

OUTLINE OF MEETINGS NAVAJO TRIBAL COUNCIL  
Fort Wingate 1933 to Fort Defiance 1936

Fort Wingate, July 7, 1933

Dr. Bennett presented soil-conservation program proposed for the Navajo Reservation and proposed that an area be set aside for experimental purposes, Mexican Springs.

Mr. Neuffer discussed water development work proposed for the reservation under the Public Works Administration program. Stated you would try to build 500 reservoirs, 250 springs, 200 deep wells.

Resolution unanimously adopted for the establishment of an erosion-control experimental station. Location yet to be selected.

Jake Morgan proposed that if the Southern Navajo did not accept this experimental station to give it to the Northern Navajo.

Tuba City, October 30-31, November 1, 1933

Chairman opened meeting, indicating need for range-management control and stated that the Navajos should take the initiative.

Commissioner states emergency conservation and the program outlined would continue.

Neuffer indicates \$940,000 to be spent on new irrigation developments.

Commissioner states: "We hope to create about 15,000 new acres of land. We are going to go the limit on employing Navajo Indians."

During the next 2 years Soil Conservation Service will spend \$1,250,000.

\$1,000,000 appropriated by Public Works for erosion-control work throughout the Navajo area for year 1933-34. \$800,000 will go in wages to Navajo Indians. Seventy new day schools will be built at a cost of more than \$2,000,000.

Commissioner then outlined the need for erosion control. "If you are going to recapture your damaged land, you are going to have to cut down the number of sheep and you will have to cut down the number of your goats. The Government has authority to limit your herds and put the entire force of the Federal law back of its orders, but the Government doesn't want to do that, in the case of the Navajos and the Pueblos. We are not going to use compulsion on you even though it might look like we should. You must cut down your sheep by at least 200,000 head and your goats by at least 200,000 head and permanently hold your goats to a total of 70,000 to 80,000 head."

Henry Taliman, delegate from Southern Navajo states: "Under no consideration will the Navajos favor reduction of their livestock." Emphasis need for erosion control. Suggests that Navajos go off the reservation and lease land.

Chas Dodge discusses the price offered for sheep. Objects that \$1 to \$1.50 for ewes is not enough. "If you give Indians a price, you will get a big sale, but if your price is low you will get only culls from the herd. You will not be reducing our sheep at all."

Zeh states emergency relief will be glad to pay full market price, market price for ewes is 1½ cents per pound.

Tuba City(Continued)

Commissioner outlines the number of sheep to be bought:  
Northern Navajo, 20,000; Southern, 32,000; Eastern, 15,000;  
Western, 15,000; Hopi-Keams, 10,000; Leupp, 8,000; total 100,000.

Resolution unanimously passed thanking Commissioner of  
Indian Affairs for what he had done for them.

Note: As a result of the agreement made at the Tuba City meeting  
and signed at Fort Defiance, 86,000 sheep were sold (14,000 under  
the quota set for the various subdivisions.

Fort Defiance, March 12-13-, 1934

The principal topic was range control and the reduction in the number of goats on the reservation.

Mr. Stewart assured the Navajo delegates that in his opinion the boundary bill and continued land improvement would not be realized unless range control were effected.

Fred Nelson, delegate from Hopi, stated that wage income which had been introduced on the reservation and which had been given the Navajos did not replace the sheep and goats.

Commissioner Collier reminisced on his statement made at Tuba City concerning the necessity of disposing of 200,000 sheep and 200,000 goats. A resolution was introduced which stated that it was imperative that the boundary bill be enacted at the earliest possible date; that erosion and range control should be continued and further that stock reduction as explained by the Commissioner and his staff should take place. Further that council delegates should return to their homes in order to explain to their people what had been agreed at the meeting so that they could devise ways and means of affecting the goat-reduction plan. An amendment was passed providing that any family having 100 or less sheep should be exempt from any reduction. Further that in flocks numbering less than 100, the majority of which might be goats, that these goats would be purchased from the small owners and that sheep would be given by the large owners to these small owners releasing goats and the large owners would dispose of the goats so acquired. This resolution was unanimously adopted. This part of reduction was never carried out.

WR 2395

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Crowpoint, April 9-11, 1934

The chairman introduced the goat-reduction question.

