

# The Return of Navajo Boy

Moving Audiences to Action

**JENNIFER AMDUR SPITZ**

Co-Founder

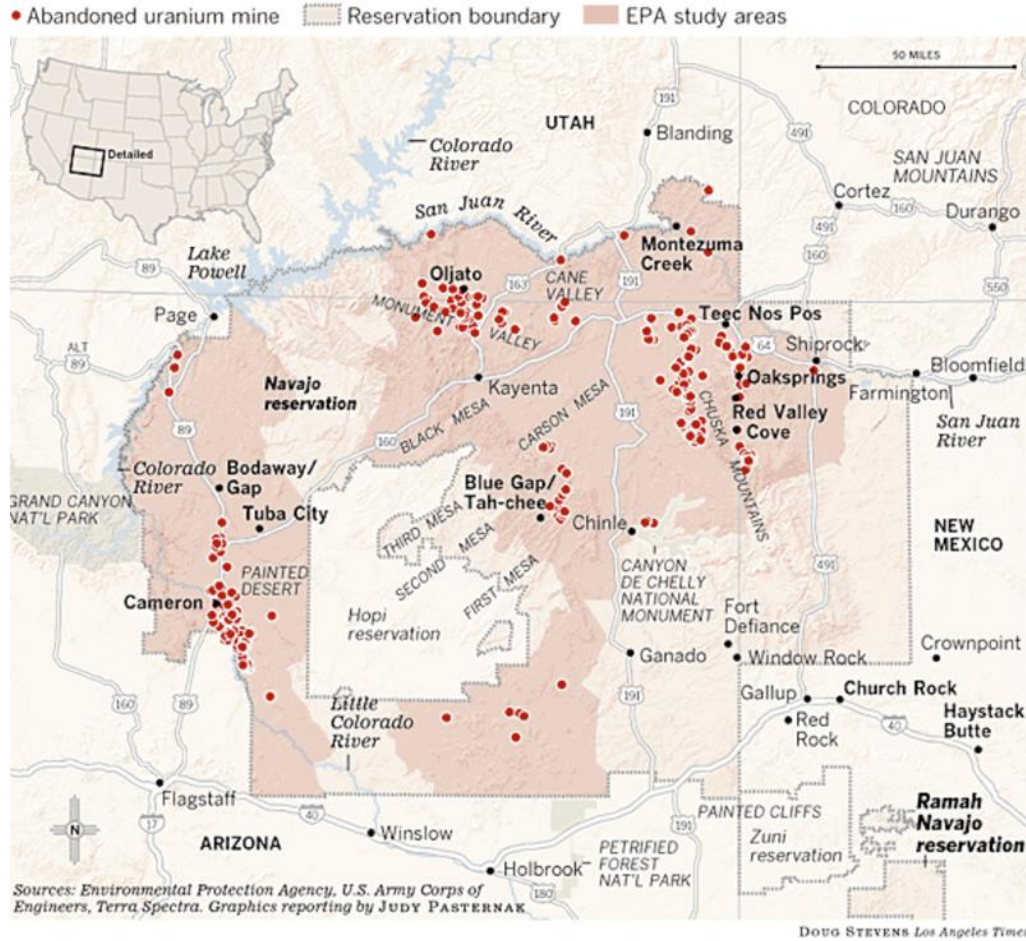
[jennifer@groundswellfilms.org](mailto:jennifer@groundswellfilms.org)



