



Academic Literature Review of

Land and Resource Use of the Utah Navajo

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Photo by Branson Reynolds



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Origin

Navajo Oral Tradition

According to their rich oral tradition, Navajo People, or Diné, originated in the present-day four-corners region of the southwestern U.S. Their creation followed the upward emergence of spiritual figures through a series of lower worlds, beneath the Earth's surface. It was in these lower worlds that First Man and First Woman initially appeared, who would later become central figures in the creation of the Diné. It is described that the inhabitants of these lower worlds lived peacefully until an immoral or mischievous act provoked supernatural powers to induce destruction and chaos in retribution, forcing the inhabitants to abandon the world they lived, and seek refuge in the next world above. A similar story manifests in each lower world, although with different characters and events. Eventually, following one of these catastrophic events, First Man and First Woman emerged onto the Earth's surface in possession of a sacred medicine bundle filled with objects and powers collected from previous worlds; together they set about designing and then creating this new world.

Using objects from the medicine bundle, First Man and First Woman initially created spiritual beings to help with the creation process and constructed a ceremonial hogan¹ where the creation process was to take place. From inside the hogan they lay out more objects that, through ceremony, would take the form of features on the landscape and all the living creatures that would inhabit this world. It was then that the sacred mountains (Blanca Peak, Mt. Taylor, San Francisco Peaks, and Hesperus Peak) and rivers (Rio Grande, Little Colorado, Colorado and the San Juan) were created as protective forces for the Diné (Aton & McPherson, 2000, p. 34). After the landscape was created, Changing Woman was born from the most sacred objects in the bundle and was then reared by First Man and First Woman. Upon womanhood, she was given the sacred medicine bundle. Changing Woman eventually birthed twin sons, Monster Slayer and Born For Water, fathered by the Sun. The twin boys became protectors of the new world and purged it of the evil beings roaming its landscape.

With the world safe for new inhabitants, Changing Woman then created corn, and with the corn she created the first of the Diné. The scene of emergence and the creation of the Navajo people are believed to have taken place at the heart of their

¹ According to Stephen Jett (1978), hogans are traditional Navajo dwellings, also used for religious ceremonies. They are apparent in the earliest Navajo sites found (Dykeman and Roebuck, 2012) and are still used today. Although the basic form has remained the same, different styles and sizes have emerged throughout the centuries. The basic orientation and rituals involved in the construction of hogans, also remain the same. The entrance always faces east, while the enclosed area has a hearth in the middle and is customarily apportioned based on the cardinal directions and various socio-religious factors. Hogans are also traditionally abandoned if a death occurs within them, over a "dread of spirits of the dead." (See also, Lane, 1999; Doyel, 1982)



sacred geography in the mountains of Colorado near Durango, or the Navajo Dam area of New Mexico, depending on the version (Maryboy & Begay, 2000, p. 268; McPherson, 2001, p. 5). After these events transpired, many of the spiritual figures returned to the previous worlds with which they were associated. Some, however, remain in spiritual form, as guardians on Earth.

As with any history, especially those passed on through oral tradition, there are bound to be differences in the details depending on the individual telling it. There are many versions of the Navajo origin tradition, and although they differ in some details, they incorporate the same general themes and ideas that have been passed down through generations and centuries.²

Archaeological Theory

Archaeologists and anthropologists have proposed theories which conflict or differ with Navajo origin beliefs and prehistory, and it should be understood that many Navajo reject these ideas because of contradictions with their oral history and beliefs. Through the study of language, cultural traits, genetic evidence (Brugge, 2012), and scant archaeological evidence, researchers theorize that, sometime before 1000 AD, a small group of Athapaskan speaking people separated from a larger Athapaskan speaking culture, based in northern Canada and interior Alaska, and slowly migrated south. According to these theories, the Athapaskan speaking descendants of this original group eventually arrived in the present-day southwestern U.S. where they later became known as, or incorporated with other tribes to become, the Navajo and various Apache tribes. Most researchers agree that the Southern Athapaskans³ were established in the SW region by the 16th century; however, there is archaeological evidence of their presence as early as the 14th century (Seymour, 2012; Sucec, 2006, p. 209). Although the Southern Athapaskan migration is generally accepted in written literature, the reasons for it, the manner in which it happened, the exact dates involved, and the role that these early Southern Athapaskans played in the emergence of the Navajo are not completely understood and are highly debated (Gilmore & Larmore, 2012).

Although researchers tend to focus on the origins of the Navajo's Athapaskan ancestry, the ancestry of the Navajo likely incorporated many different peoples, cultures, and cultural traits. David M. Brugge (2012) suggests that "[t]he earliest

² The information on Navajo origin tradition presented in this document is almost entirely paraphrased from a document written by Sam Gill (1983) and confirmed by Dine' elders and leaders including: Willie Grayeyes, Mark Maryboy, etc.

³ 'Southern Athapaskan' and 'Apachean' are terms used interchangeably by archaeologists and anthropologists when referring collectively to the Athapaskan speaking tribes of the Southwest. The term 'Apachean' is derived from early Spanish accounts of various Athapaskan speaking peoples of the southwest which they called 'Apaches'.



Navajo may not have been Athapaskan-speakers but were hunter-gatherers indigenous to the Southwest and descended from the archaic populations that later incorporated Athapaskan migrants.” Whether or not this theory is correct, it sheds light on the importance of other ancestral groups in shaping traditional Navajo culture. In addition to theorized Athapaskan ancestry, some Navajo lineages have been traced to ancestors of Pueblo tribes, such as the Hopi, Acoma, Jemez, Keres, Laguna, Tewa, and Zuni.⁴ Other ancestry has been traced to the Ute, Paiute, Havasupai, and Mexicans (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 16; Sucec, 2006, p. 210). Some Navajos also trace their ancestry to the Anasazi⁵, mostly indirectly through their Pueblo ancestry, but in some instances directly (Sucec, 2006, p. 210; Brugge, 1996, p. 264). Regardless of these other ancestral ties, researchers agree that the first Navajo descended from an Athapaskan speaking culture.

General History and Pathway Toward Utah

Early Southern Athapaskans

The first Athapaskan speakers to arrive in the Southwest are believed to have been a highly mobile and specialized group, subsisting primarily as hunter-gatherers, and on the fruits of trading and raiding. Whether the ancestral groups to the Navajo and the various Apache tribes were already distinguishable upon entering the Southwest (Brugge, 1983; Brugge, 2012; Gilmore & Larmore, 2012) or if they diverged following the entrance of a single ancestral group (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012, p. 151), is still a matter of debate. Either way, upon entering the region, the Southern Athapaskans came into contact with the Pueblo, a highly specialized agricultural society. These two cultures likely first interacted through trade; the Southern Athapaskans exchanging hides, meat and gathered plants for agricultural products from the Pueblo (Brugge, 1996; 1983; Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012). The excerpt below describes one theory:

Eventually “...separate Navajo and Apache cultural identities emerged among the Southern Athapaskans. The Navajo became less mobile, increased their use of ceramics, adopted more substantial architecture forms, adapted Pueblo agriculture, and tied their identity intimately to the landscape of the upper San Juan River Basin. The Western Apache also became more sedentary on a relative scale among mobile groups (Seymour 2005b:4), but other Apaches (e.g., the Chiricahua, Mescalero, Plains and Lipan), perhaps more conservative and somewhat less willing to take on a sedentary lifestyle, focused less on agriculture and more on gathering, hunting, trading, and

⁴ Collectively referred to in this document as “Pueblo.”

⁵ The Anasazi are considered a prominent pre-historic ancestor to the modern-day Pueblo groups described above.



raiding, ranging over larger areas through much of the American Southwest and the Southern Plains.” (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012)

Although this general synopsis of the early Southern Athapaskans is not disputed among researchers, the manner and dates in which the Navajo emerged are. One theory is that traditional Navajo culture emerged late as the result of an influx of Puebloans seeking refuge during a period of conflict with the Spanish in the late 17th century (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012, p. 152). Another theory describes this process as the gradual acculturation of a Southern Athapaskan group, to a more Puebloan way of life, that started early with a distinct Navajo culture appearing before the Pueblo refugee period (Hester, 1971, p. 51). In light of new evidence, Dykeman and Roebuck (2012) proposed yet another theory. The new evidence was an archaeological site found in the upper San Juan River drainage, dating to the mid 16th century, in which the inhabitants manifested most of the cultural traits that are considered distinctly Navajo. With this evidence and the fact that no transitional sites have been found identifying an intermediary culture between the Navajo and the early Southern Athapaskans, they envision an abrupt Navajo emergence by the middle of the 16th century. They theorize that, preceding the emergence, there was a period of coexistence between the early Southern Athapaskans and the Pueblo, with certain ideas, technologies, and traits flowing back and forth, but without progression in a specific direction. They state that:

“Prior to their arrival in Diné’tah, the Southern Athapaskan-speakers were not Navajo. They were not Navajo for the 1,200 years that they were linguistically isolated from their Tsuut’ina (Sarsi) and Dene Suilne (Chipewyan) cousins in northern Canada. They were not Navajo at Avonlea, Besant, or Dismal River, or in the Wyoming, Utah, or Colorado Rockies; or any other place where anthropologists have theorized that these Athapaskan-speakers sojourned during their “migration” to the Southwest (translocation would be a better term— migrations do not take 1,100 years). But they did not become *Navajo* until they arrived in Diné’tah, until they began to grow maize, build hogans in a ritually prescribed manner, and, importantly, until they embraced stories and accounts of the world that set them apart from other Apachean peoples. Navajo identity emerged in Diné’tah. It is intimately tied to the place.” (Dykeman and Roebuck 2012:165)

Regardless of the specific theory, traditional Navajo culture eventually emerged distinct from its ancestral roots. This has been evidenced at archaeological sites. Some of the cultural traits identified at the earliest sites, if separated, can be attributed to other groups. For example, traits associated with hunter-gatherers can be attributed to the early Southern Athapaskans and traits indicating the use of agriculture can be attributed to the Pueblo. However, sites exhibiting these traits together, combined with traits that cannot be associated with either of these groups, indicate the presence of a different culture. The people of this culture hunted, gathered, and practiced agriculture, but they also built hogans, stored produce in a



unique way, performed different ceremonies and rituals, used particular craft styles, and displayed other traits that were distinct from any of their ancestral groups (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012). This was the Navajo culture, and the location of their emergence was the Upper San Juan River drainage, amidst the four sacred mountains in the area known as the Dinétah.

The Pueblo

Regardless of the exact process and dates involved, it is clear that the Pueblo had a profound influence on the emergence of Navajo identity. Early relations between the Southern Athapaskan and Pueblo involved trade, alliance, and periods of conflict (Hester, 1971, p. 51; Schaafsma, 1980, p. 301), potentially varying by the specific Pueblo tribe. Trade would have likely included the exchange of hunting and gathering products from the Athapaskans (eg. meat, hides, wild plants, and minerals) in exchange for agricultural products from the Pueblo (eg. maize, beans, squash, etc.) (Schaafsma, 1980, pp. 304-5). As a strong trade relationship developed, there was likely an exchange of ideas and technologies as well. Traditional Navajo culture incorporated certain aspects that can be attributed to Pueblo origins, including:

1. Agriculture; including strains of maize and other crops, and some of the methods and rituals involved in farming. (Hester, 1971, p. 51; Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012)
2. Production, style, and use of ceramics. (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012, p. 154; Brugge, 1983, p. 491)
3. Masonry construction. (Brugge, 1996, p. 261)
4. Certain elements of philosophy, social structure and religion; including clan structure, matrilineal descent, matrilocal residence, the emergence theme and certain rituals. (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012, p. 154; Hester, 1971, p. 53)
5. Production and design of textiles. (Grayeyes, 2013)

The Navajo also modified and left their own cultural signatures on many of these practices (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012). Evidence of these practices has been identified at the first recognizably Navajo sites in the Dinétah, dated to the mid-16th century. As suggested by Dykeman and Roebuck (2012, p. 154), this was not a one-way transaction; Southern Athapaskan traits and technologies (including craft traits, and war and hunting technologies) apparently started showing up at Puebloan archaeological sites dating to around AD 1400.

