

EDITORIAL

An Introduction to Yavapai-Apache Nation Water Rights

By Larry Jackson, Sr.
Vice Chairman of
Yavapai-Apache Nation

Every day we turn on the faucet to drink a glass of water, shower, cook, or clean the house. The ready and easy availability of water is something that we often take for granted. We just expect it to be there for our use. Water is provided by the Nation to its citizens through the Nation's Utility Department. Water is used in all of our homes and for the Nation's governmental operations and business enterprises; including the Casino-Hotel, the Sand and Rock operation, and the Whitehills and Market Place convenience stores. The Nation and its people depend on a ready-supply of high quality water to run our homes, our government and our economy. Water, together with the land we live on, is the foundation of our homeland and our culture. This simple truth has always been at the heart of our existence as Yavapai and Apache people since the beginning of our time here in the Verde Valley. Because water is central to life itself, water is sacred.

For as long as any of us can remember, we have heard about the Nation's "water rights" case and its central place among the Nation's goals and objectives. Every Tribal Council and administration since the late 1970's, when the case was first filed in Arizona's courts, has worked on the water rights issue. The Nation has hired attorneys and scientific experts to help the Nation sort through the many legal

and technical issues associated with protecting the Nation's water rights - all with the goal of achieving a final determination of the Nation's water rights, either by litigation or by negotiated settlement. A question that many of our tribal members have asked is "what are water rights and why are they so important to the Nation?" Over the next few months we will attempt to answer this question in a series of articles discussing various aspects of the Nation's water rights and the importance of finally determining the full extent of those rights. Let's begin by looking at the big picture of what the Nation is working to accomplish and how water fits into that picture.

Long before the State of Arizona came into existence, the Yavapai and Apache people lived in the Verde Valley and throughout our ancestral homeland. This is the place our ancestors chose to live and to raise their families, practice their religion and culture, and make a living from the land. The lands of the Verde Valley and the water that flows in the Verde River and its tributaries made this possible then as it does now. The primary purpose of the Yavapai-Apache Nation is to build, preserve and protect the Nation's lands as a permanent homeland for the Yavapai and Apache people. The Nation's lands are the foundation of our ability to maintain ourselves as a separate, distinct, and sovereign people. No matter where we might roam throughout our lifetimes for education, jobs, military service or other



Yavapai-Apache Nation Verde River property in Camp Verde.

reasons, this place will always be home, always the place to which we will return. This place is our homeland.

It is self-evident that land without water is of limited value. Water makes our fields productive, our homes livable, and our economy vibrant. Land, blessed with an assured supply of quality water, opens up possibilities for cultural and economic development and is foundational to a sustainable economy. The twin pillars of the Nation's permanent homeland are an adequate land base subject to the Nation's jurisdictional authority, and an assured, legally protected supply of quality water adequate to meet the Nation's social, cultural, and economic needs both now and into the long-term future. To this end, the Nation's longstanding and ongoing work on water rights is directed at legally quantifying and protecting the amount of water that the Nation is entitled to use in building and maintaining its home-

land for all of the social, recreational, municipal, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and traditional uses that the water can be put to for the benefit of the Nation and its people now and for many generations to come. The reason that the Nation's water rights work is so vitally important to the Nation is that in achieving the Nation's water rights goals and objectives, the Nation seeks to protect flows in the Verde River and achieve a legal certainty, decreed by congress and the courts, that the Nation will have the water that it needs to protect, preserve and develop its lands as a permanent homeland for all of us living today as well as for our children and grandchildren for many generations to come. To finally and fully resolve the Nation's water rights will stand as an achievement that will outlive all of us who are alive today and, together with our land, will be the legacy that we leave our children and their children. This is the importance of the Nation's Water

Rights case. Our future depends in large part on resolving the question of the Nation's water rights.

