

***1999 NATIONAL RAINBOW FAMILY
GATHERING***

***ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST
MARIENVILLE RANGER DISTRICT***

FINAL ACTION REPORT

FINAL IMPACT SUMMARY

1999

NATIONAL RAINBOW FAMILY GATHERING

ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

Prepared By



Date: 03-03-00


b6
b7c

Approved By:

Leon F. Blashock
Leon F. Blashock

Date: 3/3/00

CONTENTS

I. Introduction and Summary	Leon Blashock
II. Clean up and Site Restoration.....	Bill Moriarity
III. Resource Assessments	
a. Soils.....	Bill Moriarity
b. Heritage.....	Jack McLaughlin
c. Wildlife.....	Scott Reitz
d. Water.....	Brent Pence
e. Recreation.....	Brenda Adams-Weyant
f. Roads.....	Rick Hiemenz
g. Law Enforcement.....	

b6
b7c

1999 National Rainbow Event Resource Summary
USDA, Forest Service, Region 9
Allegheny National Forest

Introduction: The 1999 National Rainbow gathering occurred on lands administered by the Allegheny National Forest, Marienville Ranger District. The event occurred from early June, 1999 through September 1999 when clean-up operations were completed.

The site chosen for the gathering was just south of the Bear Creek Campground near the community of Ridgway, Pennsylvania. This site was very remote with limited interior vehicular access opportunities. The vegetation is almost entirely tree-covered with limited interior openings. Because of the extreme remoteness, steep terrain, and limited openings, this site was not recommended as desirable for a gathering of this magnitude.

A team of Forest Service Resource Specialists was assembled, charged with the task of doing a pre/post event assessment of resource impacts, both negative and positive. These assessments were shared openly and frequently with Rainbow Family members in the hope that long term negative impacts of the gathering would be minimized or avoided. Specialists in Soils, Heritage, Water Quality, Recreation, Engineering, and Wildlife made an initial and post-event assessment of the resources. The resource writeups are included in this document and form the basis for the following summary.

Summary: After reviewing the pre/post event evaluations by the team of resource specialists assigned to this event, I have concluded that there will be minimal long-term negative resource impacts to the Bear Creek site. One Heritage site was damaged during the event. All other resource impacts have been adequately addressed, mitigated or rehabilitated.

The post-event Rainbow Family contingent did a very good job of cleanup and site reclamation. As time passes, it will be increasingly difficult to determine that a gathering of this magnitude ever occurred in the Bear Creek area. The Forest Service District Ranger and Resource Assessment team experienced a high degree of cooperation with the family on any matter where natural resource issues were of concern. I believe this is largely due to the cooperative spirit that was established with family members at the outset of the gathering and carried thru the event by mutually respectful encounters by Forest Service and Rainbow family members.



LEON F. BLASHOCK
District Ranger

CLEAN-UP and SITE RESTORATION

These activities consisted of searching out and filling in all slit latrines; removal of all litter and man made facilities from the Bear Creek Valley and along Forest Service roads numbered 135, 136, 393 (bus village), and 161, and Bear Creek Recreation Area; removal of abandoned vehicles; restoration of wildlife food plots; restoration of areas that needed waterbars and seeding.

The energy and commitment that went into returning the site back to its near natural state is to be highly commended. All requests for needed restoration action and follow-up was met with a spirit of wanting to do the right thing for clean-up and restoration. The USFS resource coordinator met many times with various groups and individuals of the Rainbow Family (RBF) prior to, during, and after the gathering to coordinate and seek cooperation in reducing resource impacts and mitigate impacts from RBF activities.

The Resource Coordinator (RC) made numerous trips into Bear Creek Valley during the clean-up/restoration phase and when only 12 campers were left. Lists were made of what had to be done and given to members. Several walk throughs were made with RBF members to see what needed to be done and to what standard.

The RC spent several days walking out most of the trail system located on the plateau, low slope, and riparian positions. No uncovered latrines were found. One was found that did not have enough soil cover but was covered correctly the next day.

Litter and trash removal started on July 6th. The material was removed to three concentrated recycling centers. All material was examined and separated for recycling. Local organizations were contacted for the various materials and they came out and picked up the material. Remaining non-recyclable material was placed in large dumpsters to be hauled to a local landfill. Some material was taken home by members to ease the demand on local landfills. RBF fully met their obligation to remove all litter/trash material. All abandoned vehicles were removed.

One wildlife food plot required restoration. This plot was at the A Camp location. RBF contracted with the same contractor the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) uses to renovate food plots. The work met ANF standards and was completed in a timely manner. One other plot was impacted but it needed renovation prior to RBF use.

Approximately 60% of the main trails were located on existing Forest Service roads, historical logging trails and/or historical logging railroad grades. The main trail in the "Main Meadow" area was wide, bare of vegetation and compacted. RBF rented an aerator and ran this over most of the trails. It removed a core of soil about 3/4 inches wide and 1 to 2 inches deep. On these compacted areas, the seed catch and sprouting was greatest in these small holes. After being undisturbed for 3 to 4 weeks natural vegetation began to sprout. Some areas were too shady to plant, but the RBF took it upon themselves to seed some of these areas. Some existing waterbars were restored. One area of waterbars was not done correctly. Members re-did those water-bars. Kitchen Areas were aerated using shovels and picks. Bridging and stone crossings were removed to allow for natural drainage. Some observable traces of the sites occupation will remain until leaf fall. The RBF satisfactorily "naturalized" camping areas and kitchen sites by scattering rocks, scattering logs, and filling fire pits.

Bill Moriarity
Resource Coordinator

RESOURCE ASSESSMENTS

SOILS

It is estimated that 200 acres had some degree of soil resource impact.

Soil compaction, displacement, and some loss of topsoil were RBF gathering impacts to soil resources. Concentrations of people around kitchens, prayer pole, main circle, and on newly developed trails caused compaction and displacement in those areas. Rain during the gathering and the cumulative number of people caused the trails to widen and the use area around kitchens to grow. The impacts of compaction and displacement on the new trails will likely last for ten years. Secondary trails have remained narrow with some compaction. After one to two years they should not be noticeable.

RBF did a good job overall of managing use of riparian areas. Stream corridors and within 100 ft. of stream were not impacted until the time period of July 3 to 5. During this time the terrestrial impact was slight to moderate from camping and bank use.

Wetland was one of our first and main concerns. The RC had several meetings with "Focalizers" and councils to talk about placement of facilities and for educational purposes. The RBF moved their main circle to a plateau position to avoid wetlands. The RBF flagged out the main wetlands and had great influence on keeping people out of these areas. A small border of one wetland adjacent to the prayer pole was slightly disturbed. It is already sprouting back. Most wetlands served mainly as points of interest for nature observers.

Bill Moriarity
Soil Scientist

Rainbow Gathering at Bear Creek 1999

Ridgway Ranger District

Allegheny National Forest

Heritage Resource Summary

Rainbow Family Location

The area the Rainbow Family chose to hold their 1999 national gathering was located on the Bear Creek Watershed, in Highland Township, Elk County, PA. The Family Gathering, took place on the Ridgway Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest. They occupied approximately 5000 acres within the drainage system.

Archaeological Specialists

On June, 20, 1999 I became a member the Incident Command team as a Archaeological Resource Specialist along with Leslie Dyer, Ridgway District Archaeologist and Faith Duncan, Archaeologist from the Black Hills, Ranger District and Richard Kandare, Forest Archaeologist, of the Allegheny National Forest (ANF).

