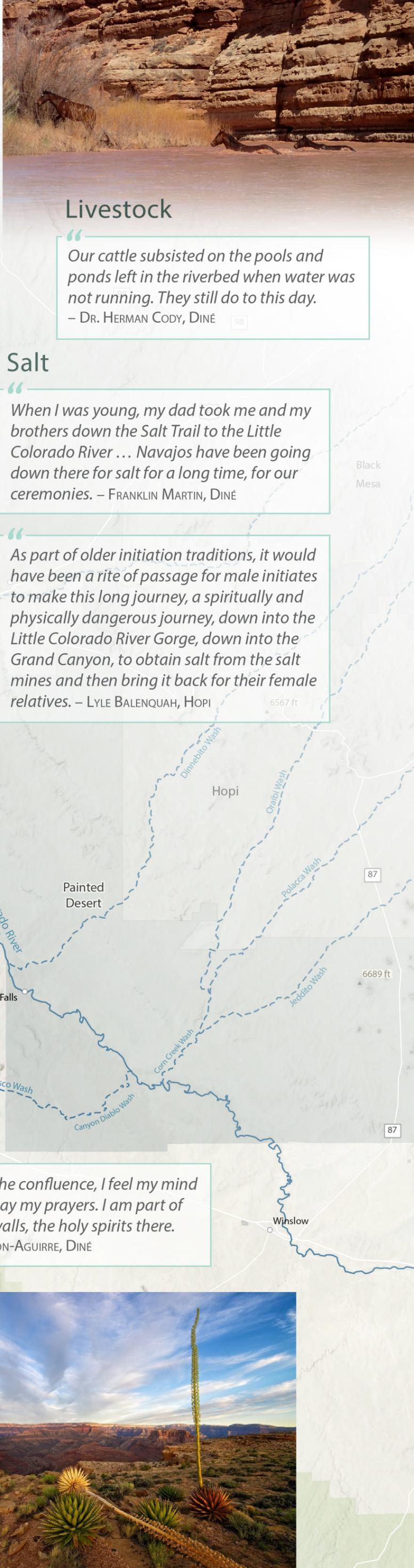


Lifeways of the Little Colorado River

From its headwaters in the mountains to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, the Little Colorado River has sustained plants, animals, and humans since the beginning of time.

Experience life along the Little Colorado River with Bennett Wakayuta, Bernadette Adley-SantaMaria, Delores Wilson-Aguirre, Franklin Martin, Dr. Herman Cody, Jim Enote, Dr. Karletta Chief, Lyle Balenquah, Radmilla Cody, and Octavius Seowtewa.



Livestock

“Our cattle subsisted on the pools and ponds left in the riverbed when water was not running. They still do to this day.”
– DR. HERMAN CODY, DINÉ

Salt

“When I was young, my dad took me and my brothers down the Salt Trail to the Little Colorado River ... Navajos have been going down there for salt for a long time, for our ceremonies.” – FRANKLIN MARTIN, DINÉ

“As part of older initiation traditions, it would have been a rite of passage for male initiates to make this long journey, a spiritually and physically dangerous journey, down into the Little Colorado River Gorge, down into the Grand Canyon, to obtain salt from the salt mines and then bring it back for their female relatives.” – LYLE BALENQUAH, HOPI



Farming

“I grew up in the Grand Falls area ... herding sheep, planting corn, and everything that incorporates and embodies the life-sustaining methods of the Diné people.”
– RADMILLA CODY, DINÉ



Prayers

“When I’m at the confluence, I feel my mind is at peace. I say my prayers. I am part of the canyon walls, the holy spirits there.”
– DELORES WILSON-AGUIRRE, DINÉ

Life

“All these waterways are connected. Any confluence, where it connects two rivers and makes one, is important because it’s like a whole new generation, a whole new life coming in.” – OCTAVIUS SEOWTEWA, ZUNI



BLAKE MCCORD



SHANE MCDERMOTT



Water

“We sing for water. When we sing to one tributary of water, we’re praying for all the water that it’s connected to.”
– BENNETT WAKAYUTA, HUALAPAI

“Water is sacred and is important to a lot of cultural practices.”
– DR. KARLETTA CHIEF, DINÉ

Animals

“The Little Colorado River begins on the White Mountain and flows north all the way into the Grand Canyon. It gives life to all the animals, all sorts of creepy crawlers, even human people.”
– RAMON RILEY, WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE



DEIDRA PEACHES

Medicinal plants

“Our people went to the Little Colorado River to gather medicinal plants for healing ceremonies.”
– RAMON RILEY, WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE



Communities

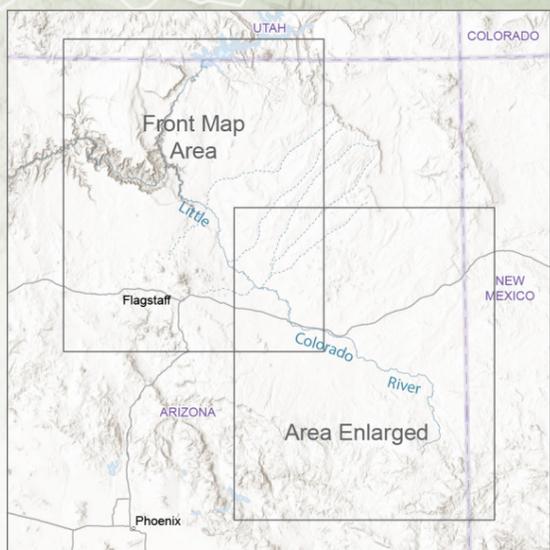
“I look at the Little Colorado River as a source that helps all people in the towns and from other tribes, as it flows north into the Grand Canyon.”
– BERNADETTE ADLEY-SANTAMARIA, WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE

“The Little Colorado River is an important river to the Navajo people, and culturally for many tribes here in the Southwest.”
– DR. KARLETTA CHIEF, DINÉ

Origins

“The Little Colorado River is like an umbilical cord. It connects the Zuni people back to their place of origin.”
– JIM ENOTE, ZUNI

“Down in the confluence area, there is also the Sipapuni, which is the cultural origin point for Hopi ancestors.”
– LYLE BALENQUAH, HOPI



GRAND CANYON TRUST

MAP BY STEPHANIE SMITH

Explore videos, art, stories, and more in the full collection.
grandcanyontrust.org/lifeways

