Bi-monthly during higher bloom "season"

Monthly collection rest of the year

Collection of Lake Sample

Collection of Tap Sample

June 11, 2023  (photo credits: Briggy Thomas)
ADVOCATING FOR AND PROTECTING DINÉ LIFEWAYS ON BLACK MESA

Tó Nizhóní Ání, which translates to “Sacred Water Speaks,” is a Diné-led nonprofit organization established in 2001. Tó Nizhóní Ání originates from the Big Mountain community on Black Mesa, and in 2005, Tó Nizhóní Ání led efforts to end the industrial use of the Navajo Aquifer - Black Mesa’s only source of potable water, from Peabody Coal Company. Today, Tó Nizhóní Ání continues to work to protect the region’s water while leading the community transition away from fossil fuels.
THE HEINZ AWARDS

Energy justice leader Nicole Horseherder, Diné, of the Navajo Nation, received the Heinz Award for the Environment for her work as co-founder of the nonprofit Tó Nizhóní Áni ("Sacred Water Speaks"). She works to protect the aquifers, streams and land of Black Mesa, Arizona; bring power to Indigenous communities suffering the environmental effects of coal extraction and industry waste; and position the region to transition to and produce renewable energy.
TÓ NIZHÓNÍ ÁNÍ WAS FORMED IN THE SPIRIT OF DINÉ ELDERS THAT FOUGHT TO PROTECT BLACK MESA

"THE CREATOR IS THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOING TO RELOCATE US"
“There have been a lot of changes from when I was a little girl. Some plants that I used to see when I was younger aren’t around anymore. It doesn’t rain and snow as it used to, and when it does, it doesn’t last very long. All the seeps and springs that I grew up with, and took our sheep to, are gone.”

-Lorraine Herder, Chíshí Dine’é
STAFF MEMBERS

Nicole Horseherder

Executive Director

Nicole Horseherder, Diné, is from the Black Mesa region of the Navajo Nation. Nicole is one of the original founding members of Tó Nizhóní Ání and has been an active member since its establishment. Nicole is a graduate of the University of Arizona with a Bachelors in Family and Consumer Resources. Nicole received her Master of Arts in Linguistics from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Canada. Nicole began her work with Tó Nizhóní Ání as an outreach coordinator and interpreting hydrology and legal documents for Diné communities fighting coal-mine impacts. Today Nicole is leading efforts towards transition away from fossil fuel development in the Navajo Nation. Outside of Tó Nizhóní Ání, Nicole enjoys her time with family, horses, ceremonies, and traveling.

Adrian Herder
Adrian Herder

Adrian Herder, Diné, is from the Black Mesa region of the Navajo Nation and currently resides in Flagstaff, AZ. Adrian served as a volunteer with Tó Nizhóní Ání for seven years before officially joining the team in 2020. Adrian graduated from Northern Arizona University in 2017 with a Bachelor of Science in Fitness & Wellness. Adrian is an accomplished potter and artist, showing his work in several notable shows and art markets. In addition, Adrian has designed many flyers, posters, and logos for businesses and organizations. Outside of Tó Nizhóní Ání, Adrian likes to run, take photos of Diné life, and dedicate his time to making traditional Diné pottery.

Jessica Keetso

Jessica Keetso, Diné, is from the Black Mesa region of the Navajo Nation. Jessica was a regular volunteer with Tó Nizhóní Ání before joining the team in 2018. As a volunteer, Jessica helped coordinate events such as the Just Transition Relay. In 2017, Jessica graduated from Northern Arizona University with her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science. Jessica served with the Navajo Nation President’s Office and worked with the Energy and Natural Resources team before being hired by Tó Nizhóní Ání. Outside of Tó Nizhóní Ání, Jessica enjoys helping her family, exploring the outdoors, and tending to her garden and chickens.

Percy Deal

Percy Deal, Diné, is from Big Mountain, located on Black Mesa on the Navajo Nation. Percy has long been an active member of Tó Nizhóní Ání and was also one of the original founding members of the organization. Percy has been deeply involved in the local community and government issues for the last 45 years. Today, Percy continues to use his knowledge and experience to support the organization in various capacities.
Jennifer Beaudette

Administrative Assistant  |  jennifer@tonizhoniani.org

Jennifer Beaudette, Diné, is from Whippoorwill Springs, which is located 10 miles east of Piñon, Arizona, on Black Mesa. She currently resides in Flagstaff, Arizona, where she supports the daily operations of Tó Nizhóní Ání at our Flagstaff office. Jennifer has over 10 years of experience with grant management and bookkeeping. Outside of Tó Nizhóní Ání, Jennifer enjoys nature walks, road trips, riding with friends, and loves spending time with her grandson.

Eleanor Smith

Community Organizer

Eleanor Smith, Diné, is originally from Tlís Názbas, Arizona, near the Four Corners Monument in the Navajo Nation. She and her husband raised their seven children in Shiprock, New Mexico. Eleanor earned her Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from the University of New Mexico in 2018, then received her Master's in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education from Fort Lewis College in 2022. Faced with an environmentally detrimental helium extraction proposal in her hometown community of Tlís Názbas, she joined the Dooda Helium movement, then helped found the Tlís Názbas Collaborative Coalition and began working for Tó Nizhóní Ání part-time in 2022 as a Community Organizer. Outside of work, Eleanor enjoys spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren, traveling with her husband, sewing, cooking, and reading.

