



**WILDLIFE SUMMIT INTRODUCTION**

9:30 - 9:45 **Conference Theme Explanation**

Gregory Pahe, NNZ, Zoo Maint. Worker, 1 yr.

Many aspects of traditional Navajo culture revolve around plants and animals. The theme of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's summit was selected to recognize and appreciate this connection between native wildlife and traditional Navajo culture. The presenter will provide the audience with more information on this connection with an explanation on The Wildlife Summit's theme.

**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 1**

Moderator - Ashley Curley, Wildlife Technician

10:00 - 10:30 **Introduction/History and Overview of Department**

Gloria Tom, NNDFW, Department Director, 16 yrs.

The Navajo Nation's Department of Fish and Wildlife was created in the 1960's with the intention of the Navajo Nation government finding a means to address complaints from the Navajo people who were experiencing losses from coyotes and experiencing rodent problems. The Department was initially started with 7 personnel, and with a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the Navajo Tribe. In the 1950's and 1960's, the Navajo Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs conducted mule deer transplants and fish stockings for recreational purposes, which spearheaded the creation of the wildlife management branch of the Department. Today, the Department has grown to employ over 45 full time in six Sections; each program addresses certain aspects of wildlife management. The presenter will describe the functions of the programs (Administration, Research and Management, Natural Heritage, Wildlife Law Enforcement, Navajo Nation Zoo, and Animal Control Program) in relation to the Department.

10:30 - 10:50 **Navajo Cultural Significance of Wildlife**

Tim Begay, NNHPD, Cultural Specialist

Historically and today, wildlife plays a major role in Navajo Culture. Not only are animals abundant in the Navajo Creation Story and folk lore stories, but also animal parts have been used for centuries in Navajo ceremonies. Native plants continue to be used for medicinal and traditional purposes by the Navajo People. The presenter will explain the importance of plants and animals in traditional Navajo Culture.

10:50 - 11:10 **Why Manage Big Game Population?**

Jeff Cole, M&R, Wildlife Manager, 25 years

Big game species on the Navajo Nation are mule deer, elk, Merriams' turkey, mountain, lion, black bear, pronghorn antelope and desert bighorn sheep. As a result of the livestock reductions, big game species were over-hunted to near extinction. The Department of Fish and Wildlife was established in the 1970s as a result of the re-introduction of mule deer and a commitment to manage wildlife for the Navajo people. Since the start of the Department, it has grown into a very diverse program, and the Navajo Nation has one of the best wildlife management programs in the U.S.

11:10 - 11:30 **Passing on the Hunting Tradition**

Gloria Tom, NNDFW, Department Director, 16 yrs.

Today many Navajo youth have interests in the outdoors and hunting; however, opportunities for them to learn are limited. Many are being raised in single-parent homes, being raised by grandparents or are orphaned and therefore, have no adult teacher to teach them the basics of outdoor life and hunting. Department employees, who are skilled in hunting and outdoor life, have volunteered to serve as mentors to Navajo youth who are interested in learning to hunt big game. The Annual Youth Hunt project began 10 years ago and has trained over 175 Navajo youth in the basics of hunting and firearm handling and safety. The Project has gained national recognition on national television and has featured young Navajo men and women on sportsmen TV shows on ESPN and The Outdoor Channel.



**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 1**

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**11:30 - 11:50 Saving a Navajo Legacy — The Desert Bighorn**

Jeffrey Cole, M&R, Wildlife Manager, 25 years

Desert bighorn sheep are a native species on the Navajo Nation. They were almost lost as a result of over-hunting and disease introduction from domestic sheep and goats. They are a protected species. The total sheep population in 1996 was 34 sheep that were located near Mexican Hat, Utah. In order to protect the sheep population, two new herds were established by transplants from the original herd as that herd increased. The original herd now consists of over 200 animals. The second herd consists of over 200 animals and the third herd consists of 75 animals.

**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 2**

Moderator - Leanna Begay, Wildlife Biologist

**1:30 - 1:50 Appreciate Your Friendly Navajo Zoo**

David Mikesic, NNZ, Zoologist, 20 years

The Navajo Nation Zoo has been in existence since 1963. The Zoo has flourished as one of America's most unique zoos, especially since the Department of Fish and Wildlife assumed responsibility for the facility in 2007. This presentation will provide the audience with an appreciation for the history, uniqueness, and mission of the Navajo Nation Zoo, in Window Rock AZ.

