



SIGNIFICANCE

OF THE DINÉ PARKS VISION GRAPHIC AND STATEMENT



With over 17 million acres, the Navajo Nation encompasses the entire northeast quarter of the state of Arizona, and spills over into New Mexico and Utah.



These vast areas of pristine wilderness, majestic canyons, high mountain meadows, dry deserts, and flatlands were inhabited by Navajo people (Diné) long before the four corner states' boundaries were drawn.



Mid-20th century Diné leaders recognized the consequences of dissecting land, resources and all inhabitants by political alignment; thus, recognizing the key to a prosperous future was to preserve and conserve our Diné Bikéyah for the benefit of all life, in accordance with Diné fundamental laws based on philosophy, spirituality and science.



Custodians for these lands were needed, so the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1964 and remains one of the oldest branch in the Navajo Nation government.



Navajo Parks and Recreation Department oversees the Four Corners Monument, Window Rock Navajo Tribal Park & Veterans Memorial, Bowl Canyon Recreation Area, Cottonwood Campground, and Monument Valley, Lake Powell, and Little Colorado River Tribal Parks.



CREATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CONFRONTED WITH OVERWHELMING CHALLENGES of protecting, preserving, and managing vast and diverse parks, the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department initiated a staff strategy session at Arizona State University that led to the collective goal of creating a comprehensive general management plan (GMP). We envisioned this GMP to be a strategic planning document to help the Navajo Nation, and the communities within and surrounding the parks, to preserve and interpret each park's natural and cultural resources, ensure safe and enjoyable experiences, provide for new visitor opportunities, and develop and enhance facilities. These plans guide park managers in their stewardship responsibilities.

TO BEGIN, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CREATE A COLLECTIVE VISION for the Diné/Navajo Nation Parks. The foundation of Diné is harmony, beauty, sustainability or Hózhó in the Diné language. The importance of using the Diné language and philosophy to illustrate Diné world view is based on thousands of years of studies, experiences, and interactions with the environment. With the guidance of a respected grandfather, medicine man, rancher, and elected leader from the community of Cameron, Arizona, known in English as Emmett Kerley, (DinéHózhó L3C Manager) the vision graphic and statement was created. This graphic can be applied to all life and on many different levels based on our understanding of our relationship with our environment.

