



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Navajo Utah Commission advances weather station initiative to strengthen local climate data and grazing management



The Navajo Utah Commission approved a weather monitoring initiative for Navajo communities.

TEEC NOS POS, Utah – During a recent regular meeting, the Navajo Utah Commission received a proposal outlining the establishment of six new weather stations across Navajo Utah communities, an effort designed to strengthen environmental monitoring, support grazing management, and align with regional water data initiatives.

Commission members engaged in discussion regarding site selection, land withdrawal requirements, and coordination with chapter land use planning committees.

Agriculture & Natural Resources Associate Professor Reagan Wytsalucy presented a comprehensive overview of the project, explaining that funding has been secured from multiple partners to support both installation and long-term research efforts. Wytsalucy indicated that \$160,000 was obtained from the Walton Family Foundation and Conscience Bay to initiate the project, with additional support from Campbell Scientific, the Utah Colorado River Authority, and the U.S. Youth Climate Center to fund the remaining stations.

Wytsalucy, who also serves as San Juan County Extension Director, noted that each station would require approximately 100 meters by 100 meters of open space to ensure accurate data collection. Additional considerations include fencing, right-of-way approvals, and long-term maintenance coordination in partnership with the Navajo Nation Division of Water Resources.

The proposal calls for three weather stations to be placed on the Utah side and three south of the state line, positioned to serve Utah and surrounding chapter communities. Proposed locations include Mexican Water, Montezuma Creek, the Highway 191 corridor near Aneth, two stations along Navajo Mountain to capture precipitation variability, and Oljato-Monument Valley, where chapter representatives previously recommended placement near the cemetery due to accessibility and open terrain.

Wytalucy emphasized that the stations would collect comprehensive environmental data, including wind, solar radiation, UV monitoring, air temperature, dew point, precipitation (rain and snow), soil temperature, and soil moisture measurements. The data would be transmitted to national databases, including NOAA, making it publicly accessible and strengthening representation of Navajo Utah communities in regional climate reporting systems.

Commissioners addressed capturing localized weather patterns unique to Monument Valley and surrounding areas, noting variability in precipitation and wind conditions across canyon systems and elevations. Discussions included the potential need for additional monitoring in areas such as Mexican Hat and Red Mesa to improve regional coverage.

Council Delegate Herman Daniels expressed support for the initiative, recognizing its alignment with water monitoring, adaptive grazing management, and long-term conservation planning efforts.

“This project gives our communities the ability to speak with data. For too long, our area has not been fully represented in state and national weather systems. This strengthens our voice in water discussions and grazing management,” said Commissioner Billy Todacheenie.

Council Delegate Curtis Yanito emphasized that the stations support local grazing permit holders by providing measurable environmental indicators that can inform conservation planning and adaptive management strategies.

Commissioner Martha Saggboy said, “We want to ensure that our land use planning committees are involved early. By coordinating with chapters and securing proper land use approvals, we can move forward responsibly and to ensure long-term benefits for our communities.”

The initiative also supports broader regional collaboration efforts with Utah state agencies, including the Utah Colorado River Authority, particularly as water rights discussions continue across upper and lower basin states.

The Navajo Utah Commission approved the proposal with a vote of six in favor and none opposed.

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