Background

All Federal agencies are mandated under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), to take into consideration their effects on Heritage Resources when instituting a Federal Undertaking. Since that time the ANF has met its responsibilities. Much of the Bear Creek, area had received various degrees of phase 1 archaeological coverage. These coverages were generally designed for timber harvesting purposes only. They are designed and managed by Interdisciplinary Management Teams, during the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act of 1979) process. This congruous management planning, in concert with adaptive archaeological reconnaissance surveys serves the ANF mission well. It limits the amount of possible impacts which could occur to archaeological resources during a Federal Undertaking (i.e. Timber harvesting). However, these surveys are chiefly sculpted to meet the objectives of the Forest Service, and are not designed to accommodate impacts of private developers, or non legal occupation of public property where subsequent impacts could occur.

The main area of Rainbow Family Gathering, occupied Ecological Land Types (ELT's) on which Forest Service activities usually would not occur. Preliminary phase 1 heritage surveys were conducted on these ELT's to consider the effects of Forest Service harvesting activities in adjacent areas. Albeit, Historic Railroad Logging Era sites were identified in these bottom land ELT's only for the purpose of understanding their relationship to the similar sites located on ELT's which could be affected by FS activities.

Consequently, these sites evaluations were not placed on a FS priority list for Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for possible inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places. The ANF Heritage Management Team has been working on a thematic approach to Historic Logging and Railroad sites. This approach is in early stages of development. The Bear Creek historic logging operation (circa 1925) is an important piece of the puzzle in understanding and developing a thematic scheme for the whole ANF. Could the ANF withstand the loss or impact the Bear Creek sites? It will quite some time before we know that answer. One could say, we have many fine examples of these site types on the ANF, and yes that is certainly true. However, the Bear Creek lumbering operation was one of Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company's largest operations.

Rainbow Family Effects on Heritage Resources.

The Rainbow Family deprived the public of it's opportunity to conduct an DOE which was uncontaminated. It will be many years before human and animal excrement will leach thoroughly from the soils safely enabling an archaeological evaluation. Furthermore, their presence and impact on the landscape has left permanent surface and subsurface soil displacement which will complicate future Archaeological studies. One example of their impact is; how will we know if we are excavating a rainbow

feature, a prehistoric feature, or historic logging feature. Carbon 14 dating samples may become contaminated with free carbon from the Rainbow land use. Carbon 14 dating generally run around \$400.00 to 500.00 a sample.

The Rainbow family used the old Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company's, rail system for much of their trail network. This gave them access to all the bottom land. The impact to the old rail grades was minimal. However, the heritage team was concerned about campsites being developed along the grades. These campsite locations were on much sought after land. Sought after for the same human ecological reasons which created the historic logging sites (i.e. proximity to water and flat terraces). Not all of the sites have been identified.

One site was shovel probed to confirm it's existence. Fragments of nails, whitewash were present. Buffer zones were established at the site to keep people from camping or setting up kitchens. One man set up a public shower on the site. I repeatedly asked him to move, as did the Rainbow Council, he refused. When I negotiated with him for a small amount of axle grease he needed and he moved five feet. (The grease was donated by a local garage and was not public property). Although he was still within the site boundary his impact to the site was minimized. As more Rainbow people gathered, prime real estate became harder to find. I knew that the best protection for this logging era site was to find a suitable tenant. A temporary Hare Krishna group had moved on site on July 1, 1999. I requested that no digging occur which they honored.

Around July 1, 1999 management strategies changed to educating the people about heritage resources, ecosystem management, and public health. Given the fact the Rainbow Family's refusal to comply with the Special Use Permit regulations, the Forest Service is forced into a swift reactionary mode dealing with natural and cultural resources. I discussed heritage site protection with many people. From these discussions I learned most people do mean well about land ethics. Notwithstanding, their cognition is convoluted as to what constitutes a heritage site and what does not. For that matter, I witnessed their same confused interpretation of knowledge with other resources.

Heritage Summary and Recommendations

The Rainbow Family Gathering 1999 occupied the Bear Creek Watershed, which contained known and unknown Historic Railroad Logging Era archaeological sites. They occupied at least one site and lightly trekked upon others. Damage was minimized at the occupied historic site by flagging buffer zones, bartering with one occupant and educating the other religious group.

It is recommended that no further activity occur at the site for a long period of time. The one tenant had a public shower set up at the site. It is my opinion that it would be a high health risk if archaeologists were to come into physical contact with the surface and subsurface. It is further recommended that the same extend to surrounding area which the Rainbow people occupied. Thousands of people used dug sewage pits throughout the landscape. Most of these locations are not able to be relocated.

It is not known what prehistoric resources may exist on the bottomland ELT's. These areas are usually not tested extensively by the Forest Service as we usually do not impact these areas in our undertakings.

It is inevitable that Rainbow Family's refusal to comply with regulations will impact a nationally significant heritage site. If not on the ANF then on another Forest.

John S. McLaughlin

Archaeologist

Bradford Ranger District



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Bradford
Ranger
District

Star Route 1, Box 88
Bradford, PA 16701
(814) 362-4613

Reply To: 1950

Date: January 20, 1999

Subject: 1999 National Rainbow Gathering

This letter summarizes wildlife related impacts/concerns associated with the 1999 rainbow gathering on the Marienville Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest.

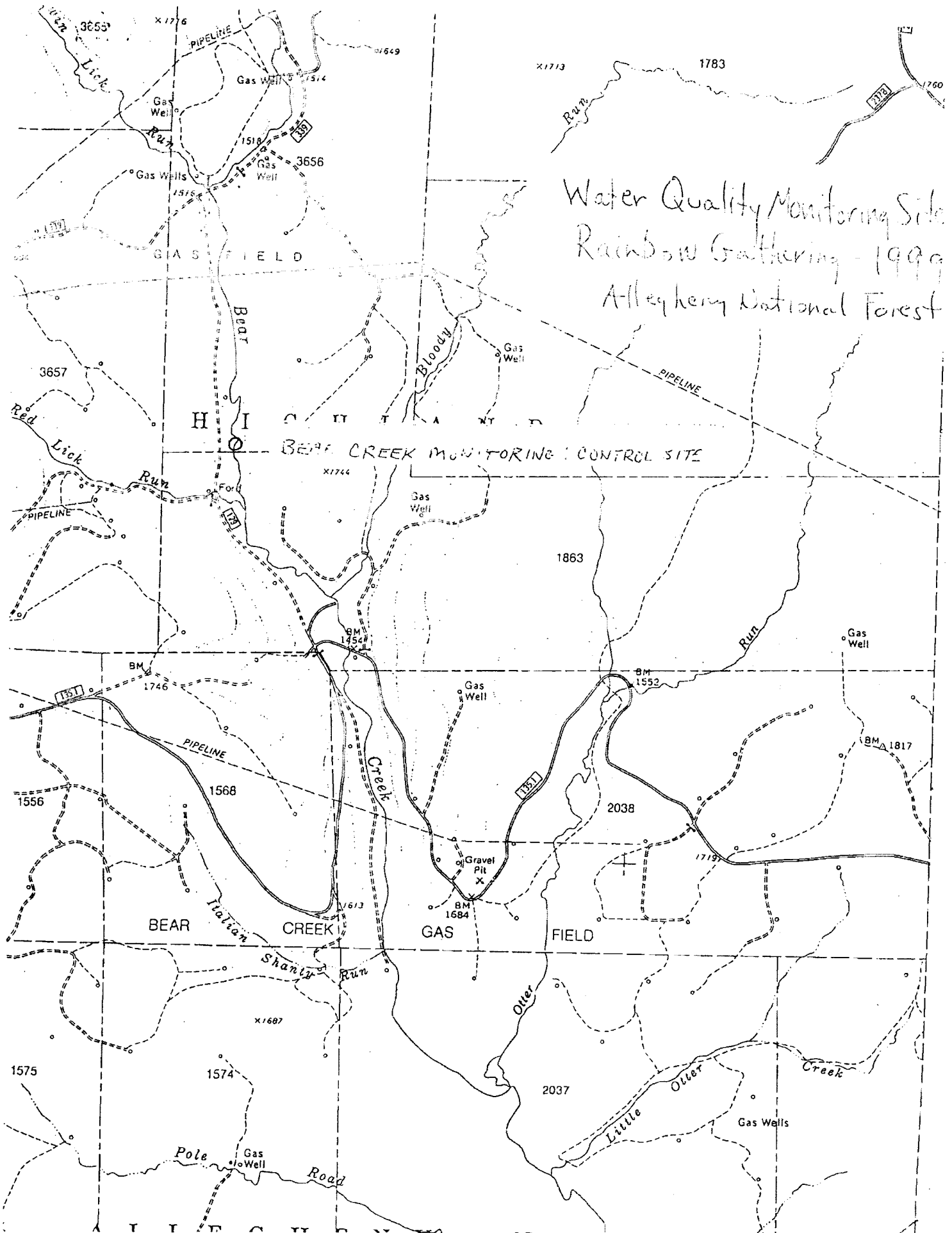
1. One of our most immediate concerns with the rainbow gathering, was related to potential conflicts and impacts to the timber rattlesnake. While there were numerous conflicts with rattlesnakes, including at least one family member being bitten, family members were for the most part tried to avoid conflicts. Critical periods for snakes include late September through April, when they could be disturbed during denning and when they are mating and bearing young (late July-August). While the rainbows were on site most of the summer, large numbers of family members occurred outside these critical periods and impacts consisted primarily of disturbance of foraging or basking snakes. While this undoubtedly disturbed individual snakes and resulted in behavioral avoidance of some foraging areas, these impacts are considered short-term in nature.
2. We were also concerned with potential impacts to sensitive habitats including wetlands and riparian areas, damage to spring seeps and possible damage to streambanks. Most family members were very sensitive to minimizing resource damage and high use areas such as kitchens and welcoming areas were for the most part set up in areas where impacts would be minimized. Sensitive areas were most affected by established trails and impacts included; two streamcrossings, which were disturbed for a distance of approximately 50 ft., an estimated quarter acre of disturbance at a spring seep and localized compaction of vegetation at a few wet areas along the bottom. Complete recovery to the disturbed streamcrossing and trampled vegetation in wet areas is expected. While recovery of disturbance of the spring seep may take several seasons, there are no anticipated long-term impacts to wildlife.
3. There was a concern that the mowed opening at "A" camp would be damaged. However the contractor hired by the family did an excellent job of restoration and no long-term impacts to the site occurred.