BENEFITS OF A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

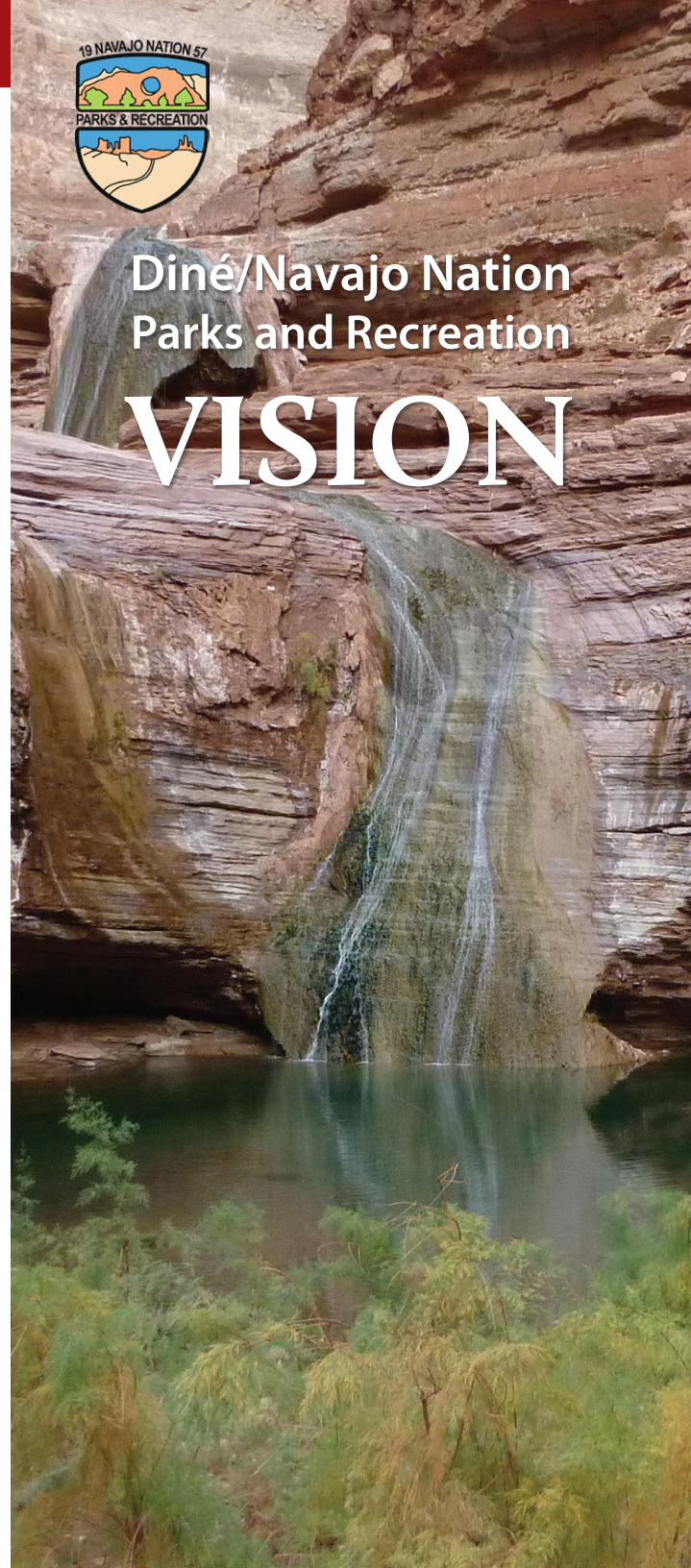
- Promote cultural sovereignty and traditional knowledge.
- Revitalize Navajo culture and language and empower youth and entire communities.
- Integrate sustainability concepts from an indigenous perspective.
- Value and protect cultural and biological diversity.
- Encourage critical thinking, intergenerational cultural exchange, and global dialogue.
- Provide visitors, both Navajo and non-Navajo, an authentic and educational experience that awakens a sense of stewardship
- Develop partnerships between all stakeholders and create a platform for human capacity building.



For more information, go to navajonationparks.org



Diné/Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation VISION



DINÉ REALISTIC PARADIGM

The four cardinal directions are associated with the following:

