



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee receives report on the status of Wolf Springs Ranch

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife manager Samuel Diswood, regarding ongoing activities, operations, and challenges associated with Wolf Springs Ranch. The ranch consists of approximately 16,379 acres and is located within Huerfano and Custer Counties in Colorado, approximately 195 miles south of Denver.

In July 2017, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee approved legislation that allowed the Nation to purchase Wolf Springs Ranch utilizing the Land Acquisition Trust Fund.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) stated that the purpose of the report was to identify challenges in order to provide the committee with the opportunity to assist in making the ranch venture a success.

“The Navajo Nation purchased the ranch with the intensions to make it a successful and sustainable business. The report outlines the policy changes that need to be made to address the unique problems of the ranch. The intent is to support the ranch’s efforts,” said Delegate Shepherd.

In his report, Diswood reviewed the ranch’s third quarter report that included the irrigation of hay, replacement of waterline pipes, fence repairs, status of cattle and bison, and the initiation of the hunting program. Challenges include issues with human resources, procurement policies, ranch vehicles and equipment, and drought conditions, added Diswood.

RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) asked how the committee could resolve the issues and avoid the loss of revenues and resources at the ranch.

“It troubles the committee that the ranch is having personnel issues. We need to find avenues to keep employees who know the ranch and the animals. It is also alarming that the ranch is having difficulties and delays to pay for bills, repairs, and equipment due to the Nation’s procurement policies. We need to address this immediately,” said Delegate Phelps.

During the discussion, Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) recommended that the Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife provide and present the management plan that was required in legislation.

“When the purchase was approved, Council asked for the department to put a plan together for the ranch, however, we have not seen a plan. Please provide a plan that addresses all the issues, because it is obvious that Wolf Springs Ranch would need unique solutions to make it successful,” said Delegate Tsosie.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) added, “We made a tremendous investment to purchase the ranch and we can’t ignore the problems that exist.”

The Resources and Development Committee approved the report with a 3-0 vote with a directive to the Navajo Nation Office of the Controller and Office of Management and Budget to expedite the procurement process and to have the Navajo Fish and Wildlife manager stationed at the ranch to oversee the ranch’s operation.

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