

# First Utah Navajo Weather Station to Bring Local Data to Monument Valley

**Shelby Ruud and Julene Reese**

**10/13/2026**

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PHOTO

ATTACHED: Courtesy of the Utah Climate Center Monument Valley is getting a new source of local weather data.

The first Utah Navajo weather monitoring station will provide locally collected information to help ranchers, community leaders, emergency responders, and others navigate drought, changing weather patterns, and other challenges in the region.

The installation will be celebrated Oct. 15 from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Goulding's Air Hangar Building in Oljato/ Monument Valley, Utah.

The station is part of a collaborative effort involving Utah State University and several regional and national partners to improve access to local weather information and support long-term planning for Navajo communities.

"For generations, families in the region have relied on the land for grazing and agriculture," said Reagan Wytsalucy, USU Extension associate professor and event organizer. "Today, ranchers face recurring drought and shifting weather, and some grazing guidelines still rely on climate data collected nearly a century ago."

The new station will help address that gap by collecting weather data directly in Monument Valley, providing information that better reflects local conditions.

"Leading up to this moment, I realized the Navajo communities would continue to struggle to reclaim their rangelands unless we begin improving the existing methods for data collection across their rangelands," Wytsalucy said. "Installing a weather station as the initial step toward more accurate climate data will support ongoing rangeland improvement planning and lead to educational programming that supports the next generation of agricultural producers in Utah Navajo communities."

Wytsalucy said the data could help emergency responders and transportation crews prepare for hazardous weather. It could also help tribal leaders make decisions about water resources and provide new educational opportunities for local youth.

Beyond collecting weather data, project partners hope to develop programming that combines modern climate monitoring technology and traditional ecological knowledge passed down through generations, she said.

The project brings together the Upper Colorado River Commission, Utah Colorado River Authority, Campbell Scientific Inc., Walton Family Foundation, Conscience Bay Research, Apogee Instruments, USU Climate Center, USU Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water and Air, and USU Extension.

The Oct. 15 celebration will include brief remarks from project partners and opportunities for community members to discuss future climate data programming.

## Contact

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