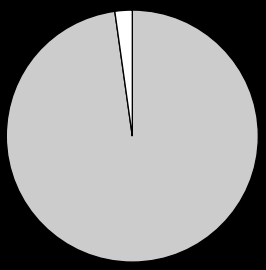
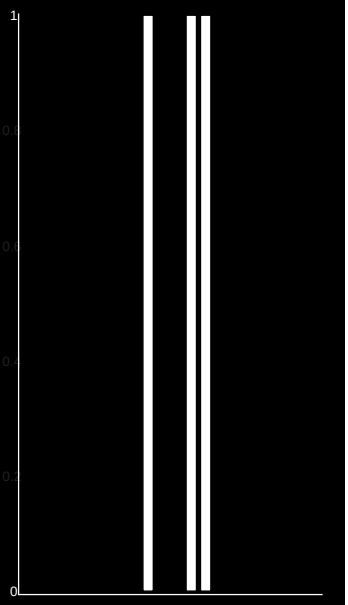
Navajo Tribe



Production tonnage 1978-1997

U.S. Total

Navajo Reservation Coal Production



Number of new permits 1978-1997

Interim Program

Permanent Program

Largest coal-producing Indian Tribe

The Navajo Nation is the largest Indian tribe in the United States and occupies a reservation encompassing about 16 million acres in northeastern Arizona, southeastern Utah, and northwestern New Mexico, with three satellite reservations in western and west-central New Mexico. Coal mining is conducted on a commercial scale at three large surface mines in northeastern Arizona and western New Mexico.

The principal coal-bearing region in Arizona is the Black Mesa coal field, which underlies about 3,200 square miles in the northeastern part of the state. The Black Mesa coal field lies within the boundaries of the Navajo and Hopi Indian Reservations and makes a significant contribution to the economies of both tribes. Coal reserves in this field are estimated to be 352 million tons, less than one-tenth of one percent of U.S. coal reserves. This coal was first mined by prehistoric Indians as fuel for cooking and heating. It has been estimated that the Indians removed more than 100,000 tons between 1300 and 1600 A.D. The principal use of coal produced on the reservation is used at the Four Corners Generating Station, Navajo Generating Station and Mohave Generating Station located nearby.

The Office of Surface Mining's Western Regional Coordinating Center is responsible for regulating mining and reclamation on Navajo land. The Navajo Abandoned Mine Land Program was approved May 16, 1988.

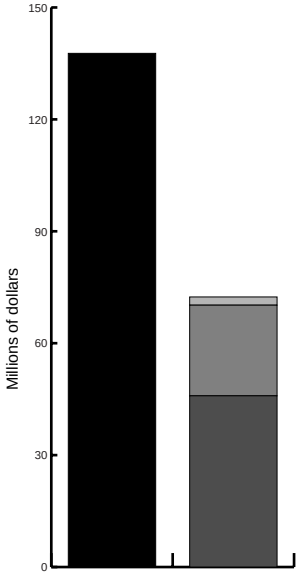
The Office of Surface Mining is responsible for Abandoned Mine Land emergency and has spent approximately $1.1 million on emergency reclamation projects.

Since 1977, more than $1.2 million has been spent eliminating high priority Abandoned Mine Land hazards (open portals, landslides, and subsidence), $1.3 million for Priority 3 projects (spoil areas, mine pits, and water problems), and $4.8 million for high-priority non-coal projects (dangerous highwalls, refuse piles, and open portals). Most of the non-coal reclamation has eliminated problems associated with uranium mines, which pose radiologic hazards to residents.

The Navajo Tribe certified completion of all Abandoned Mine Land coal problems in May 1994, providing for funds to be used for lower priority projects and non-coal reclamation projects.

coal production[10]

	1978		1997		
	Amount	Percent U.S. Total	Amount	Percent U.S. Total	1978-1997 Rank
Tons Produced					
Surface	9,572,048	3.9%	19,467,168	3.35%	8
Underground	0	0%	0	0%	0
Lignite	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	9,572,048	2.0%	19,467,168	1.79%	13
Number of Producing Mines					
Surface (bituminous coal)	7	0.2%	3	0.1%	19
Underground	0	0%	0	0%	0
Lignite (surface)	0	0%	0	0%	0
Total	7	0.1%	3	0.07%	23
Mine Production					
Average	1,367,435	1,924.3%	6,489,056	2,465.8%	
>1,000,000 tons	2	4.0%	3	1.4%	
300,000-1,000,000 tons	1	0.4%	0	0%	
<300,000 tons	4	0.07%	0	0%	



Amount paid into the AML Fund[11] $ 137,718,326

Amount received for reclamation[12] $ 45,905,677

State share balance in the Fund[13] $ 24,334,326

Federal abandoned mine projects[14] $ 2,222,792

RAMP abandoned mine projects[15] $ 0

Active mining and reclamation[16]

	1978	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	Total
Number of New Permits																					
Surface Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Underground Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acreage Permitted																					
Surface Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,850	0	0	12,092	56,601	1,945	0	508	0	0	0	0	77,996
Underground Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acreage of Bond Release																					
Interim Prog. (final)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
Phase 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phase 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inspections																					
Complete	NA	NA	NA	NA	25	23	24	22	28	30	25	35	38	37	22	26	34	33	67	62	531[4]
Partial	NA	NA	NA	NA	48	47	50	45	55	47	50	45	55	62	41	68	73	79	91	85	941[4]
Oversight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Citations Issued																					
NOV's	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	12	19	17	16	8	13	10	9	31	25	12	33	19	224[4]
CO's	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	NA	1	2	1	0	0	5[4]

Abandoned coal mine reclamation 1977-1997[17]

	Reclaimed Problems			Remaining Problems	
	OSM Emergency	State Emergency	Non-Emergency	Number	Estimated Cost
Priority 1 & 2 (Protection of Public Health, Safety, and General Welfare) and Emergency Projects					
Clogged Streams (miles)	0	0	0	0	$ 0
Clogged Stream Lands (acres)	0	0	0.8	0	0
Highwalls (feet)	0	0	44,136.0	0	0
Impoundments (count)	0	0	4.0	0	0
Piles & Embankments (acres)	0	0	148.0	9.1	292,042
Slides (acres)	0	0	7.0	0	0
Gases (count)	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment & Facilities (count)	0	0	4.0	0	0
Water Bodies (count)	0	0	0	0	0
Industrial Waste (acres)	0	0	4.7	0	0
Portals (count)	0	0	445.0	0	0
Polluted Water: Agriculture & Industrial (count)	0	0	4.0	0	0
Polluted Water: Human Consumption (count)	0	0	0	0	0
Subsidence (acres)	0	0	6.7	0	0
Surface Burning (acres)	0	0	3.0	0	0
Underground Mine Fires (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Vertical Openings (count)	0	0	83	0	0
Total					$ 292,042
Priority 3 (Environmental Restoration)					
Bench (acres)	0	0	2.4	0	$ 0
Industrial Waste (acres)	0	0	1.0	0	0
Equipment & Facilities (count)	0	0	2.0	0	0
Gob (acres)	0	0	146.0	0	0
Highwall (feet)	0	0	420.0	0	0
Haul Road (acres)	0	0	22.8	0.6	3,500
Mine Opening (count)	0	0	46.0	0	0
Pit (acres)	0	0	28.5	0	0
Spoil Area (acres)	0	0	264.5	0	0
Slurry (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Slump (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Water (gallons/minute)	0	0	0	0	0
Total					$ 3,500