# What We Found: Uranium Contamination



# 500+ Abandoned Mines



Red dots mark mines discovered by the US EPA as of 2006



# Homes made of radioactive rock



# Contaminated Water



# Cancer



# Lack of Awareness

Both inside *and* outside Navajo Nation





# Cultural Divide

## Majority & Native Cultures





# The Return of Navajo Boy Trailer

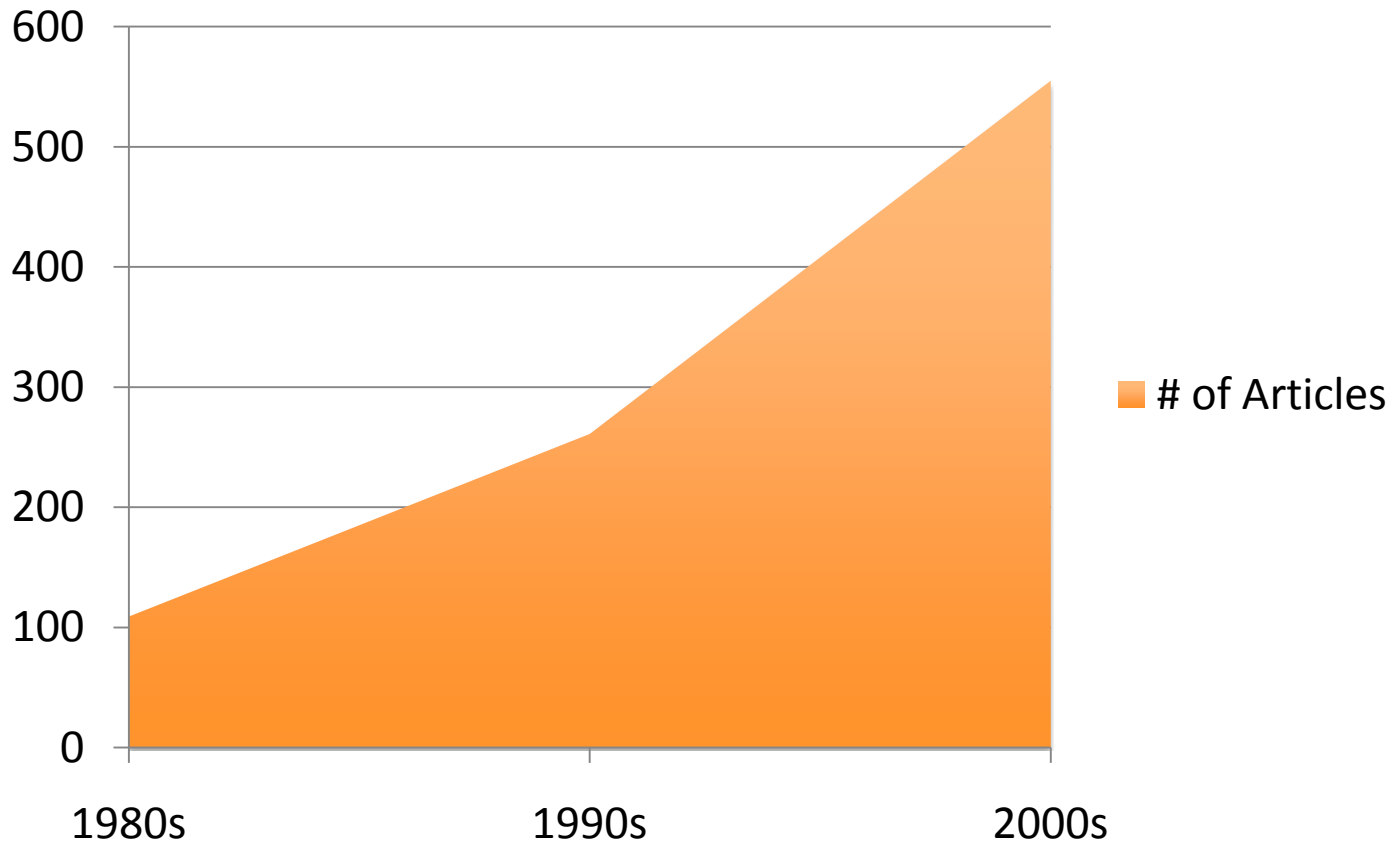


# Groundswell Makes a Difference



# Impact 1: Raising Awareness

## News About Navajo Uranium Issues



Source: Google News Archives



# Navajo Story Put on Film

■ *Movie will be shown at two free screenings in Albuquerque today*

The Salt Lake Tribune ENTERTAINMENT Saturday, January 12, 2002  
**'Return of Navajo Boy' Documentary**  
**A Closer Look at Utah's 'Postcard Image'**  
BY CHRISTOPHER SMITH  
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

## Return of Navajo Boy to

**Mystery surrounds contamination of Navajo homes**  
No one knows how many health-and-safety programs in that radioactive home she was raised in. That low, Elsie Mae Begay of Monument Valley speaks to Congressman Patrick Kennedy.

### Family reunites with Navajo Boy

Navajo Boy reunites with family after 40 years  
by Loren Tapahewa

## Kennedy sees uranium impact on Navajos

It takes is a backhoe and a water hose to bat down dust in order for two workers to remove Elsie Mae Begay from Monument Valley, Utah.

