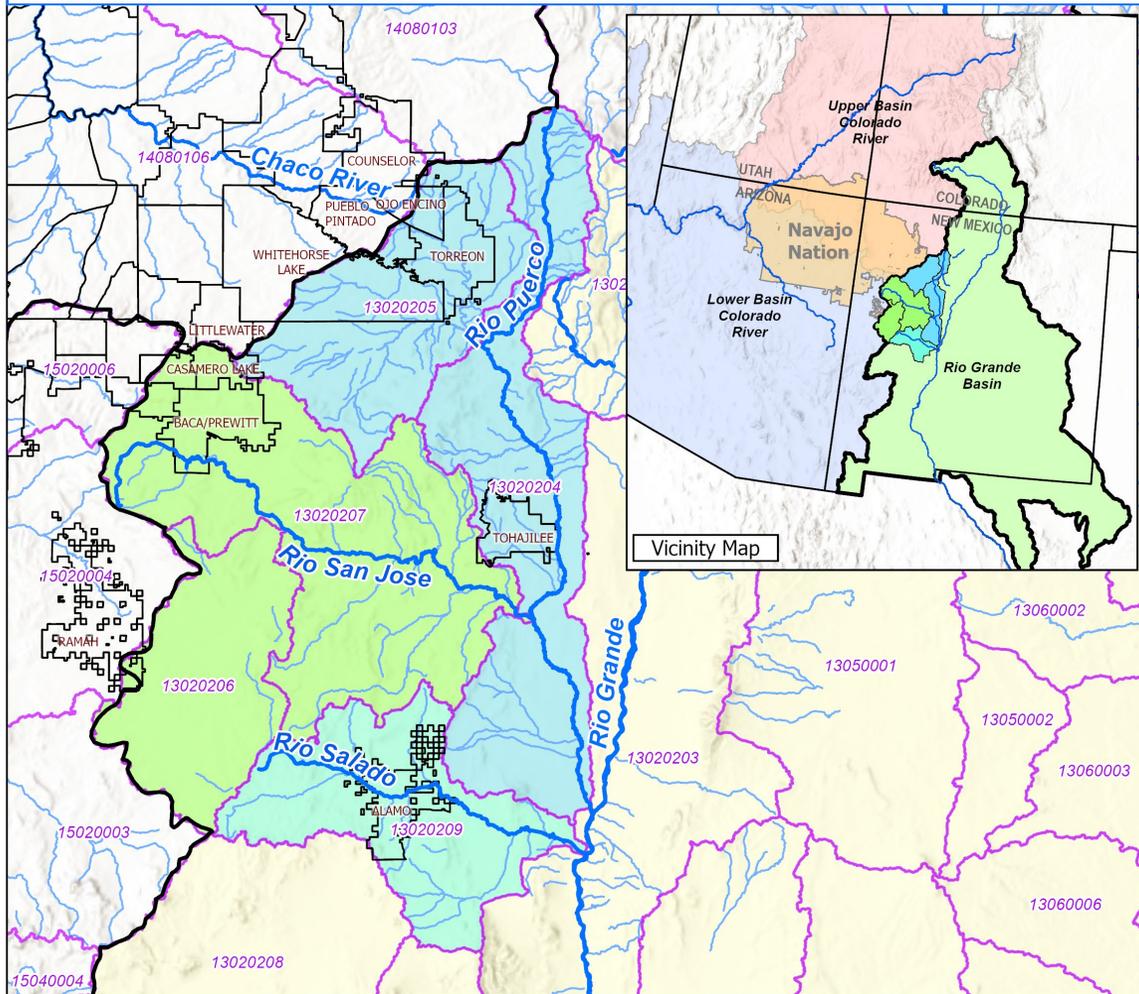
In 2022, Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, the State of New Mexico, and non-Indian water users executed a settlement agreement, quantifying the water rights of the two Pueblos in the Rio San José and Rio Puerco Basins.

The United States and the Navajo Nation are not party to the 2022 settlement agreement at this time. The Pueblos’ settlement contemplates that the parties would reach a settlement with the Navajo Nation at some point in the future.

The proposed Navajo RSJ Settlement with the Navajo Nation and other mentioned parties would fairly and finally settle water rights claims of the Nation, and the United States acting as trustee for the Navajo Nation, in the general stream adjudication of the Rio San Jose Stream System.