The Spanish

The first written accounts identifying the Navajo, specifically, came from the observations of Spanish missionaries and friars in the late 16th and early 17th



centuries (Brugge, 1983). An account from Fray Alonso de Benavides, in 1630, identifies the “Apache de Nabajo”, in reference to their use of agriculture. The term ‘Nabajo’ is believed to be the Spanish interpretation of a Puebloan word, essentially meaning, ‘wide cultivated field’ (Hewett, 1906). Other observations by Benavides describe a:

“... semisedentary people who planted maize and perhaps other crops but moved to areas distant from their fields for hunting; traded meat, hides, and mineral products, primarily salt and alum, to the Puebloans; lived in “underground homes in Rancherias and built special structures for the storage of their harvest; were variously friendly or hostile with the Pueblos under different poorly defined circumstances; had clothing with feathered headgear, arrows tipped with stone points; had many local headmen including war chiefs and one or more caciques or peace chiefs; practiced polygamy; and were quite skillful in war.” (Brugge, 1983, p. 491)

The Spanish, looking to establish colonies, explore for mineral wealth, obtain slaves, spread Christianity, and later establish a route to the Pacific Ocean, made their way into the Southwest from the South beginning in the 16th century. With them, they brought new technologies, ideas and domesticated animals not seen before. Directly and indirectly, primarily through trade and raiding, the Navajo incorporated certain aspects of the Spanish culture that fit well into their existing cultural system (Hester, 1971, p. 53). They acquired livestock (ie. horses, sheep, goats and cattle), leading to increased mobility and an introduction to a pastoral economy, as well as metal objects and other trade goods. The Navajo mostly rejected all other aspects of Spanish culture, including Christianity (Hester, 1971, p. 53). In addition to beneficial contributions, the Spanish also brought with them disease and a new source of conflict for the indigenous groups of the Southwest. The effects of disease on the Navajo are difficult to identify based on archaeological evidence, but based on trade and other interactions with neighboring tribes to the South, it is possible that these effects were felt even before actual contact with the Spanish. Disease epidemics are well documented further south and suggested as far north as Santa Fe. Although devastating to the Navajo, disease likely strengthened and cemented healing rituals and ceremonies for the surviving culture (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012, p. 166).

Conflict

The onslaught of Spanish diseases and slave-raiding, combined with their territorial and ideological encroachment, is sure to have led to resentment and retaliation by the Navajo and other indigenous groups. In fact, hostilities and conflict defined the nature of the Spanish-Navajo relationship (Hester, 1971, p. 53). In 1680, the Pueblo revolted against the oppressive Spanish and drove them from their settlements in southern New Mexico. However, during an event known as the Reconquest of 1696,



the Spanish defeated the Pueblo and reclaimed their settlements, causing many Pueblo to seek refuge among the Navajo and other adjacent tribes. The Navajo likely harbored Pueblo refugees because of their long-standing trading relationship with Pueblo people (Brugge, 1996, p. 261). There is no doubt that this influx of refugees had an effect on Navajo culture, although the magnitude is still debated. Archaeological sites, dating to the period following these conflicts, show additional Puebloan traits incorporated into Navajo culture. These include the construction and use of small stone defensive structures, called pueblitos, as well as the appearance of weaving technologies and distinctly Navajo rock art that incorporated aspects of the Puebloan and Plains cultures (Brugge, 1996, p. 261; Schaafsma, 1980, pp. 305-6). With the addition of Pueblo women into Navajo society, new clans were also incorporated. This is evident, in that about one-third of all Navajo clans claim Pueblo origins. Historical accounts from the period following the Spanish Reconquest indicate that:

“[t]he [Navajo] People lived at this time in small, compact communities located away from the fields on the tops of adjacent mesas. Agriculture was the basic economic pursuit, but sheep and goats (and horses and cattle in lesser numbers) had already been obtained from Europeans by trade, by raid, or indirectly through the Pueblo Indians. Woolen blankets and dresses for women were woven. Men dressed in buckskin.” (Kuckhorn & Leighton, 1951)

These same accounts also identify that the Navajo are growing beans, pumpkins and watermelons in addition to their staple of maize (Schaafsma, 1980, pp. 304-5).

As tensions with the Spanish subsided in the early 18th century, conflicts with the Ute and Comanche arose (Brugge, 1983, p. 493; Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 17). This is evidenced by the construction of pueblitos. Archaeologists believe they were built as defense against the Ute and Comanche, because they would have had little effect against the Spanish (Brugge, 1983, p. 493; 1996, p. 261; Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 20). Eventually choosing mobility over fortification, the construction and use of these structures were abandoned within the same century they appeared (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 30). Regardless, a mixed, but often turbulent, relationship with the Ute remained a common theme throughout the next century.

Expansion

By the early 18th century the Navajo had a diverse economy based on agriculture, livestock, hunting, gathering, trading, and raiding. This broad-based economy allowed them adaptability and therefore stability in a variable environment with the constant threat of conflict. This distinguished them from other inhabitants of the Southwest and has attributed to their growth and success as a people. As Dykeman and Roebuck (2012, p. 162) note, “When harsh conditions cause Pueblo and Spanish economies to collapse, the Navajo appear rich in comparison as they were never



completely dependent on agriculture, and these differences are reflected in the Spanish historical accounts.”

However, despite this relative economic cushion, early 18th century pressures from the Ute, Comanche, and Spanish⁶, combined with drought and a need for more land and resources to satisfy a growing population and pastoral economy, caused the Navajo to shift their sights westward. (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 30) As drought and conflict were likely pressures ‘pushing’ the Navajo out of the Dinétah, landscapes to the West, ideal for herding and with a greater abundance of game, would have likely exerted ‘pull’ forces (Towner, 2008). The first Navajo to explore these areas were potentially either the herders or hunting parties (Kelley & Whiteley, Navajoland: Family Settlement and Land Use, 1989, p. 29), acting as scouts for a gradual migration (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012; Magne, 2012). Another ‘Pull’ force for cultural migrations, identified by Magne (2012) in his paper on migration theory, includes vacant territory, even those recently abandoned by previous cultures. He indicates that a group migrating into an abandoned territory would need to have an adept environmental awareness of the area, combined with the technological means to succeed where the previous culture had failed. Whatever the motivation and pressures involved, by the middle of the 18th century, the Navajo had left the Dinétah in favor of lands to the West, Northwest and Southwest (Dykeman & Roebuck, 2012, p. 156; Towner, 2008, p. 511).

Utah (Prehistory To Present)

Attraction

Southeastern Utah is defined by a harsh arid landscape, dotted with high mesas and forested mountains. The region is segmented by the Colorado River, along with major tributaries such as the San Juan River, and myriad other smaller tributaries and associated canyons. The high mesas and mountains of Southeastern Utah; with their alpine meadows springs, and abundant snow melt; offer rich ecological communities ideal for hunting, gathering, summer livestock grazing, shelter and firewood. The rivers and their associated drainages offer perennial and ephemeral water sources, alluvium for agriculture and fodder for winter livestock grazing. The harsh climate, remote location and segmented landscape of Southeastern Utah would have also, importantly, offered security to its inhabitants. The combination of these features would have been attractive to the Navajo during a time when they were likely seeking peace and a landscape that could support their diverse economy.

⁶ When hostilities died down, following the Spanish Reconquest of 1696, there was reported to be a period of peace between the Spanish and Navajo, extending from the early 18th century to around AD 1770 (Kelley and Whiteley, 1989, p.31). Despite this peace, the Spanish settlements continued to encroach on Navajo and Pueblo lands, still exerting pressure for Navajo expansion.



Although the Anasazi abandoned this region during the 12th and 13th centuries, the Navajo had an adept awareness of this type of environment and the technological means to benefit from its resources (Davis, 1965, p. 353).

Early Activity

It is unclear exactly when the Navajo first entered and began settling in Utah. Sucec (2006) reported that some Navajo, among the Oljato Chapter House, tell of ancestral Navajos already west of the Colorado River in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The earliest archaeological evidence, which comes from tree-ring data collected at hogans and other structures during the Navajo Land Claim survey, suggests that the Navajo were established in Utah, North of the San Juan River, by at least the latter half of the 18th century. However, the earliest sample, coming from a Hogan at White Canyon, dates back to AD 1620⁷ (Stokes & Smiley, 1963, pp. 12-13). Other tree-ring data, from the same study, date similar structures around Navajo Mountain to the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Shepardson & Hammond, 1970, p. 26), Oral accounts of the births of prominent Navajo headmen (eg. K'aa'yelii on Elk Ridge in 1801; Kee Dinihi at White Canyon in 1821), as well as others, show further evidence of Navajo settlement and use along the lower San Juan River before the beginning of the 19th century (Correll, 1971, pp. 147-48; McPherson, 2009, pp. 84-87). Due to the remoteness of Southeastern Utah and the lack of historical information concerning the Navajo in this region, it seems likely that these early inhabitants enjoyed relative peace, at least until the turn of the end of the 18th century.

Fearing Time

Towards the end of the 18th century, and until Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the Navajo and Spanish resumed hostilities. There was continued Spanish encroachment into Navajo territory, Navajo attacks and raids on Spanish settlements, slave raiding, and retaliative punitive measures from both sides (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 23). This gave the Navajo even more reason to seek new ground. Conflict also continued with the Ute, who by this point had allied with the Spanish and helped provide Navajo captives for the slave trade (Benally, 1982, p. 83; Brugge, 1964, p. 225). This may have, in part, been retaliation for raids of a similar type by the Navajo. This retaliatory relationship is believed to have been commonplace during the 18th and early 19th centuries (Sucec, 2006, p. 216). Despite these conflicts, there are reports from this era of good relations between the Navajo and Ute, especially concerning Navajos living in the outlying areas of Navajo

⁷ Due to the nature of tree-ring analysis for dating archaeological sites, it is possible that this tree-ring sample does not indicate Navajo presence at the site in AD 1620. Tree-ring analysis is only able to indicate the date in which a tree stopped growing. In other words, this analysis can show when a tree was cut down or died due to natural causes. Because of the possibility that the trees used in the construction of these structures may have died or been cut down prior to the general time of their use, tree-ring dates may not be conclusive evidence indicating the exact date of construction.



territory and in areas previously thought of as Ute territory (Correll, 1971, p. 146; McPherson, 2009, p. 84).

Following Mexico's independence, trade was opened with Anglo-Americans, providing New Mexicans⁸ and Mexicans⁹ with increased firepower and reinvigoration of the slave trade. Raids, theft and retaliation continued to mark this period. Only the outlying areas of Navajo territory seemed safe. In 1823, Jose Antonio Vizcarra, governor of New Mexico at the time, led a punitive military campaign, also capturing livestock and slaves, deep into Western and Northern Navajo country. Following a skirmish near the present-day Utah-Arizona border, Vizcarra documented that a group of Navajo fled with livestock towards the San Juan River. Leading a detachment from the same campaign a few days later, Colonel Francisco Salazar documented signs of Navajo driving stock north towards Bear's Ears, a prominent feature north of the San Juan River. Although the campaign did not make it far into Utah, much evidence is reported of Navajo use of this border region (Brugge, 1964, pp. 237, 243). Together, these reports comprise the first historical evidence linking the Navajo to Southeastern Utah.

Military actions, attacks and retaliation continued on both sides. The New Mexicans, although no longer under Spanish rule, carried on the legacy of slave and livestock raiding even after the U.S. gained control of New Mexico in 1848 (Sucec, 2006, p. 229). Kelley and Whiteley (1989, p. 36) note that as of 1846 there were reported to be over 2,000 Ute and Navajo slaves held captive in New Mexico. Various treaties, signed between the Mexican government and the Navajo, were aimed at resolving these issues. None, however, materialized in action or peace.