## EPA destroys radioactive

By Larry Di Giovanni  
Staff Writer

Region 9's on-scene coordinator from its Emergency Response Office in San Francisco. The demolition work began at about 11:30 a.m.

F6 THE SUNDAY JOURNAL

ARTS

MONUMENT VALLEY, Utah — Elsie Mae Begay, 84, when the U.S. Environ-

"easy" job  
ALBUQUERQUE, MARCH 23, 2001

## Documentary filmmaker's hunch led to 'Navajo Boy'

■ *Man tracked down family in an old movie*

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

### Film works a healing miracle of its own

By Mark Caro  
TRIBUNE MOVIE WRITER

rated at each screening by the filmmaker himself. The film was watched by family members.

you go  
T: "The Return of Navajo Boy," a documentary by Jeff Spitz  
family named Cly in Monument Valley, he was skeptical. But he read the story the next day. "It kind of hit me harder than any other movie. I've seen a lot of movies were made in this location, including several that are where members of their family have often posed for

Little did Spitz know that when he named the future documentary "The Return of Navajo Boy," the title was a nod to a 1952 documentary movie "Lost in the Navajo Desert."



Los Angeles Times "A Peril That Dwelt Among the Navajos"

AP Associated Press "Film Exposes Family, Land History"

CHICAGO READER "Mystery in The Desert"

THE DAILY TIMES "Navajo Man Finds Family After 41 Years"

THE COLUMBIA CHRONICLE "Documentary Uncovers Health Catastrophe"

The Salt Lake Tribune "A Legacy of Uranium, a Prayer for Healing"

Independent "Navajo Boy Returns"

Chicago Tribune "Film Works Healing Miracle of its Own"

Nuclear FREE Planet.org "A Good Example of Successful Activist Media"

NAVAJO TIMES "Sundance Film Festival Applauds The Return of Navajo Boy"



# Impact 2: Contaminated Homes

US EPA investigates and demolishes “uranium houses,” starting with Elsie Mae Begay’s





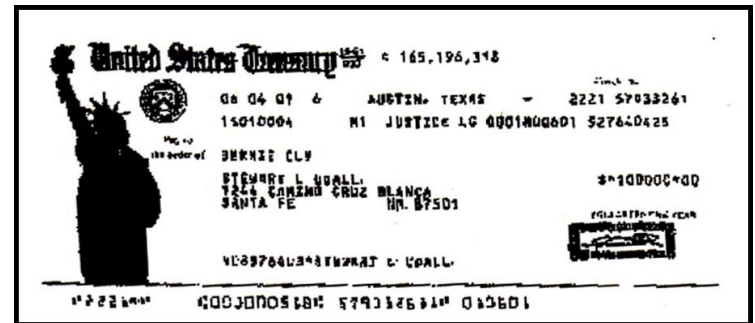
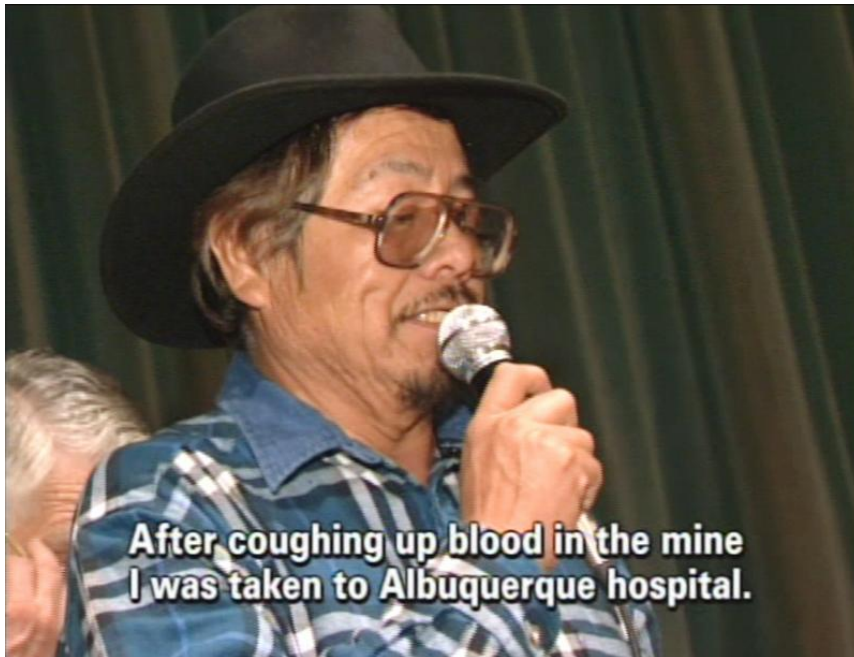