If approved by all parties, the Navajo RSJ Settlement would be added as an addendum to the Pueblos' settlement.

# RIO GRANDE BASIN NEW MEXICO MAP



## Legend

- Stream
- Rio San Jose Subbasin
- Rio Puerco Subbasin
- Rio Salado Subbasin
- Rio Grande Basin
- 8-digit USGS Hydrologic Unit Code
- Navajo Nation Chapter Boundary



# Rio San Jose & Rio Puerco Basins

9 chapter communities are located within the Rio San Jose Basin (RSJB)

- Baca/Prewitt
- Casamero Lake
- Crownpoint
- Littlewater
- Mariano Lake
- Ramah
- Smith Lake
- Thoreau
- Tóhajiilee

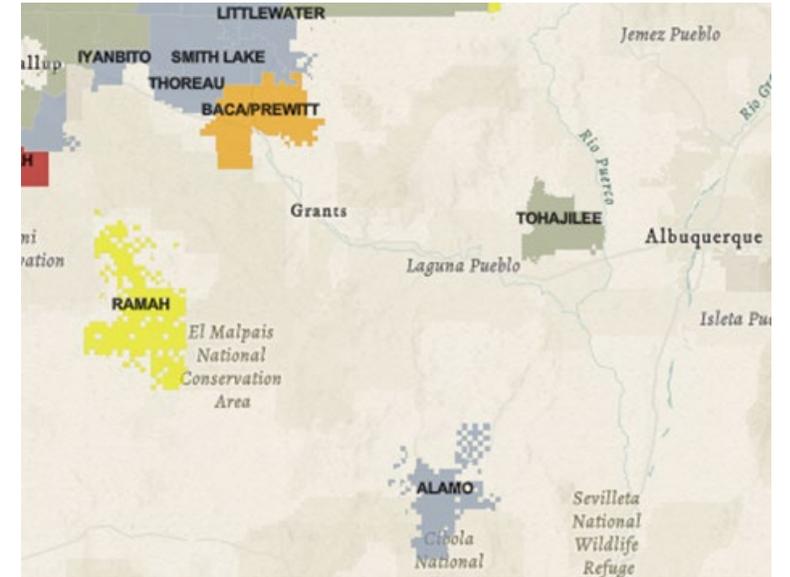
7 chapter communities located within the Rio Puerco Basin (RPB)

- Tóhajiilee
- Torreon
- Ojo Encino
- Pueblo Pintado
- Whitehorse Lake
- Counselor
- Littlewater



## Navajo Nation Homes without Piped Water Access

Homes without Piped Water



# Water Supply Conditions

Existing groundwater supplies are limited and are of poor quality

More than 200 Navajo households in the RSJB & RPB do not have running water and rely on water hauling to meet daily water needs