In addition to the New Mexicans, Anglo-Americans were also increasingly entering the far reaches of Navajo territory. Accounts from trappers and cross-country travelers note encountering the Navajo in Utah as early as the 1820s and 1830s (Benally, 1982, p. 99). Although these first encounters with Anglo-Americans were of little threat to the Navajo, this changed quickly with the arrival of the U.S. Army to New Mexico in 1846 (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 36), the acquisition of New Mexico in 1848, and the subsequent opening of borders for U.S. settlement in 1853 (Sucec, 2006, p. 229). The U.S. Government generally sided with the New Mexicans, carrying on the legacy of the Mexican Government. Various treaties were attempted, but most demanded concessions that many Navajo were unwilling or unable to comply with (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 40). All eventually failed to bring peace and... "(t)he cycle of attacks and counterattacks continued, precipitated by raids for livestock, violations of agreements and treaties, warfare and death, unfair treatment, and struggles to retain grazing, farming, and homelands." (Sucec, 2006, p. 229)

⁸ The term 'New Mexican', at this point in history, refers to the descendants of the Spanish and Mexicans that were settled in the territory referred to as New Mexico.

⁹ The term 'Mexican' refers to those Mexicans actually from or settled in Mexico, outside the territory of New Mexico.



The correspondence and cartography of James S. Calhoun, the first US government appointed Indian Agent to New Mexico, recognized Navajo presence in Utah and north of the San Juan River (Abel, 1915, pp. 33, 174, 195, 256, 309). Despite this recognition though, the Navajo in this remote portion of Navajo territory seemed of little interest to the US. Although there were periods of peace, tensions escalated and the U.S. government formally declared war against the Navajo in 1858. In 1863, with a surplus of troops staged to defend New Mexico from the confederates, Brigadier General Carleton and Colonel (Kit) Carson launched an aggressive campaign to subdue the Navajo (Roessel, 1983, p. 511). The U.S. Army enlisted aid from various irregular military forces. The most notable of these forces were the Ute, who were familiar with the terrain and extremely effective at tracking the Navajo. Carleton's scorched-earth policy, "...in which the troops destroyed cornfields, peach trees, hogans, water holes, animals, and people, began to pay dividends as the Navajo had nowhere to hide and little or nothing to eat" (Roessel, 1983, p. 511). By March of 1865, although many died fighting to avoid capture or during the grueling 'Long Walk'¹⁰; over 9,000 Navajo had been forced to occupy a small piece of land at Ft. Sumner¹¹. Despite the US Army's efforts to round up all Navajos, thousands of Navajos remained in their ancestral lands, having escaped detainment, by hiding out in the more inaccessible areas of Navajo country. These areas, such as the Grand Canyon, Navajo Mountain, the homelands north of the San Juan River, and west of the Colorado River, earned the name *Náhonidzo'*, or "escaping places" (Roessel, 1983, p. 514; Benally, 1982, p. 120).

Leading up to this time, the Navajo living in these areas were likely off the government's radar and living relatively peacefully compared to the those in other regions, closer to the sources of conflict. According to Correll,

"During the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, Navajos lived and ranged in the La Sal Mountains, near the Bear's Ears, in Arch Canyon, along Montezuma and McElmo Creeks, near present Dove Creek, Colorado, and even in the Henry Mountains west of the Colorado River, grazing stock, gathering wild foods, or farming in the canyons and higher elevations north of the [San Juan River], as well as along the San Juan River Valley." (1971, pp. 148-49)

A report by Calhoun in 1849, commented on the general Navajo population at the time. He said, "[t]hey have extensive fields of Corn & Wheat—fine Peach orchards, and grow quantities of Melons, Squashes, Beans and Peas, and have immense flocks of sheep, a great number of Mules and horses of a superior breed: they have nothing of the cow kind." He also noted that the Navajo did not have permanent residences,

¹⁰ The term 'Long Walk' is used when referring to the grueling journey from Navajo settlements, and other places of capture, to Ft. Sumner in eastern New Mexico.

¹¹ Ft. Sumner is also referred to, in various documents, by its Spanish name 'Bosque Redondo' or its Navajo name 'Hwééldi' or 'Hwelde'.



instead they changed locations depending on the season and apprehensions of danger (Abel, 1915, pp. 32-33). Although these reports may be based solely on a few encounters near posts or along expeditions, they are likely to be at least somewhat representative of the general culture.

In Utah, prominent headmen, such as K'aa'yelii and Kee Dinihii lived in this manner. They ranged with their followers North of the San Juan River and West of the Colorado River, taking advantage of the seasonal availability of wild foods, pasture for livestock and plots for farming. Hoshkanenii was another prominent headman who ranged with his followers between Monument Valley, Navajo Mountain, and Bear's Ears in much the same manner (Correll, 1971, pp. 149-150). These and other groups of Navajo in Utah, although far away from New Mexican settlements, also worried of Ute, Mexican, and New Mexican slave and livestock raids (Sucec, 2006, pp. 218,229; Roessel, 1983, p. 511). They soon became familiar with escape routes and hiding places such as Wilson Mesa (named "Bínáhoníibzo'ii" or "chase up" by the Navajo) among many others (Sucec, 2006, p. 229). Despite these worries, there are other reports of Navajo in this region maintaining close ties and trading relationships with their Ute and Southern Paiute neighbors (McPherson, 2009, pp. 84,88; Benally, 1982, p. 121). These reports indicate that the Utes farther to the East were responsible for the hostilities. In any case, with onset of the Carson campaign, the Utes soon became the most feared enemy of the Utah Navajo.

Many Navajo sought refuge in the remote "...canyons, mesas, ridges and hills..." of southern Utah, north of the San Juan River and even west of the Colorado River (McPherson, 2009, pp. 83-84; Sucec, 2006, p. Chapter 4). Some of these Navajo were killed during raids; some surrendered fearing death or misery. Others were captured and either forced to go to Ft. Sumner or sold as slaves (Roessel, 1983, p. 511). Still others were more fortunate, including groups like those who joined or were previously following K'aa'yelii, Kee Dinihii and Hoshkanenii (Correll, 1971, p. 151). Although they lived in constant fear, they managed to evade capture and survive the US Army's scorched-earth campaign. They remained persecuted but free until the Treaty of 1868 was signed, effectively ending the campaign and detention at Ft. Sumner and allowing Navajo People to return to their homeland.

Post – Ft. Sumner

Although some Navajo successfully escaped detention at Ft. Sumner and returned to their homelands sooner, the majority were freed following the signing of the treaty of 1868 (Roessel, 1983, p. 514). This treaty stipulated 10 years worth of annuities (eg. Clothing, tools, livestock, etc.) and a reservation boundary among other conditions. The initial reservation was an approximately 3.5 million acre rectangle that straddled the far northern border between New Mexico and Arizona (Roessel, 1983, pp. 519-20). A fraction of their former territory, the Navajo never confined themselves to this treaty reservation (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 45). The boundary of the reservation has changed many times since the original treaty, and continues



to change to this day (Roessel, 1983, p. 520; Gavin Noyes, Round River Conservation Studies, personal communication, 2013). The Utah Navajo, following the treaty of 1868, had more to worry about than reservation boundaries. Their territorial boundaries, areas long used for hunting, grazing, and farming, would soon be encroached upon by an advancing front of miners, cattlemen, and settlers. The most prominent group, were Mormon pioneers encouraged to settle Southeastern Utah by the LDS church in a fateful expedition along what has become known as the “Hole in the Rock” trail. They began arriving in the late 1870s and early 1880s (McPherson, 2009, p. 89). Although this is the first time the Utah Navajo began encountering Mormon settlers east of the Colorado River, they were already familiar with each other from encounters west of the Colorado River.

Beginning in 1865, following the brutality of the Carson campaign, some Navajo are reported to have allied with the Ute and Southern Paiute in a series of struggles against the advance of Mormon settlement in central and southern Utah. These attacks and counter-attacks are collectively referred to as the ‘Black Hawk War’ after the movement’s leader, a Ute named Black Hawk. As noted by Crampton (1959, p. 8), “This, the Black Hawk War, caused the abandonment of some 25 white settlements; it cost about 70 lives and a million dollars before it was brought to an end in 1868 by the Utah territorial militia.” Although the war officially ended in 1868, the Navajo are reported to have continued raiding Mormon settlements in Southern Utah, west of the Colorado River, until peace was brokered by John W. Powell and Jacob Hamblin in 1870 (Crampton, 1959, p. 9).

As the first white settlers arrived in Bluff and other areas adjoining the San Juan River, the Navajo were just getting back on their feet. Those who were forced into Ft. Sumner had returned, and those that had escaped or avoided detention were adjusting to life without fear. Sheep herds were being re-established or rebounded while hogans and other seasonal dwellings were being rebuilt or built anew. These dwellings could now be constructed in favorable locations for growing crops, raising livestock and gathering firewood, without regard for defense or concealment (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, pp. 48-49,52,62-63). These locations, however, also enticed the newly arrived settlers, especially as the settlers’ communities and livestock herds began to grow.

“Moving closer to Elk Ridge with its summer range, the advance of the cattle industry ran into four Navajo families living in the area with their flocks of sheep. Most likely one of these families was K’aa’Yelii’s, since in 1884, Lyman noted that this Navajo was there with his livestock when the first Mormons explored Elk Ridge.” (McPherson, 2009, pp. 94-95)

With the influx of prospectors, settlers, and their increasing herds, coupled with an increase in the Navajo population and herds, encounters such as these became more common. Tensions began to rise and occasionally the result was violence (Maryboy & Begay, 2000, p. 290; Brugge, 1966?, p. 11). The increasing competition for



resources was soon to plague the San Juan country of Utah, in more ways than confrontation. Recognizing this and likely recognizing the Navajo's ability to subsist through its livestock economy, and the threat that competition might pose to that subsistence, an 1884 executive order amended the borders of the Navajo reservation to include all lands in Utah south of the San Juan River (McPherson, 2001, p. 16). However, because the land north of the San Juan River was more favorable for general subsistence than much of land south of the river, many Navajo still lived, farmed, gathered and pastured their livestock north of the river. The new reservation boundary did little to quell the competition for land.

The new reservation boundary also failed to incorporate many of the wildlife rich areas that the Utah Navajo had utilized as hunting grounds for centuries. Although a stipulation in the 1868 treaty allowed for hunting outside of reservation boundaries, access to these areas became increasingly inhibited. The wild game (especially deer) faced grazing competition with growing livestock herds, and Navajo hunters now faced new competition for game with the influx of settlers (McPherson, 2001, pp. 28-29). Even if the Navajo did not use these areas exclusively and hunting played a lesser role in their economy, hunting north of the San Juan River was still an essential part of Utah Navajo culture and crucial to their survival (McPherson, 2001, pp. 23,28-29). In addition, the significance of hunting to their economy grew with the advent of trading posts (McPherson, 2001, p. 33).

The first trading posts appeared with the arrival of settlers and prospectors in the 1880s (McPherson, 2009, p. 96; Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 47). The posts provided many benefits to the Navajo, but they also had consequences. As many Navajo were trying to rebound after Ft. Sumner, trading posts offered a new avenue for economic growth. They created or expanded markets for Navajo goods, including particularly sheep products (eg. raw wool, pelts, blankets and rugs), but also deer hides, basketry¹² and silverwork among others (Kelley, 1986, pp. 24-25; Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 49; McPherson, 2001, p. 33; Edison, 1996, pp. 10-11). The Navajo still traded for necessities of their traditional economy, but also increasingly for products of the American capitalist economy, including mass-produced foods, machine made textiles, as well as cash¹³ (Kelley, 1986, p. 24; Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, pp. 49,78-79; McPherson, 1996, p. 19). The trading posts not only increased demand for Navajo goods, providing an important economic driver that allowed many of them to be less sensitive to the ebbs and flows of subsistence agriculture, they also served as an introduction to aspects of Anglo-American culture, good and bad. Trading posts also subjected the Navajo to swindlers and new sources of

¹² Navajo basketmaking is reported to have declined around this time because their traditional baskets were replaced with more contemporary products, such as "buckets, canteens, plates, cups and pots..." Also, many of their ceremonial baskets were replaced with baskets made by the Ute and Paiute, who could more easily make them because their cultures lacked the taboos that restricted the Navajo (Edison, 1996, p.10).