Todestina Cheschillie opposes the resolution adopted at Fort Defiance. States we don't want to sell our goats. We are not asking anyone to buy our goats. Further that the people in this district are not in favor of the plans that have been put before them (them meaning the tribal council). He states further that the people generally are opposed to any goat reduction.

Marcus Kanuho, present acting chairman of the tribal council, suggested that one of the methods outlined at the Fort Defiance meeting be carried out: Namely that the money would be loaned the tribal council and charged to oil royalties. This money to be used to purchase goats.

In this meeting Mr. Eric Johnson, range examiner, explained to the Indians the necessity for continued reduction and stated that it was apparent, from range surveys which had been made, the number of breeding ewes which could be kept on the reservation would approximate 400,000 units.

Henry Taliman suggested that a count be made flock by flock and that the dipping record not be accepted.

Jake Morgan then stated: "It seems unfair for the people to back down on the resolutions passed at Fort Defiance. Mr. Taliman indicates that the Navajos were not honest enough to bring in their sheep to be dipped. He further suggested an approval of the reduction and acceptance of the dipping records as being accurate." Resolution was unanimously adopted by which the Navajos agreed to carry out the resolution made at Fort Defiance.

WR 2306

Keams Canyon, July 10-12-, 1934

It was agreed by the tribal council that they would accept the contract which had been arranged by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, whereby the Secretary of Agriculture would buy from the Navajos 150,000 goats and up to 50,000 sheep. A provision was included in this agreement whereby the Navajos were to castrate all goats during the term of this agreement, except those which were to be used for the production of a milch goat strain. This resolution was unanimously approved, but never carried out.

Additional water developments and dipping vats were discussed and requested by the Navajos. (Two hundred and forty wells have been drilled and 20 additional dipping vats constructed; 148,000 goats and 50,000 sheep were sold).

Washington, April 12, 1935

Various methods of establishing base preference rights were discussed. Chee Dodge stated that people would not accept any agreement whereby they would be forced to pay grazing privileges.

In the fall of 1935, \$250,000 was encumbered by Federal Emergency Relief Administration for purchase of sheep and goats for relief slaughter. Navajos sold only 26,000 head.

WR 2307

Fort Defiance, January 25, 1936

In the interim between the meeting held at Keams July 1, 1935, a gradual opposition had been crystallizing on the reservation opposing the adoption of range regulations. The opposition was centered on the Soil Conservation Service. This came about because the Indians felt that the Soil Conservation Service was suggesting most of the reduction and that if the Soil Conservation were forced off the reservation no further reductions would be requested. In order to meet these criticisms and to define Indian Service policies, the Commissioner met with the tribal council January 25, 1936.

1. Commissioner stated that Secretaries Ickes and Wallace were in complete agreement and unity about the matters concerning grazing and range regulations which is the law for the Navajo Tribe.

2. Pointed out that the Navajo range-control programs have been and are Indian Service and Interior Department programs.

3. Pointed out that the conservation policy of the whole Government is this: That wherever the Government controls any land that is used for grazing then the amount of stock has to be kept down to the number that will not destroy the land but will allow the grass to grow.

4. Pointed out this policy of conservation would continue regardless of possible administrative changes and indicated that the two departments of the Government working on the reservation were in complete accord and were essentially one service. That the Soil Conservation Service is on the reservation at the request of the Interior Department and not as a rival duplicate service.

WR 2308

Resolution Adopted by the Navajo Tribal Council at Fort Wingate, N. Mex.  
July 7 & 8, 1933

WHEREAS it is generally known that the various processes of soil erosion have become extremely serious in many parts of the Navajo country, and that unless sound plans for the control of this erosion are developed and carried into practice without further delay, the greater portion of the reservation soil will be damaged beyond repair: Therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE NAVAJO TRIBAL COUNCIL IN COUNCIL ASSEMBLED, that the plan of the Government to test out on suitable areas every practical method for arresting, reducing, or otherwise checking the destruction of land by erosion be, and is hereby approved; be it further

RESOLVED, That the Government be, and is hereby, allowed to select a representative area or locality within the reservation for the establishment and operation of an erosion-control station, provided that the consent of the people living on or having control over the proposed area or locality be first obtained.