Drought conditions have impacted available water supplies

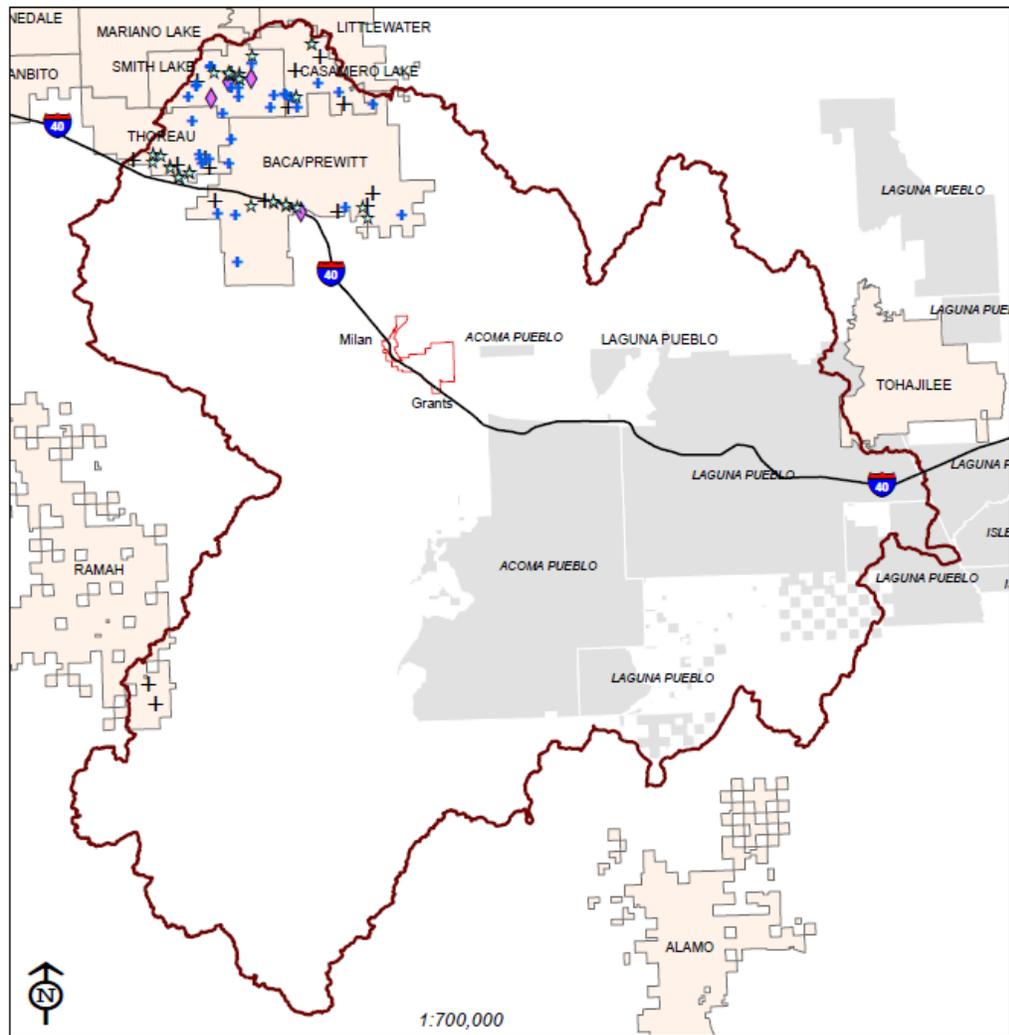


# Navajo Nation

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## Past and Present Water Uses in the Rio San Jose and Rio Puerco Basins

- Domestic, Commercial, Municipal, Industrial Wells
- Stock Wells
- Livestock Consumptive Use
- Stock Ponds Storage Right
- Stock Ponds Consumptive Use Right



**Legend**

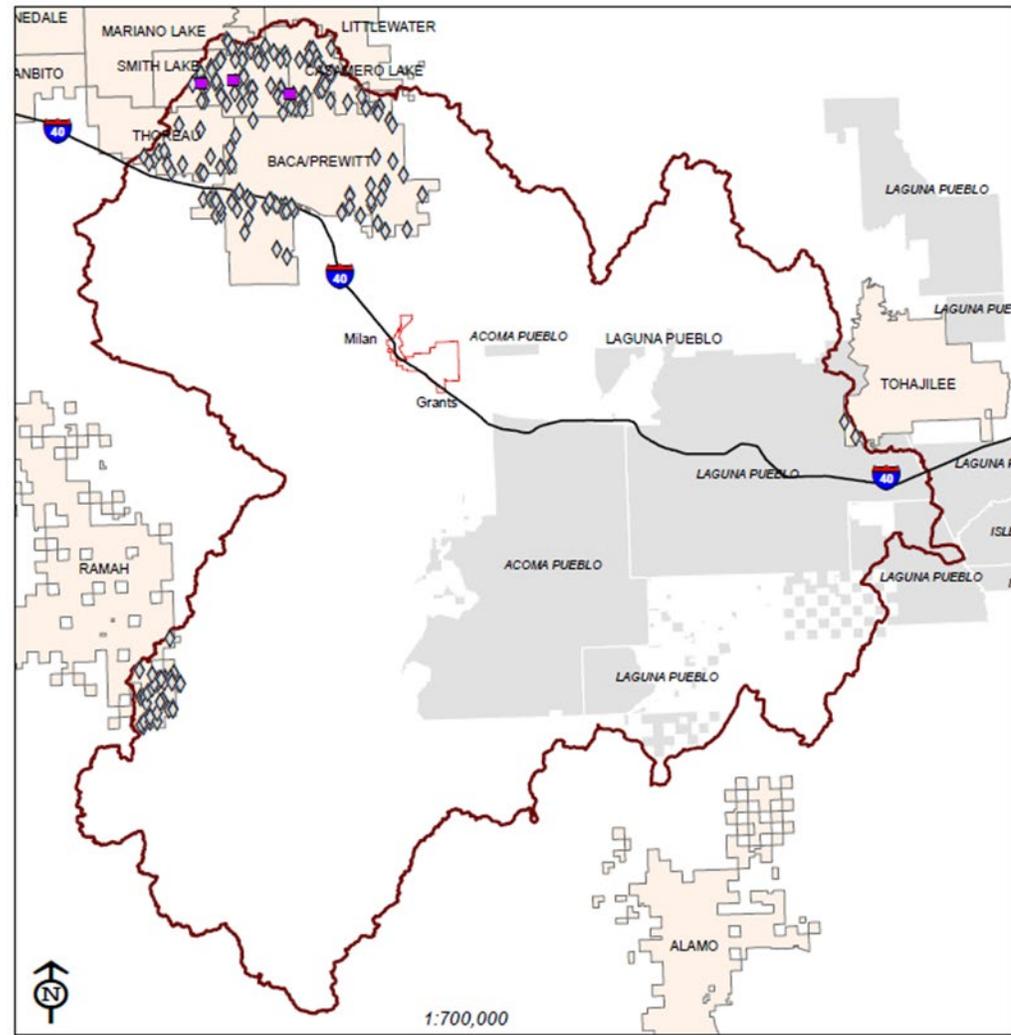
- ☆ Municipal Wells
- + Domestic and Springs Wells
- + Livestock Wells
- ◇ Industrial Wells
- City Boundaries
- Chapter Boundary 2018
- Reservations

