

Taos Pueblo
A Self-Governing
Sovereign Indian Nation

With a Homeland based on
Culture and Traditions

Presentation to the New Mexico State Legislature

Indian Affairs Committee

By: Governor Gilbert Suazo Sr.



The Place: Taos Pueblo

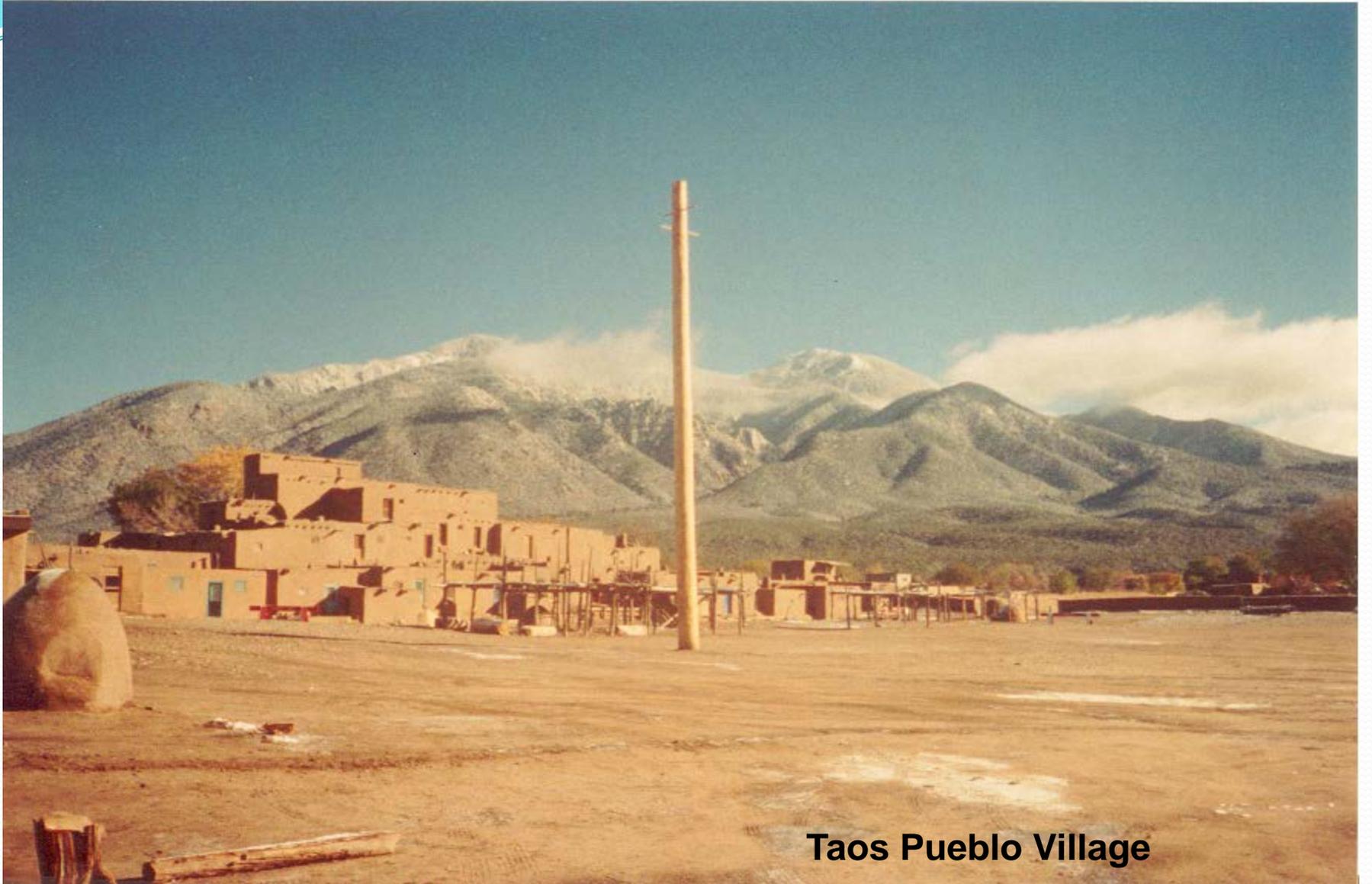
- Tuah-Tah-The Place of the Red Willows at Emergence of the Water's Journey-The Water from Blue Lake
- A spiritual sacred place
- A World Heritage Site-Recognized for enduring structures and living culture-A major tourist attraction
- Our Aboriginal Homeland: North-central, north-eastern New Mexico and into Colorado

The People-Tuah-Tah Dainah

- Tiwa Speaking
- 2600 members-All have Indian names
- Hunters, agriculturalists, gatherers, builders; professional expertise, skills and talents in many fields
- Traditional, conservative, adaptable
- Time Immemorial Presence in the region
- Persistent in preserving and protecting traditions, culture and homelands

