

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/INFORMATION SECTION

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the Rainbow Incident Information Office, outlined in the Delegation of Authority, are typical Incident Information tasks. Some of the objectives of the Information Office include:

- Provide for internal and external information exchange through a Communications Plan.
- Manage media contacts within the framework of established agency policy.
- Ensure agency cooperators, local officials, and the public are kept informed as to the progress of the event.

OPERATIONS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Communication Plan - A meeting, prior to the National Incident Management Team's relocation to West Virginia, was held with the Public Affairs Office for the Monongahela National Forest. Agreement was reached concerning information assignments and responsibilities. The Communication Plan was drafted and sent to the local Forest Public Affairs Officer for review and approval. The Incident Commander also approved the Communication Plan.

The staffing of the Rainbow Incident Information Team included two Type II Information Officers, one from the Savannah River Site (South Carolina) and the other from the Washington Office. District personnel helped to answer questions about the local area and in particular questions pertaining to the environmental aspects of the Cranberry site. The local Forest Public Affairs Officer was very helpful and had many contacts in the local community and with state and federal elected officials. She provided advice and insight regarding community relations as well as suggestions on improving internal and external communications.


The Information Office was set-up at the Inn at Snowshoe. The Inn also housed the other sections of the NIMT and the Incident Command Post.

- Internal Communications -- The Information Office provided a Rainbow Daily Briefing to the Washington Office, the Monongahela National Forest, and the R-9 Regional Office. Information in the briefing concerned law and resource operations. Briefing information included daily vehicle counts, provided by law enforcement, and assessments of resource conditions, provided by permit

Conclusions

I believe that the objectives set for the overall management of the incident which was based on the direction in Delegation of Authority were met by the Incident Management Team, Forest and cooperating agencies. All law enforcement, special use administration, and resource protection operations were conducted in a safe and efficient manner. Internal and external communications were outstanding and the Unified Command System worked extremely well. The permit administration, within the terms and conditions of the permit was excellent. Resource concerns/ impacts were mitigated or planned for rehabilitation.

Don Palmer
Planning Section Chief



administrators. The daily briefing, distributed from June 14 through July 6, was intended to be of limited distribution and was approved by the Incident Commander before forwarding. The Monongahela National Forest sent out a number of updates to its own employees while the Information Office provided the forest with a Rainbow question and answer sheet for forest employees. Information Office personnel attended shift briefings to update law enforcement personnel on expected media visiting the gathering and to remind the officers to be careful of any offhand remarks that could be misconstrued by onlookers. Daily information also was sent to the Washington Office Media Desk.

- External Communications – The forest website was used to share info about the Rainbow Family gathering to a wide audience. West Virginia's Congressional Delegation was included in the Daily Briefing mailings. The District Rangers in Richwood and Marlinton covered the trap lines that included the communities of Richwood, Webster Springs, Marlinton and Hillsboro. Three Unified Command meetings were organized and attended. One meeting was June 14, one June 23, and the last one on June 30. Agencies attending the meetings included: West Virginia State Police, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Marshals Service, Elkins Police Department, and Pocahontas County Commissioners, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Pocahontas County Health Department, and Pocahontas County Memorial Hospital. A meeting of community and business leaders was held June 17 in Elkins. Some of the organizations represented included: Kroger, Davis Memorial Hospital, Chamber of Commerce, and several local banks. The purpose of all the meetings was to capture the concerns of local organizations and communities and to determine ways to share and use resources more efficiently.

The Forest Service conservation message also was shared through the Gauley District Biologist's talk to the children at the gathering in Kiddie Village. A Forest Service bulletin board was set-up at the Rainbow Family's Welcome Center. Information such as protecting your campsite from bears was listed, in addition to information concerning health (personal hygiene) and environmental protection.

Four press releases were developed and distributed. One concerned the signing of the noncommercial group use permit; another alerted readers to the recreation opportunities on the Monongahela despite the presence of the Rainbow gathering; the third was an update of the gathering event; and the final was the conservation education efforts of the Gauley District Wildlife Biologist in Kiddie Village. The Forest Supervisor reviewed each release to ensure accuracy and inclusion of forest messages in the release.

Interviews with newspapers, radio, and television stations were coordinated through the Lead Information Officer. Information concerning these interviews is shown in the table below.