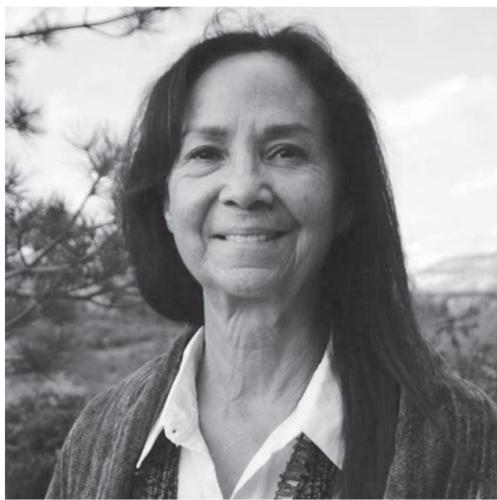
Today, the Nation is perhaps closer than ever before to a determination of the extent of the Nation's right to use water for our homeland purposes. While we still face many challenges, we believe those challenges are not insurmountable. Let me assure you that every single day the Nation, through the Tribal Council and the Executive Branch of our government, with the dedicated assistance of the Nation's lawyers and water experts, is working to advance the Nation's water rights to a final conclusion. There are many pieces and moving parts in this work as we work to find ways to protect flows in the Verde River and identify the sources of water that will become part of the Nation's rights, and as we work to secure the local, state and federal support that will be needed to reach a satisfactory conclusion for the Nation. One

of the central principles of the Nation's water rights that the Verde River will continue to flow for many generations and will not be allowed to dry up from unbridled development. We believe that this objective is in the best interest of all communities throughout the Verde Valley and not just here within the Nation.

Another important aspect of the Nation's water rights is expanding the Nation's land base to accommodate a growing population and the need for diversified economic development. Our land base, at just over 1,800 acres is simply too small to meet the Nation's long-term needs. As part of a water rights settlement, we also need to plan for and provide financing for future water infrastructure for the Nation. Finally, any water rights settlement must put in place the legal protections and mechanisms that will provide for enforceability of our rights, including future flows in the Verde River.

Each of these water rights principles and objectives will be discussed in future articles as we take you through the legal and practical underpinnings of the Nation's water rights case. For now, the key principle to take away from today's discussion is the central importance of land and water in the Nation's overriding mission of building and protecting a permanent homeland for the Yavapai-Apache people. Our water objectives are long-term and generational. The land and water are the most important assets that we can leave for our children.

Holiday message from Administration



Chairwoman Jane Russell-Winiecki

To all the members of the Yavapai-Apache Nation and your families, we wish you the very best this holiday season and also wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year. The ending of another year has brought us blessings as well as challenges and losses. We hope for your continued blessings, that they may be many and joyful.

We support you and ask that you be given the strength to meet all your challenges with success and the ability to move forward with optimism for your future.

And we pray you may find peace and solace in your losses, with a knowledge that our Creator will always be there for you. Lucky we are for our families and friends! Blessings to you all now and always.

Christmas Greeting!



Vice Chairman Larry Jackson, Sr.

As Christmas comes upon us like a rush of cold wind and we bundle up with the warmth of family and friends, let us be grateful for what we have and look for the opportunities to help those who may be looking for help through this season. A few unexpected cookies, a handshake and a smile, or a few dollars to help with gas, all are magnified and serve to show others they are loved and cared for in this time of the year.

Merry Christmas and God Bless!

Vice-Chairman Jackson

Yavapai Culture News

By Reba Franco, Yavapai Cultural specialist

On Saturday November 3rd, 2018 our Little Warriettes dance group did a Dance Presentation at the Montezuma Castle and again at the Orme Days Celebration in Ft. McDowell. The drummers were the Harquahela Singers from Ft. McDowell. These young girls also did a song and dance performance for the audience at the Wellness Program in Clarkdale hosted by Becky Jackson and Hazel Siow. The dance performance at this meeting was meant to show how young people can learn traditional/ cultural activities at a young age so as to make better choices in their teen years and have that knowledge in adult life.

On November the 13th, Jordan Lewis and Reba Franco made a trip to Castle Hot Springs to be interviewed on their knowledge of the springs and how it pertained to

the Yavapai of Ancient Days. When asked on what this one Elder knew of this site, he stated, "That's where the Yavapai used to go and hold ceremonies and gather Saguaro Fruit". The drive to the springs was pretty interesting. First you're on pavement for a quarter of the way and then you're actually driving in a rough rocky flood plain most of the rest of the way; and then, the road has a damp center and the mesquite trees are quite large and still green while the surrounding plants on the hills are already dry. When you arrive at the site you think you're in Indio, CA; there are huge palm trees galore. It is so beautiful! The waterfall is something to see and feel! The warm water has been running since time immemorial and in your mind you can imagine what this place meant to the Yavapai. The Castle Hot