

BITCOIN

# The Navajo Nation Is Mining Bitcoin With Sustainable Energy. Here's How



Published 4 days ago on November 6, 2021  
By Rajesh Khanna

The Navajo Nation's Bitcoin story might be the most wholesome of the last few months. The mine isn't only providing employment within the reservation, it's helping them transition from providing coal-powered energy to renewables. Another case study that proves Bitcoin incentivizes and funds green energy. Another story of Bitcoin helping the disenfranchised people of the world to find their footing.

How disenfranchised are the Navajo? *"The Federal Government took away all the land rights away from the Navajo people,"* says a disembodied voice in the Compass Mining mini-documentary. According to it, among the Nation:

- 48% are unemployed
- 40% live without running water
- 32% live off the grid
- 33% live below the poverty line



*"But the Navajo are resilient people who've claimed the desert Southwest as home since time immemorial,"* said director [Will Foxley via Twitter](#). And now, they have Bitcoin on their side.

## The First Bitcoin Mine In Navajo Territory

The audiovisual piece comes with [this text as a companion](#), which tells the story of how the first Bitcoin mine came to be:

*"In 2017, a small Canadian firm named West Block approached the Navajo about building a mine on Navajo land. At 8 megawatts (MW) in size after the initial round, the Navajo invested in an equity stake in the mine during the bear market of 2018. Three years later, Bitcoin mining has turned a corner to become one of the most profitable sectors of Bitcoin itself."*

Apparently, 58% of the mine's energy already comes from the depicted solar farm. *"The Bitcoin mine is incentivizing renewables to be built on Navajo country to replace coal,"* says the mini-documentary's narrator. Foxley claims that *"the Bitcoin mine uses Navajo energy on Navajo land for Navajo employment."* However, the text states that *"The Navajo chose to divest themselves at a profit."* The move was positive because it ended up *"placing the money back Navajo peoples hands with investments into the public utilities."*

## **The Navajo Nation's Transition To Clean Energy**

In the past, the Navajo have had their runnings with dirty forms of energy. The text summarizes it with.

***"The Navajo story of the 20th century is fraught with energy abuse, including malpractice in coal and uranium extraction for people off the reservation. Today's generation of Navajo continue to live with these negative externalities, such as heightened levels of radiation in well water."***

However, as the world is trying to phase out coal-powered energy, the Navajo innovate to keep up with the times. According to Walter Hasse, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority president, *"I had excess electricity that I still had to pay for and deal with. Now, I want to build renewable energy to replace my lost coal resources that are throughout the nation. I need someone to consume that renewable energy resource."*

Who could consume that energy,? we wonder. What industry is mobile enough to move to the desert and start making money for everyone around right away? Well, the mini-documentary is all about exactly that phenomenon.

## **Jobs For The Navajo People**

Traditionally, the Navajo don't want to leave the reservation. However, there are not many employment choices there. That was before Bitcoin. According to Foxley, the mine now hosts around 3,000 machines. According to the text, *"The facility currently employs two full-time employees. With the expansion, that number will grow to eleven. That money then flows from the mine into local jobs creating even more buzz."* Not only that, the documentary's narrator promises *"more mines scheduled to come online in the coming months."*

Considering a mining company commissioned both the audiovisual piece and the text, we could assume who's behind those *"more mines scheduled."* And we salute them.