**Exhibit 1A**

**Navajo Nation Well Claims in the Rio San Jose Basin New Mexico**

*RSJ\_Claims\_Map04202022w.mxd, April 21, 2022, RLK*

LOCATIONAL MAP



**Legend**

- Recreational Impoundments
- ◇ Stock Ponds
- City Boundaries Navajo
- Chapter Boundary 2018
- Reservations

**Exhibit 1B**

**Navajo Nation Stock Ponds/Impoundments/Lakes Claims in the Rio San Jose Basin New Mexico**

*RSJ\_Claims\_Map04202022w.mxd, April 21, 2022, RLK*

LOCATIONAL MAP

# Navajo Nation Water Rights

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- 2,444 AFY Groundwater for the two basins
- 417 AFY for livestock use
- 493 AFY additional storage right of for stock ponds for Rio San José Basin
- livestock water rights for the Rio Puerco Basin to be determined later
- The Settlement Agreement does not impact allottee water rights.

# Groundwater

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## Future Water Demands

### Quantity

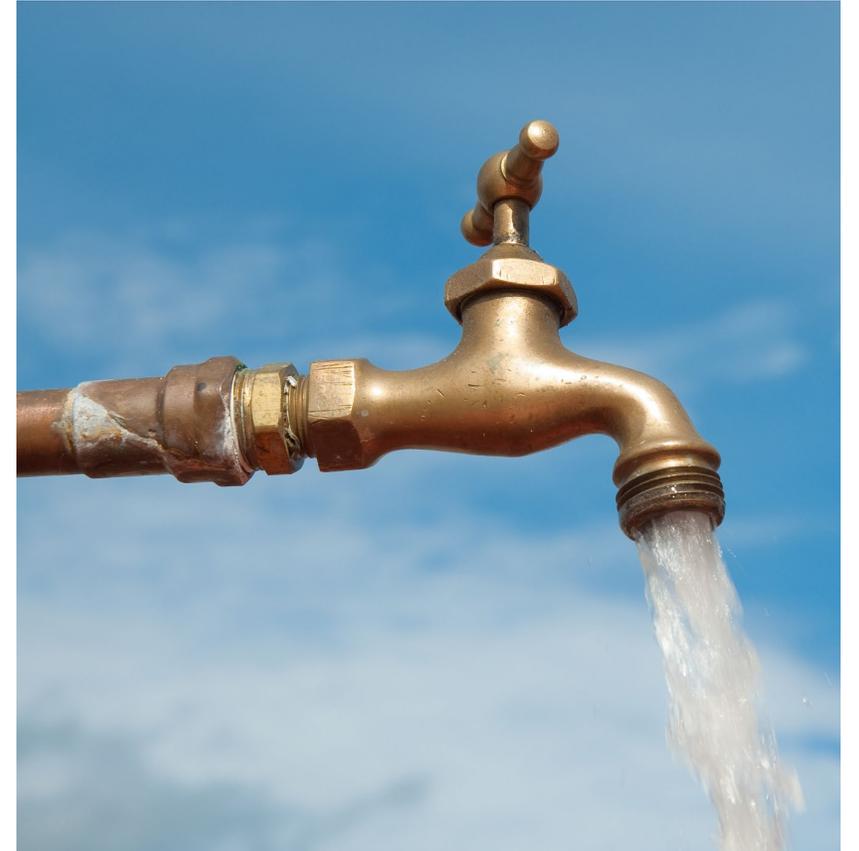
- Navajo Nation, Right to divert and consume 1,300 AFY

