



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 8, 2024

Resources and Development Committee honor Melvin Yazzie for his service to Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department



PHOTO: Members of the Resources and Development Committee honored Melvin Yazzie from the Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department for 35 years of service.

TSE BONITO, N.M. - On Monday, Feb. 5th, the Resource and Development Committee (RDC) honored Melvin H. Yazzie for his dedication and years of service with the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources (NNDNR) Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department (NNAML).

Yazzie worked as a Principal Mining Engineer with emphasis in administration, engineering, partnerships, public relations, and STEM events.

"Mr. Yazzie has been instrumental in providing education and technical assistance to the RDC regarding abandoned uranium mine remediation efforts that take place in the Navajo Nation," said RDC Chair Brenda Jesus. "NNAML knows the history and location of these abandoned mines. Yazzie guided us as we recently toured abandoned mines from Cameron to Monument Valley to Red Mesa and Cove."

RDC Vice-Chair Casey Allen Johnson said the relationship between the Navajo Nation Superfund Program, the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, NNAML and the RDC is critical to addressing the remediation of Navajo abandoned uranium sites.

"Going forward under the Navajo Nation Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, there is a lot of work that needs to be done," Vice-Chair Johnson said. "With the five federal agencies responsible for remediation, we need to make sure these mines are closed and the risk of exposure to our people is reduced or eliminated. We thank Yazzie for his work in addressing these issues."

NNAML's accomplishments extend beyond their reclamation work under the Department of Interior, but also include many chapter projects and environmental projects with the Department of Energy.

Yazzie's milestones include helping to establish a Navajo Nation Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) organization that focuses on Navajo Nation middle and high schools.

"Special thank you to the current and past staff at NNAML for making us feel like a close family," Yazzie said. "We were able to accomplish many things for the Navajo Nation and built a well-recognized department among tribal, state, federal and outside stakeholders."

The Research and Development Committee thanked Yazzie for all his work in addressing the remediation of abandoned uranium mine lands and presented him with a plaque and blanket for his 35 years of service and commitment to the Navajo Nation.

###