Our Lands

- 111,000 acres from Rio Grande to alpine peaks at 13,000 feet elevation
- Taos Pueblo Village is at 7,000 feet elevation
- Blue Lake: an important cultural site and area
- Buffalo Pasture: A natural wetland of similar cultural significance as Blue Lake
- Mahwahluna (Sacred Taos Mountain) at over 12,000 feet elevation dominates landscape
- Tuahtah Bahnah-Taos Pueblo Stream from Blue Lake runs through village



Taos Pueblo Village



Blue Lake

Mahwahluna:Taos Mountain



Our Government

- Traditional unwritten system-rooted in pre-history; evolved to adapt to modern world around us
- Tribal Council: Policy making body; former tribal leadership officials and cultural leaders
- Governor and Staff: Responsible for domestic, civil and external business affairs
- War Chief and Staff: Protectors and caretakers of lands, natural and wildlife resources
- Our Sovereignty and right to self governance recognized historically by governments of Spain, Mexico and United States

Our Traditions and Culture

- Traditional and spiritual way of life with complex responsibilities.
- Year-round culturally related activities and practices.
- The Land, Mountains, Water, Crops, Wildlife, Seasons, Heavenly Bodies, Trees, Plants, Traditional Crops and Natural Wild foods are important cultural resources for our People.
- The Great Spirit has blessed us with our cultural way of life and with Christianity.
- All this as a whole give us our cultural identity.

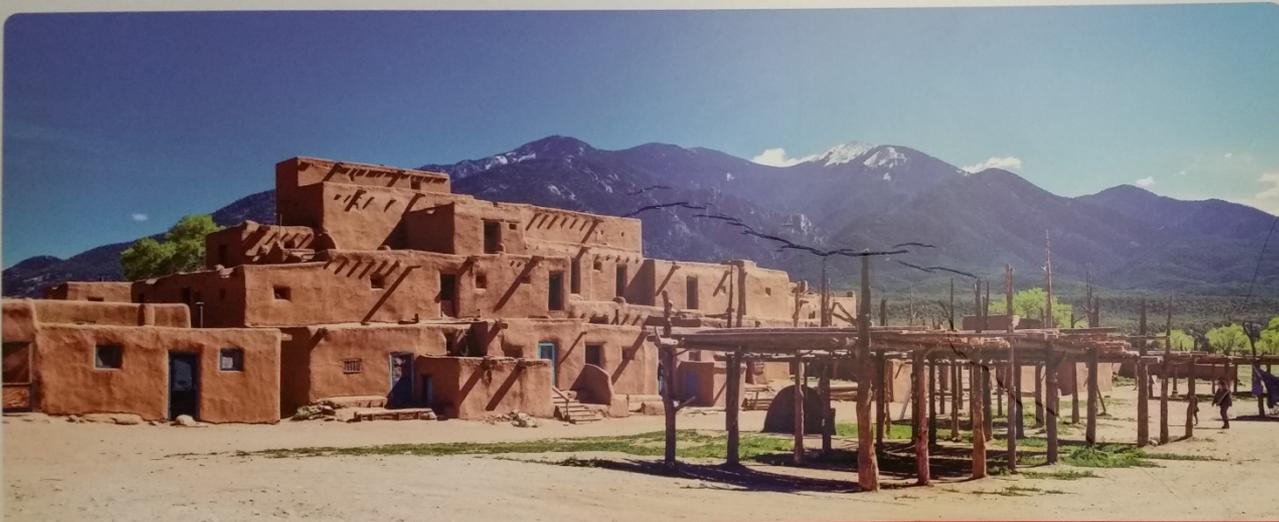
Leadership Role in Protection of Homelands, Culture and Traditions

- Pueblo Revolt of 1680-Leadership role
- Water Rights-After 47 years-Settlement in 2016
- Fight for Blue Lake began-1906-After 64 years Justice achieved in 1970; First return of land to Indian Tribe.
- Resisted government effort to suppress traditional practices; Opposed encroachments on Pueblo Lands-1920's-Resulted in suppression of governmental efforts and in Pueblo Lands Board.
- Aboriginal Lands Claim-Including for Town of Taos - Settlement in 1984
- Effort to protect airspace over Pueblo lands -On-going

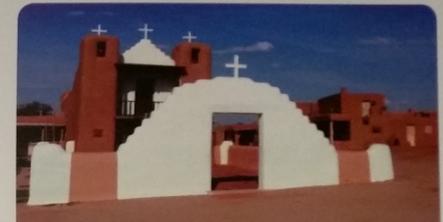


Taos Pueblo

over 1000 years of Tradition



Pilots are requested to avoid over flights of the Taos Pueblo World Heritage Site and the Blue Lake Wilderness Area as shown in the Denver Sectional Aeronautical Chart.



TAOS PUEBLO is the oldest continuously-inhabited site in the United States and is the only LIVING WORLD HERITAGE SITE recognized by UNESCO.