¹³ Apparently, cash (coin) was not commonly used by the Navajo for payment at this time, but rather as ornamentation on clothing and crafts.



conflict, and may have been a factor in cases of excessive resource exploitation, most notably incidents of excessive deer harvests and over-grazing by livestock (McPherson, 2001, pp. 33,67; McPherson, 2009, p. 99).

The importance of livestock to the traditional Navajo economy and culture cannot be overstated.

“Horses provided transportation and occasional food for the winter months; goats and sheep served as a continuing source of sustenance, blankets, and clothing and as a means for entering the barter economy of the trading post. Livestock also became synonymous with social status and psychological security, as Navajos watched their herds multiply and prosper.” (McPherson, 2001, p. 102)

Following defeat and the detention at Ft. Sumner, livestock was the primary force facilitating a return to self-reliance and prosperity. However, as both Navajo and settler herds grew, precipitated by their desire for economic viability, competition for range increased, tensions rose, and the lands adjacent to the San Juan River started to show signs of over-grazing.

Various government approaches targeted these issues, including the installation of a government farmers tasked with the implementation of large-scale irrigation agriculture on behalf of the Navajo on the San Juan River. The thought was that large-scale agriculture would lessen the Navajo’s reliance on livestock and bring them back to the south side of the San Juan River, easing frictions with settlers and the strain on the land (McPherson, 2001, p. 46). Another approach was to amend the borders of the reservation. Two additions were made to the reservation border in Utah during this period, one in 1905 and the other in 1933¹⁴; both were north of the San Juan River, encompassing Aneth and its surrounding area¹⁵ (McPherson, 2001, pp. 18-20; Roessel, 1983, p. 520). Each of these approaches, although beneficial in other ways, failed to materialize as effective solutions for over-grazing. In early 1930s, as the farming program finally conceded to the powers of the San Juan River, the government introduced its most abrasive approach towards the Navajo since the Carson campaign (McPherson, 2001, pp. 61,102). Aimed at saving and restoring livestock ranges from the effects of over-grazing, the federal government mandated livestock reductions on the Navajo reservation in the 1930s and 40s (McPherson,

¹⁴ In agreeing to the 1933 addition, the Navajo relinquished, “their right to establish individual homesteads in San Juan County north of the tribal boundaries, although the forty-four pending claims would be honored. The BIA insured that Navajo lands, where appropriate, would be fenced, that the Indians would abide by state game laws when hunting off the reservation, and wandering livestock that crossed boundaries would be handled according to published livestock rules.”(McPherson, 2001, p.20)

¹⁵ Another parcel was added to the Aneth extensions in 1958, serving as retribution for the lands swallowed by Lake Powell after the building of the Glen Canyon Dam (Maryboy and Begay, 2000, p.301; Roessel, 1983, p.520)



2001, p. 108). This had devastating consequences on the Navajo. Reservation wide, hundreds of thousands of livestock were either killed or sold, including sheep, goats, horses and cattle (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989). The reduction itself and the regulations of the Taylor Grazing Act that followed, "...limited Navajo herders to such an extent that very few could remain economically self-sufficient" (McPherson, 2001, p. 119). According to a Navajo saying, "dibe bee iina" or "sheep is life", and life changed immensely for the Navajo after the livestock reduction (Maryboy & Begay, 2000, p. 298). Navajo mistrust of the federal government increased during this campaign as many Navajo people viewed this action; not as something to save the land, but rather another attempt to wipe out native people (Grayeyes, 2013). Most Navajo, if they weren't already, were soon dependent on the wage economy, at a time when jobs were scarce due to the Great Depression and the start of World War II (McPherson, 2001, p. 119; Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 101).

Navajo dependence on the wage economy continues to this day. Most wage earning Navajos are employed in the public sector. Of those in the private sector most jobs are related to the reservation's non-renewable natural resources, specifically the extractive industries of coal & uranium mining and oil and gas development (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 138). Within the past century, the Navajo have had a bittersweet relationship with these industries. On one hand, although directly creating relatively few jobs, revenues from these industries (ie. lease earnings, royalties, and bonuses) comprise an overwhelming majority of the total tribal government revenues, supporting infrastructure development, social services, and some tribal enterprises (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, pp. 138-39). On the other hand, these industries are primarily run by outsiders, so the tribe sees relatively little of the resources' potential economic benefit. In spite of this, they deal with all of the consequences, including; environmental degradation, health issues, competition for land and water, forced relocation, and the ups and downs of extractive industries (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, pp. 144-45; Maryboy & Begay, 2000, pp. 303-306).

This bittersweet relationship is especially true for the Utah Navajo. Starting with the boom of the late 40s and later the discovery of Aneth oil field in 1956, extractive industries brought jobs and revenues (Maryboy & Begay, 2000, pp. 303-306). However, despite these benefits, the industries also brought hazards with them. Oil extraction has affected the drinking water, rangeland, livestock, and the general health of the Utah Navajo, while oil spills have also polluted the San Juan River, a sacred river that has sustained and protected the Navajo people since their emergence (Maryboy & Begay, 2000, p. 303; McPherson, 2001, p. 224). The Uranium boom, although long over, has also left a legacy of health and environmental issues that plague the Utah Navajo to this day (Maryboy & Begay, 2000, pp. 303-306).

Although the Utah Navajo economy is based largely on the extractive industries and anglo-style wage earning, traditional Navajo culture persists. The preservation of this culture and the social, political, economic and environmental issues that jeopardize it, continue to be major concerns for Utah Navajos. Utah Navajo still herd



sheep and other livestock, grow crops, hunt wild game, gather wild plants, collect firewood, conduct traditional religious ceremonies, use hogans and sweathouses, weave blankets, rugs and baskets, and work silver. These activities have carried the Navajo people through many centuries and generations, forging their cultural identity. They not only continue to contribute to their livelihood, they form the means with which the Navajo people of today relate to their ancestors. Because of this, the land and resources that are associated with these activities have always been, and will forever be, sacred.

The Greater Capitol Reef Region (Note: This section is redundant with the following section to serve two intended audiences.)

Landscape Potential

At the time that the Navajo first settled in Utah, they had a diverse subsistence economy based on livestock herding (mainly sheep; but also goats, horses, and possibly cattle), agriculture, hunting wild game, gathering wild foods, and trade. Kelley (1986, p. 17) notes that the Navajos of this time "... would have sought farming sites in places where they could also graze small herds of sheep and goats, find water and firewood, and hide during raids." She also notes that during the 18th century there may have been seasonal migrations; from lowland farming areas in the summer to upland areas in the winter, near firewood and better deer hunting habitat (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 28). However, as the Navajo economy shifted from an agricultural base to a pastoral base, this seasonal pattern shifted. In the summer, Navajos took their herds to seasonal pastures in the mountains and returned at harvest time to the lower, but still wooded areas near the snow line. Following this latter pattern, "... some headmen with followers moved thirty to fifty miles between summer and winter range" (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 60). The subsistence pattern of Navajos in the 18th century was likely either in a period of transition or it had already shifted to that of a pastorally based economy. It may have also depended on the specific family, band, or the location in which they were living. Whichever subsistence pattern these early Utah Navajo adhered to, the Greater Capitol Reef region would have been appealing for various reasons.

Provided the routes across the river were known, the areas west of the Colorado River were both appealing and accessible. The Henry Mountains, the Fremont River corridor, Thousand Lake Mountain, and the surrounding areas were all accessible, via Hite's Crossing, from White Canyon on the east. The Burr Trail, the Waterpocket Fold, the Escalante River corridor, Fifty-Mile Mountain, Kaiparowits Plateau, Aquarius Plateau, and the surrounding areas were all accessible via Hall's Crossing, from the Red Rock Plateau, between Lake and Moqui Canyons, on the east (Sucec, 2006, pp. 223-224). These areas were appealing because they offered, or provided access to, good habitat for hunting and gathering, range for livestock and potentially land for farming. The Capitol Reef region also offered corridors for trading and raiding, and places to escape conflict (Sucec, 2006, p. Chapter 4).



Evidence for Use

The majority of information on Navajo use of the Capitol Reef region comes from oral histories and accounts collected during interviews. These accounts come from the Navajo, Ute, Paiute, and descendants of Anglo-American settlers and are referenced in various literature sources. Historical documents and archaeological data¹⁶, although contributing, fail to manifest the magnitude of use of the Capitol Reef region and its importance to the Navajo people.

Despite the information available, it is unknown when the first Navajo entered and began using the areas west of the Colorado River in present day Utah. A combination of oral histories and archaeological evidence suggest that the Navajo were established in the region by the latter half of the 18th century, if not before. Some oral histories place ancestral Navajo in the region, west of the Colorado River, as early as the 14th and 15th centuries (Sucec, 2006, p. 213). Most information, however, indicates that Navajo were using the region by, at least, the end of the 18th century. This evidence comes from a mixture of mainly oral accounts, but also a few archaeological sites. The presence of the White Canyon hogan, although east of the Colorado River, provides indirect evidence for use west of the Colorado River. This hogan, dating back to as early as AD 1620, was in close proximity to “Hite Crossing” (also known as “Dandy Crossing” by Anglo-American settlers), one of two river crossings used by the Navajo and others to access the Capitol Reef region (Sucec, 2006, p. 214). Sucec suggests that

“... the White Canyon hogan may have played an important role in the hunting tradition, serving as a place of purification once back across the Colorado River. It also could have been used to maintain a farm and herd sheep, even as a base from which to graze sheep across the Colorado River.” (2006, p. 214)

¹⁶ There tends to be a general scarcity of archaeological sites attributed to the Navajo, especially in areas that Navajo are reported to have continually used for subsistence activities. As explained by various sources, this is most likely due to various aspects of traditional Navajo culture and the nature of the archaeological surveys conducted. The Navajo were semi-nomadic people, who used utilized different resources in different areas, depending on the season and other factors. A lifestyle like this would have left few traces, especially after centuries have passed. The Navajo also incorporated various traits from other cultures, and vice versa, making it difficult for archaeologists to decipher the cultural ties of certain sites. In addition, many of the surveys that have been conducted, especially in Utah, have encompassed large areas that were traversed by vehicles looking for obvious signs of habitation and use. Surveys such as these, would have a hard time spotting signs left by a semi-nomadic culture that may have used the area for hunting, gathering, or herding livestock. (Brugge, 1966?, pp.32-33; 1996, p. 257; Fowler, et. al., 1959, p. 171; Sucec, 2006, p.208)



In addition to this site, oral histories attribute the births of two Navajo men to women living at or using the Henry Mountains in 1801 and 1802 (Littell, 1967, p. 481). Other information on the 18th and 19th century use of the region comes from oral histories referring to Navajo settlements at the base of the Aquarius Plateau and Thousand Lakes Mountain, and later amidst the Henry Mountains. Near one of these locations, the base of Thousand Lakes Mountain, archaeologists have identified a historic structure dating back as early as 1860. This site shows signs of Navajo origin, but conclusive evidence is lacking. One other early site, a petroglyph panel in the Fremont River corridor, may also have Navajo origins. Other than these sites, archaeological information on Navajo use of the region is generally scant (Sucec, 2006, p. 204).

