



NAVAJO NATION

Division of Health

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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State of Emergency Declaration for the Navajo Nation

Window Rock, AZ; August 4, 2010 - The Navajo Commission on Emergency Management has declared a State of Emergency with the concurrence of the Navajo Nation President, Dr. Joe Shirley Jr., due to flooding and related problems from the monsoonal rainfall.

While the rainfall is a blessing during this drought, the recent heavy rainfall has led to road washouts in several communities. A bridge has been washed out twice since Saturday in Church Rock, New Mexico. Residents have been evacuated due to flooding along the Little Colorado River and there are impassable roads with culverts exposed or washed out on many of the rural roads. Several vehicles have been damaged as a result of flash flooding. There have been funnel cloud sightings near Standing Rock, New Mexico. Tornado activity was also reported near Many Farms and Chinle, Arizona with no structural damage. The communities of Red Valley and Cove were evacuated last night due to a tornado warning.

There have been fatalities as a result of the monsoonal rainfall; an 89 year old woman from Rock Point, Arizona, died from injuries received as a result of the roof collapse of a traditional hogan. The hogan had a log and mud roof. Lightning has claimed the lives of a 17 year old female visiting relatives in Cameron, Arizona and that of a man fixing a roof in Kayenta, Arizona.

The Navajo Nation Safety of Dams Program reports that all Navajo Nation Dams are safe. There have been no problems with dams managed by SOD on the Navajo Nation. As a precautionary measure, Tsaile Lake is being drained at this time. Runoffs will contribute to the increased water flowing through Chinle wash. Tsaile/Wheatfield Chapter confirmed that a small dam north of the chapter did broke last night.

Chinle Police Department established an Incident Command Post yesterday evening at Wildcat Den with a shelter for evacuees at the Chinle Community Center.

Motorists and pedestrians are advised not to cross flooded roadways, bridges, arroyos and washes.

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