# Impact 3: Health Compensation

## Federal Legislation: Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA)

\$100,000 payment to former miner Bernie Cly





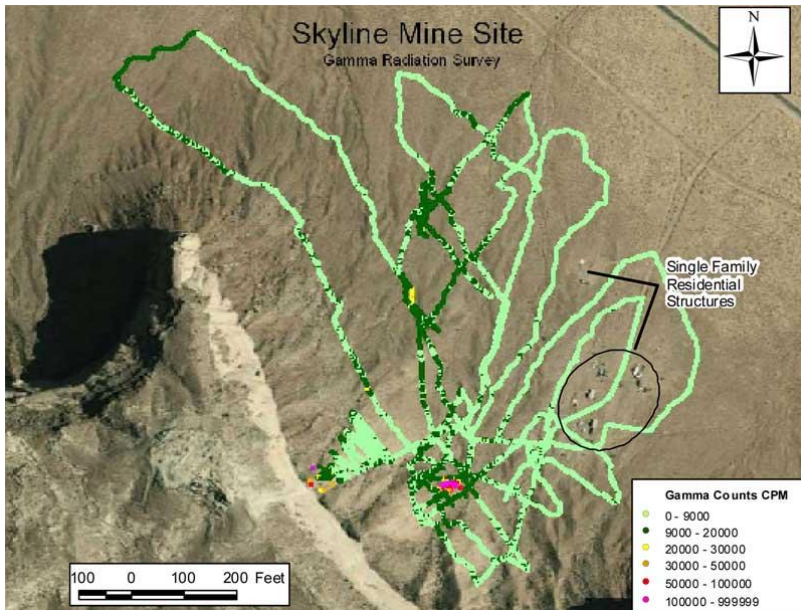
# Impact 4: Bridging the Gap Between Cultures



# Impact 5: Uranium Clean Up

## 5-Year Plan

Elsie's story inspired Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) to order the five responsible federal agencies to work together and develop a plan





# 2011 - US EPA allocates \$6 million to clean up the Skyline Mine and Elsie's backyard



# Groundswell's Methodology





# The Return of Navajo Boy Screenings

## Sundance Film Festival (2000 Premiere)

US Department of Energy Environmental Justice Conference  
Popular Culture Association & American Culture Association  
Conference  
Sapatq'ayn Cinema Film Festival  
The Public Interest Environmental Law Conference  
Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Outreach Event  
Wilkinson Public Library  
Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission  
Oregon State University  
University of Chicago  
Columbia College Chicago  
University of Wisconsin Center for Culture, History and  
Environment  
Westminster College  
SLC Indian Walk-In Center  
SLC Public Library  
Many Nations Longhouse  
Diné College Screening  
The Environmental Law & Policy Center  
Indian Health Service Awareness Event  
Amnesty International Human Rights Film Festival  
Rough Rock Trading Post  
Daley College, Chicago  
Dine College Uranium Ed Program  
The American Indian Christian Mission  
The University of Chicago  
The University of Illinois at Chicago  
Miami U's Native American Film Festival  
Capitol Hill  
Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival  
Sedgewick Cultural Center  
Stars in the Desert Festival

Big Sky Documentary Festival  
Siskiyou Environmental Film Festival  
Mashantucket Pequot Museum  
INPUT in the USA  
Hirschhorn Museum, Environmental Film Festival  
Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the  
American Indian  
Museum of Modern Art  
Columbia College Chicago  
Toronto International Environmental Film Fest  
Festival of Narrative Arts  
George Eastman House  
Peabody Essex Museum  
Lewis & Clark College  
University of Michigan  
University of New Mexico  
Dartmouth College  
Honolulu Academy of Arts  
Docupolis Film Festival  
Mesa Verde Nat'l Park  
Association of Health Physicists  
First People's Festival  
University of California  
Cape Town  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Northern Illinois University  
Shiprock Campus of Dine College  
Flagstaff, AZ du Bois Center Ballroom, NAU south  
campus  
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque  
Albuquerque Public Library (Albuquerque, NM)  
Durango Film Festival