Additional oral histories and accounts, as well as historical documents, provide the majority of information that demonstrates further use of the region from these early dates until the present. K'aa'yelii, prominent headman north of the San Juan River, and his followers are reported to have included the Henry Mountains in their seasonal range throughout the 19th century (Correll, 1971, p. 147). And Hoshkeniiniiii, another headman; associated with the country between Monument Valley and Bear's Ears, is reported to have used the Capitol Reef region for its river corridors and trails that facilitated trading, traveling as far North as the Uintah basin and Salt Lake to trade with the Ute. During the 19th century many Navajo also used the areas west of the Colorado River as a place of refuge, escaping New Mexican slave raids, Ute raids, the Carson campaign, and detention at Ft. Sumner (Sucec, 2006, p. Chapter 4). During the Black Hawk War of the 1860s, the Navajo are reported to have joined with the Paiute and Ute, attacking new Mormon settlements west of the Colorado River. Although much of the activity was in central Utah, using the Fremont River corridor for access and as an escape route, some Navajo are reported to have used the "Crossing of the Fathers", near the Utah-Arizona border, to join the Paiute in attacking the Mormon settlements of Kanab and Pipe Springs (Crampton, Outline History of the Glen Canyon Region, 1776-1922, 1959, p. 9). There are abundant archaeological sites along the left bank of the Colorado River, near the "Crossing of the Fathers", that may also support the assumption that they used of this crossing frequently to access areas to the west of the river in southern Utah (Crampton, 1960, pp. 21-36; Fowler, Gunnerson, Jennings, Lister, Suhm, & Weller, 1959, pp. 525-528). One historical account described an incident, in 1873, between non-mormon settlers and Navajo traders that almost broke the peace arranged in 1870. In this incident, a non-Mormon settler (apparently a member of Butch Cassidy's gang named Billy McCarty) killed three Navajo men on a routine expedition to trade with the Ute and Paiute west of the Capitol Reef National Park near Grass Valley. Four Navajo had apparently taken shelter from a winter storm on the settler's property, killed one of his livestock for food, and gotten into a scuffle with the settler at his house. One of the four managed to flee and make it back to alert his band. Another diplomatic effort from Jacob Hamblin apparently kept the conflict to a minimum (Sucec, 2006, p. 236; Newell, 1999, pp. 116-118).



In the mid to late 19th century, if not before, trading with the Ute, Paiute, and settlers to the west and north of the Colorado River had become commonplace. Navajo trading parties regularly visited Boulder, Caineville, Hanksville and Fruita, as well as communities in Grass Valley and Rabbit Valley (modern day Koosharem and Bicknell respectively.) This is thoroughly documented in the oral accounts of settlers and their descendants, as well as by Paiute and Navajo elders. One account mentions that Navajo trading continued in Rabbit Valley through the 1940s. The Navajo likely used the Fremont River corridor to access the communities west of Waterpocket Fold, and the Burr Trail to access the Boulder area (Sucec, 2006, p. 235). During these expeditions, the Navajo took advantage of the passage through prime hunting and gathering areas offered by the region (Sucec, 2006, p. 236). They would also make expeditions solely for these purposes, especially hunting. Places typically used for hunting near the Colorado River included: the Henry Mountains, Waterpocket Fold, canyons of the Escalante River, Fifty-Mile Mountain, and Kaiparowits Plateau. However, especially on trading expeditions, they also ventured to further locations, including: Aquarius Plateau (Boulder Mountain), Thousand Lake Mountain, and as far as Grass Valley and Richfield. Some Navajos are still reported to hunt in the Escalante drainages and the Circle Cliffs areas (Sucec, 2006, p. 205). Other Navajos were seen, into the late 20th century, collecting pine nuts in the Henry Mountains and also willow and sumac (also known as squawbush; used for making baskets and the berries are used to make a food called chilchin) at Notom near the perimeter of the Capitol Reef National Park (Sucec, 2006, p. 238).

According to the information from available literature, the landscape west of the Colorado River was used primarily for hunting deer, big horn sheep, and antelope; gathering plants for food, medicinal plants, and craft; trading with the Ute, Paiute, and Anglo-American settlers; raiding the Ute, Paiute, and Anglo-American settlements; and escaping enemies during periods of hostility. Other activities mentioned, although to a lesser extent, include: grazing livestock (mainly horses, but also sheep); hunting elk, bison, and rabbits; and gathering minerals for ceremonies (Sucec, 2006, p. Chapter 4; Janetski, Kreutzer, Talbot, Richens, & Baker, 2005, pp. 342-44). Although many of these activities and accounts seem to have been centered around the resource rich Henry Mountains, other areas, including the Escalante River drainages, Kaiparowits Plateau, Aquarius Plateau, and surrounding vicinities, appear to have been equally as important for resource use, access to trade, and refuge from Navajo enemies.

The Capitol Reef region is significant to the Navajo people of today, not only because of their past and present use of the area and its resources, but also because of the rich traditions that bind them to the landscape.



San Juan County

Landscape Potential

At the time that the Navajo first settled in Utah, they had a diverse subsistence economy based on livestock herding (mainly sheep; but also goats, horses, and potentially cattle), agriculture, hunting wild game, gathering wild foods, and trade. Kelley (1986, p. 17) notes that the Navajos of this time "... would have sought farming sites in places where they could also graze small herds of sheep and goats, find water and firewood, and hide during raids." She also notes that during the 18th century there may have been seasonal migrations, from lowland farming areas in the summer to upland areas in the winter, near firewood and better deer hunting habitat (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 28). However, as the Navajo economy shifted from an agricultural base to a pastoral base, this seasonal pattern shifted. In the summer, Navajos took their herds to seasonal pastures in the mountains and returned at harvest time to the lower, but still wooded areas near the snow line (Kelley & Whiteley, 1989, p. 60). Following this latter pattern, "... some headmen with followers moved thirty to fifty miles between summer and winter range. The subsistence pattern of Navajos in the 18th century was likely either in a period of transition or it had already shifted to that of a pastorally based economy. It may have also depended on the specific family, band or the location in which they were living. Whichever subsistence pattern these early Utah Navajo adhered to, the landscape of present-day southeastern Utah would have been appealing.

The landscape surrounding the San Juan River and its tributaries would have been equally attractive in Utah as in New Mexico and Colorado, where the river sustained the Navajo people for centuries. In addition to arable alluvial floodplains, the landscape closest to the river offered various seasonal and perennial water sources for livestock, crops, and people. Further from the river, rich high elevation landscapes included Navajo Mountain, the Abajo (or Blue) Mountains, and the La Sal Mountains. These mountains, although covered with snow in the winter, offered oases with rich habitat for wildlife, livestock, and people during the hot summer months. During the winter months, the wooded ridges, hills, mesas, and canyons, at or below snow line, offered excellent locations for firewood, deer hunting, livestock range, and, consequently seasonal home sites. Along with these subsistence resources, the San Juan River watershed in Utah also offered excellent security in its remote location, complex topography, and harsh climate.



Evidence for Use

Information on Navajo use of present-day southeastern Utah comes from oral histories, historical documents and archaeological surveys^{17 18}.

Despite the abundance of information available, it is unknown exactly when the Navajo first entered and started utilizing the resources of present day San Juan County. A combination of oral histories and archaeological evidence suggest that the Navajo were established in the region by the latter half of the 18th century, if not before. Some oral histories place ancestral Navajo in the region, west of the Colorado River, as early as the 14th and 15th centuries (Sucec, 2006, p. 213). The earliest archaeological evidence comes from a hogan site in White Canyon, a tributary to the Colorado River west of Bear's Ears. One tree-ring sample, taken during a survey for the Navajo Land Claim proceedings of the 1960s and 70s, from this site suggests the hogan was built as early as AD 1620, with other samples suggesting a later date in the mid to late 18th century. Tree-ring samples, from the same survey; dating between the early 18th and 19th centuries, also come from Navajo structures at White Canyon, Grand Gulch, Bear's Ears, Navajo Mountain, Butler Wash, and Montezuma Creek, including a game run (used for hunting)¹⁹ at Grand Gulch (Stokes & Smiley, 1963, pp. 12-13; McPherson, 2001, p. 7). In addition to archaeological data from this period, oral histories recount the births of K'aa'yelii in 1801 at Elk Ridge and Kee Dinihii in 1821 at White Canyon, both prominent headmen in Utah Navajo History. These men are believed to have spent their lives roaming with their bands, "...from the Bear's Ears to the Henry Mountains, into the Blue or Abajo Mountains, the La Sal Mountains, the Uncompaghre Plateau in

¹⁷ There tends to be a general scarcity of archaeological sites attributed to the Navajo, especially in areas that Navajo are reported to have continually used for subsistence activities. As explained by various sources, this is most likely due to various aspects of traditional Navajo culture and the nature of the archaeological surveys conducted. The Navajo were semi-nomadic people, who used utilized different resources in different areas, depending on the season and other factors. A lifestyle like this would have left few traces, especially after centuries have passed. The Navajo also incorporated various traits from other cultures, and vice versa, making it difficult for archaeologists to decipher the cultural ties of certain sites. In addition, many of the surveys that have been conducted, especially in Utah, have encompassed large areas that were traversed by vehicles looking for obvious signs of habitation and use. Surveys such as these, would have a hard time spotting signs left by a semi-nomadic culture that may have used the area for hunting, gathering, or herding livestock. (Brugge, 1966?, pp.32-33; 1996, p. 257; Fowler, et. al., 1959, p. 171; Sucec, 2006, p.208)

¹⁸ The majority archaeological data concerning this region comes from salvage surveys of the Glen Canyon Area prior to inundation by Lake Powell and surveys for the Navajo Land Claim proceedings of the 1960s and 70s.

¹⁹ Game runs are fence lines or natural barriers that were used by Navajo (and other tribes) to direct wild animals toward a pre-positioned hunters to make the kill. DEFINE



Colorado, in Allen Canyon, and along Montezuma Creek” (Correll, 1971, pp. 146-7). Oral histories also recount the births of other Navajo ancestors in this region during the early 19th century (Littell, 1967, p. 482).

The first historical references to Navajo in the region come from the reports of Mexican army officials when they were north of present-day Kayenta, near the Utah-Arizona border, during a military campaign against the Navajo in 1823. These reports refer to Navajo livestock trails heading north and towards Bear’s Ears, a pronounced feature north of the San Juan River (Brugge, 1964, pp. 237,243). Other general reports of Navajo in the region come from Calhoun’s correspondence in the mid 19th century. He reports their territory extending, essentially, as far North as present-day Monticello. He also recognizes a faction of Navajo living near the lower San Juan River who moved their sheep to Navajo on the upper San Juan River, fearing hostilities from the US military (Abel, 1915, pp. 33,309). Maps from this time period, including a map by Calhoun, also indicate Navajo use of the region (Littell, 1967, pp. 488, 494-95). Many Navajo oral histories recall the landscape of southeastern Utah as a refuge or “escaping place” during this time, especially for those Navajo not already living in the area. The use of the region as refuge continued from the late 18th century until the Navajo were released from Ft. Sumner, establishing place names in certain areas based on these activities, such as “chase up” for Wilson Mesa and “escaping place” for a river crossing at Oljato Creek and the whole San Juan County region (Sucec, 2006, pp. 216, 229; Littell, 1967, p. 495). Hoshkenenii is another prominent headman in this period of Utah Navajo history, related through oral histories and later accounts of anglo settlers. Although he lived most of his life in the Monument Valley-Oljato region, near the Utah-Arizona border, he is reported to have also ranged between Navajo Mountain and Bear’s Ears, especially during the Carson campaign (Correll, 1971, pp. 149-161). Hoshkenenii, K’aa’yelii, Kee Dinihi, their respective followers, and many other Navajos are reported to have sought refuge from Carson’s scorched-earth campaign and escaped detention at Ft. Sumner by hiding out in the hinterlands of southeastern Utah (Correll, 1971; McPherson, 2009, p. Chapter 4; Sucec, 2006, p. Chapter 4) (McPherson, Comb Ridge and Its People: The Ethnohistory of a Rock, 2009)

Between 1865 and the early 1870s, oral histories and settler accounts also recall the Navajos involvement in the Black Hawk War, and other hostilities, west of the Colorado River (Crampton, 1959, p. 9; Newell, 1999, pp. 116-18). Following the Carson campaign, detention at Ft. Sumner, and the Black Hawk War, the first Anglo-American settlers began entering the region of southeastern Utah, east of the Colorado River.