Andrew Atencia

Community Organizer  |  andrew@tonizhoniani.org

Andrew Atencia is from Flagstaff, Arizona. Andrew just began with Tó Nizhóní Ání, initially as an Intern in the Fall of 2022. He is now a recent graduate of Northern Arizona University with a B.S. in Environmental and Sustainability Studies. Andrew comes from Filipino descent and has found a deep connection with water and land through mountain biking, rock climbing, and backcountry split boarding. He is guided by the indigenous teachings of elders, as well as informed by the issues that threaten the existence of natural spaces. Motivated, disciplined and inspired, Andrew is determined to make a difference and hopes to continue his work with Tó Nizhóní Ání.
ADVISORS

Our advisors play a very crucial role in our organization. Their experiences and expertise help guide us and provide direction for the organization. Below is a list of advisors, past and present:

Current Advisors
- Valencia Edgewater
- Marshall Johnson
- Tony Skrelunas

Past Advisors
- Theodore Badonie
- Leonard Deal (dec.d.)
- Ram Herder (dec.d.)
- Alice Nez Horseherder (dec.d.)
- Lorraine Johnson (dec.d.)
- Katherine Smith (dec.d.)
Rhonda Begay

Nutritionist

Rhonda is Diné and from the Kinyaa'ání clan. Rhonda was born and raised in Teesto, Arizona, and currently resides in Hardrock, Arizona. Rhonda works for the Navajo Nation’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program providing special supplemental nutrition programming for families with young children.

Dana Eldridge

Organizer

Dana is Diné and from the Tséñį́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́į́ią́ numérique
Dan Herder

*Rancher/Retired NGS Employee*

Dan is Diné, and from the Tłį́tłáłii clan. Dan is originally from Howell Mesa and resides in Hardrock, Arizona. Dan is a full-time rancher and spends his days tending to his livestock. As a frontline community member, Dan has seen, firsthand, the impacts of climate change and resource extraction on the indigenous pastoralist lifeways.

Edith Simonson

*Shepherd/Weaver*

Edith is Diné and from the Chíshi Dine'é clan. Edith was born and raised in the Big Mountain community of Hardrock, Arizona. Edith is a full-time shepherd and Diné weaver. She is one of the few Diné weavers that still processes her wool by hand, using the native vegetation to dye and weave traditional blankets. Edith has seen the impacts of coal mining on the native plants and herbs, which has impacted the traditional economy and way of life.

Darrell Marks

*Community Organizer/Educator*

Darrell is Diné of the White Corn Zuni Edgewater, born for Those Going Home. His maternal grandparents are Money Goats, and his paternal grandparents are Salt. Darrell is a father of three children. Originally
CAMPAIGNS

WATER IS LIFE

Tó Nizhóní Ánlí "Sacred Water Speaks" was established in 2000 to address the waste and misuse of precious groundwater by the coal industry on Black Mesa. The Navajo Aquifer has long been the sole source of potable water for the Diné and Hopi living on the Black Mesa plateau in northeast Arizona. The Navajo Aquifer or N-Aquifer is described as ice-age pristine drinking water and surpasses EPA standards. The natural fissures in the earth allow the water to come to the surface as springs and seeps, bringing substance to the people that call Black Mesa home.

Since the 1970s, Peabody Energy has operated both the Black Mesa Mine and Kayenta Mine on Black Mesa. Black Mesa N-aquifer groundwater was used to transport coal from the Black Mesa mine through a slurry line to John C. Campbell Station, 271 miles away. On average, Peabody has
RECLAMATION & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

With the end of coal mining operations on Black Mesa, Tó Nizhóní Ání focuses on rehabilitation efforts: 1) ensuring complete reclamation of coal mined lands and the water source that was used during these operations. 2) The decommissioning and complete clean-up of the power plant site at Navajo Generating Station. In addition, we demand the repatriation of all artifacts and ancestral remains removed when mining operations began on Black Mesa.

JUST & EQUITABLE TRANSITION

As we move forward and transition away from the coal and the fossil fuel economy, Tó Nizhóní Ání is engaging utility owners and giving them the first opportunity to support our efforts to mitigate the economic losses and environmental destruction that our indigenous communities have endured. We are engaging utilities to support a Just and Equitable Transition (JET) which includes providing support to rebuild economies lost from coal plant and mine closures. Our efforts include re-training and jobs for displaced mine and plant workers, replacing coal energy with renewable energy, and securing the support needed to transition the Navajo Economy.
CLIMATE CHANGE

Tó Nizhóní Ání is working toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector and ensuring all fossil fuel generation is replaced with clean, renewable resources leading to a low carbon future. We recognize the environmental and economic toll that decades of exploitation and resource extraction by outside interests have had on the Navajo Nation. Crucially, we recognize that the impacts on our water have been tremendous. We are focused on replacing coal energy with renewable energy everywhere on the Navajo Nation to protect the water sources. We are working with Navajo, State and Federal leadership to achieve that goal.