

Tohatchi. In Navajo it is called Tó Haach'i' which means water seepage, but loosely translated by some as "scratching for water."

In northwestern New Mexico, at the southeastern end of the Chuska Mountain range, you will find Red Willow Valley, where the community of Tohatchi is located. The Tohatchi Chapter land area encompasses flatlands, mesas, and arroyos in the lower terrain. Greyhills, rocky hills dotted with juniper and piñon trees, are found in the higher xerophytic zone, where a family was afforded a powerline extension a decade ago. As you ascend higher, summer sheep camps were to be found among the ponderosa pine and oak trees, with multiple watering sites for livestock and dryland farming.

Upon return from the infamous, tragic Long Walk, the Red Willow Valley was first settled by Hosteen Nidazzi's band. The higher ranges of the Chuska Mountain were settled by the maternal family of Chief Manuelito. He lived out his days with his third wife and has his resting place in Coyote Canyon.

After 1868, a government sub-agency was established in Tohatchi. Tohatchi was a rendezvous point for ancient peoples, and it remains so today.

Our ancestors established the Red Willow Farms in 1870. The first trading post built on the reservation was constructed here in 1871. In 1895, land was withdrawn for the construction of Tohatchi Boarding School. Dormitories, dining hall, and a clinic was built as years went on. Sadly, the first clinic burned down in 1928,

The first Catholic Church was built in 1901, followed by the Christian Reformed Church in 1910. A reservoir was constructed in 1935 and rehabilitated in 1954, later known as Chuska Lake Dam, making it possible to send controlled irrigation water to the Red Willow Farms.

In 1938, a second trading post was built at Buffalo Springs.

In 1948, El Paso Natural Gas Plant was constructed 7 miles northeast of Tohatchi. This installation brought in new technology, jobs, and a place for social activities. Other than the Tohatchi Boarding School, it was also the place to go ... "to see a Show at El Paso." This facility was replaced with a reduction-sized, "unmanned" compressor plant in 1992. High-tech equipment and pumping units now only require visits from the company three days a week.

In 1952, the Chapter House was built and renovated in 1989. The Tohatchi Chapter was recognized as a local government entity on December 5th, 1955.

The Tohatchi Post Office started operation in the old Tohatchi Trading Post, then moved into Mr. Nakai's family store. The government saw a need and built a small red brick building circa 1960, where it operated until half a decade ago. Now it is located at the corner of the Tohatchi Loop and Chuska School intersection.

The N108 bridge was first built around the summer of 1975 and since has undergone repairs, though it still needs attention. In 1978, the Senior Citizen Center was built. A 14-acre landfill was finally closed in 1990 and replaced with a solid waste transfer station. The Tohatchi Health Center was completed in 1994. It is staffed with a basic health team to treat acute and chronic ambulatory problems and refer patients to other levels of care.

Educational services are the main economic activity. Infrastructure developments occurred in cycles between the 1950's and the present time.

~ Ms. Lee Rodgers, Tohatchi Chapter Vice-President.

