

Navajo Nation implements Stage 1 Fire Restrictions

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 25 September 2020 05:12



Resolves issues over USE OF chainsaws to gather FIREWOOD

Staff Reports

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Attorney General Doreen N. McPaul, and Navajo Area BIA Director Bartholomew Stevens signed Executive Order No. 010-20 on Sept. 16, implementing Stage 1 Fire Restrictions on the Navajo Nation, which also resolves concerns over the use of chainsaws to gather firewood for the upcoming winter season.

The new Executive Order lifts some of the restrictions that were included in the previous Stage 2 Fire Restrictions, which went into effect in May during the height of fire dangers on the Navajo Nation. With ongoing wildfires in the Southwest, Nez said the new restrictions still provide for the safety and prevention of wildfires, but also allow the Navajo people to gather firewood for the upcoming winter season.

“With devastating wildfires occurring in several states in the Southwest, we must proceed with extreme caution in order to prevent any wildfires and to ensure the safety of our communities on the Navajo Nation,” Nez said. “The latest fire restrictions provide for flexibility to allow our Navajo people to use chainsaws to gather firewood for the winter season, which was previously restricted during certain times of the day.

“Open fires and fireworks are still prohibited under the latest fire restrictions. Use this opportunity to prepare your homes and families for the upcoming winter season,” he added.

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“The top priority is always protecting our communities and our Navajo people. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many setbacks, but we are a resilient people and we will continue to overcome adversities,” Lizer added. “We are thankful to all of our Nation’s fire fighters and the many others who helped our Nation when we had wildfires earlier this year.

“We all have to work with one another and hold each [other] accountable in order to prevent any more wildfires. Please proceed with extreme caution and continue to pray for everyone who is impacted by the wildfires happening in several states throughout the country,” Lizer said.

The Stage 1 Fire Restrictions prohibit the following:

Possession, manufacturing, sale or use of fireworks or other pyrotechnic devices pursuant to 17 N.N.C. § 2733

Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, charcoal, coal; except campfires and charcoal to be used in developed sites where fire rings or grills are provided;

Using a firearm or incendiary devices, without a valid permit;

Those engaged in the following activities must use extreme caution:

Smoking, which is recommended only in permitted areas, within an enclosed vehicle, traditional and ceremonial uses, and while stopped in an area at least six feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.

1. The following activities are PERMITTED:

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Persons who regularly reside within the closed area are permitted to go to and from their homes and continue ordinary activities that do not create an unreasonable fire hazard;

Propane, gas or other petroleum-fueled stoves will be allowed for livestock branding;

Ceremonial fires, properly registered and permitted by the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) through a Navajo Nation EPA Burn Registration, five (5) days prior to ceremony. To obtain a Burn Registration, please contact Navajo Nation EPA Air Quality at (928) 729-4156. Mail: NN Air Quality, PO Box 529, Fort Defiance, Ariz. 86504, FAX: (928) 729-4323 or email: kaelynmorgan@navajo-nsn.gov;

Persons with a written permit/bonding/license that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act;

Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice;

Any federal, state, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty; and

The implementation of a Low Complexity Prescribed Fire which meets prescriptions approved by the Agency Administrator under an approved Burn Plan.

The Executive Order states that any person or parties found guilty of violating the fire restrictions will be fined up to \$5,000 or be required to provide restitution. The Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Division of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, Division of Community Development, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Wildland Fire and Aviation are hereby directed to fully enforce the Executive Order.