Most of the wildlife related impacts from the family gathering occurred in the form of short-term behavioral avoidance of wildlife using the area and impacts to species sensitive to disturbance such as turkey and red-shouldered hawk undoubtedly occurred. However large numbers of rainbows did not occupy the site until after most wildlife had completed nesting, brood rearing, fawning, etc.. As a result, no significant impacts to breeding or reproduction are anticipated.

Scott L. Reitz
Wildlife Biologist

Rainbow/Bear Creek/Water Quality Monitoring - 1999									
Fecal Coliform Count (per 100 ml)									
Date	Control			Downstream			Streamflow (cfs)		24 hour rainfall (") at MARIPOSA 14 miles W-NW of site
	Control	Middle	Downstream	Control	Middle	Downstream			
6-21-99	15	73	22	4.4	-	6	0.05"		
6-24-99	94	48	10	2.9	-	2.6??	0.00"		
6-28-99	420	1320	1650	7	-	14	0.63"		
7-1-99	15	40	13	5	-	5.4	0.00"		
7-6-99	86	178	143	6.2	-	6.7	0.00"		
7-8-99	101	172	124	meter broke	-	24.5	0.00"		
7-12-99	44	66	45	meter broke	-	meter broke	0.00"		
7-15-99	51	94	32	meter broke	-	meter broke	0.00"		
8-5-99	106	157	90	meter broke	-	7.3	0.40"		
8-20-99	43	70	44	meter broke	-	meter broke	0.65"		
9-2-99	27	23	35	meter broke	-	meter broke	0.00" - very low flow - 0.0095"		
<p>Fecal coliform counts appear to vary between sites. On most occasions and under low flow conditions, the control and middle sites are higher than the downstream site. A possible reason for the higher readings at the middle site is because this site is located just downstream of the main encampment, but that is not conclusive.</p> <p>The only time the downstream site had higher readings was the 6/28/99 sample, which occurred following a rainfall event on 6/27/99, and again on 9/2/99 (with no previous rainfall). The 7/5 sample followed a rain event, but unfortunately was 2 days afterward and thus may not show the levels that normally occur after a rain event. The same thing occurred as well with the water samples taken on 7/8 (rainfall measured from 7/6 and 7/7 was 0.95"), although flows still remained significantly higher than previous dates.</p> <p>It is difficult to make a determination that the increased number of people in the area caused an increase in the fecal coliform counts. The reason is that when the middle and downstream water samples showed elevated amounts of fecal coliform, so did the control. It should be recognized that not only can people cause increases in fecal coliform counts, but animals contribute as well.</p> <p>Just to provide some idea of the levels that became a concern, the State of PA (DEP) closes beaches to swimming when coliform counts exceed 200. This only occurred on one sample date, 6-28-99.</p> <p>Water samples taken before the Rainbows started gathering would have been beneficial to determine if the counts that were recorded were a result of the high number of people. This would have provided a background in which to compare. The 6/21 reading was taken when approx. 1000-1500 people were already at the site, and 2000 people on 6/24.</p> <p>It appears from the analysis that there will not be any long-term effects to water quality. In fact, it doesn't appear that there were any real short-term effects.</p>									

Water Quality Monitoring Site
Rainbow Gathering - 1999
Allegheny National Forest



LAW ENFORCEMENT

b7c

After July 8, Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers (LEO) assigned to the Rainbow incident were demobilized. [REDACTED] Region 9 LEOs were assigned to the incident area to assist Allegheny LEO and SLEO in managing the ongoing dispersal of the gathering.

These officers remained on duty in the incident area through July 14th. During this time period there was a steady flow of vehicles and people leaving the gathering site. Law Enforcement incidents were primarily limited to motor vehicle violations. By July 14, only about 125 cars remained at the site. The remaining LEOs were released on July 15.

In the weeks following the gathering, during the clean-up and removal period, few problems were observed. There were several minor acts of vandalism such as defacing of signs and painting on rocks in the gathering area. On July 30, the Allegheny LEO toured the site and advised all individual that remained that the gates on FR 339 and FR 161 would be locked on August 2. On August 2 the LEO checked these roads, found no vehicles behind the gates, and locked both closed.

A small group of family members remained at the welcome home site for a short period of time awaiting rides and auto repairs. By August 20, only two known persons remained at the site. These individuals were gone by August 28. A significant pile of trash was left at this site and had to be removed by the Forest Service.

LEO received reports of an individual still camping in the Bear Creek valley well into September and October. Several attempts to locate this individual were unsuccessful, however evidence suggested that there was still at least one individual camping in the area as late as mid- October.

In the aftermath of the incident there have been complaints made to Forest Service LEOs by the public that the Rainbow Family was allowed to get away with things that would never be tolerated from the general public. After discussion regarding overwhelming numbers and officer safety concerns many, but certainly not all, came to better understand the reasons behind the apparent double standard.

In late October a local man was trapping in the Bear Creek/Owl's Nest area. He trapped what he thought was the largest coyote he had ever seen. However, after taking the animal to a taxidermist it was determined that the animal was a wolf or perhaps a wolf/dog hybrid. The animal had been surgically neutered so was apparently someone's pet that had been lost or abandoned at the gathering. Officers had received complaints of a wolf being at the gathering tormenting other peoples pets.