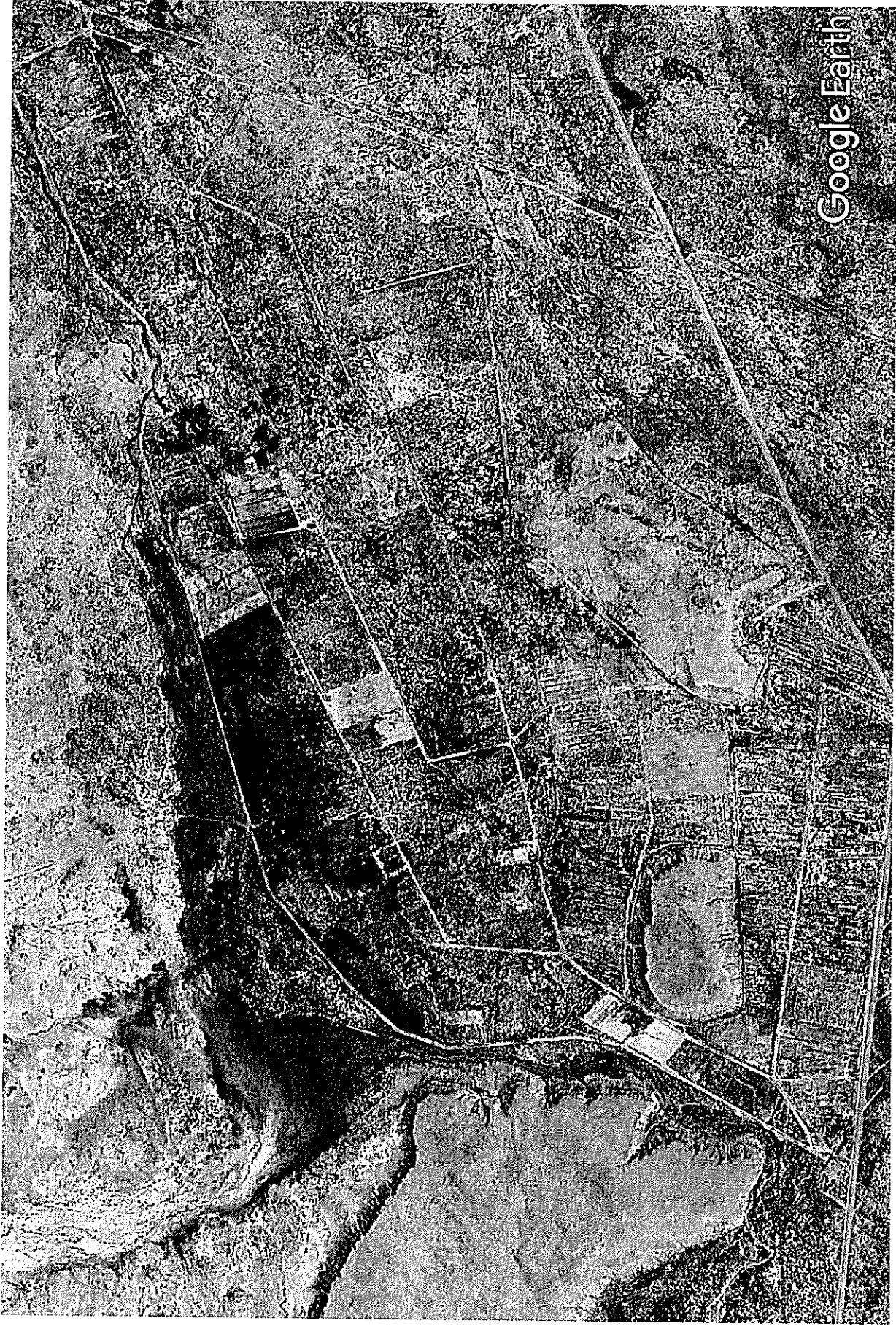
TOHATCHI CHAPTER PROJECTS- CURRENT STATUS 2025

TOHATCHI CHAPTER

JULY 16, 2025

- A. Navajo HeadStart school: student enrollment (20), 12 mos. 1 teacher assistant.
- B. Chapter Warehouse: plan, design, completed. Construction funds needed.
- C. Senior Center: Final OEH inspection complete, ready to reopen pending sanitation permit. DALTCS- Division of Aging and Long Term Care Services.
- D. Nakai Community Park: Park is located southeast of Tohatchi Chapter.
- E. N108 Bridge project: final phase pending completion of permit and budget.
- F. Veterans' Community Park: Outdoor picnic tables, seek expansion and maintenance funds. Color guard organization, seeking more membership.
- G. Professional Housing Development: proposal site is located at old BIA housing compound by Indian Health Clinic. Final land withdrawal application pending at Navajo Land Department.
- H. Road repairs, sidewalks, flood control, ingress, in all housing areas needed, including the elementary, middle, and high school compound, teacherage.
- I. TAOS, Inc (Tohatchi Area Opportunity & Services) USPS post office building:

TOHATCHI RED WILLOW FARM
Tohatchi New Mexico



July 7, 2000

RE: Narrative for Red Willow Irrigation Project

Narrative Statement and History:

The Red Willow Irrigation Project was built in 1939 with the construction of the Chuska Dam and 10,689 feet of 15 inch diameter cement pipe that delivers irrigation water to the open dirt ditches on Red Willow Farm. Approximately 50,000 feet of dirt ditches served the 1200-acre farm. By modern standards, the ditches were not longer efficient and had degraded to a level where operation and maintenance was no longer feasible.

The Red Willow Farm Board started working to improve the irrigation distribution system on the farm in the late 1970's. Many attempts were made by past Red Willow Farm Boards to obtain grants and other types of funding to improve the irrigation distribution system.

Erosion by wind was another problem faced by Red Willow Farmers due to the lack of vegetative cover on productive farmland. With winter snowpack and monsoon runoff, Chuska Dam could hold enough water to provide irrigated agriculture to Red Willow Farmers, but as soon as water was delivered to the field, the inefficiency of the dirt canals and ditches would create distribution problems and many farmers could not achieve irrigated agriculture production from their fields.

The Red Willow Farm has great significant in Navajo history and culture as it was the first area settled by the Navajos after they returned from Fort Sumner in 1868. Many elders recite stories of good harvests and importance of corn, squash, melon, fruit, alfalfa hay and other crops to their lifestyle. Farming is a part of Navajo culture and tribal elders want young people to continue farming.

1996 Farm Bill & EQIP:

Through the efforts of Red Willow Farm Board, St. Michael Field Office, Navajo Resource Conservation & Development, McKinley County Farm Services Agency, State of New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs and Fort Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District, a partnership was formed. The objective of the partnership was to develop an Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) proposal to acquire USDA funds to improve irrigation water efficiency or in other word achieve water conservation. Another objective of the partnership was to acquire New Mexico funds to cost-share with USDA-EQIP funds.