**1:50 - 2:10 30 Years of Success and Challenges with the Navajo Natural Heritage Program**

Andrea Hazelton, NNHP, Botanist, 4 years and  
Chad Smith, NNHP, Zoologist, 3 years

The Navajo Natural Heritage Program is the office responsible for protecting the threatened and endangered species of the Navajo Nation. It is part of an international network of Natural Heritage Programs, and is the only tribal Natural Heritage Program. Since the early 1980's the NNHP has matured from a few biologists responsible for surveying rare species on the Navajo Nation, to a fully developed endangered species program which is responsible for managing the Navajo Nation's threatened and endangered species. These responsibilities include project clearance, tracking the locations and status of listed species to inform land management decisions, and developing policies to guide development, land management and project clearance. This talk will follow the development of the NNHP into a program which has allowed the Navajo Nation government assert tribal sovereignty and take full responsibility for protecting its most sensitive natural resources.

**2:10 - 2:30 From Fry to Fish to Frying Pan**

Glenn Selby, M&R, Fish Biologist, 2 years

The Navajo Tribal Fish Hatchery located near Toadlena, NM has been operating since 1983. The hatchery was developed to ensure a continuous supply of rainbow trout for stocking in Navajo Nation lakes. Today, the hatchery continues to supply thousands of rainbow trout for recreational fishing, as well as offering educational tours of the facility.

**2:30 - 2:50 Your Cultural Connection - Get Your Legal Eagle Feather**

David Mikesic, NNZ, Zoologist, 20 years

The Department of Fish and Wildlife helps the Navajo People maintain a cultural connection to wildlife by providing a number of animal parts donations. These donations include parts from bears, mountain lions, turkeys, and Golden Eagles and others. The Department has an application process for enrolled members of the Navajo Nation to obtain naturally-shed feathers from the Golden Eagles at the Navajo Nation Zoo. This presentation will cover the process to obtain eagle feathers and other donated animal parts from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**2:50 - 3:10 Enhancing Your Outdoor Experience - Wheatfields Lake**

Glenn Selby, M&R, Fish Biologist, 2 years

Wheatfield Lake Recreational Area (WFLRA) is a valuable resource for the people of the Navajo Nation. Providing such outdoor activities as fishing and camping, WFLRA is a popular destination on the Navajo Nation. This presentation will cover the many improvements the NNDFW has made, and is planning to the WFLRA. In addition, the NNDFW strives to address the consequences of increased recreational demand on the area.



**ENDANGERED SPECIES PANEL**

Moderator - Gloria Tom, Department Manager

3:30 - 5:00 Endangered Species management has always been a controversial topic both on, and off, the Navajo Nation. Many see endangered species as barriers to Navajo Nation progress, and economic/community development at the local level. This is a misconception which is primarily the result of insufficient accurate and factual information. This panel attempts to provide several per spective related to endangered species management. We brought together experts from various agencies to provide you with their thoughts on endangered species on the Navajo Nation, and how policies and procedures affect their operation on Navajo lands. In doing so, it is the goal of this panel to educate and inform community leaders and land users on endangered species management, and the importance of maintaining the overall health of the Navajo Nation's natural environment.

**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 4**

Moderator - Sonja Detsoi, Wildlife Technician

8:00 - 8:20 **Modernizing Your Local Zoo**

David Mikesic, NNZ, Zoologist, 20 yrs.

When the responsibility of managing the Navajo Nation Zoo was transferred to the Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2007, a tremendous rebirth of the facility began. This transformation included increased visitation, educational services, and infrastructure development and renovation. This presentation will provide the audience with an appreciation for the amount of effort has been put into the Navajo Nation Zoo to put it on a path of modernization.

8:20 - 8:40 **Responsible Pet Ownership**

Stacey Daw, NNACP, Sr. Animal Control Ofcr., 20 yrs.