Work related to the conclusion of this gathering continues. Cases are still going through the courts, phone calls are still coming in from people who are looking for property or other people that are supposed to have been at the gathering but are now lost. The work to bring this incident to a close goes well beyond the gathering itself or even the final clean-up. I wish the next officer who must endure this incident on his or her home unit the best of luck and will be happy to provide whatever assistance I might be able to.

[REDACTED]
Law Enforcement Officer

b6
b7c

Unified Command

USDA-Forest Service

PA State Police

Participating Agencies

Elk County Sheriff's Office

Elk County Emergency Services

Kane Community Hospital

Ridgway Ambulance Service

PA Dept. of Agriculture

PA Dept. of Health

PA Fish & Boat Commission

PA Game Commission

PA Dept. of Envir. Protection

Dickinson Mental Health

Forest County Sheriff's Office

Johnsonburg Police Department

Kane Police Department

McKean County Sheriff's Office

Ridgway Police Dept.

Sheffield Township Police

St. Marys Police Department

Warren City Police

Warren County Sheriff's Office

Incident Commander

LE&I

Safety Officer

Gene Smalley - NFS

Deputy

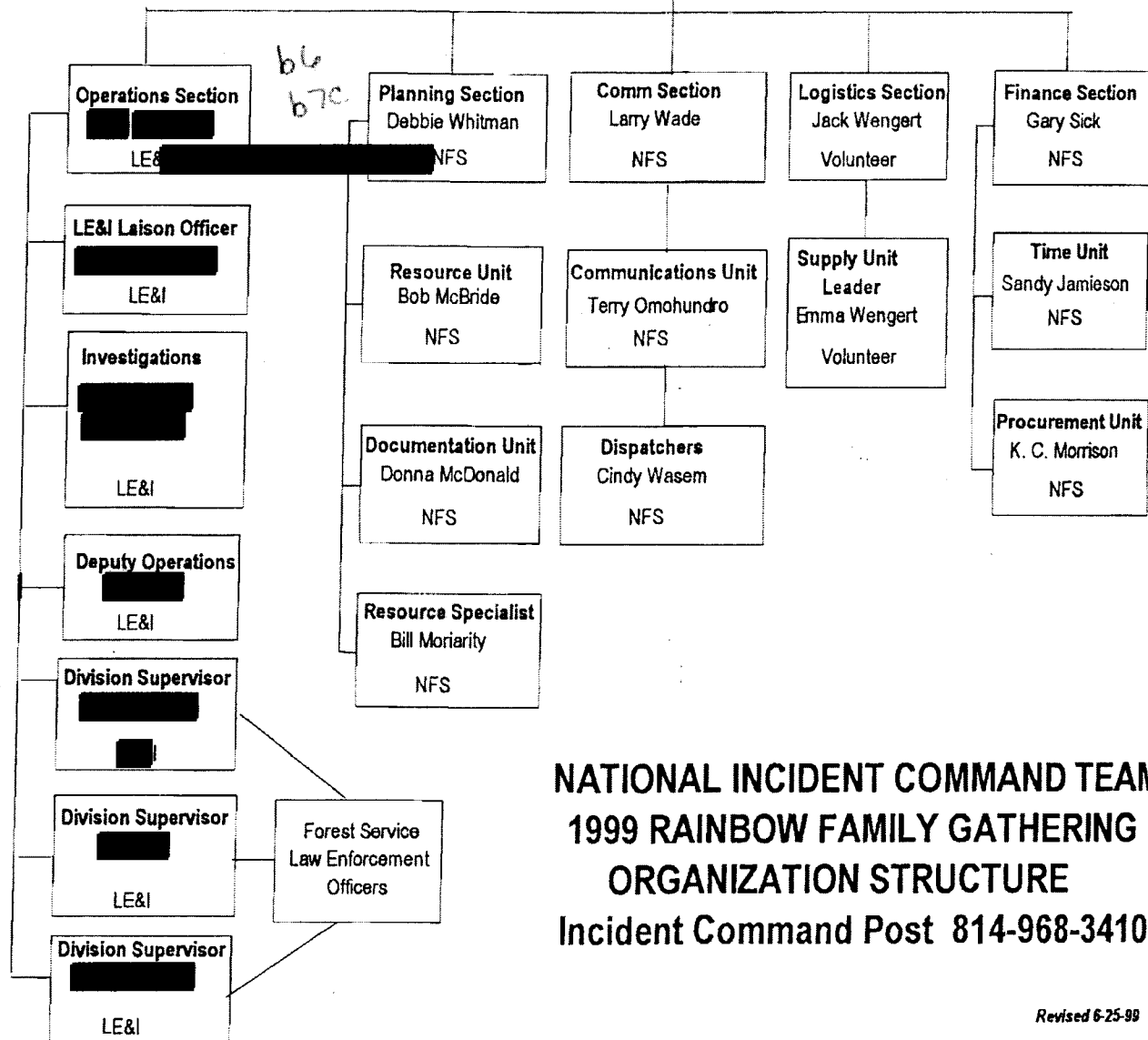
Hank Waiters

Liaison Officer

Leon Blashock - NFS

Information Officer

Rose Davis - NFS



**NATIONAL INCIDENT COMMAND TEAM
1999 RAINBOW FAMILY GATHERING
ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE
Incident Command Post 814-968-3410**

Revised 6-25-99

**Facsimile Transmission****National Center for Prevention Services**

Corporate Square

Atlanta, Georgia

TO:

Jane Smalley
Address:

Telephone No.

307-739-5450
Facsimile Telephone No.

FROM:

Elizabeth Talbot
NCPS Office or Division: DTBE/OD

10 2312 E-10
Building Room Mailstop

Atlanta, GA 30333

(404) 639-8120
x 8965

Telephone No.

(404) 639-8604
(404) 639-8600 (Alternate Fax No.)

Facsimile Telephone No.

DATE: Aug 12, 1999

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER):

SUBJECT: Ramdon

MESSAGE: Here's Dr Jenkins report and here is a copy of what I had done before I left to Africa. Feel free to pass it on to [redacted]

CDC Report

66
670



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)

Date: July 20, 1999

From: Elizabeth A. Talbot, MD, EIS Officer, International Activities, DTBE, NCHSTP
Christian Hanson, MS, NCIPC

Subject: EPI-AID #99-73: Public Health Surveillance and Outbreak Prevention and Control
at the Annual Gathering of the Rainbow Family, Allegheny National Forest, 1999

To: Director, Division of Applied Public Health Training, EPO

INTRODUCTION

Mass outdoor gatherings at festivals, refugee camps, and military encampments often occur in settings with inadequate sanitary facilities and potable water. Crowding and the low infectious dose of some pathogens (ex. shigella) magnify the potential for contamination of food and water, and outbreaks that have occurred in such settings have been explosive. In 1977, salmonella was implicated in an outbreak during a Navaho Indian Reservation gathering [Horwitz 1977]. In 1991, over 3,000 women who attended an outdoor music festival became ill with shigellosis [Lee 1991]. More than half of 12,700 persons who attended the 1987 Rainbow Family Gathering became ill with multi-drug resistant shigellosis, which spread to at least three states after the event [Wharton 1990].

BACKGROUND

The Rainbow Family of Living Light is a loosely-organized group descended from the counterculture movement of the late 1960's. Since 1972, the Rainbow Family has hosted an Annual Gathering for World Peace and the Healing of the Earth (the "Gathering") in a national forest during the first week of July. The purpose is to "pray for peace and discuss environmental and other contemporary political and social issues" (www.welcomehome.org). In the past, up to 27,000 people have attended this event.

Rainbow Family members organize and staff their own communal kitchens, a police force (the "Shantia Sena"), a group child care center (at "Kid Village"), and

Page 2 of 8

clinic ("CALM", or the Center for Alternative Lifestyles Medicine). In spite of efforts to manage their members' health care needs, individuals attending previous Gatherings have sought medical care in the surrounding communities. At the 1997 Gathering in Oregon, at least 74 persons were seen in the community medical center [personal communication, Pioneer Memorial Hospital], and, during the 1998 Gathering, 35 persons were seen in the community [personal communication, White Mountain Regional Medical Center, Arizona].

