



**JOE SHIRLEY, JR.**  
*President*

**FRANK J. DAYISH, JR.**  
*Vice-President*

## THE NAVAJO NATION

**For Immediate Release**  
Feb. 13, 2006

**Contact:** George Hardeen  
Communications Director  
Office – 928-871-7917  
Cell – 928-309-8532  
georgehardeen@opvp.org

### **Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., signs resolution warning of drought on Navajo Nation, urges conservation**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., has issued a warning to Navajo residents to take all precautions to deal with imminent drought conditions.

Today, the President signed a Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management resolution that declares a drought warning for the entire Navajo Nation.



***Drought conditions on the Navajo Nation***

It recommends that all branches of the Navajo Nation government begin to plan and implement drought responses in accordance to the Nation's contingency plan.

"While drought is natural, cyclical and has been with the Navajo people before, it is still very disruptive and everyone must be wise and take precautions to ensure their family is safe," the President said. "We may see our windmills and stock ponds dry up sooner this year. When the winds come, the grass and water will be gone earlier, so take precautions."

Commissioner Selena Manychildren said the commission also reaffirmed the August 2004 state of emergency drought declaration and will further revise it.

"We have a warning out to the people to begin conservation practices so they don't get caught in a very serious situation," she said. "If there's a need, they should start culling their livestock, using their own wisdom."

The Climate Prediction Center of the National Weather Service reported that developing La Nina conditions are expected to continue for the next three-to-six months, according to the Commission's resolution. This is expected to cause the jet stream over the eastern North Pacific to shift north, leading to drier than normal conditions in the Southwest.

*“When the winds  
come, the grass  
and water will be  
gone earlier, so  
take precautions.”*

*– Navajo President  
Joe Shirley, Jr.*

Reduced surface water from decreased snowmelt runoff will impact Navajo municipal wells and water sources, the resolution states. These wells are more prone to the effects of drought. Reduced flows result in less aquifer recharge, lower well static water levels and lower yields.

The commission notes that there are approximately 5,000 livestock ponds on the Navajo Nation. As water diminishes and evaporates, more pressure will be placed on the 900 Navajo windmills.

“This condition will create a critical shortage of water and range feed for livestock, leading to poor physical conditions of livestock and will increase the potential for adverse livestock health,” the resolution states.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. Geological Survey reported that the 1987-1989 drought, caused by above normal sea surface temperatures related to Global Warming, was the most costly natural disaster in U.S. history, with damages estimated at \$39 billion for the country.

==

**ADDITIONAL SOURCES**

U.S. Geological Survey <http://wrgis.wr.usgs.gov/wgmt/navajo/drought.html>