This presentation will address the responsibilities of owning a pet dog or cat. Observing good pet ownership guidelines provides for happy, healthy pets, which provides benefits to their owners and communities. Being a responsible pet owner includes such activities as spay and neutering, vaccinating, obtaining licenses, and provide adequate food, water and shelter for your pets. Educating yourself on these aspects, and the Navajo Nation Animal Control ordinances, will allow you to provide a safe, comfortable home for your pets. The presenter will also describe how local residents can get involved to help pet owners improve their communities.

8:40 - 9:00 **Improving Your Community -  
Know the Animal Control Laws**

Joe Begay, NNACP, Sr. Animal Control Ofcr., 20 yrs.

Animal Control laws exist to protect the health and safety of your family, livestock, and pets. Understanding and following these laws are crucial to avoiding some of the most common mistakes with pet ownership. The presenter will cover the most critical animal control laws to protect your family and pets and improve your community. Proposed changes to Animal Control laws will also be presented.

9:00 - 9:20 **Enjoy Your Boating Experience Safely**

Eddie Benally, NNWLE, Wildlife Law Enf. Officer, 14 yrs.

This presentation will cover all important aspects of boating safety, including boating regulations, common mistakes to avoid, and the dangers of operating watercraft unsafely.

9:20 - 9:40 **Clean Water Benefits Both Wildlife and People**

Fred Johnson, NEPA, Environmental Specialist, 13 yrs.

The presenter will provide explanation on the essential truth that "WATER IS LIFE". This idea is ever present in the desert habitats of the Navajo Nation, where water is always limited. Having clean, useable water is essential for humans, but also for our native plants and animals. The presenter will examine non-point source surface water quality impacts on the Navajo Nation, and how you can help to ensure that clean water is available for future generations.



**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 4**

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9:40 - 10:00 **Prairie Dogs and Plague - Should We Worry?**

Chad Smith, NNHP, Zoologist, 3 years

Sylvatic plague is a growing wildlife management and human health concern. Incidence of plague has been on the rise throughout the western United States and has the potential to radically transform mammal communities on the landscape. Of particular concern is the loss or degradation of large numbers of prairie dog colonies, which provide habitat for and represent an important prey source for a wide variety of wildlife species. This presentation will provide an introduction to plague biology and cover current and future strategies for managing plague in wild mammal populations.

**RANGELAND IMPROVEMENT PANEL**

Moderator - Judy Willetto, Range Conservationist

10:20 - 12:00 For decades, rangeland management and domestic animal grazing have been hotly debated topics across the Navajo Nation. Throughout this time, there have been issues surrounding grazing regulations and enforcement. These issues continue to have major implications for wildlife management and native plant management on Navajo lands. This is hope that the Rangeland Improvement Act will help solve these issues. The members assembled for this panel will discuss implications of the Rangeland Improvement Act for Navajo Nation residents and potential benefits for our rangelands and wildlife.

**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 6**

Moderator - Stacey Daw, Sr. Animal Control Officer

1:30 - 1:50 **Cooperative Management and Recovery of a Rare Fish Species**

Chris Cheek, M&R, Fish Biologist, 1 year

This presentation will explore the endangered Razorback Sucker recovery efforts conducted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife over the previous 10 years. The Department has been raising razorback suckers and releasing them into the San Juan River, and operating a fish ladder to remove non-native fish species. Aspects of the funding and success of these programs will be discussed.

1:50 - 2:10 **Protect Your Loved Ones from Wildlife Diseases** Dr. Scott Bender, NNVP, Wildlife Veterinarian, 18 yrs.

There are many diseases that occur in nature, that can affect people. These zoonotic diseases come in many forms, from the feared Rabies to the many diseases carried by ticks. This will be a presentation of these diseases that occur most commonly on the Navajo Nation, with the hopes of being able to both prevent exposure and to increase awareness of these diseases.

2:10 - 2:30 **Creative Ways to Meet Our Expansion Needs, While Saving Space for Wildlife**

Sam Diswood, NNHP, Wildlife Manager, 10 months

The 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA) is one of several federal laws that require consideration of environmental outcomes in the planning process. The ESA provides for protection of ecosystems, the conservation of Threatened and Endangered species and the enforcement of all treaties related to wildlife preservation. The Navajo nation also has laws and regulations that provide protection and management of its wildlife resources. As stewards of the Navajo Nation fish and wildlife resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife through its Natural Heritage Program has developed proactive planning, environmental review processes, and management plans to facilitate project development and the protection of sensitive species, while addressing the ecological, economic and social needs of the Navajo Nation.