As settlements arose in the late 1870s and early 1880s at Montezuma Creek and Bluff, settler accounts of the Navajo east of the Colorado River, entered history. Many of these accounts involved struggles over the use of land and resources, especially competition for livestock range; they also included accounts of competition for hunting grounds and arable land (Brugge, 1966?; McPherson, 2009,



p. 95). Where hunting was concerned, many accounts mentioned instances of immoderate deer harvests by the Ute and Navajo in the Blue and La Sal Mountains, some in excess of 300 deer and some solely for hides (McPherson, 2001, p. Chapter 2). Although some of these accounts may have been exaggerated to spur government action, these actions, to a lesser extent, are also supported by some Navajo oral histories (McPherson, 2001, p. 33). These accounts appear to contradict the fact that deer are considered sacred in traditional Navajo culture. However, as presented by McPherson (2001, p. Chapter 2), this may have been an indication of the struggles that the Navajo had as their traditional belief system clashed with the Anglo-American culture and economy, following the influx of settlers and the advent of trading posts. Accounts from late 19th century, through the mid 20th century, also come from government agents, government farmers, and non-Mormon missionaries mainly telling of Navajo-settler interactions and the competition for resources, but also of the successes and failures of the farming program (McPherson, 2001, p. Chapter 3).

Following the reservation boundary changes, the harsh act of livestock reduction, and the imposition of Taylor Grazing Act of the 1930s, Navajo activities were severely restricted off-reservation, especially livestock grazing. Despite these restrictions and the increased dependence on the anglo-style wage economy, subsistence use of the region continued, both north and south of the San Juan River.

In the 1950s, the University of Utah and the Museum of Northern Arizona were contracted by the National Park Service to conduct archaeological salvage surveys of the Glen Canyon Region, preceding inundation by Lake Powell. These surveys identified archaeological sites pertaining to past use by the Navajo, but also reported signs of their contemporary use. At the time of the surveys, Navajo farming plots were reported to be active along the south side of the San Juan River, near the mouths of Beaver Creek, Paiute Creek, Neskahi Wash, Nokai Wash, and, most extensively, at Paiute Farms. Past and contemporary use was also reported along the south bank of the Colorado River, throughout lower Glen Canyon, and at Castle Creek, Nokai²⁰ Dome, and "... at several [other] points along the north bank of the [San Juan River]" (Adams W. Y., 1959, p. 272) This use was indicated by the presence of hogans, sheep camps, and, in at least one case, a reconstructed Anasazi site (Adams & Adams, 1959, p. 6; Fowler, Gunnerson, Jennings, Lister, Suhm, & Weller, 1959, pp. 535-537, 640-642; Adams W. Y., 1959). One survey also reported that deer and bighorn sheep were still occasionally hunted by Navajo "...in the more remote areas of Wilson Mesa and the Clay Hills, north of the river..." (Adams & Adams, 1959, p. 8) Another survey noted an important observation about use of the region north of the San Juan River:

"It should be noted that all (archaeological) sites in the San Juan Triangle bear a direct relationship to available water supplies. They

²⁰ The correct term in Navajo is "Nakai." Personal communication Willie Grayeyes 5/5/13



are clustered most closely around springs, now present in the area, or along water courses having the longest period of active flow. They can be shown to increase in overall density as one moves into the Elk Ridge and its upper tributary canyons and on the northeast into the major drainages originating around the base of the Abajo Mountains.” (Fowler, Gunnerson, Jennings, Lister, Suhm, & Weller, 1959, p. 563)

Although this includes prehistoric ancestral Pueblo (Anasazi) sites, as well as Navajo sites, it summarizes the settlement pattern continually used by the inhabitants of the region. The information from these surveys not only reveals broad Navajo use of the San Juan and Colorado River Corridors, it also indicates their continuous subsistence use of the entire southeastern Utah region.

Contemporary documents indicate that the land and resources in southeastern Utah continue to be significant to Navajo to this day. Spangler, Yentsch, & Green (2009, p. 151) note that the region north of the San Juan River continues to be used by the Navajo “...for hunting, gathering traditional plants and wood-cutting.” In addition to areas used for subsistence, the landscape also holds features that continue to be significant because of their reference within Navajo oral tradition. In many instances these features and places are represented in stories of ancestors and past events. They are also represented in Navajo mythology, stories of a time when spiritual figures roamed the earth and through various acts created these features and the resources they bear. Related to these stories, many of the landscape features in southeastern Utah are believed to hold special powers that are bestowed upon those who visit them, provided that certain rituals are observed. Bear’s Ears, Comb Ridge, Lime Ridge, the Goosenecks (a feature on the San Juan River), Navajo Blanket (near Mexican Hat) and Navajo Mountain among others, all hold certain powers and are regularly visited by the Navajo people and medicine men for this reason (McPherson, 2009, p. Chapter 3; Sprangler, Yentsch, & Green, 2009, pp. 151-152)

“From oral tradition reported by them, from archaeological evidence, and from cartographical and documentary sources, we are able to assert that the Navajo Indians have roamed San Juan County and adjacent parts of Utah and Colorado for at least two centuries” (Correll, 1971, p. 149).

This landscape has provided an abundance of resources that have sustained the Utah Navajo for generations. The San Juan River, the Colorado River, and their respective tributaries, although mostly surrounded by an arid landscape, provided arable land for agriculture, perennial water sources and lush canyons for wildlife, livestock, and human inhabitants. Some of these canyons were virtually inaccessible to those not familiar with them and, therefore, provided the Navajo with an ideal refuge from their enemies. The wooded mesas, ridges, hills, and drainages above these canyons, up to the snow line, provided suitable areas for hunting, gathering firewood, and pasturing livestock, especially during the winter months. Even higher



in elevation, the ridges and drainages of the mountains, although covered in snow during the winter, provided excellent pasture for livestock and resource rich environments for hunting and gathering when the snow was gone. Navajo Mountain, the Henry Mountains, the La Sal Mountains, and the Abajo Mountains all contained these rich environments. These mountains, together with the snowmelt and springs that drained from their slopes, sustained not only the San Juan and Colorado Rivers, but the Navajo people themselves.

At one time, the Navajo's land was defined by the extent of the resources they used and the landscape they identified with. Today, although the their land is now defined by arbitrary boundaries a fraction of the size they once roamed, the Navajo people remain bound to the their ancestral lands through the continued use of its resources, and the cultural and religious significance of its landscape that has survived and been passed down for centuries.

Important Resources to the Utah Navajo

See the attached tables below.



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitat Reported	Habitat Site(s)	Other Sites	Comments	Sources
Abajo Mountains (Blue Mountains)	San Juan	North of SJR		X	X			X					X	X		Also known as the Blue Mountains; Important in Navajo Ghostway tradition of the Male Shootingway	Unford 2000: 285-287 (Citing Halle 1950, Ferguson and Hart 1985); Littlell 1967:507-508; McPherson 2001: 30; McPherson 2009: 86; Sucec 2006:223; BLM 2007: 3.16; Brugge 1966?: 16,19,32
Allen Canyon	San Juan	North of SJR	W of Blanding					X	X								Littlell 1967: 503, 505
Aneth	San Juan	North of SJR										X				San Juan River crossing; see also McElmo Creek	Littlell 1967: 495; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35
Aquarius Plateau	Garfield	West of Colorado River	N of Escalante	X	X								X	X		Also known as Boulder Mountain;	Sucec 2006: 203, 216, 223
Arch Canyon	San Jaun	North of SJR	W of Blanding										X	X		Reported to have lived and ranged in this area	Correll 1971: 148-149
Bear's Ears	San Juan	North of SJR	SW Elk Ridge	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	Symbol of Protection; Important in legend of Changing Bear Maiden; Bear and Big Snake served as guardians for Changing Woman and are still believed to serve as guardians for the Navajo People, see Comb Ridge; place for giving prayer and offerings; used by medicine men; see also Douglas Mesa; Site of many other births; hogan, sweathouse and other sites found	McPherson 92: 35-37, 2009: 74, 87; Unford 2000: 295 (Mont. Creek); Littlell 1967:506-507; Stokes and Smiley 1963: 12-13; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35; Benally 1982: 99, 120-12; BLM 2007: 3.16; Correll 1971: 146, 148-149
Bluff	San Jaun	North of SJR										X			X	Plant collecting reported around Bluff, River crossing, Rock Art site identified as Navajo (18th century)	McPherson 2009: 86; Sucec 2006: 223; BLM 2007: 3.16
Boulder (town)	Garfield	West of Colorado River						X		X						Horse grazing	Sucec 2006: 203
Burr Trail	Garfield	West of Colorado River	Capitol Reef National Park	X	X			X		X	X	X				Used as a corridor to access areas west of Capitol Reef	Sucec 2006:241
Butler Wash	San Jaun	North of SJR	Comb Ridge									X				San Juan River Crossing at the mouth	Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
Capitol Reef National Park	Garfield	West of Colorado River		X	X					X	X	X			X?	Cairns within the park were used as places for offerings; A petroglyph panel along the Freemont River is potentially of Navajo origin; possible Navajo structure in the Cathedral District (See Thousand Lake Mountain); areas within the park served as corridors used for various activities	Sucec 2006: 203-5



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitat	Habitat	Other Sites	Comments	Sources	
Castle Creek	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle					X							X	X	Habitat and livestock corral site found near mouth of creek; four separate hogan sites found in lower Castle Creek and Johnnies Hole (A small tributary canyon to lower Castle Creek)	Adams 1959: 269-272; Fowler, et al. 1959 (part 2): 640-642; map
Cedar Mesa	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle	X	X	X										X	Navajo camp with a forked-stick hogan, cribbed hogan and a forked-stick sweat lodge found (dating from 1869-79); Contemporary hunting, gathering, and wood-cutting reported in the Greater Cedar Mesa area	Hobler, et. al. 1978: 35; Sprangler 2009: 151; Day 1964: 144-146
Cha Canyon (Beaver Creek)	San Juan	South of SJR	Navajo Mountain						X								Contemporary use reported(1959)	Adams and Adams 1959: 6
Chinle Creek (Mule Ears)	San Juan	South of SJR	E of Mexican Hat									X	X	X	X		Hogan site; River crossing; Putes and Navajos reported living together (1916)	Aton and McPherson 2000: 35-36; Gregory 1916: 32
Clay Hills	San Juan	North of SJR	W of Cedar Mesa	X								X			X		Game trap was use here for deer; place of a San Juan River crossing; unspecified arch sites found; Contemporary hunting of Deer and Bighorn Sheep by the Navajo was reported	Littell 1967: 509; 495, 503; Adams and Adams 1959: 8; Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
Colorado River	Various	General	General									X	X				One of the Navajo's four sacred rivers; considered a female river and a defensive guardian	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34, 39; BLM 2007: 3, 16; 3, 20
Comb Ridge	San Juan	North of SJR	NE of Bluff		X			X				X	X				Believed to represent Big Snake, a powerful figure in Navajo tradition; Alcoves and potholes are considered homes of Wind, a spiritual power in Navajo tradition; Comb Ridge is believed to hold powers for healing and protection; foot and stock trail crosses Comb ridge and leads into Comb Wash; plant collecting reported in canyons along Comb Ridge	McPherson 2009: 61, 64-65, 86; Littell 1967: 504;
Comb Wash	San Juan	North of SJR	W Comb Ridge					X				X	X		X		Also know as Comb Creek; San Juan River crossing near the mouth; foot and stock trail reported; Hogan and livestock corral sites found	Littell 1967: 495, 504; Stokes and Smiley 1963: 13; Aton and McPherson 2000: 36; Bruge 1966: 17
Confluence	San Juan	San Juan River	Colorado River									X	X				The confluence of the San Juan River and Colorado, two sacred rivers to the Navajo, is reported to be a sacred location where prayers and offerings are made	Linford 2000: 293 (citing Luckert 1977: 24, 44-45); Aton and McPherson 2000: 39
Copper Canyon	San Juan	South of SJR	SW of Nakai Dome									X					San Juan River crossing	Aton and McPherson 2000: 36; Gregory 1916: 32