For the 1998 Gathering, the Rainbow Family chose the Allegheny National Forest, Elk County, in northwest Pennsylvania (figure 1). Members began arriving as early as mid-May. To manage this Gathering, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) organized, funded and led a National Incident Management Team (NIMT), with representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; the Elk County Emergency Medical Services (EMS); the PA Department of Health; the PA Department of Agriculture; local, state and federal law enforcement; the local mental health center; and from the community, including a physician from the St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, which was to be CALM's referral center. No representative from the Rainbow Family participated in the NIMT.

Because of the massive shigellosis outbreak associated with the 1987 Rainbow Gathering and the large number of participants anticipated, the Pennsylvania Department of Health requested federal public health assistance on June 22, 1999. The objectives were:

1. Assist the state of Pennsylvania in establishing and maintaining public health surveillance;
2. Advise on outbreak prevention and control measures.

METHODS AND RESULTS

Routine and emergency health care.

Within the Rainbow Gathering, health care was provided by a loosely-associated organization called "CALM": the Center for Alternative Lifestyles Medicine. CALM operated several small peripheral clinics and one large clinic ("CC" on figure 1). These clinics were staffed 24 hours a day. Although CALM did not require certification of its staff, it is believed that this organization was made up of traditional and alternative healers, including at least one medical doctor, one nurse practitioner, several herbalists, emergency medical technicians, faith healers and acupuncturists.

Page 3 of 8

The setting for this year's Gathering posed unique challenges for emergency medical services. The Gathering was located in a remote area that took more than 45 minutes to access by a brisk walk. The terrain was rough, including several streams with makeshift bridges and large rocks which became slick after rains. Radio and cellular phone transmissions were unreliable.

An emergency evacuation plan for life-threatening medical conditions included an evacuation site appropriate for a helicopter ("landing zone" on figure 1). It was estimated that if a person were in need of evacuation, it would take approximately one hour to get the person from the Gathering to the helicopter site. On July 5, a man was bitten by a rattlesnake and evacuated by helicopter according to the plan established.

Health surveillance within the Gathering.

Health surveillance at the Gathering was expected to be uniquely challenging. The site was secluded and collaboration with the Rainbow Family was difficult to establish because 1) there were no identified Rainbow leaders; 2) attendees used pseudonyms (Dragonfly, Lightwarrior, Nutmeg, etc.) and were difficult to locate; 3) attendees were mobile and transient within the Gathering; 3), the Rainbow Family has had a long-standing suspicion of federal employees; and 4) the NIMT did not permit public health workers into the Gathering without USFS escort, which was not always immediately available.

The CALM providers were unwilling to keep a record of presenting complaints of their patients, but did agree to stock the specimen cups for use if they perceived there was a diarrheal epidemic. They also agreed to permit the public health workers to visit the clinic regularly for an exchange of information, which was specified to be collegial and informal - taking notes was strongly discouraged.

We observed that the largest CALM clinic cared for at least 20 ambulatory patients a day. The most common presenting complaints of persons visiting CALM were soft tissue injuries (blisters, cuts), musculoskeletal injuries (falls, altercations), bites (especially spiders) and infections (body piercing sites, lacerations). Two persons in heroin withdrawal were "admitted" for supportive care. Many persons sought care for ectoparasites (lice, ticks, scabies).

We conducted an in-service on use of the stool sample collection system, endemic health risks (such as rabies and Lyme disease) and the causes of epidemic diarrhea. These in-services were each attended by approximately 10 CALM health care providers, who asked appropriate questions and expressed enthusiasm for regular lectures in future Gatherings.

Health surveillance in the local medical community.

The two health care centers most proximal to the Gathering (labeled A and B on figure 2) were visited. Medical Center A is a 90-bed hospital with a 24-hour emergency room. There is a combined medical-surgical intensive care unit with an 8-bed capacity. On-call nursing staff were available in case of extra need during the entire duration of the Gathering. There was a stock of rattlesnake anti-venom, and a small microbiology laboratory. If a stool sample was submitted for bacterial culture, the laboratory would be capable of in-house isolation of salmonella and *E. coli*, but utilized a reference or state laboratory for ova and parasite testing (such as for giardia and cryptosporidium), culture of yersinia, campylobacter and serotyping of *E. coli* (such as O157:H7). Medical Center B is an urgent care center, open 8:00 to 5:00 Monday through Saturday. The facility had a physician who referred any non-ambulatory cases to Medical Center A.

To avoid overwhelming local medical resources, arrangements were made to conduct any laboratory testing through the state health department. The laboratory was advised that in most cases, the patients tested would not provide their names or payment for this testing. The state health department laboratory provided a stock of Cary Blair (bacterial) stool culture and ova and parasite testing media. It was also decided that if large numbers of patients began accessing the local medical centers, the NIMT would set up a triage center (at the landing zone on figure 1). At the triage center, Gathering attendees could be evaluated, receive oral medication or be transferred to an available medical center for treatment.

To establish surveillance in the surrounding medical communities, all urgent care centers, emergency rooms and psychiatric centers in a 75-mile radius along access routes were contacted (figure 2). The Gathering and potential public health risks were explained to the supervising staff via a phone call and an explanatory letter and patient register (appendix 1). Staff were instructed to fax the register to the collaborating EMS center as soon as a patient was identified as either a Rainbow Family Gathering attendee or otherwise associated with the Gathering (ex. law enforcement officer injured while on duty for the Gathering). Several days after this initial contact, a follow-up call was made to the infection control nurse of each facility to ensure the system was understood and followed. A call was also made to each center at the end of the Gathering as a final reminder to submit patient registers.

Twelve medical facilities were contacted and agreed to participate. A total of 89 patient visits were submitted by five facilities. Only three of these visits were by Gathering support staff - the remainder were attending the Gathering. The

Page 5 of 8

average age of patients seen was 28.4 years (range 1-57) and 66% of patients were male.

The number and presenting complaints of patients seen are shown in table 1. The majority of patients presented because of apparent infections (22 or 25%). Six of these visits for infections (7% of all visits) were due to gastroenteritis. Etiologies of the gastroenteritides were not sought except in one case of bloody diarrhea (which was negative on testing for bacterial pathogens). Six visits for infections (7% of all visits) were due to pharyngitis. In two cases of pharyngitis, a rapid streptococcus test was positive. Fourteen patients (16.0%) presented with musculoskeletal injuries, related to falls on the trails, or incurred during altercations. The percentage of these that were alcohol- or drug-related was not known. Thirteen (15%) presentations were for soft tissue injuries, ten of which were a result of bites (including dog, spider or other insect, and rattlesnake). Eleven patients (12%) presented with problems that were classified as psychiatric. Although not a presenting complaint, lice were a common problem

Sanitation.

The event was held on riparian and forested land (figure 1). Drinking water was obtained by running plastic tubing from surface streams, which were also used for swimming and bathing. Four days before the official start of the event, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Health tested four surface water sites used for drinking. Five days after testing, results were available and showed the presence of coliforms (21-42/100 ml). In several of the more popular water sources, the Rainbow Family had placed filter systems, which were reported to have a filter capacity of 2 microns.

Food was prepared in eight communal kitchens and consumed by hundreds of persons per meal ("K" on figure 1). Food was also prepared and consumed by individuals and within family units. Most communal kitchens had common containers for hand-washing and several had displayed signs that encouraged hand-washing, but compliance was not enforced and thought to be sporadic. Food temperature was not measured.