Resolutions Drafted by the Navajo Council in Session, Tuba City, Ariz.  
November 1, 1933

- WHEREAS the members of the Navajo Tribal Council have heard and carefully considered the program of improvements submitted by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; and
- WHEREAS we have found that this program will be of great benefit to all the Navajo people and help them make a better living on this reservation; Therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that we strongly approve of the proposed land purchases and extensions and urgently request Congress to pass the necessary laws and appropriate the funds necessary to carry out this program; be it further
- RESOLVED, That we approve of the Commissioner's plan to give the entire Navajo Nation one administrative head and to extend the benefit of the Indian Office services to the remote parts of the reservation now badly neglected; be it further
- RESOLVED, That we heartily approve of the project to build 70 day-schools in our country, thus not only giving all our children a chance to get an education without being separated from their families, but also extending health and home-making services to every part of the land; be it further
- RESOLVED, That we express our hearty thanks to the Government for the great help given the Navajos through the Emergency Conservation Work which has helped our young men to earn wages even when they were facing poverty and distress because our sheep, our wool, and our blankets brought us almost nothing and our crops have been very poor; be it further
- RESOLVED, That we thank the Indian Commissioner for getting us a large appropriation with which to build irrigation works that will enable 3,000 Navajo families to plant crops on 5 newly irrigated acres for each family; be it further
- RESOLVED, That we heartily approve of the Indian Commissioner's policy to build the new schools, the roads, and irrigation works through the labor of our men and to have them work under the direction of Navajo foremen whenever possible; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That we approve of the great program whereby the Government will spend more than a million dollars to stop the washing away of our soil and bring back the grass. We promise the Government the help and assistance of the Navajo people in this great undertaking to save our homeland from destruction through erosion, and we will submit to all of our people that part of the erosion-control program which has to do with overgrazing and stock reduction, urging our people to follow the counsel of the wise men who urge this step. We also approve of the Government's plan to establish more erosion-control and range-management experimental areas like the one at Mexican Springs, and recommend that our people cooperate with the Government in the establishment of these areas.

Resolution, Navajo Tribal Council, Adopted at Fort Defiance, March 12-13, 1934

WHEREAS the Navajo Tribal Council has heard and carefully considered the program of future employment of Navajo Indians on reservation improvement work and especially is impressed with and is appreciative of the proposed reservation boundary extension, which involves a total appropriation of approximately \$1,000,000; Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Navajo Council agrees that it is imperative that the boundary bills be enacted at the earliest possible date, and in order that Congress may be assured that the Navajo people realize that in appreciation of the large grants of free or gratuity money involved therein; be it further

RESOLVED, That the Navajo Tribal Council agrees that erosion control and range control should be carried on as explained by the Commissioner and his staff, and, further, that stock reduction as explained by the Commissioner and his staff should take place, with the understanding that the Council delegates will return to their people in order to explain the proposals so that the Navajo people may consider the matter and devise ways and means of effecting consummation of the stock, or goat, reduction plan.

Amendment: Provided that any family having 100 sheep or less number shall be exempt from any reduction; but this provision shall not apply to those having a total head of 100, a majority of which are goats. In such cases the goats shall be purchased and in return sheep of equal value shall also be purchased from large stock owners and given to the family whose total head was 100, but who sells his goats. Provided further, that large stock owners shall sell such goats so purchased from small herds.

Extract from Minutes, Navajo Tribal Council, Crowpoint, April 9-11, 1934

"The executive night session was closed to all whites except Mr. Stewart, and was attended by practically all the assembled Indians. The goat reduction program was the only matter taken up at this session and various ways and means were discussed relative to raising the necessary funds to purchase the 150,000 goats agreed to by the council at the Fort Defiance meeting. It was finally concluded and agreed by the council, which passed a resolution to the effect that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was authorized to take such steps as may be necessary looking toward obtaining a reimbursable loan from the Government in the amount of \$225,000 with which to purchase the goats. This amount of money to be reimbursed the Government from future tribal oil royalties."

This proposal was abandoned when it was found oil royalties money was not available for this purpose. Later it developed that this stock could be purchased with Federal Emergency Relief Administration funds.

WR 2312