Programs, Operations, Teams

- Senior Citizens' Program
- Police Department, Tribal Court
- Division of Natural Resources, Education Division
- Health and Community Services, Housing Program
- Municipal Services, Utility Service Department
- Water Administration Department
- Budget Team, Business Development Team, Priority Team
- Support entities-Finance, Human Resources, Program Administration

Community Plan and Priorities

- Comprehensive Community and Land Use Plan (TIF funded)
- Priorities:
 - Education
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Health
- Strategic Plans being developed

Issues and Problems

- Unemployment
- Drugs, alcohol
- Trespassing
- Drought
- Pueblo structure deterioration
- Housing shortage
- Obesity/Diabetes/Respiratory problems
- Detention facilities-Lack of
- Treatment/Recovery facilities-Lack of

Projects Underway and Planned

- Wellness Center-TIF Funding proposal for design rejected
- Multi-complex Facility-Planning/Design-TIF Funded
- Express Plaza for grocery and gas sales-Funding application submitted to NMFA
- Water Administration Facility –Planning and design
- Senior Day Care Facility and Assisted Living Center-Planning stage with UNM student architects
- Housing Subdivision-TIF funding for planning
- Pueblo structure rehabilitation
- Water/Sewer line expansions-TIF funded-Completed

Needs/Interests

- Pueblo Preservation- Funds for repair and maintenance- Needed
- Detox/Treatment facilities-Needed
- Protection of Gas Tax legislation and agreements, and Gaming Compacts
- The State of New Mexico and the New Mexico tribes are national leaders in collaboration and cooperation on key issues. This partnership through the State-Tribal Collaboration Act must continue as originally intended.

Legislation and Other Recommendations

- Taos Pueblo proposes that 32a-1-8(e) be amended so Tribal court orders pertaining to Indian children are recognized and enforced by the district court for the judicial district in which the tribal court is located.
- Recognition of Tribal Court orders for allowing tribal members access to state services
- Support re-appropriation of funds to secure \$100,000 for NM Highlands University social services program for Indian Child Welfare Act training and education. The legislature funded the training in past legislative session but was vetoed by Governor Martinez.

Abeyta-Taos Pueblo Water Settlement

- The Pueblo is implementing the Abeyta Water Settlement under which it forbears the exercise of more than half of its historic irrigation water rights. This is a major compromise on the Pueblo's part that benefits our non-Indian neighbors
- The forbearance will decrease over time as non-Indian water rights are acquired including those rights forfeited or abandoned under State law.
- Taos Pueblo will then be able to exercise its historic water rights for irrigation. In the future, if proposals are made to change state law concerning forfeiture or abandonment, the Pueblo will want an opportunity to address how the legislation could affect us.

Funding Sources

- Federal 638 contracts-Tribal projects
- Federal Self Governance Compacts-Tribal programs
- State TIF funding-Tribal Projects-2012 to 2016-4.04 mill-**NOTE: No new TIF projects funded in 2017-18**
- Federal Grants-Housing, environmental protection, Head Start
- Congressional appropriation-Water Settlement

Tribal Economy/Revenue Sources/Employment

- Tourism
- Taos Mountain Casino
- Tax revenue
- Big Game Hunting
- Coming: Express Plaza-Food, Fuel, Etc. Sales
- Tribal Funds- Used for Utility Services, Administration, Governmental Operations, Community Support, Irrigation Maintenance, Structural repairs. etc.
- Tribal employment – 239 employees

Taos Pueblo Benefits the Region

- Taos Pueblo, a World Heritage Site, is a destination for many national, international and regional tourists. We welcome these visitors who come to learn of our customs, history, and architecture, and to view our village and unique centuries-old 5 story adobe structures. Many of our families earn their living from selling arts and crafts, jewelry and local food at our village. At the same time, the town of Taos and surrounding area restaurants, hotels, and businesses benefit from the Pueblo's draw that has brought tourists, artists and writers to visit our Pueblo for many years.

Economic Diversification

- Taos Pueblo needs to diversify its economy and improve our visitors' experience. A new business at the corner of Hail Creek and Paseo del Sur will be a gateway for our tourists' experience. We will sell fuel and convenience store items and groceries as well as Taos Pueblo made food and goods, and will have a visitors' alcove. We will work with the New Mexico Finance Authority and its revolving loan fund for financing our economic development projects such as this one, as well as our Wellness Center.

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST
IN TAOS PUEBLO!*

- *A VISIT TO TAOS PUEBLO CAN BE OF SPIRITUAL AND MEANINGFUL SIGNIFICANCE.*
- *YOUR SUPPORT FOR TAOS PUEBLO'S PROJECTS WILL BE APPRECIATED*
- *MAY THE GREAT SPIRIT BLESS YOU AND GUIDE YOU IN YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.*