Funding and Technical Assistance Sources:

The partnership proved successful, the Red Willow EQIP proposal was funded \$ 225,000 in 1998 and the EQIP funds were available in FY 1999. The Red Willow proposals to New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs through Senator John Pinto net three allocations of \$ 75,000 per fiscal year. St. Michael Natural Resources Conservation Service provided technical assistance for planning, project feasibility, economic feasibility, data collection, environmental and cultural surveys, engineering and design, implementation, and certification of project completion.

Fort Defiance SWCD and Red Willow provided information to "grass roots" farmers and land users. The Red Willow Farm Board was designated as "cooperators" for the EQIP project. The "cooperator" represented 88 plus farmers at Red Willow Farm. The Farm Board held bi-monthly meetings with farmers and presented alternatives to the Red Willow Farmers and their decisions were based upon discussion and vote by Farmers and Farm Board.

Red Willow Farm Board was authorized by Red Willow farmers, Tohatchi Chapter, Navajo Nation to make decisions that would affect Red Willow Farm.

Design & Engineering:

The NRCS St. Michael Field Office and Engineering staff completed the Design and Engineering on February 04, 2000 and was presented to the Red Willow Farm Board and Red Willow Farmers during their Farm Board meeting on February 08, 2000. The Design & Engineering plans were approved and accepted by the Farm Board and farmers during their meeting. Bid packages and Request for Proposals were sent out to prospective contractors promptly and a deadline was set for February 18, 2000 for all proposals.

Selection of Contractor & Supply Contractor:

Selection of the Contractor & Supply Contractor was completed on February 22, 2000 during the regularly scheduled Farm Board meeting. Closed bids were submitted to the Red Willow Farm Board and were opened during their meeting with all prospective contractors present. Red Willow Farm Board held an executive session and the Farm Board selected Uitley Construction of Cortez, Colorado as the contractor for installation and supplier for all materials.

Cultural Resources:

USDA-EQIP program dictates that a "cultural resources survey" be completed and an "Archeological Information Report" completed and a cultural resources permit be issued by Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department. The cultural resources survey was completed on February 28 to March 03, 2000. The Archeological Information Report was submitted to NN HPD on March 10, 2000 and NN HPD reviewed the report and issued a permit on March 14, 2000.

Project Implementation:

The contractor proceeded with construction on March 15, 2000. Navajo Nation HPD requested NRCS provide an archeologist or archeological technician on-site during excavation and trenching during construction. John Allison; NRCS Archeologist worked with Arizona NRCS office to provide himself, Chris McLaughlin and eventually James Begay to monitor excavation or trenching. The contractor provided reports to Red Willow Farm Board during their bi-monthly meeting during the months of May, April and May.

Amendment of Design & Engineering:

An amendment to the design was presented to Red Willow Farm Board on April 20, 2000 during the regularly scheduled Farm Board meeting at Tohatchi Chapter House. The design amendment and price quote for the design amendment was approved and accepted by the Farm Board. The amendment was to add 700 feet to the start of the pipeline and add one 8 feet by 8 feet by 8 feet concrete box to dissipate water velocity and pressure from Chuska Dam. Another objective of the concrete box was to build some head pressure for the first 3 farm fields. Norman Uitley submitted a quote of \$ 13,500 to the Farm Board and Red Willow Farm Board accepted the quote.

Pipeline Project Certification:

An invoice was delivered to Red Willow Farm Board on April 20, 2000 during the Farm Board meeting. The invoice was in the amount of \$ 411,161.14 for installation of 33,905 feet 15 inch, 80 psi PVC pipeline. The 15 inch pipeline was installed with all outlets, gate valves, air vacuum valves, pipeline drains, sleeves for road crossings, pressure relief valves and thrust block as designed by NRCS. The Red Willow EQIP project was certified complete by NRCS on April 18, 2000 through CCC-1245 and a check for \$ 225,000 was paid by McKinley County Farm Services Agency on April 27, 2000 to the contractor.

Concrete Box Certification:

The concrete box structure and connections were certified complete on May 16, 2000 by NRCS. The concrete box structure will not be paid by USDA-EQIP funds, but the Farm Board agreed to abide by NRCS specifications and guidelines for certification.

Irrigation System Demonstration:

The contractor completed field demonstration day and dedication on May 16, 2000, and there were over 50 people in attendance to view operation of the irrigation system. Gated pipe irrigation, flood irrigation and sprinkler irrigation was demonstrated.

Irrigation System Installation and Balance of NM Funds:

The State of New Mexico through Senator John Pinto granted the Red Willow Farm Board \$225,000 and there remains a balance of \$ 186,161.14 owed by Red Willow Farm Board to Utley Construction. There is also a remaining balance of \$ 13,500 for the 8 feet by 8 feet by 8 feet concrete box. A total of \$ 199,661.14 is owed to Utley Construction for the 33,905 feet of 15-inch pipeline and the concrete box.

After \$ 199,661.14 is paid to Utley Construction, there should be balance of \$ 25,338.86 from the State of New Mexico and the Red Willow Farm Board has decided to purchase additional irrigation supplies that will augment their irrigation system.