California State - Fullerton  
Native Visions Film Festival  
University of Utah  
Santa Fe Film Festival  
Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History,  
US Geological Survey  
Native American Film & Video Festival  
American Anthropological Association Conference  
Landmark's Embarcadero Center Cinema  
American Indian Film & Video Festival  
Texas Union Theatre  
San Jose State University  
Durango Film Society  
Denver International Film Festival  
Mill Valley Film Festival  
Navajo Studies Conference  
Chicago Historical Society  
NAES College, Chicago  
American Indian Center  
Old Town School of Folk Music Auditorium  
Reel Aboriginal Voices Film Fest  
University of Chicago  
American Indian Center, Chicago  
Eastern Connecticut State University  
Alamo Drafthouse  
Arizona Film Festival  
Nations Hall Arizona Film Festival  
Navajo Nation Museum  
University of New Mexico  
Monument Valley High School  
Post Effects, Chicago  
The Public Interest Environmental Law Conference  
US Department of Energy Environmental Justice  
Conference

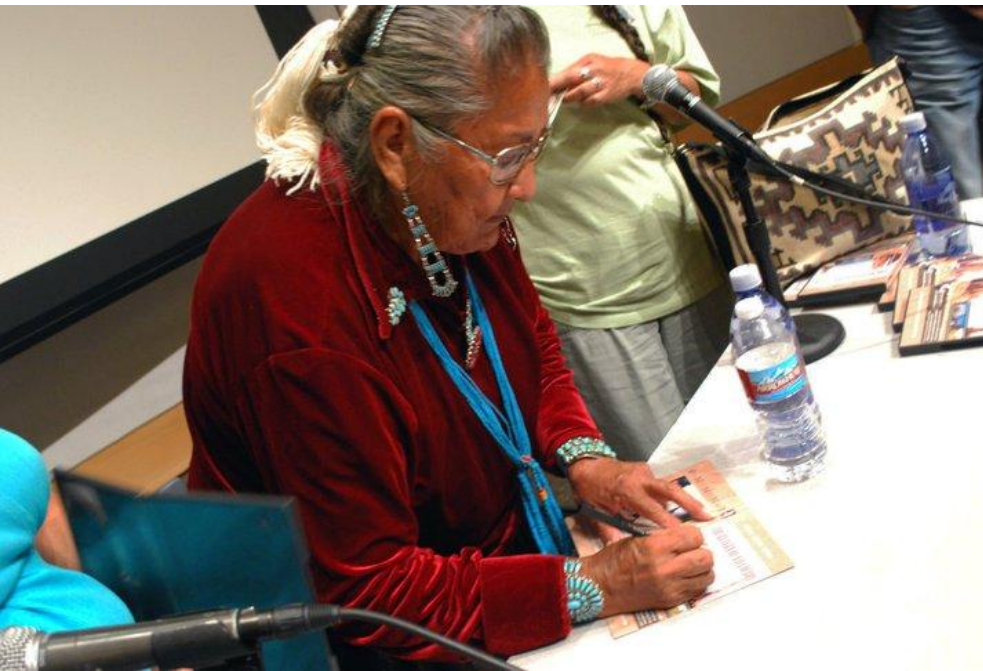
# The Return of Navajo Boy Screenings



Not Pictured: Screenings in Hawaii, Germany, Spain, France, South Africa, Brazil



# Live Events, Conferences, Panel Discussions, Talk Shows



# Free Curriculum for Schools





# Advocacy



Cross-cultural and face to face communication

# Webisodes: The Story Continues

[www.navajoboy.com/webisodes](http://www.navajoboy.com/webisodes)



# NavajoBoy.com Website

[BUY DVD](#) [DONATE](#)

## THE RETURN OF NAVAJO BOY

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AWARD  
PLANET IN FOCUS  
FESTIVAL

AUDIENCE AWARD  
DURANGO INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
SUNDANCE  
FILM FESTIVAL

 [The Salt Lake Tribune Highlights Elsie's Story & Groundswell's Efforts](#)

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"The Return of Navajo Boy" Documentary Trailer



**DVDs On Sale Now!**

Includes New Epilogue



LATEST "NAVAJO BOY" UPDATES

[The Activist Writer: "A successful outreach tool for Environmental Justice"](#)

