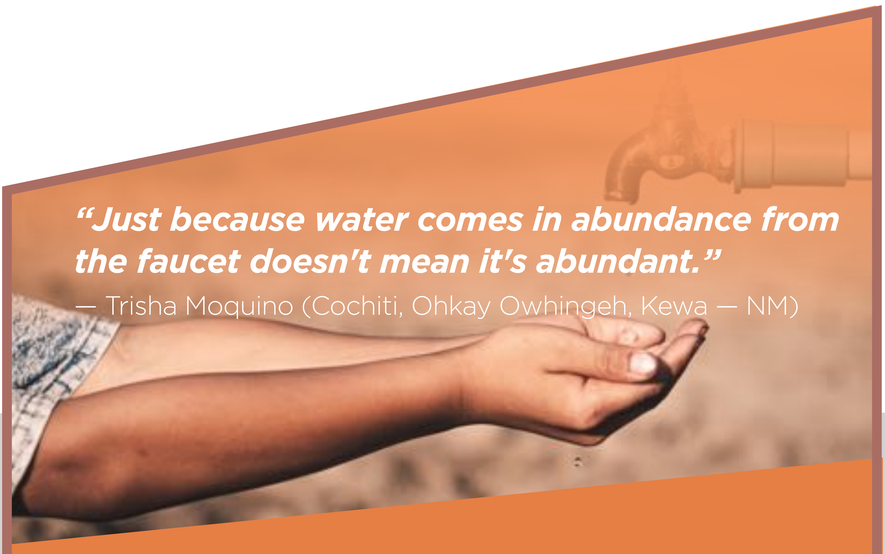

"Just because water comes in abundance from the faucet doesn't mean it's abundant."

— Trisha Moquino (Cochiti, Ohkay Owhingeh, Kewa — NM)

WATER CAN BE HARD TO COME BY HERE

TÓ BÍDIN HÓYÉÉ' KWE'É

EL AGUA SUELE ESCASEAR AQUÍ

Farmers and ranchers must deal with drought
The Four Corners is mostly desert, making water hard to come by during any year. During droughts, when rain is less frequent, farmers and ranchers have a hard time getting water to grow crops and raise livestock. As droughts become more frequent in the Four Corners, they're finding new ways to cope. Some have switched to crops that use less water. Others are learning how to grow crops on smaller areas of land, which cuts the amount of irrigation water they need. To preserve soil moisture, some farmers also avoid watering crops during the hottest parts of the day and plow their fields less often.

In 2015 the Gold King Mine spill contaminated water supplies across Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. It had devastating effects on the Navajo Nation and surrounding communities.

Not everyone here has access to clean drinking water
In the Four Corners, a person's access to water depends on whether their community has a pipeline that brings them safe, clean drinking water. Many Indigenous and Hispanic/Latinx communities within the Colorado River Basin lack such access.

Navajo communities work to boost their access to water
More than a third of Navajo households lack running water. To get water, household members often must drive long distances to fill barrels and haul them back home. Some of the sources they get water from are contaminated with chemicals from abandoned uranium mines.

While many communities have water rights, a lack of government funding has prevented the building of pipelines to bring water to homes. More money is also needed to create water quality monitoring programs to ensure the water is safe to drink.

Communities have partnered with scientists, nonprofit groups and government agencies to raise money, plan, and get approval to build pipelines and wells which will bring safe, clean water to communities. In the meantime, these organizations are developing temporary solutions such as installing household water tanks to increase storage capacity and increasing the number of water deliveries.

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