### ◦ Purpose of Use

- Additional groundwater rights shall be domestic, commercial, municipal, and industrial

### ◦ Places of Use

- Navajo Nation, Rio San Jose, and Rio Puerco Basins



# Proposed Settlement Fund \$243,271,000

**Regional Transmission Waterline & Navajo communities' connections**

**Wastewater Development**

**Chlorination Station**

**Water Hauling Stations**

**Operation and Maintenance Trust Fund**

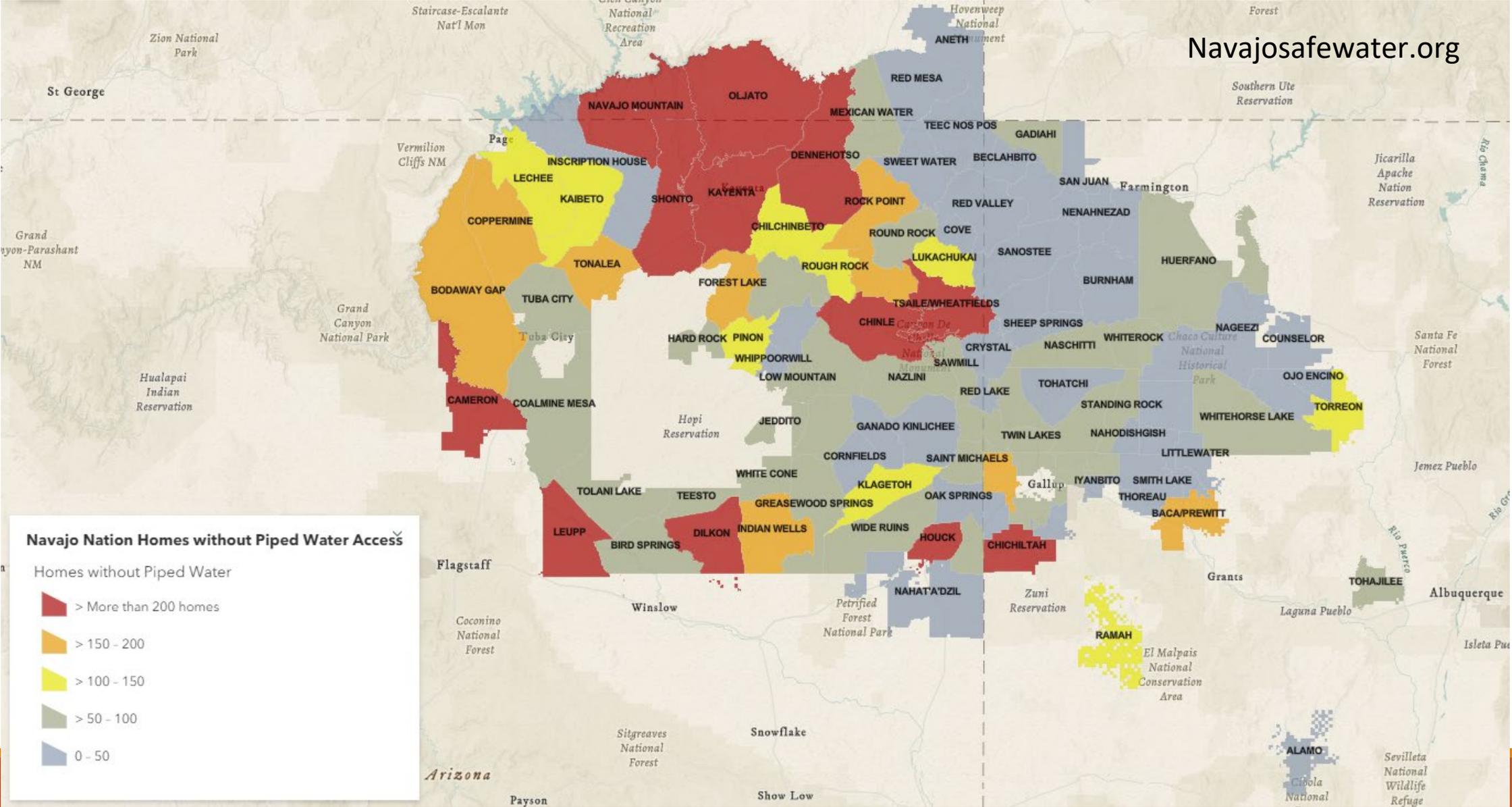
**Waterline Extension & Bathroom Additions**

