

**Geo-Ecological Based Interagency Study of Historic and Prehistoric Land Use in the Arid Region  
of Hopi Buttes on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations, Arizona**

**preliminary report 5**

**NAVAJO LAND USE AND CLIMATE IN CHEZHIN BII'**

by

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submitted to

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there's no water to work with. Farming has gone down because younger people are not interested in doing the work, they give up on culture, and they only watch TV. (SL2)

### **Changes in range use**

#### **Notice changes in best places for livestock to graze?**

**before 1864.** According to Navajo family histories for the Land Claim (Navajo Nation Library, Land Claim Collection, Navajo Statements), before the Ft. Sumner internment, families who sometimes lived in ChEzhin Bii' also ranged:

- from Dilkon and Leupp to Gray Mountain and San Francisco Peaks. (Statement 7)
- from upper Oraibi Wash on Black Mesa to Little Colorado Valley 12 miles above Leupp. Families resettled along Little Colorado because upper Oraibi was crowded. (Statement 192)
- from ChEzhin Bii' and lower Oraibi Wash to San Francisco Peaks (hunting) and south and west of the Peaks (gathering). (Statement 198)
- around Castle Butte country in times before raiding. When raiding began, family moved south of Little Colorado to the San Francisco Peaks. (Statement 206).
- from Comar Spring to Na-ah-tee Canyon, "foothills" of present Joseph City, and Little Colorado River. This family (Goma'a) had big herds and dominated the area. (Statement 271)
- from Rotten Bananas Butte to Mogollon Baldy Mountain to hide out during Ft. Sumner internment. Family also ranged from Woodruff Butte (near Holbrook) along the river to present Winslow and up to Castle Butte area. (Statement 412).

Some of these wide-ranging families had a lot of sheep and horses and also farmed (statements 147, 271). Others seem to have depended more on gathering and hunting (statements 175, 203, 207, 412). People tended to hunt in the San Francisco Peaks and upper Little Colorado watershed west and south of ChEzhin Bii', gather yucca fruit in ChEzhin Bii', Canyon Diablo, and Sunset Knob (SW of Winslow), find grasses on lower Oraibi Wash (Tolani Lake) and berries on upper Oraibi, collect walnuts and grapes in Canyons Padre, Walnut, and Diablo (SE of San Francisco Peaks), gather pinon nuts on Black Mesa (statement 203). [Extended families may have formed larger groups with customary use areas for various resources, as evidently did pre-Fort Sumner Navajos in

general (Hill 1940). Presumably each of the constituent families would also use kinship and marriage ties to gain temporary access to resources outside its customary area.]

**1880s-1890s.** According to Navajo family histories for the Land Claim (NLC, Navajo Statements), families who sometimes lived in ChEzhin Bii' also had ranges as large as:

- between Dilkon and Leupp (statement 7)
- White Cone to Greasewood and Jeddito Washes (statement 143)
- between Seba Dalkai and Hardrocks (middle Dinebito Wash, western Black Mesa) (statement 203)
- from Bidahochee area south to upper Little Colorado 10 miles south of Joseph City (statement 206)
- between "Greasewood Valley" (probably Pueblo Colorado Wash near Greasewood) and Bidahochee (statement 207)
- between White Cone and Flat Top Butte (DibE NjighAA', [Where] They Massacred Sheep) and Rotten Bananas Butte (statement 412)

Compare also family ranges recorded by Spurr, Begay, and Livingston (1996:93):

- resettlement from TOyee' (Steamboat) to "entire region north and east of Dilkon"
- temporary moves from TOyee' to ChEzhin Bii'
- limited area around Twin Buttes (south of Greasewood)

**pre-1910 - 1930s or later (?).** Families with farms in upper DIEEsh Bii' TO Wash (D15) moved livestock elsewhere in winter to let the land regenerate: Malpais Spring to the south, grasslands between DIEEsh Bii' TO and Dilkon to the west (using Sheep Butte area for lambing). (EB; MS; NNLO, Arizona Plat Book; Warburton 1995; IP).

**1912-1920.** The thousands of cattle driven into the area around Dilkon by cowboys from Holbrook ate up all the grass and trampled the land. Then they left, and locoweed (nAA' AdIih) grew up and ruined the land. The cows had brought the locoweed from elsewhere. (IP) [Between 1912 and 1920. Non-Indian ranchers leased the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad (Arizona and New Mexico Land Company) sections that alternated with the allotted ones in the western part of ChEzhin Bii' (Coyote and Jeddito watersheds) (Janus 1918, 1920).