[From the archives... Elsie and US Rep Kennedy](#)

[Salt Lake Tribune: EPA Cleanup of Navajo Backyards is a "Teachable Moment"](#)

[Read More Updates...](#)

**SCREENINGS CALENDAR**

[US Department of Energy Environmental Justice Conference, Washington DC](#)

April 29, 2011

[Popular Culture Association & American Culture Association Conference, San Antonio, Texas](#)

April 22, 2011

**PRAISE FOR THE FILM**

"A must-see"  
- Native People's Magazine

"A truly authentic portrait"  
- Old School Reviews

"The Return of Navajo Boy reminds us that there is a different kind of power"

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The epilogue to this film shows how a documentary film triggers an ongoing federal investigation of uranium poisoning.

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## The Return of Navajo Boy

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The Return of Navajo Boy

activist, Lori Goodman, is a champion for Navajo environment.



OpEdNews – Article: Navajo activists for another way, beyond coal and nuclear, after Japan  
[www.opednews.com](http://www.opednews.com)

On 03.20.2011, KPFA Radio Weekend News spoke to Lori Goodman, lifelong Navajo environmental activist, about the Navajo response to the Japanese nuclear catastrophe and ongoing Navajo struggles with uranium and coal mining and coal-fired power plants:

about an hour ago · Like · Comment · Share

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The Return of Navajo Boy

Mary & Jeff will travel with film to State of Environmental Justice Conference April 27 – 29 in WASHINGTON, DC.

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Sample Ad: The Return of Navajo Boy



The text of your ad will go here.

# Collaborations: Diné College





# Collaborations: Indian Health Service

**Community Health Screening  
& Education Event**

Community Uranium Exposure  
*Journey to Healing*

**Cove Chapter House  
April 29, 2010  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Health Screening All Day**

**Information Booths:**

DINEH Project	Groundswell-	Navajo Nation EPA
RESEP Program	<i>Return of Navajo Boy</i>	Healthy Cooking
Video Story Booth- Tell your story	Traditional Support Services	Demonstrations

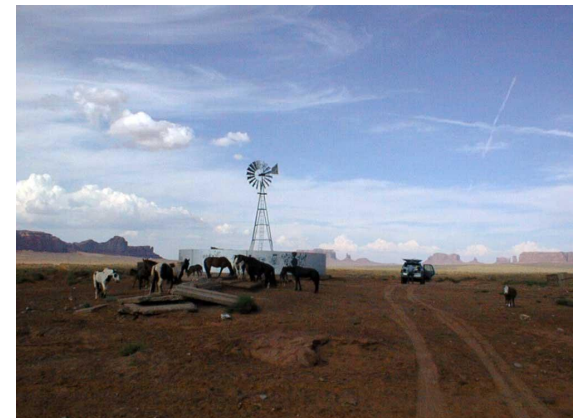
**Presentations:**

10:00 *Blessing*  
10:15 *Community Uranium Exposure Overview*  
10:30 *History of Uranium on the Navajo Nation*  
11:15 *RESEP Program for Miners and Millers*  
12:00 *NNEPA Contaminated Buildings Program*  
12:45 *DINEH Project Water Quality/Navajo Kidney Study*  
1:30 *Movie: Return of Navajo Boy*  
*Star of the movie Elsie Begay and filmmaker  
Jeff Spitz will be here--don't miss this amazing film!*  
Lunch Available - Fundraiser for Cove Day School  
Contact: Lisa Allee 505-368-6311 Karen Sandoval or Tina Tso 505-368-6300