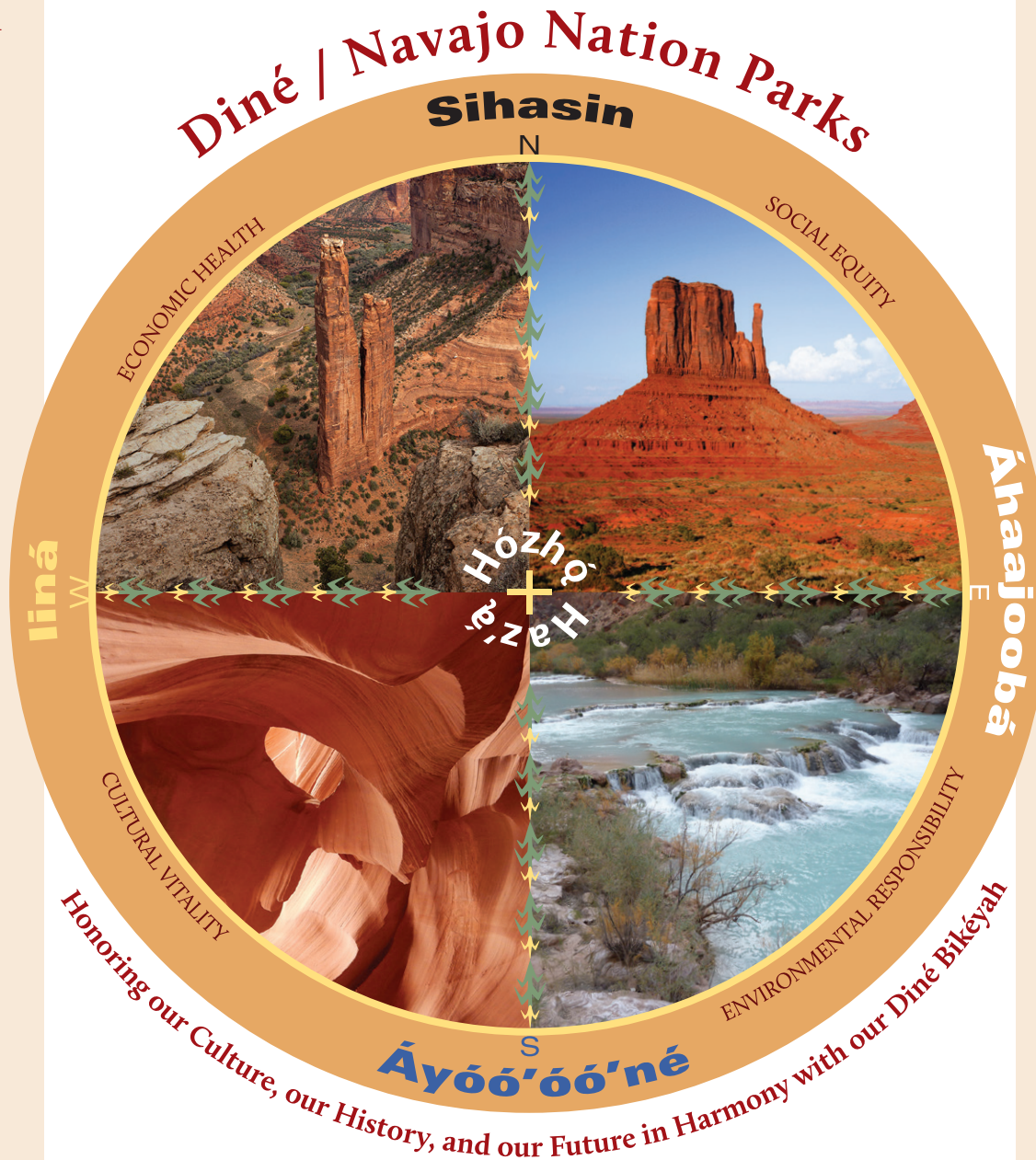
Áhaajoobá, meaning charity, originates in the East. These teachings lie within the birth of a new day symbolizing charity and determination. One acquires charity through knowledge. Only when you have love for self and others do you attain the understanding of another person's condition and mortality, resulting in self-determination for positive action.

Áyóó'óó'né, meaning love, exists in the South. Love and charity work hand in hand. Through love one is able to communicate that knowledge to another recipient. Only through having respect and love is one able to pass that knowledge on.

liná, meaning life, exists in the West. The cycle of life changes, but never ends. Planning and implementation is a natural process in seeking equilibrium in what seems to be a chaotic environment.

Sihasin, meaning faith and clarity are achieved through honest evaluation which exists in the North. Only by having honest evaluation can you attain Sihasin.

Hózhó Haz'á, meaning this is a place designated for balance and sustainability. This place is created from a beautiful process—the corn pollen path—illustrated by the cornstalk with beginnings from one cardinal direction flowing to the next.



Diné Bikéyah is a place of scenic beauty and biocultural diversity, offering visitors and Diné a holistic connection to pristine landscapes, wildlife, and wilderness. Here exists opportunities for intergenerational global dialogue grounded in traditional Diné knowledge of sustainability.

DINÉ SUSTAINABILITY

liná doo nda nashi is Diné sustainability, literally meaning never to wear out or erode. Sustainability is the never ending cycle of life. From the application of this dynamic process equilibrium can be achieved. Equilibrium already exists and is an ongoing pendulum of chaos with constant readjustments in the natural cycle. We think and call it chaos, but it is not, it is merely the cycle of life.

It is our arrogance that the universe should exist in balance for us but it is not the case. The universe exists because it exists and we just happen to be a part of it. For this reason, we want to learn the ability of sustaining. In order to do that we have to understand that knowledge and pass this knowledge on to the next generation.

The four pillars of sustainability—environmental responsibility, cultural vitality, economic health, and social equity—are critical parts of the cycle of life. We are a part of the environment and the environment is a part of us. When we create something, we destroy something in the process so it is our responsibility to bestow charity to all those who are a part of this life cycle so that overuse and greed are recognized as actions that lead to harm.

Sustainability is wanting life to mature to where it is useful and responsible and to be able to replicate that cycle again through sharing of this knowledge.