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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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## No More Snakes at the Navajo Nation Zoo

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – No more snakes.

The Navajo Nation Zoo is no longer a home for two bull or gopher snakes and a rattlesnake.

Navajo Nation Zoo Manager David Mikesic said the bull snakes were rehomed in March and the rattlesnake was rehomed in May.

More than 3,000 students from various schools on the Navajo Nation visit the Navajo Nation Zoo every year.

Mikesic said approximately 25 percent of the teachers who accompanied the students expressed concerns from parents who did not want their children viewing the snakes at the zoo.

"It was not a case of fear.  It goes beyond fear," Mikesic explained. "It was a cultural issue. The parents did not want them to view, nor breathe the same air as the snakes.  If there's a concern that people can't view snakes, why continue to house the snakes here. I want all classrooms to see all the other animals that we have in the rest of the Discovery Center."

The Discovery Center is home to other classes of animals and mammals such as spotted skunks, ringtail, Gila monsters, scorpions, spiders, frogs, toads, fish and lizards.

The bull snakes were sent to the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Draper, Utah and the rattler was transported to the Staten Island Zoological Society in Staten, New York.

The Navajo Nation Zoo is the only zoo in the U.S. that is managed and owned by an American Indian tribe. It is home to over 100 animals representing over 50 different species. Nearly all of the animals housed at the Navajo Nation are injured or orphaned, leaving them unable to be released back into the wild.

After several months of renovation the Discovery Center will reopen on Monday, June 15th for visitors to see new upgrades that the Zoo's construction staff has completed.  For more information, contact them at www.navajozoo.org or (928) 871-6574.