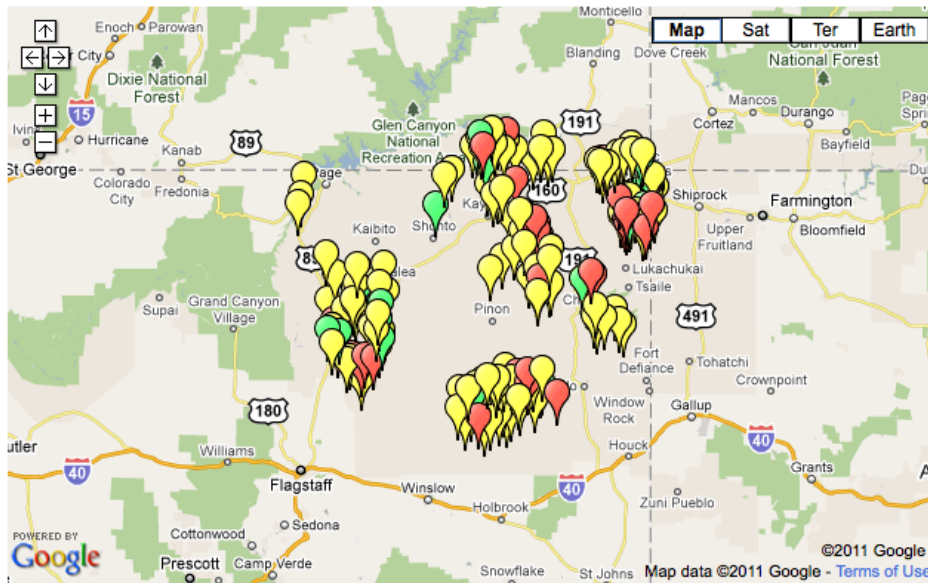
# Collaborations: Northwestern University



# Navajo Water Website

www.NavajoWater.org

## Navajo Nation Water Quality Project



**Ya'at'eeh! Welcome!** The Navajo Nation Water Quality Project is a new interactive website and outreach campaign designed to make Navajo Nation water quality information easily available and analyzable for the first time online.

[Watch a video](#) introducing the Navajo Nation Water Quality Website.

A joint initiative of the Northwestern University [Chemistry Department](#) and [Groundswell Educational Films](#).

Find a Well or Spring

Or, [browse by location](#)

### Spotlighted Water Source



[Alcove Canyon Springs](#)

### Compare by Contaminant

- ☐ Alpha Particles
- ☒ Thorium228
- ☐ Uranium238

### Browse by Contaminant

### Export Raw Data

# Next Steps

## Utah News. The Salt Lake Tribune

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(LEAH HOGSTEN | The Salt Lake Tribune) A white line along the face of the Oljato Mesa in Monument Valley marks the Skyline uranium mine and its rubble piles that contaminate the land with dangerous radiation, just a few hundred feet from where Navajo residents have lived since the 1950s.

### A legacy of uranium, a prayer for healing

Reservation residents have lived — and died — near uranium for generations.

BY JUDY FAHYS  
The Salt Lake Tribune

First published Jan 01 2011 10:46PM  
Updated Mar 22, 2011 11:00PM

Monument Valley, Utah • The sickness in Elsie Mae Begay's family troubled her for a long time. So she turned to a Navajo medicine man.

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5. Ex-medical resident sent to prison for writing illegal prescriptions
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9. Did Army fail to notify Utah leaders of missing nerve agent?
10. BYU expecting Florida's best shot



# Continue Educating and Advocating

## *Navajo Nation Shows Award-Winning Film to Congress*

An official selection of the Sundance Film Festival and PBS, *The Return of Navajo Boy* introduces audiences to Native American culture, environmental racism and one Navajo grandmother's incredible struggle for justice.

*The Return of Navajo Boy* with Epilogue is an internationally acclaimed film that reunites a Navajo family and triggers an unfolding federal investigation into uranium contamination in the Navajo Nation. See the groundswell rising in the news and on campuses at [www.navajoboy.com/news](http://www.navajoboy.com/news).



[Click to watch the trailer](#)

In 2008 the Navajo Nation entered into an unprecedented partnership with Congress to clean up the Cold War contamination. Is it possible to clean up more than 1,000 abandoned uranium mines on Navajo lands? What are the environmental health impacts? Who decides where to put millions of tons of radioactive waste? Who is responsible?

**Order the DVD online.** Book a screening & discussion for your campus. Get involved.

To see the movie trailer and learn more, please visit at [www.navajoboy.com](http://www.navajoboy.com). Contact Groundswell Educational Films at 773-771-7697.

"Like a finely made rug, *The Return of Navajo Boy* contains multiple layers of color, construction, and meaning. . . . A must see."

-Native Peoples Magazine

- Book screenings & speakers
- E-newsletter and join online community
- Advocate to fund 5-year plan
- Keep uranium in the news

# Local Issues, Universal Stories

- Cross cultural communication
- Story-telling through film
- Empowering local voices

**JENNIFER AMDUR SPITZ**

Co-Founder

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