



The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Navajo Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jones Benally, and Anna Rondon welcome participants of the Longest Walk 2 to the Navajo Nation on March 29 in Leupp, Ariz. (Photos by Joshua Lavar Butler)

Navajo Nation welcomes Longest Walk 2 participants in Leupp, Ariz.

Welcome reception planned in Window Rock on April 4

"The Flagstaff and surrounding communities really came out to support us in such beautiful ways by organizing prayer gatherings, opening their homes to us, and taking people shopping." — Tashina Banks

LEUPP, Ariz. — Navajo Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. welcomed participants of the Longest Walk 2 to the Navajo Nation on behalf of the 21st Navajo Nation Council on Saturday, March 29.

The walkers began their trip onto the Navajo Nation early Saturday morning from the STAR school near Leupp.

Walker (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake) explained that the Navajo Nation is grateful for their efforts to advocate for the environment, which is the foundation of Navajo culture.

Walker presented the group with a Navajo Nation flag, which they appreciated. Dennis Banks received the Navajo flag with great honor and said that the flag will be carried all the way to Washington, D.C.

Joshua Lavar Butler, Communications Director for the Office of the Speaker, presented the group with a Navajo Nation proclamation from the honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan as well.

Speaker Morgan issued this proclamation on Feb. 19 in support of this momentous event that began from Alcatraz, Calif. and will end in Washington, D.C. The group is walking

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to advocate for environmental protection and for Native American rights.

Speaker Morgan issued the proclamation to encourage people to participate and support the historic event.

In the proclamation, Speaker Morgan stated that on behalf of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, protecting Native American sovereignty and commemorating the first Longest Walk 30 years earlier in support of all treaties dealing with sovereignty of Indian Nations must be respected.

Organizers have touted the event as stating they want to “raise awareness about the planetary crisis by walking to reconnect with the land, increase respect for cultural diversity, stimulate dialogue about connections between nature and culture, and protect sacred lands and diverse spiritual practices.”

The Longest Walk 2 follows two routes, a northern and a southern route, that will cover more than 8,000 miles in total. Participants will be stopping each evening in communities along the way, as people from all over the world will be joining the walk with its peaceful and spiritual call to action to protect Mother Earth and defend human rights.

Tashina Banks, daughter of Dennis Banks, said that “Arizona has been a very welcoming and hospitable state for the Longest Walk participants. Throughout all the tribal communities they have entered, they are being welcomed with open arms.”

The group has crossed the reservations of the Hualapai tribe, the Fort Mojave tribe, the Havasupai tribe, the Yavapai tribe, and the Navajo Nation.

According to Banks, the group spent 10 days in Flagstaff, Ariz. on March 19-28 and they were hosted by several local and national grassroots organizations, such as the Save the Peaks Coalition, Indigenous Environmental Network, and the Sierra Club — just to name a few.

Banks explained that there was a series of outreach activities set up for the participants of the Longest Walk 2. A panel discussion at Northern Arizona University was organized, as well as a rally at the Arizona Snow Bowl ski area, community dinners, a benefit concert with Keith Secola, Blackfire, Radmilla Cody and many others.

“The Flagstaff and surrounding communities really came out to support us in such beautiful ways by organizing prayer gatherings, opening their homes to us, taking people shopping,” Banks said. “It was a great time for the walkers to decompress and prepare for the next leg of their journey to the Navajo Nation and then to New Mexico.”

Banks expressed her appreciation to everyone that has helped out thus far and said “the Longest Walk is a beautiful event! You will hopefully be touched, moved and inspired as I have been over the last few days.”

The Navajo Nation will host a welcome reception for the Longest Walk 2 participants from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 4 at Gorman Hall in Window Rock, Ariz.

A reception supper is being hosted by the honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale) and the 21st Navajo Nation Council.

Scheduled guest speakers at the welcoming reception include: organizer Dennis J. Banks, Navajo Council Delegates Larry Anderson (Ft. Defiance); Amos Johnson, Lenny Foster, Vanessa Brown, Hazel James, Robert Tohe, and Guadalupe Branch.

For more information, contact Anna Rondon at 505-726-9397 or you may contact Joshua Lavar Butler at 928-871-6384.