



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:
Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275
Crystalyn Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758
Timothy Benally, Public Information Officer
(928) 871-7000
nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

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**Navajo Nation examines agricultural and
economic development opportunities on fee lands**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez observes maps detailing plot boundaries along with Navajo Nation Council Delegate Rickie Nez and former Navajo Nation Council member Walter Phelps in Winslow, Ariz. on Mar. 1, 2022.

WINSLOW, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Division of Natural Resources Executive Director Dr. Rudy Shebala, and Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office Director Robert K. Black were joined by members of the Resources and Development Committee, Navajo Land Department, and Birdsprings Chapter officials on Tuesday, as they visited a 484-acre site, located near the southwest portion of the Navajo Nation, that is currently under consideration for potential agricultural and economic development initiatives.

Under the guidance of the Division of Natural Resources, several departments have devoted their resources to assess the site. One proposal being considered is the development of a commercial alfalfa farm near the city of Winslow, Ariz., within fee lands owned by the Navajo Nation.

“In comparison to lands that are held in trust by the federal government, fee lands have a lot of upside and potential for development, jobs, and revenue. Through the collaboration of the Division of Natural Resources and our lawmakers, this initiative is coming together in a way that can benefit several Navajo communities. Agricultural development, such as an alfalfa farm, can create new jobs and generate resources for livestock owners and ranchers that reside on the Navajo Nation. Currently, we have many livestock owners who rely on businesses off of our Nation to sustain their operations,” said President Nez.

Dr. Shebala also supports the development of an alfalfa farm to lessen the dependency on outside providers that charge high prices for hay. For the past several months, Assist International, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering humanitarian efforts, has provided its expertise and support for the project.

Department of Water Resources Branch Director Najam Tariq said the site could accommodate various water infrastructure to support opportunities for housing and other types of development. He estimates that the site could generate a similar water output as other nearby farms.

The Nez-Lizer administration will continue to work with the Resources and Development Committee, City of Winslow, Navajo-Hopi Land Commission, and other partners to establish the Navajo Nation’s priorities for the fee lands area.

“We appreciate Resources and Development Committee Chair Rickie Nez, Vice Chair Thomas Walker, Council Delegates Kee Allen Begay and Elmer Begay, and former Council Delegate Walter Phelps for their involvement and support as we work together to make this a successful and sustainable initiative,” added President Nez.

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