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President Shelly Signs Executive Order of Fire Restriction To Protect Navajo Nation Forests

Window Rock, AZ—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed an executive order of fire restriction to protect tribal forests and woodlands from the dangers of wildland fires.

“To ensure the safety of our people and forests, we are asking everyone to be very cautious and follow the Navajo Forestry Department’s fire restriction guidelines, when building an open fire and consider the extreme drought conditions and shortage of rain on the Navajo Nation,” stated President Shelly. “Our prayers go out to our neighbors in southeastern Arizona and the San Carlos and Fort Apache Nations affected by the Wallow Fire.”

Navajo Forestry Department Manager Alexious C. Becenti concluded, “We appreciate everyone’s cooperation with our fire restrictions. The Division of Natural Resources and BIA Forestry and Fire Management aim to protect our forests and woodlands from loss to human caused catastrophic wildland fires.”

Full text of the executive order can be found below:

Order of Fire Restriction

Pursuant to **17 N.N.C. § 2701**, upon the advice of the Navajo Forestry Department, the President of the Navajo Nation may order any area of Navajo Nation land closed to entry by the general public due to the danger of wildland fire.

An Executive Order of Fire Restriction is being issued due to a combination of inadequate precipitation, high wind conditions, high temperatures and low humidity, which have resulted in high to extreme fire danger conditions Nationwide. Therefore, to protect the Navajo Nation’s forests and woodlands, this restriction is being issued.

The **ORDER of FIRE RESTRICTION** will restrict the use of the Navajo forest and woodlands from:

1. Building, maintaining and attending to all open fires, including personal use fires (*i.e. family reunions, trash burning, etc.*); and
2. Recreational (*propane and/or petroleum fueled stoves*) will be the only fires allowed in developed recreational areas; and
3. Open burning of cropland, fields, rangeland, debris, weeds, etc; and

4. Operating, using internal or external combustion engines (i.e. chainsaws) without a spark arrestor; and
5. Smoking of cigarettes, pipes and any other material; and
6. Possessing, discharging, manufacturing, sale or use of fireworks or other pyrotechnic device is unlawful on the Navajo Nation (17 N.N.C. § 2733); and
7. BIA burn permits will be required for all traditional ceremonies requiring the use of fire and will only be issued for these ceremonies.

Any person or parties found guilty of violating the provisions of this ORDER of FIRE RESTRICTION will be fined and may be required to pay restitution to the Navajo Nation the full cost of fire suppression and/or fair market value of the timber/woodlands and improvements destroyed or damaged by a fire.

Report any wildland fires to the B.I.A. Fire Dispatch at (928) 729-2307. If there are any questions pertaining to this document, please contact the Navajo Forestry Department at (928) 729-4007.

ATTEST

Alexious C. Becenti, Sr. Forest Manager
Navajo Forestry Department

Fredrick H. White, Division Director
Natural Resources

SIGNED AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE THIS 8TH DAY OF JUNE 2011.

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT SEAL OF THE NAVAJO NATION.

BEN SHELLY
PRESIDENT

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