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitat	Reported	Habitat	Other Sites	Comments	Sources
Cottonwood Wash	San Juan	North of SJR	E of Comb Ridge					X									Hogan and livestock corral sites found. See also Bluff	Stokes and Smiley 1963: 13; Brudge 1966?: 17
Cow Canyon	San Juan	North of SJR	Bluff										X			X	Rock formation called the "Navajo Twins". The layers of the formation are said to "represent the sacred materials that comprise a k'eat'ahn," or prayer stick. "Their elements may include white shell, turquoise, abalone, jet, bluebird feathers, eagle and turkey down, mountain tobacco, and the colors associated with the four directions."	McPherson 92: 31
Crossing of the Fathers	San Juan / Kane	South of SJR	Colorado River									X					Used for trading with and raiding mormon settlements at Kanab and Pipe Springs during the period of the Black Hawk War.	Crampton 1959: 8-9; Crampton 1960: 525-528; Sucec 2006: 224
Douglas Mesa	San Juan	South of SJR	W of Mexican Hat									X					Geologic features between Douglas Mesa and Bear's Ears are believed to have been a pathway walked by the holy beings.	McPherson 92: 29
Drip Spring	San Juan	North of SJR	Monticello Area	X													Also know as Bine'itico. Unknown location?	Litell 1967: 508-9
Eagle Mesa	San Juan	South of SJR	Monument Valley									X					Sacred place, believed to be where spirits go after a person is buried; also a water seep where prayers and offerings are made; see also Monument Valley	McPherson 92: 29
Elk Ridge	San Juan	North of SJR	SW Abajo Mountains	X				X			X		X				See Bear's Ears (twin buttes on Elk Ridge); Kaayell (Headman) born just here in 1801, north of Bear's Ears	McPherson 2009: 87, 94-95; Sucec 2006: 223; Hobler et al. 1978: 35; Correll 1971: 146-7
Escalante (canyon)	Kane	West of Colorado	E-SE of Escalante	X													Horse grazing	Sucec 2006: 203
Escalante (town)	Garfield	West of Colorado	West of Colorado River					X			X	X					Horse grazing	Sucec 2006: 203, 216
Fifty-Mile Mountain	Kane	West of Colorado	SE of Escalante	X				X									Horse grazing	Sucec 2006: 203
Fishlake Hightop Plateau	Savler	West of Colorado River	NW of Capitol Reef National Park		X													Sucec 2006: 203
Gooseheads	San Juan	San Juan River	San Juan River									X					Said to be a place of power, created by Big Snake.	McPherson 2009: 67
Gouldings (Trading Post)	San Juan	South of SJR	Monument Valley									X					A butte near the post is said to be the hearth of a giant hogan that is Monument Valley. See also Monument Valley.	McPherson 92:28-29



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitatation	Habitatation	Other Sites	Comments	Sources
Grand Flat	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle											X?	X	Two recent (1978) camps found of possible Navajo origin, contained shelter and sweat lodges; children's playhouses identified	Hobler, et. al. 1978: 35; Fowler, et al. 1959 (part 2): 658
Grand Gulch	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle						X						X	Hastin Beyal born here around 1832; Navajo and Ute cornfields and camps reported by Prudden(1897); unspecified arch sites found; game corral site found	Hobler, et. al. 1978: 35; Littell 1967: 503; Stokes and Smiley 1963: 13; Benally 1982: 99
Grass Valley	Plute / Sevier	West of Colorado River	W of Capitol Reef National Park	X						X							Suucc 2006: 203
Gray Whiskers Mesa	Navajo County, AZ	South of SJR	Monument Valley										X			One of two door posts of the giant hogan that is Monument Valley, see also Sentinel Mesa and Monument Valley; also a water seep were prayers and offerings are made	McPherson 92: 29
Green River	Various	General	General									X	X			Considered sacred because it comes from natural spring water; Navajo are reported to have lived as far north as the Green River prior to 1861	BLM 2007: 3.20; Shinumway 1980: 392
Halls Crossing	San Juan / Kane	Colorado River	W of Natural Bidges National	X								X				Prominent crossing used to access areas west of the Colorado River	Suucc 2006: 203, 223-224
Harris Wash	Garfield	West of Colorado River	E of Escalante	X												Horse grazing	Suucc 2006: 203
Henry Mountains	Garfield	West of Colorado River	E of Capitol Reef National Park	X	X							X	X			1970s and 80s Navajo use reported	Littell 1967: 508, 505-506; McPherson 2009: 86; Suucc 2006: 203, 216, 238; Correll 1971: 148-149
Hite Crossing	San Juan / Garfield	West of Colorado River	NW of Natural Bridges National Monument							X		X				Prominent crossing used to access areas west of the Colorado River	Suucc 2006: 203, 223-224
Hole-In-The-Rock	Kane	West of Colorado River								X		X				River crossing used for trade west of the Colorado River	Suucc 2006: 203,223
Hovenweep National Monument	San Juan	North of SJR		X								X				Linford suggests that the Navajo hunted in the area or passed through it on their way north of the monument	Linford 2000: 292
Kaiparowits Plateau	Kane	West of Colorado River		X	X							X	X			Linford suggests that the area was a source for wild horses; others report of the Navajos using the area to graze horses, hunt deer, gather plants and as a route for trading	Linford 2000: 293; Suucc 2006:203; Chapter 4; Littell 1967: 508



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitat	Habitat	Other Sites	Comments	Sources
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
La Sal Mountains	San Juan / Grand	North of SJR	SE of Moab	X	X			X					X			Source of medicinal plants (Linford) and pine nuts; Navajo reported to have lived in the region prior to 1861	Linford 2000: 294; Littlell 1967:507-508, 505; McPherson 2001: 30; McPherson 2009: 86; Benally 1982: 120; Correll 1971: 148-149; Shumway 1980: 392
Lake Canyon	San Juan	North of SJR	N of Nakai Dome					X					X			Colorado River crossing (Camp Stone Crossing); Navajo and Ute are reported to have resided at Red Lake within the canyon	Littlell 1967: 505; Sucec 2006: 223
Lime Ridge (Sugarloaf)	San Juan	North of SJR	W of Bluff									X				Believed to be the home of Big Snake; The Sugarloaf rock formation is believed to be a hogan where disobedient children go; considered a shield and source of protection; offerings and prayers made; "sacred"	McPherson 2009: 66
Long Point	San Juan	North of SJR	N of Blanding					X								Livestock grazed in the area	Littlell 1967: 505
Lower Crossing	San Juan	San Juan River	18 miles up river from confluence									X				San Juan River Crossing 18 miles up river from its confluence with the Colorado	Littlell 1967: 495
Lower Glen Canyon	San Juan	South of SJR	W of Cummings Mesa					X				X				See Crossing of the Fathers; numerous Navajo sites found (some contemporary (1961) along the Left bank of the Colorado River; sites include hogans and other shelters, sweathouses as well as livestock corrals and Navajo-built livestock trails	Adams, et al. 1961: 12, 23-24; Crampton 1959: 8-9, 91-109, maps; Crampton 1960: 14-7, 21-37; Fowler, et al. 1959 (Part 2): 525-7, maps
McCracken Mesa	San Juan	North of SJR	N of Montezuma Ck					X	X				X			Navajo families are reported to have settled in the area in the 1870s	Littlell 1967: 504-5; Shumway 1980: 392
McElmo Creek	San Juan	North of SJR	Aneeth					X	X							Hogan and sweathouse sites found; See also Aneeth	Littlell 1967: 503-4; Stokes and Smiley 1963: 13; Brugge 1966: 7; Correll 1971: 148-149
Mexican Hat	San Juan	North of SJR	W of Bluff									X				River crossing; Also referred to as Goodridge	Sucec 2006: 223; Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
Montezuma Creek (Canyon)	San Juan	North of SJR	E of Bluff			X		X		X		X	X			Also known as Montezuma Canyon; Traditional place for trade with Utes(Linford); San Juan River crossing near the mouth; 5 arch sites prior to Ft. Sumner; hogan, sweathouse and other sites found	Linford 2000:295; Littlell 1967: 509, 495, 503,505; McPherson 2009: 87; Stokes and Smiley 1963: 13; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35; Brugge 1966: 17-19; Correll 1971: 148-149; Shumway 1980: 392



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitat	Habitat	Other Sites	Comments	Sources
				Monument Valley				X?			X		X		X		
Places																	
Monument Valley	San Juan	South of SJR	Monument Valley					X?					X			Believed to be a giant hogan with its door posts at Gouldings and its door posts at Gray Whiskers and Sentinel Mesas, the tops of mesas that align between Douglas Mesa and Bear's Ears are believed to be a pathway used by the holy beings; single monoliths are believed to be holy beings, frozen in form, see also Gouldings, Gray Whiskers Mesa, Sentinel Mesa, Eagle Mesa;	McPherson 92: 29
Natural Bridges National Monument	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle					X						X		Consists of slab hearth and stone walls; walls resemble sheep pens; suspected to be Navajo, but not conclusive;	Hobler, et. al. 1978: 35;
Navajo Blanket	San Juan	South of SJR	Near Mexican Hat										X			Also known as Dzil Na'neest'ee'l or Mountain That Is Coiled; believed to be a home of the wind; place of power where prayers of offered	McPherson 2009: 66,72-73
Navajo Mountain	San Juan	South of SJR	Near Colorado River	X		X			X				X	X		Believed to be the birthplace of Monster Slayer (one of the twin protectors in the Navajo origin tradition); place for where offerings and prayers are made and ceremonies are conducted; contains sacred spring; believed to serve as a protective shield	McPherson 92: 20-21,53; 2001: 112; 2009: 86; Prudden 1903: 283; Littell 1967: 506; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35; Bernally 1982: 121, 138; BLM 2007: 3,16; Crampton 1960: 21
Neskahi Wash	San Juan	South of SJR	Navajo Mountain						X							Contemporary Navajo use reported (1959)	Adams and Adams 1959: 6
Nokai Dome	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle						X							Farming reported near this area;	Littell 1967: 504
Notom	Garfield	West of Colorado River	E of Capitol Reef National Park		X											Contemporary Navajo use reported (1996)	Succc 2006: 203, 238
Ojiate Creek (Wash)	San Juan	South of SJR	N of Ojiate					X	X			X				San Juan River crossing at mouth known as "Nahonidzo" or "Escaping Place"; Livestock grazed north of river; favorite farming area in the 19th century	Littell 1967: 495, 503, 506; Cornell 1971: 148
Patute Creek (Canyon)	San Juan	South of SJR	Navajo Mountain						X							Contemporary navajo use reported (1903, 1959, 2000)	Linford 2000: 302; Prudden 1903: 283; Adams and Adams 1959