The only sanitary facilities were shallow trench latrines. The USFS provided advice on their placement and construction. Most latrines had instructions for use (written on paper or cardboard and tacked to nearby trees), including the use of lime or ash to cover waste. Several of the more central latrines also had hand-wash stations, consisting of a gallon bottle of water with a capful of bleach.

Public health authorities designed, laminated and provided kitchens with signs which encouraged hand washing, water boiling and the exclusion of ill persons from working at kitchens. During on-site visits, kitchen staff (who were either long- or short-term volunteers) were encouraged to comply. The state agency which certifies commercial kitchens provided a "courtesy walk-through" of the larger kitchens.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RAINBOW GATHERINGS

Collaboration.

1. After the site has been identified for a gathering, the health authorities (local emergency medical services, medical facilities and the public health department) should be involved in the planning process. Ideally, health authorities who were involved in past Gatherings should be consulted, because the most significant challenge in 1999 was establishing trust with the CALM staff. Continuity would facilitate more effective collaboration. Given the remote location of many of the Gatherings, participating staff should be physically fit. Consideration should be given to including CALM representatives in the planning process.

2. Attempts should be made to resolve issues that were problematic at the 1999 Gathering, such as pet attendance, condom distribution and the use of pseudonyms during medical evaluation in the community.

Health surveillance.

1. Public Health workers should be available 24-hours a day and 7 days a week to discuss emerging health issues at the Gathering.

2. A triage center near the Gathering should be planned in the event of an outbreak so as not to overwhelm the local medical resources. Planning should involve the CALM clinics, EMS and the Forest Service.

3. Conduct surveillance in the surrounding community:

- Identify local medical facilities likely to treat Gathering participants (those facilities located along access routes within reasonable proximity)
- Contact the facilities' supervising staff to inform them of the Gathering and the need for health surveillance.
- Request that these medical facilities maintain a log of the type and number of Rainbow admissions (e.g. appendix 1).
- Laboratories should be informed that samples may be labeled with pseudonyms.
- If a lab is overburdened by the number of stool samples, arrange for the

state laboratory to process the samples.

- Periodic phone calls should be made to the infection control staff of these local medical centers as a surveillance reminder and to answer any questions that arise.

4. Conduct surveillance within the Gathering if possible:

- The CALM clinic should be provided with stool specimen cups. Conduct an in-service for CALM staff about proper procedure for stool sampling. Make arrangements to have samples transported and processed (locally or by the state).
- Encourage the CALM clinic to maintain a record of the presenting complaints of patients for early detection of an outbreak.

Health education.

1. Conduct an in-service tailored to members of the NIMT (for example, educate about lice, a common problem in the Rainbow Family, and describe Lyme disease risk and symptoms).

2. In 1999, it was common for nearby community residents to visit the Gathering site. Educate the public in the communities surrounding the Gathering about possible health risks associated with visiting the site. This might be in the form of a letter to the editor of the local paper.

3. Provide public health messages regarding these risks to the CALM staff and at the Rainbow Gathering information center.

4. Provide information on safe food handling to kitchen staff:

- Encourage kitchens to limit the number of persons preparing food and the amount of handling each food item undergoes
- Make running water available or, at a minimum, provide hand wash containers (such as milk jugs with bleach) to be placed at the latrines and kitchens
- Handwashing in common containers should be discouraged
- Persons with diarrheal illness should not work as food handlers
- Promote handwashing among food handlers
- Arrange kitchen walk-throughs to reinforce food safety practices

REFERENCES

Horwitz MA, Pollard RA, Merson MH, et al. A large outbreak of foodborne salmonellosis on the Navaho Indian Reservation: epidemiology and secondary

Page 8 of 8

transmission. Am J Public Health 1977; 67:1071-6.

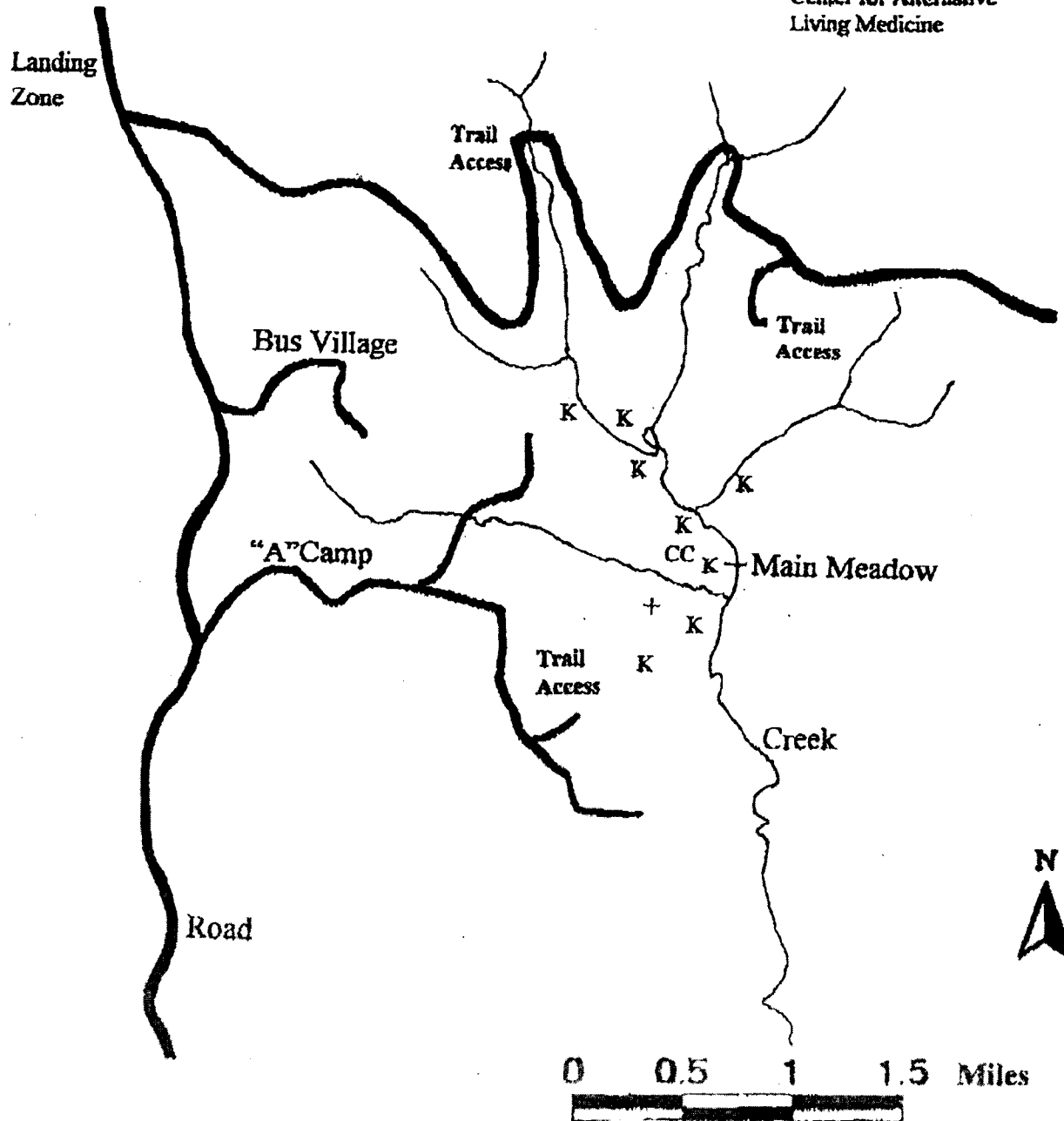
Lee LA, Ostroff SM, McGee HB, et al. An outbreak of Shigellosis at an outdoor music festival. Am J Epid 1991; 133 (6):608-15.

Wharton M, Spiegel RA, Horan JM, et al. A large outbreak of antibiotic-resistant Shigellosis at a Mass Gathering. J Infect Dis 1990; 162: 1324-8.