**Livestock Water Projects**

**Sanitation Projects**

**Water Acquisition Fund**

# Navajo Nation Homes without Piped Water





# Public Education Meetings

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## **Past Meetings**

December 20, 2023 – Joint BBN9/Hwy 371/Cutter Lateral Chapters Workgroup, Iyanbito Chapter

January 12, 2024 – Navajo Technical University, Crownpoint

January 26, 2024 – Eastern Agency Council, Thoreau Chapter

## **Future Meetings**

April 6, 2024 from 12- 4 pm – Torreon/Star Lake Chapter

April 7, 2024 from 12- 4 pm – Tóhajiilee Chapter

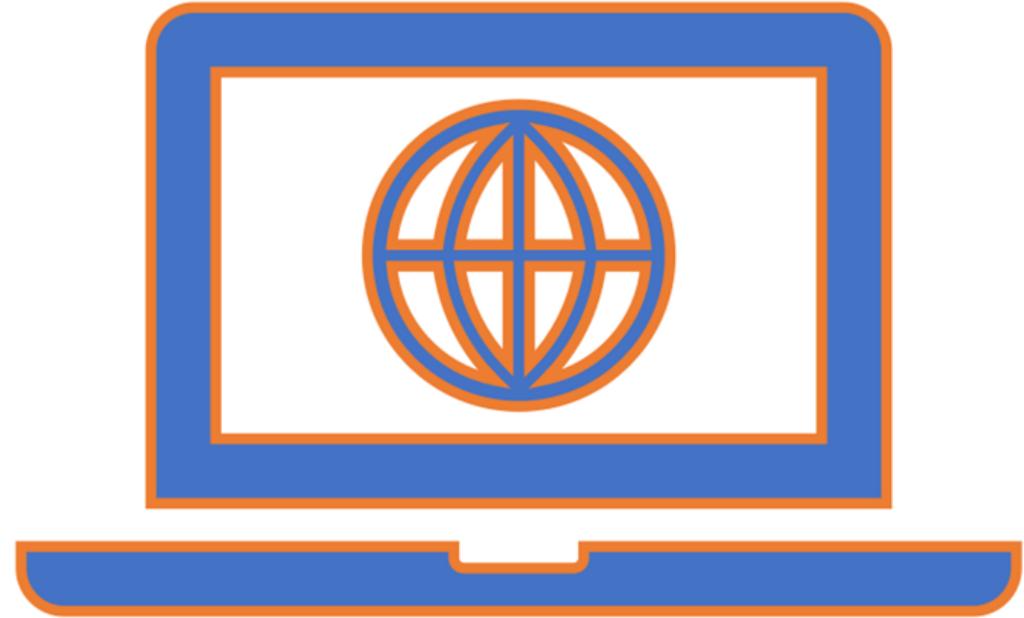
April 13, 2024 from 12- 4 pm – Baca/Prewitt Chapter



# Learn more at...

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- Weekly Facebook Live updates
  - Posted on Facebook and soon on YouTube and WRU website
- Water Rights Commission monthly meetings
- Water Rights Commission website
- Press releases
- Upcoming public education meetings and events
- Presentations by WRC, WRU, and the Department of Water Resources/ Water Management Branch





<https://nndoj.navajo-nsn.gov/Public-Education>

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