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Habitat										Comments	Sources		
				Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Reported			Habitat Site(s)	Other Sites
Paute Farms Wash	San Juan	South of SJR	Ojeto							X							Place of past farming; contemporary farming reported(1959); San Juan River crossing Linford 2000: 302; Sucec 2006: 224; Adams and Adams 1959: 6; Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
Price River	Various	Utah	General									X					Considered sacred because it comes from natural spring water BLM 2007: 3-20
Rabbit Valley	Garfield	West of Colorado River	W of Capitol Reef National Park							X							Sucec 2006: 203
Rainbow Bridge	San Juan	South of SJR	Near confluence of COR and SJR								X						McPherson 92: 31; Aton and McPherson 2000: 39
Recapture Creek	San Juan	North of SJR	E of Bluff						X								San Juan River crossing near the mouth; Navajo families are reported to have settled in the area in the 1870s Littell 1967: 495; Brugge 1966?: 17,19; Shumway 1980: 392
Richfield	Sewer	West of Colorado River	NW of Capitol Reef National Park	X						X							Sucec 2006: 203
San Juan River	San Juan	Utah	General					X				X					McPherson 2001: 112; Littell 1967: 504; Adams 1959: 272; Aton and McPherson 2000: 34,38-39; Correll 1971: 148-149; Schaafsma 1980: 310-312; Gregory 1916: 32
Sand Island	San Juan	San Juan River	Bluff								X						San Juan River crossing Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
Sentinel Mesa	San Juan	South of SJR	Monument Valley							X							One of two door posts of the giant hogan that is Monument Valley; see also Gray Whiskers Mesa and Monument Valley McPherson 92: 29
Slickrock Canyon	San Juan	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle										X				Hogan Site Day 1964: 141
Thousand Lake Mountain	Garfield	West of Colorado River	NE of Capitol Reef National Park	X									X	X?	?		Habitat was reported near the base of this mountain and an archaeological site indicating habitation shows signs of Navajo ownership Sucec 2006: 203-5
Tohdiki	San Juan								X								Reported to be a farming area. Unknown location? Littell 1967: 504



Important Places

Places	County	Region	Area	Hunting	Gathering	Firewood	Livestock	Farming	Trading	Refuge	Travel	Religious	Habitatation	Habitatation	Other Sites	Comments	Sources
Trail Canyon	San Jaun	South of SJR	Navajo Mountain									X				San Juan River crossing, connected with Wilson Creek	Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
White Canyon	San Juan	North of SJR	W. of Bears Ears	X				X	X							See Diniht (headman) born here in 1821. As a young man, Hashketeinil kept horses in this canyon; Provided access to Hite's Crossing; game trap was used here for deer; hogan site with early tree-ring date of AD 1620 (dates from the site ranged from 1620-1783); site was potentially important in traditional hunting across the Colorado River (place of purification); potentially used for farming; livestock corral site was also found;	Litell 1967: 509, 505; Sucec 2006: 203,214; Hodler et al. 1978: 35; Stokes and Smiley 1963: 13; Benally 1982:99; Correll 1971: 150
Wilson Creek	San Jaun	North of SJR	Wilson Mesa									X				San Juan River crossing, connected with Trail Canyon	Aton and McPherson 2000: 36
Wilson Mesa	San Jaun	North of SJR	San Juan Triangle	X							X	X				Termed "Chase Up" by the Navajo; Contemporary hunting of Deer and Bighorn Sheep by the Navajo was reported (1959);	Sucec 2006: 229; Adams and Adams 1959: 8



Important Animals

Animals	Food		Economic		Religious		Locations	Comments	Sources
	Food	Medicinal	Economic	Craft	Religious				
Antelope (Pronghorn)	X						Blue Mountains; Bear's Ears; Aquarius Plateau; White Canyon; Henry Mountains;		Littell 1967: 510; Sucec 2006:203; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35
Bears	X				X			Considered to be a protective and healing force; offerings placed in tracks, only eaten during periods	McPherson 92: 64-65
Beavers	X				X			Skin used for the medicine bags of medicine men, and for clothing in certain ceremonies	Aton and McPherson 2000: 35
Bighorn Sheep		X			X	X	Clay Hills; Wilson Mesa; Bear's Ears; Blue Mountains; Aquarius Plateau; Escalante River Drainage; Henry Mountains	McPherson (92:68) reports that Bighorn Sheep are not hunted for food, but for other purposes; skins used for medicine bags, various medicinal uses	Littell 1967: 509-510; Sucec 2006:203; Adams and Adams 1959: 8; McPherson 92: 68
Bluebirds					X			Use of feathers	McPherson 92:31,63
Butterflies					X				McPherson 92: 68
Buzzards					X				McPherson 92: 63
Chipmunks		X			X			Skins used for medicine bags	McPherson 92: 63
Coyotes					X				McPherson 92: 63-65
Crows					X				McPherson 92: 63
Deer	X	X			X	X	Wilson Mesa; Clay Hills; Blue Mountains; Bear's Ears; La Sal Mountains; Henry Mountains; Kaiparowitz Plateau; Drip Spring; Clay Hills; White Canyon; Montezuma Creek; Aquarius Plateau; Harris Wash; Thousand Lakes Mountain; Capitol Reef National Park; Halls Crossing; Grass Valley; Richfield; Fifty-Mile Mountain;		Littell 1967: 509; Sucec 2006:203; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35; Adams and Adams 1959: 8; McPherson 92: 67-68
Domestic Dogs			X		X			Used to guard livestock	McPherson 92: 62
Dragonflits					X				McPherson 92: 68
Eagles					X			Use of feathers	McPherson 92:31, 63
Elk	X						Blue Mountains; Aquarius Plateau		Littell 1967: 510; Sucec 2006:203
Gophers					X				McPherson 92: 62
Green-Collared Lizard					X				McPherson 92:58
Horned Toads					X				McPherson 92: 63,68
Horses				X	X				McPherson 92: 62, Sucec 2006: Chapter 4
Moths					X				McPherson 92: 68
Mountain Lions					X				McPherson 92: 63
Owls					X				McPherson 92: 62-63,68
Porcupines	X	X			X			Various medicinal uses	McPherson 92: 63
Prairie Dogs	X				X				Aton and McPherson 2000: 35
Rabbits	X						Clay Hills; Thousand Lake Mountain		Littell 1967: 509; Sucec 2006:203; Aton and McPherson 2000: 35
Raccoons					X				Aton and McPherson 2000: 35
Sheep	X			X	X				McPherson 92: 61; McPherson 2001: Chapter 6
Skunks	X	X			X			Various medicinal uses	McPherson 92: 63-64
Snakes					X			Considered to hold protective powers	McPherson 92: 27,63,68
Squirrels					X				McPherson 92: 62-63
Turkeys					X			Use of feathers	McPherson 92:31



Important Plants, Minerals, and Shells

Plants/Minerals/Shells	Locations			Comments	Sources
	Food	Medicinal	Religious		
Absalone Shell			X		
Alder				Bark use as dye for basketry	McPherson 92:31 McGreedy 1996: 22
Alumroot		X		Smoked in a Jet pipe for healing	McPherson 92:58
Aspen		X	X	Powder from bark used in ceremonies	McPherson 92:57
Beans	X			Cultivated	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Broadleaf Yucca		X		Remedy for vomiting and heartburn	McPherson 92:57
Carrots (Wild)			X	Dye for basketry	McGreedy 1996: 22 McPherson 2009: 86
Cherries (Wild)	X	X		Bark used for diapers and to calm sheep	McPherson 92:57
Cliffrose		X	X	Cultivated; pollen and meal used for offerings and religious ceremonies; significant in Navajo religious symbolism	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34, 39; Brugge 1996: 270; McPherson 92:55
Corn	X				McPherson 92:57
Cottonwood			X	Used for cradleboards, fire drills, and summer cooking	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Creeping Barberry			X	Certain leaves, flowers and berries are sprinkled for livestock protection from lightning	McPherson 92:58
Devils Claw		X		Used to calm humans and sheep	McPherson 92:57
Few-Flowered Goldenrod		X		Used as a lotion for newborn hemaphroditis	McPherson 92:58
Goldenrod		X	X	Roots eaten or used in tea	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Goosefoot	X			Found near the river	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Indian ricegrass	X			Found near the river	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Jet		X	X	Used to make pipes	McPherson 92:31, 58
Juniper		X	X	Berries collected for unspecified use; ash used in dye making for basketry; offerings left on lightning struck Junipers; used in medicinal drink	Littell 1967:507; McPherson 1992: 55, 58; 2009: 86; McGreedy 1996: 22
Larkspur		X		Used medicinally for livestock and humans	McPherson 92:57
Mint		X		Various medicinal uses	McPherson 92:57
Mormon Tea		X		Used in a medicinal drink	McPherson 92:58
Mountain Mahogany		X	X	Dye for basketry; used in medicinal drink	McGreedy 1996: 22; McPherson 1992: 58
Mountain Tobacco			X		McPherson 92:31
Narrowleaf Yucca	X	X		Root used for shampoo	McPherson 92:57
Oak		X	X	Used to make bows and arrows and bows for cradle boards: used medicinally to soften afterbirth pain; used in medicinal drink	McPherson 92:56,58
Onions (Wild)	X			Found near the river	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Parry Bellflower		X		Used during pregnancy	McPherson 92:58
Pine		X		Unspecified rotten pine used as talcum powder	McPherson 92:56
Pinyon Pine	X	X	X	Nuts collected for food; Pitch collected for basketry; also use for various human and livestock injuries; used in medicinal drink	Littell 1967:507; McPherson 1992:58; 2009: 86; Sucec 2006: 203; Benally 1982: 120; McGreedy 1996: 24
Ponderosa Pine	X	X		Inner bark, used as food; ashes used for sores; pitch is use for sores and to fight disease; needles used for hair growth	McPherson 92:56, 57-58
Potatoes (Wild)	X			Used to stir commel or mush; used medicinally for coughs, colds, headaches, and menstrual cramps; used to make a yellow dye for wool	McPherson 2009: 86
Rabbitbrush	X	X	X	Found near the river	Sucec 2006: 241
Rocky Mountain Beepiant	X			Unspecified use	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Sacaton				Used medicinally for indigestion, pain from childbirth, cold swellings, and tuberculosis	McPherson 2009: 86
Sagebrush		X		Unspecified use	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Salt Berry				Unspecified use	McPherson 2009: 86



Important Plants, Minerals, and Shells

Plants/Minerals/Shells	Religions			Locations	Comments	Sources
	Food	Medicinal	Craft			
Sand Grass				Bear's Ears	unspecified use	McPherson 2009: 86
Sandstone (Colored)			X	Capitol Reef National Park	Used in sand paintings; scrapings from rock art are also used during healing ceremonies (applied to patient's body)	Sucec 2006: 241; Brugge 1996: 266
Scrub Oak		X			Used to calm humans and sheep	McPherson 92:58
Silly sophora		X			Used in medicinal drink	McPherson 92:57
Snakeweed		X			Used medicinally for livestock; used in a medicinal drink	McPherson 92:57-58
Spreading Fleabane		X			Used during pregnancy	McPherson 92:58
Squash	X				Cultivated	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Squawbush	X				Found near the river	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Sumac (<i>Rhus trilobata</i>)		X	X	Capitol Reef National Park (Notom); Bear's Ears	Also know as Three-Leaf Sumac; used for basketmaking among other uses; used in medicinal drink	Sucec 2006: 238; McPherson 1992: 58; 2009: 86; McGreevy 1996:22
Sunflowers		X			Used with water to remove foot odor	McPherson 92:57
<i>Tragia nepetaefolia</i>		X			Used as protection from snakes and lightning	McPherson 92:58
Turquoise		X	X		Used as offerings; used during pregnancy	McPherson 92:31, 55, 58
White Clay		X	X	Capitol Reef National Park	Used in sand paintings	Sucec 2006: 241
White Cowry Shell		X			Used during pregnancy	McPherson 92:58
White Shell		X			Used as offerings	McPherson 92:31, 55
Wild Turnips	X				Found near the river	Aton and McPherson 2000: 34
Willow			X		Used for basketmaking among other uses	Stevens, et. al.:2000
Yucca		X	X	Bear's Ears; Blue Mountains; La Sal Mountains	Fruit collected for unspecified use; stem used medicinally for livestock	Littell 1967:507; McPherson 1992: 57; 2009: 86;
Unspecified Mineral Gathering				Henry Mountains		Sucec 2006: 203
Unspecified Plant Gathering	X	X	X	Kaiparowits Plateau; Aquarius Plateau; Fishlake Hightop Plateau; Capitol Reef National Park; Henry Mountains; Notom; Boulder canyon; Bear's Ears; Blue Mountains; Navajo Mountain		Sucec 2006: 203; McPherson 92: Chapter 5



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