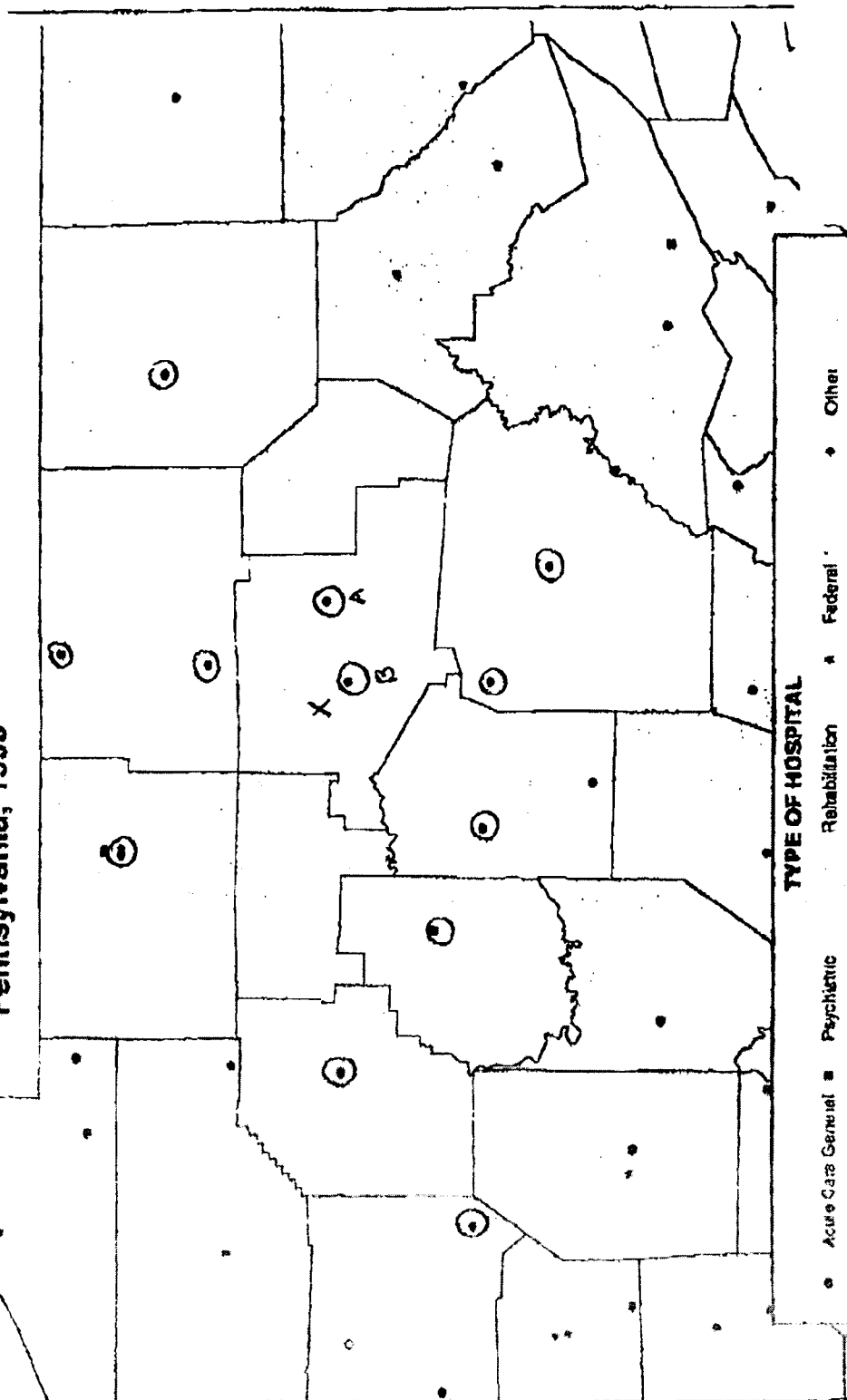
Rainbow Gathering 1999 Allegheny National Forest Site Map

Legend

- K Kitchen
- CC Child Care (Kid Village)
- + CALM
Center for Alternative
Living Medicine



**Figure 2. Area Medical Facilities
 Rainbow Gathering, Allegheny National Forest,
 Pennsylvania, 1999**



(pg 1 of 2)

TO: Northwest PA Emergency Rooms and Urgent Care Centers

FROM: The National Forest Service and the PA Department of Health

DATE: June 25, 1999

RE: Rainbow Family Gathering Health Monitoring

The 27th Annual Rainbow Family Gathering is scheduled for June 27 through July 10 outside Ridgway, PA, in the Allegheny National Forest. This event has been attended by 30,000 people or more in past years. Previous Gatherings have received considerable media attention, as concern is raised about the health of the event's participants, the secondary public health and safety issues of the surrounding communities, and the demand on local resources.

To date, there is no evidence of an outbreak of infectious disease with this Gathering. However, the National Forest Service and the PA Health Department are conducting health surveillance within the Gathering and in surrounding communities. Injuries, including dog bites and musculoskeletal injuries, and infectious diseases (especially food- and water-borne) are anticipated.

Accompanying this memo is the tally sheet all local clinical centers are using for surveillance. Please indicate whether the patient was attending the Rainbow Gathering or was otherwise affiliated with the Gathering (e.g. community member, or support staff), and record patient age, sex, diagnosis, and disposition. In cases of diarrhea, indicate if bacterial stool culture is pending, which may be appropriate in this unusual setting. Whenever a patient is added to the list, please fax the log to the National Forest Service's Incident Command Post at 814-968-3345. Feel free to call the National Forest Service at 814-968-3410, the Elk County State Health Center at 814-834-5351, or page 814-332-1376 with any questions, concerns or observations. Your participation is sincerely appreciated by the agencies involved in protecting the health and safety of both Gathering participants and local residents.

NEW CAPTION
Rainbow Gathering

DATE	ADMISSION #	AGE	SEX	R	RR	NATURE OF PROBLEM	DISPOSITION
6/7/99		18	F	✓		fell inj. left leg	OP
6/7/99		22	M	✓		fell inj. (R) leg	OP
6/13/99		21	M	✓		left ankle lac	OP
6/13/99		21	M	✓		pain inf. leg lacer	OP
6/16/99		34	M	✓		fell inj. left ribs	OP
6/13/99		25	F	✓		abd. pain ^{watkins} nausea	OP
6/14/99		21	M	✓		ratem/leg bite inf.	OP
6/14/99		21	M	✓		recheck of left ankle	OP
6/18/99		44	M	✓		BP. 202 mal. ll	sent to Brown Dr. Dingcong cancelled
6/20/99		18	F	✓		poss. spider bite eyelid	OP ^{2nd visit 6/23/99}
6/21/99		22	M	✓		throat injuries	OP
6/22/99		19	M	✓		puncture wound L foot	OP
6/23/99		23	F	✓		rash all over body	OP
6/24/99		26	M	✓		lac. below left eye	OP
6/25/99		22	F	✓		throat, forehead rash covering	OP
6/26		25	M	✓		back	OP
6/26		18	M	✓		pain @ upper malon	OP
6/27		37	F	✓		fell - injury @ foot ^{distal}	OP
6/28		19	M	✓		2nd visit swelling @ pain @ upper malon	OP
6-28		26	M	✓		wheeling of lac	OP
6-28		18	M	✓		pinpoint urticaria	OP
6-28		37	M	✓		congestion, pain	OP
6-28		21	M	✓		inj. @ hand	OP
6-29		41	M	✓		Rev dog bite / Suture wound	OP
6-29		35	F	✓		Chills diarrhea	OP

