



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

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## Many Farms Looking to Capture Rainwater for Agriculture Use

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 12, 2021



PHOTO: Many Farms Lake and the Diversion Dam after the recent rainfall from the monsoon season on the Navajo Nation.

**MANY FARMS, Ariz.** — Last week, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) met with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources (DNR), Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands (AML), and Many Farms Chapter Officials to visit the Diversion Dam structure within the Many Farms Community.

Dr. Johnson Bia, Irrigation Supervisor from the Department of Water Resources led an on-site tour of the dam. The group visited the feeder gate, sluice gate concrete unit, Chinle wash upstream channels and the reservoir.

With the recent amount of rainfall on the Navajo Nation, the Many Farms Community is looking to re-examine the Diversion Dam to maximize the rainwater collected during times of drought.

“The existing work to identify capturing water is a good recommendation and task at hand, including the water projects pending. We may be over budget, however will seek to congress and Washington D.C. level with recommendations from the BIA Office of the Interior, on the current status of revitalization irrigation, farmland conditions, infrastructure, and water shed projects,” said delegate Begay. “We will request to BIA continued guidance in our initiatives as we collaborate with the chapters, Central Navajo Agency, and Navajo Nation Departments.”

Many Farms relies on the water run-off from the winter and monsoon seasons for farming practices and the leaders requested a study for water shed projects to be established within the community. The study will identify the prime locations to capture water to recharge the underground aquifers.

“The Navajo Nation also needs to develop watershed projects at certain parts of the reservation,” said DNR Director Dr. Rudy Shebala. “While we utilize surface water, watershed projects will help capture water and help recharge underground aquifers.”

The recapturing of rain water will reestablish Many Farms as the agriculture hub it once was in the 1930’s. The surrounding mountains divert rain water run-off to Many Farms and the natural drainage systems will need to be reexamined to determine the amount of water needed to support agricultural businesses.

BIA currently collaborates with departments of the Navajo Nation to promote the best agricultural practices by educating farmers. BIA is continuously visiting the departments and communities before the funding timeline closes out.

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