



Contact: Erny Zah
Director of Communications

Cell: (928) 380-0771

navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov

For Immediate Release
July 2, 2013

Navajo President Shelly Declares Emergency Due to Drought Conditions

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly declared a State of Emergency for persisting drought conditions on the Navajo Nation.

“We recognize that much of our land is dry, our wells aren’t producing water like they have in the past, and now we must do what we can to help our people who are suffering in these dry conditions,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly signed the declaration on Monday. President Shelly also signed memorandum directing all executive branch divisions to formulate plans to assist in drought relief.

“I am directing all Executive Branch divisions to pull its resources together to immediately develop a plan to coordinate necessary service to the Nation,” President Shelly wrote.

Division directors are formulating a comprehensive plan that includes response and public education regarding drought land, livestock, and agricultural management.

According to tribal precipitation statistics, Western Agency is about 65 percent below normal precipitation amounts this year, while Fort Defiance Agency is about 63 percent below normal. Northern and Eastern Agency are about 55 percent below average, while Chinle Agency is about 30 percent below average precipitation levels.

The declaration allows chapters to use emergency funds to assist with drought conditions and also allows the Navajo Nation to seek a federal disaster from President Barack Obama.

“For every department, division and chapter that is working on the drought, please maintain all your records. If we get a federal disaster declaration, we will need those records for possible reimbursement,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly, however, cautioned against spending large amounts of money to combat drought conditions.

“We can’t fix every problem by throwing money at it. We have to be creative and think about new ways to get through this drought. We need long term solutions and practices,” President Shelly said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials expect above normal temperatures to continue through the summer months with below average precipitation.

About 5,000 lakes and ponds exist on the Navajo Nation and as dry conditions prevail, pressure will be put on existing wells, the emergency declaration states.

“We are going to do everything we can to bring our people through this drought. We have many needs, and we are a strong people. Water is precious and we have to learn how to conserve and change our practices to make sure we prevail through these drought conditions,” President Shelly said.

###