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
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.

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.