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NEWS ADVISORY

Navajo Nation, New Mexico Office of State Engineer host tour of San Juan River Settlement area Saturday

First-hand look at communities that need Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project

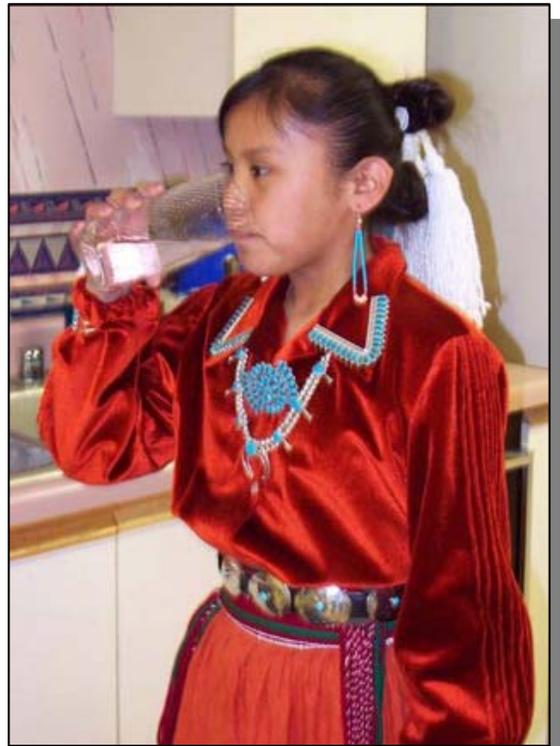
WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Nation and the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer will host a press conference and tour Saturday to highlight areas to be affected by the San Juan Settlement and the proposed Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

The tour begins at 9 a.m. at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. It will follow the proposed Project route, highlighting the many communities that do not have an available water supply. It will end at the Farmington City Hall.

“This settlement is crucial to the Navajo Nation,” said Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., who will be joined at the press conference by U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman and New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio.

“We are hosting this tour because it is vital that people see the conditions that some of our people are living in right now. There are people in America without running water,” he said. “This is one of the primary reasons why we need to move forward with this water project.”

“This negotiation is a move in the right direction and is the result of a lot of hard work and cooperation between the Navajo Nation, the State of New Mexico and the federal government,” Mr. D’Antonio said. “Navajos and non-Navajos have waited many years for a resolution of water claims in this region and this settlement protects existing uses of water and gives these communities a secure future.”



***Thousands of Navajo families must
continue to haul drinking water to their
homes.***

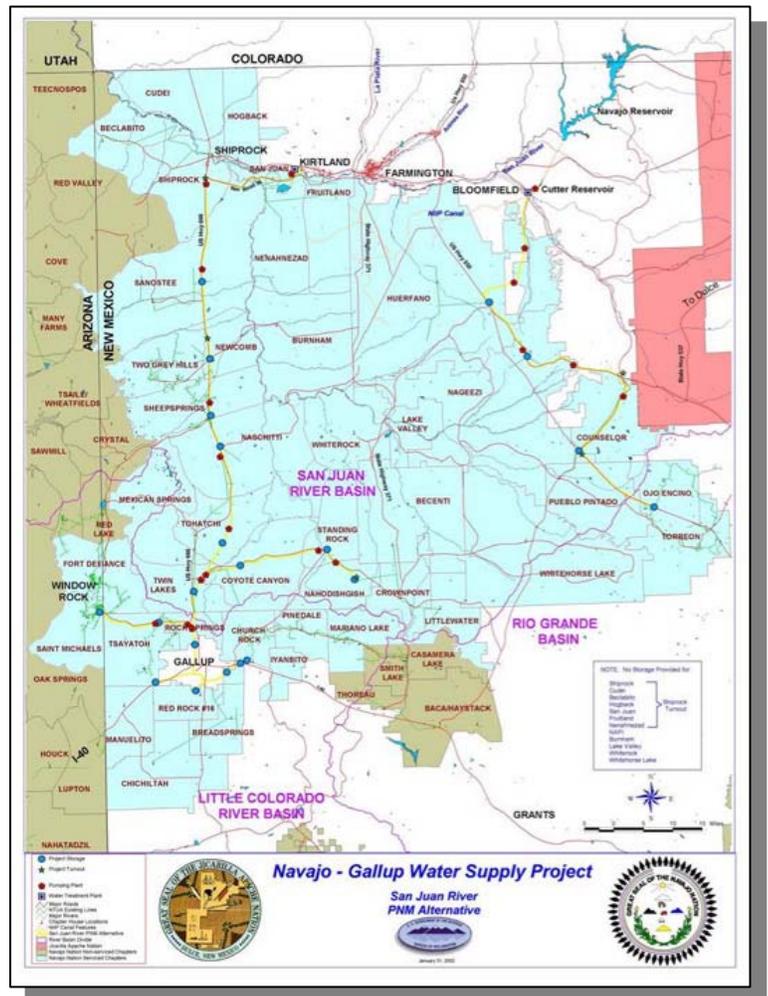
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The San Juan River Settlement Agreement provides for the development of a rural water supply system to serve Indians and non-Indian residents in northwest New Mexico and on to the Navajo Nation in far western Arizona. Many of the communities in this region do not have access to a renewable and sustainable water supply.

“The settlement is a bold step to address the need for a water system in this area of New Mexico and will have far reaching benefits to multiple communities,” Sen. Bingaman said. “It gives this region security and a way to pursue economic development to remain a viable region in the state – all the while ensuring that these communities’ children and grandchildren will have access to a reliable source of clean water.”

The proposed settlement agreement would resolve the Navajo Nation’s water rights without litigation, supply water to Gallup, N.M., and recognize existing and authorized uses of water in the San Juan River Basin including the San Juan-Chama Project. That project will provide drinking water to Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

In exchange for a release of claims to water that could otherwise displace non-Navajo users in the San Juan Basin, the agreement would adjudicate water rights to provide water development projects for the Navajo Nation, including the Navajo-Gallup Project and the Farmington-Shiprock Municipal Pipeline.



“This settlement is a win-win solution for everyone involved and crucial for all of us depending on water from the San Juan Basin,” Gallup Mayor Bob Rosebrough said. “Our current water supply will be depleted in 15 years and many Navajos who do not have tap water in their homes come to our municipal water points to get water for household use. Up until now there was real uncertainty for our city’s future.”

Farmington Mayor Bill Standley and members of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission will be on hand to discuss the Indian and non-Indian benefits and partnerships.

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