RR=RAINBOW PERSONNEL
RR=RAINBOW GATHERING
RELATED

new layout
Rainbow Gathering
Statistics

DATE	AGE	SEX	R	RR	NATURE OF PROBLEM	DISPOSITION
6/29	29	M	-		absent by age	OP
"	22	M	-		sore throat, chills	OP
"	20	F	-		throat pain, abs. pain	OP
"	28	F	-		Swollen (Forearm, See Personnel)	OP
6/30/99	20	M	-		sore throat, pain	OP
"	32	M	-		sore throat, pain	OP
"	37	F	-		sore throat, pain	OP
7/1	16	M	-		sore throat, pain	OP
7/2	47	F	-		Swollen @ side of face	OP
"	23	M	-		Dislocated @ shoulder	OP
"	41	M	-		Re. dog bite	OP
"	1	M	-		Cough, runny nose	OP
"	56	M	-		Spider bite @ ankle	OP
"	36	F	-		Rash	OP
"	18	F	-		Pain @ side	OP
"	20	M	-		Epigastric pain	OP
7/3/99	41	M	-		swollen @ eye	OP
"	20	F	-		both eyes red	OP
"	46	M	X		sore throat, pain	OP
7/4/99	20	M	X		sore throat, pain	OP
7-5-99	23	M	X		ingested mushrooms	OP
7-5-99	15	M	X		sore throat, pain	OP
7-5-99		M	X		dog bite left leg	OP
7-6-99	38	M	-		left ankle pain	OP
7-6-99	20	F	-		diff breathing Hyattsville	OP

RR-RAINBOW PERSONNEL
RR-RAINBOW GATHERING
RELATED

07/30/99 13:22 [] 66/20/99

8167811369

SMRNC ER

Rainbow Gathering

DATE	ADMISSION #	AGE	SEX	R	RR	NATURE OF PROBLEM	DISPOSITION
7-6/9		22	M	✓		sunburn belt ft	OP
7-6		18	M	✓		FB eye	OP
7-6		20	F	✓		diff breathing asthma	OP
7-6		12	M	✓		vomiting, diarrhea	OP
7-7		41	M	✓		Back injury	OP
7-7		20	M	✓		sun throat	OP
7-7		36	F	✓		inj @ leg	OP
7-7		19	M	✓		diarrhea, fever	OP
7-7		19	M	✓		diarrhea, fever	OP
7-8		41	M	✓		puncture wound @ foot	OP
7-9		8	M	✓		tick @ scrotum	OP
7-13		55	M	✓		Rain in @ ears - neck	OP
7/15		28	F	✓		cramping 7/2 this ^{pregnant}	OP
7/17/99		20	F	✓		prob. exposed, bite cramps diarrhea, stomach	OP

R=RAINBOW PERSONNEL
 RR=RAINBOW GATHERING
 RELATED

07/30/99 13:22 04/07 NO:376

8147811369

SNRMC ER

SHRMC - Emergency Department
Rainbow Gathering Statistics

Date	Age	Sex	R*	RR	Diagnosis	Disposition
6/12/99	24	M	*		Strep Throat	Discharged
6/12/99	23	F	*		Strep Throat	Discharged
6/13/99	---	M	*		Hemolysis	Ref. Salvation Army
6/17/99	40	M	*		Abd. Pain	Discharged
6/17/99	34	M	*		General Paresis	Air Trans. AOH
6/18/99	23	F	*		Vaginal Bleeding	Discharged
6/19/99	46	M	*		GI Bleeding	Admitted
6/21/99	41	M	*		Infected Dog Bite	Discharged
6/22/99	41	M	*		Recheck Dog Bite	Discharged
6/23/99	19	F	*		Gastroenteritis	Discharged
6/24/99	34	M	*		Paresis R. leg.	Discharged
6/26/99	36	M	*		Abrasions (Police Officer)	Discharged
6/26/99	18	F	*		Spider Bite	Discharged
6/26/99	40	M	*		Abd. Pain	Discharged
6/26/99	22	M	*		Insect Bite	Discharged
6/26/99	44	M	*		Pain L. Foot	Discharged
6/28/99	19	M	*		Cellulitis/Insect Bite	Discharged
6/28/99	40	M	*		Abd. Pain	Discharged
6/28/99	34	M	*		Headache	Discharged
6/28/99	6 m.	F	*		Fever/Eurache	Discharged
6/28/99	29	F	*		Medical Clearance/Prison	Elk County Jail
6/29/99	48	M	*		? Stress Fr. Foot	Discharged
6/30/99	17	F	*		Recent Fr. Wrist-Pain	Discharged
6/30/99	36	F	*		Contact Dermatitis	Discharged
7/1/99	22	F	*		R Otitis Media	Discharged
7/1/99	27	F	*		Cervical Adenopathy	Discharged
7/1/99	20	F	*		Metorrhagia	Discharged
7/1/99	24	M	*		MVA- Multiple Trauma	Admitted
7/1/99	24	F	*		MVA- Multiple Trauma	Trans- HamovAmb
7/1/99	26	M	*		Spider Bite- Sepsis	Admitted

* "R" indicates that the patient is a Rainbow Gathering participant. "RR" indicates that the patient was otherwise associated with the Gathering, such as community member or law enforcement.

07/30/99 13:22 66/03/07 NO:376

81478181369

SHRMC ER

SMRMC Emergency Department
Rainbow Gathering Statistics

Date	Age	Sex	R*	RR	Diagnosis	Disposition
7/2/99	18	F	*		Back Pain	Discharged
7/3/99	47	M	*		Dehydration	Adm. Observ.
7/3/99	41	M	*		Cellulitis R eye	Trans Presby*Gr. C
7/3/99	23	F	*		Asthma	Discharged
7/3/99	18	M	*		Contusion R Knee	Discharged
7/3/99	39	M	*		? Fracture R Ankle	Discharged
7/3/99	46	M	*		Cellulitis R Foot	Admitted
7/3/99	25	M	*		Lac L Hand	Discharged
7/4/99	22	M	*		Schizophrenia	Obs. in ER
7/4/99	39	M	*		Pain L Ankle	Discharged
7/5/99	22	F	*		Facial Edema	Discharged
7/5/99	46	F	*		Severe Jaw Pain	Discharged
7/5/99	20	M	*		Tietz Syndrome	Discharged
7/5/99	43	F	*		Severe Headache	Discharged
7/5/99	27	F	*		Acute Psychosis	302 Ridgeview
7/6/99	23	M	*		Gastritis	Discharged
7/6/99	17	F	*		Situational Adjustment	Discharged
7/6/99	26	F	*		Lightening Strike	Discharged
7/7/99	33	M	*		Assaulted	Discharged
7/7/99	44	M	*		L Flank Pain	Discharged
7/7/99	22	M	*		Psychotic Episode	302 Ridgeview
7/8/99	19	M	*		Dehydration-Asthma	Discharged
7/8/99	21	M	*		302 Clearance	302 Ridgeview
7/9/99	28	F	*		Head Injury	Discharged
7/11/99	21	F	*		Head Injury	Discharged
7/12/99	17	F	*		Sinusitis/Bronchitis	Discharged
7/12/99	70	M	*		Cardiac Arrest	Morgue
7/14/99	49	M	*		Mandibular Tumor	Discharged
7/15/99	19	F	*		Sore Throat	Discharged
7/16/99	36	F	*		R Leg Sprain	Discharged

* "R" indicates that the patient is a Rainbow Gathering participant. "RR" indicates that the patient was otherwise associated with the Gathering, such as community member or law enforcement.

07/30/99 13:22 92/30/99 06/07 NO:376

696181781478

SMRMC ER

AUG-19-99 04:05pm From-CDC NCHSTP DTBE

+4046388604

T-818 P.07/18 F-888

Rainbow Gathering Statistics

* = "R" indicates that the patient is a Rainbow Gathering participant. "RR" indicates that the patient was otherwise associated with the Gathering, such as community member or law enforcement.

8147817369

SMRMC ER