



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee discusses projects and partnerships with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Last Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee held a leadership meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss potential partnerships and to receive updates on current projects within the Navajo Nation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans, designs, builds, and manages projects for national, economic, and environmental security and they are the world's premier engineering organization, with more than 37,000 professionals in technical centers, and regional and field offices worldwide. Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a unique trust relationship with tribes based on the U.S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders to protect and preserve tribal resources, stated Tribal Nations Technical Center program director Ronald Kneebone, Ph.D.

“The purpose of this meeting is to enhance partnerships with federal agencies. Also to maximize resources and connections to create economic development and address issues regarding watersheds, flood zones, and uranium mines in Navajo communities,” stated RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii).

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Albuquerque District commander Lt. Col. James L. Booth identified seven Navajo Nation unmet needs that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers could assist and support:

- Project and construction management: can provide intergovernmental support
- Planning: can provide planning assistance to state and Tribes through the Tribal Partnership Program Section 203
- Water and wastewater infrastructure: can provide environmental infrastructure and intergovernmental support
- Persistent flood risk: can provide readiness and contingency operations and flood plain management and small flood risk services
- Habitat degradation: can provide ecosystem restoration
- Housing and public services: can provide intergovernmental support
- Abandoned mine contamination, relocation services, and watershed: can provide remediation of abandoned mining sites and assist with Environmental Protect Agency interagency collaboration.

“Does the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have current projects and partnerships with the Nation?” asked RDC member Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa).

According to Kneebone, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed projects in Chinle, Dilkon, Gadi’i’áhi/To’Koi, Lake Valley, Crownpoint, Many Farms, Window Rock, Red Lake, Cove, Ojo Encino, Iyanbito, Tsé Si áni, Lupton Tsé Si áni, Lupton, Smith Lake, and Leupp.

In addition, they have provided flood response and sand bag training across the Nation, and provided a bathymetric survey and hydrology report of Assayii Lake. They have also partnered with various Navajo Nation departments such as the Navajo Department of Water Resources, Navajo Nation Division of Transportation, Navajo Nation Zoological and Botanical Park, and Navajo Housing Authority, added Kneebone.

RDC vice chair Council Delegate Benjamin L. Bennett (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) thanked the representatives for supporting projects on the Navajo Nation and said he would like to see more partnerships that benefit Navajo communities.

Further information and assistance contact USACE Tribal Nations Technical Center program director Ronald Kneebone, Ph.D. at (505) 342-3355 or via email Ronald.r.kneebone@usace.army.mil.

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