



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson participates in groundbreaking For Bosque Redondo Memorial

FORT SUMNER – Governor Bill Richardson joined leaders from the Navajo Nation and the Mescalero Apache Tribe to break ground on the new Bosque Redondo Memorial. The memorial commemorates the forced internment of thousands of Navajo and Mescalero Apaches from 1863-1868.

Governor Bill Richardson delivered the following remarks during a ceremony near Ft. Sumner:

This monument – commemorating the forced internment of thousands of Navajo and Mescalero Apaches -- is a long time coming.

I think it's important to point out that we're not celebrating this historical event. Rather, we're paying tribute to the ability of the Navajo and Mescalero Apaches to persevere and overcome adversity during the forced internment of thousands of native people.

The Navajos were marched by the U.S. Army from their homelands, in what became known as the "Long Walk," to the reservation at Fort Sumner. Hundreds of the very old, and the very young died on-route. Hundreds more died at the reservation. Mescalero Apaches, in smaller numbers, were relocated from their lands in the Sacramento Mountains.

As a result, we ended up with the Treaty of 1868, which created the present-day Navajo Nation.

I want to applaud everyone who has worked on making this memorial a reality – including the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Legislature and Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici.

I know there's more work to do to complete this memorial. But I'm pleased to hear that the memorial will be open to the public next summer. New Mexicans can start participating and learning about this important experience right away.

Once again, thank you for having me here today.