2:30 - 2:50 **Protect Your Wildlife Resources by Understanding the Law**

Tytus Sandoval, NNWLE, Wildlife Law Enf. Ofcr., 5 yrs.

Wildlife laws exist to protect important Navajo Nation resources - fish and wildlife. Understanding and following these laws are important for wildlife management, as well as maintaining your privilege to hunt and fish on the Navajo Nation. Current and future revisions to wildlife laws will be presented as well.



**THE WILDLIFE SUMMIT - Wednesday August 6, 2014**

**ABSTRACT**

**WILDLIFE SUMMIT -- SESSION 7**

Moderator - Glenn Selby, Fish Biologist

**3:10 - 3:30 Wildlife In Your Backyard - Avoiding Conflicts**

Jeff Cole, M&R, Wildlife Manager, 25 years

How many of you have ever encountered/seen wildlife around your home? The Department receives many complaints from Navajo Nation residents about bears, cougars, coyotes and other wildlife. We have established policies on how to respond to calls on some of the more dangerous species like the bear and cougars. This presentation will describe these policies and provide some examples on how to prevent unwanted wildlife interactions. The presenter will also explain how to report the incident to the Department and what evidence to preserve for investigations. Being proactive can help reduce wildlife damage.

**3:30 - 3:50 How Forest Activities can Enhance Wildlife Habitat**

Alexious Becenti, NNFD, Department Director

The Navajo Nation contains extensive lands managed in part for commercial forestry. The Navajo Nation Department of Forestry is responsible for managing timber sales and other forestry projects within the commercial forests. While wildlife management can sometimes conflict with resource extraction, sound forestry management is often consistent with wildlife management goals and provides both economic and ecological benefit. The purpose of this presentation is to provide information about the ways that the department of forestry and the department of fish and wildlife can work together to manage healthy, economically viable, and biologically diverse forest ecosystems.

**3:50 - 4:10 Stealing Wildlife is a Crime**

Dondi Begay, NNWLE, Wildlife Law Enf. Officer, 15 yrs.

The presenter will provide the audience with a clear definition of wildlife poaching and describe the negative impacts of illegal take of Navajo Nation's fish and wildlife. This talk will also explain how community members can help the Department of Fish and Wildlife to catch wildlife law violators.

**4:10 - 4:30 Climate Change - Predictions for Wildlife's Future**

Leanna Begay, NNDFW, Wildlife Biologist, 4 years

Impacts of climate change are evident. All living beings must continue to adapt to these changes for it's uncertain how extensive and dramatically different the landscape will change. We can be optimistic, but as we know, we all see the changes occurring on the landscape that surrounds us. Within this country numerous federal, state, tribal governments and NGO's have established and participated in various workgroups and committees to address topics related to climate change. With this presentation, you can learn about changes that may occur in the Southwest, and learn how we can do our part, either as a community or individual to help those who don't have a voice to thrive.

**4:30 - 4:55 Working Together for Wildlife Tomorrow**

Gloria Tom, NNDFW, Department Director, 16 yrs.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has made great strides in conserving and protecting wildlife by implementing management programs at the local level for the benefit of both the Navajo people and our wildlife. In the 1950's, deer transplants were made to bring back this culturally important species; and today, we provide hunting opportunities for our people and generate funding to manage these populations. Fish stocking of Navajo lakes continues since the 1960's, and recreational fishing and camping has become a huge part of our everyday lives. The Navajo Nation has invested huge amounts of money on improving the facilities and services at the lakes; however, these facilities are jeopardized by vandalism and trash dumping. Also, unregulated or uncontrolled land use practices threaten our wildlife populations due to the lack of forage and grass for both livestock and wildlife, and there are increased conflicts between wildlife and humans. There are solutions to these, but we need your support from the local level. The presenter will explain that local communities and land users have a critical role in addressing these problems, and that the Department is focused on bridging gaps between the Department and the communities. Strong partnerships with our communities will make our projects successful and keep things moving in a positive direction with managing our natural resources.