



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Council members tour Many Farms irrigation systems and farm areas



Photo (above): Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. and Delegate Leonard Tsosie, along with Many Farms Chapter and Farm Board officials, view an outdated irrigation canal along U.S. Highway 191 (2/28/2016).

MANY FARMS, Ariz. – On Feb. 28, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) and Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) met with Many Farms Chapter and Farm Board officials to tour the farming areas and dilapidated irrigation systems.

Delegate Begay said he hopes to garner support from Council and the Síhasin Fund Subcommittee to aid the Many Farms area in rehabilitating its irrigation systems to divert water to the Many Farms Lake in hopes of providing water to farmers.

“Many Farms has been a farming community since I can remember. There were hundreds of farms that flourished in this area, but due to droughts and outdated irrigation systems, it has affected farming in a very adverse way,” said Delegate Begay.

Delegate Begay added that the goal of the community is to revive its “once flourishing” industry and encourage community members to begin farming again.

According to the proposed Many Farms Irrigation Project Conservation Plan developed by the Farm Board, it aims to rehabilitate farmland soil, renovate and construct irrigation canals and earthen dams, create a farmland conservation plan, and develop a crop production management plan.

The Many Farms Irrigation Project is located north of the Many Farms community on the east and west side of U.S. Highway 191. The initial irrigation project was established in the 1930’s, which now consists of 1,919 acres of irrigated farmlands. However, farming has lessened drastically due to drought, overgrazing, and unhealthy plant root activity due to invasive weeds.

Delegate Begay said the rehabilitation of the irrigation systems has been “on the table” for several years, and hopes to begin work on the conversation plan project. The Farm Board would collaborate with the Navajo Nation Department of Resources Water Management Branch, who would aid in carrying out the proposed plan.

“The rehabilitation is necessary to regenerate and sustain agricultural activities in Many Farms. Proper irrigation systems and water management are essential in revitalizing this way of life, which has always been important to the community of Many Farms,” said Delegate Begay. “I would like to implement this same initiative in my other communities.”

Delegate Begay, Many Farms Chapter and Farm Board Officials said they would continue to advocate for funding to implement the conservation project. He added that they would begin to work with the Resources and Development Committee and the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture.

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