Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project

Features

- Approximately 300 miles of pipeline (48” to 10” diameter)
- Approximately 19 Pumping Plants
- 2 Water Treatment Plants
- Several Storage Tanks
- Programmatic Agreement among agencies and tribes for the consideration and management of effects on historic properties

Project Challenges

- Integration of the facilities into the existing distribution systems
- Right of Way acquisition
- Simultaneous construction by multiple entities
- Schedule construction of reaches to meet critical interim water needs
- Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Partners

- Navajo Nation
- City of Gallup
- Jicarilla Apache Nation
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- State of New Mexico
- Indian Health Service
- Bureau of Reclamation

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Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP) has evolved over four decades as a major infrastructure initiative to provide a long term Municipal and Industrial water supply for communities in the eastern portions of the Navajo Reservation, the Jicarilla Apache Reservation, and the City of Gallup, New Mexico. It is the cornerstone of the Navajo Nation San Juan River Basin in New Mexico Water Rights Settlement Agreement.

Purpose & Scope

A long-term sustainable water supply is needed for the area to support current and future populations. Existing groundwater supplies are dwindling, are of poor quality, and cannot meet the area’s future needs. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of Navajo households rely on water hauling to meet daily water needs.

The City of Gallup’s groundwater levels have dropped approximately 200 feet over the past 10 years, and the supply is not expected to meet water demands within the decade which is cause for great concern.

It is presently very difficult for the Jicarilla Apache people to live and work outside the Town of Dulce, New Mexico on other portions of the reservation due to a lack of water supply.

The Project is designed to divert a total of 37,764 acre-feet of water per year from the San Juan River, with a resulting depletion of 35,893 acre-feet, based on 2040 projected population with a demand rate of 160 gallons per capita per day (gpcd).

When completed, the Project will include over 300 miles of pipeline, two water treatment plants, 19 pumping plants, and numerous water storage tanks.

The Project has two branches. The eastern branch (Cutter Lateral) will divert 4,645 acre-feet per year with no return flow to the San Juan River. The western branch (San Juan Lateral) will take the remaining 33,119 acre-feet of diversion, with an average return flow to the San Juan River of 1,871 acre-feet.

Based on the projected populations in the year 2040, the Project will provide enough water to serve approximately 203,000 people in 43 chapters in the Navajo Nation, 1,300 people in the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and approximately 47,000 people in the City of Gallup. Water from the Project will be used to meet domestic, commercial, and industrial water needs now and in the future.

Authorization

On March 30, 2009, the President signed Public Law 111-11, also known as the “Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009” authorizing the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, to construct, operate, and maintain the NGWSP in substantial accordance with the preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Federal Infrastructure Project

In August 2011, the NGWSP was identified by the President as one of 14 infrastructure projects nationwide to be expedited through permitting and environmental review processes. The NGWSP was the only project selected from the Department of the Interior. The NGWSP will still comply with all environmental compliance and permitting requirements, but all involved agencies and entities will focus on how these processes can be streamlined and improved to allow the project to move forward more towards a completion date of 2024.

In 2017, the President of the Navajo Nation signed an executive order directing programs in the executive branch to expedite the review and processing of necessary permits and contracts related to the Project.

Groundbreaking Ceremony

To commemorate the award of the first construction contract for NGWSP, in April 2012, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar joined Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Honorable Speaker Johnny Naize, along with local, state, tribal, and congressional dignitaries and approximately 150 project supporters for a groundbreaking ceremony on June 2, 2012, near Twin Lakes, NM.

Construction Status

The Bureau of Reclamation has the overall responsibility for the construction of the NGWSP; however the Navajo Nation, the City of Gallup, and the Indian Health Service will be responsible for the design and construction of various portions of the Project through financial assistance agreements with Reclamation. Construction on the initial reach of the Project (Reach 12A) was completed in November 2013. Construction is well underway throughout the Project area and the entire project is scheduled to be completed in 2024.