MEDIA CONTACTS	
Television	Print
WBOY NBC Clarksburg	Charleston Gazette, Charleston
WCHS/FOX Charleston	The Intermountain, Elkins
WOAY Beckley	The Exposition-Telegram, Clarksburg
WDTV Bridgeport	Roanoke Times, Roanoke, VA.
Videographer W.VA. PBS Morgantown	AP, Morgantown
Radio	Pocahontas County Times, Marlinton
WAJR Morgantown	Pittsburgh Post Gazette, Pittsburgh, PA.
WVMR Dunmore	Cleveland Free Times, Cleveland, OH.
West Virginia Public Radio Morgantown	

VIP Visits – There were several visitors attending the gathering. Below is a table showing tours completed for the gathering.

TOURS CONDUCTED	
John Twist, Forest Service liaison to USDA Under Secretary of Agriculture	
██████████ WO Deputy Director of Law Enforcement	
John Reedy, Special Assistant to Mark Rey, Under Secretary of Agriculture	
██████████ WO Director of Law Enforcement	

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Managing the Media - Effective communications between the Incident Information Section and media were extremely difficult in the early stages of the Incident. The communications problem was exacerbated by the lack of cell phone coverage in the area. Additionally the physical distance between Glady Fork and the ICP Headquarters made it very difficult for one Information Officer to cover law enforcement actions in the vicinity of Glady Fork, yet satisfactorily field media inquiries at the ICP. Although all calls from media outlets to the Team were returned, the contact often was too late to impact the story. Consequently, the media began to turn to other sources to gather their information.

Two Information officers and the designation of an agreed upon gathering site improved the opportunity to effectively provide and coordinate the Team's messages for the media. With one Information Officer stationed at the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center, located adjacent to the Rainbow gathering, media could easily contact us. The media began to look to the Team as one of their primary sources of information. With the permit issue settled, media interest began to be directed to the Rainbow Family.

Media interest was highest during the following events: the closure of Glady Fork (June 14); the signing of the permit (June 19) for the Cranberry Site; the court cases (June 28) related to the violation of the occupancy/use rule; the July 4 Rainbow Family gathering; the court cases heard on July 5, and the rehabilitation effort (post July 4) associated with the Cranberry site.

Some of the most often asked questions from the media were:

Why is a noncommercial group use permit required and what does it entail?

The Cranberry site also appears to be environmentally sensitive. Why was the Cranberry area offered as an alternative?

What are some of the impacts local communities can expect?

Can you give a rundown of the court cases and their disposition?

Local Officials, Agency Cooperators, and Public – Ensuring that local officials, agency cooperators, and various publics were kept informed about the progress of the event was accomplished by different organizations. The NIMT organized and conducted three Unified Command meetings (held at West Virginia DOT and Shavers Fork Fire Department [2]) where issues and concerns were discussed and recorded. One community meeting in Elkins (City Hall) also was held to allow community and business leaders to express their concerns. Forest personnel worked to inform local government officials, forest users, state and federal delegations about the status of the gathering and potential problems for local government. State and Federal legislative delegations were sent daily Rainbow briefings. Law enforcement coordinated and directly cooperated with the West Virginia State Police and the Pocahontas County Sheriff's Department. The predominant question from many government officials was how they would pay for some of the services provided for the Rainbow Family gathering, e.g., trash disposal, unpaid hospital bills. Recommendations were offered as to how to mitigate some of the gatherings' impacts, e.g., Cooperative Law Enforcement agreements.

The goals of the Communications Plan were met.

Recommendations/Observations

1. Add an additional IOF (at least at the IOF2 level) to the Team right up front. The level of media interest will be high, especially if they are aware of the conflict occurring in past years. At the end of two weeks the additional IOF position could be re-evaluated to determine if it is still needed. Ideally the two person IO Team should consist of an experienced member and someone who will take the lead position the following year. In a situation where one side is feeding the media information about what is happening "on the ground", it is imperative we also have someone in the same location to counter any ludicrous claims. The lack of cell phone connections really hamstrung us.
2. New folks on the team need to be told what to bring, i.e., vehicle, equipment, clothing. Some incidents will rent equipment (e.g., computer, printers); some will not. The IOF person will need to bring a laptop, a compatible printer, and direct access to an e-mail account.

3. Ensure information distributed within the Team is available to all members.
4. When there is only one daily local newspaper and the reporter assigned to cover the Rainbow gathering refuses to even consider the Team's messages, it is difficult to get your positive side out to the public.
5. If possible, prepare more detailed information to give to the Rainbow Family as to why some areas are environmentally sensitive and should not be an event site. This assumes the Rainbows are willing to sit down and commit to a particular area ahead of time. If not, the time to do this will never be available if the same permit scenario is played out again next year.

COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY RAINBOW EVENT FOR 2005

Team arrived in Roanoke VA. On 6 June, 2005, I arrived a couple of days earlier, ordered Radio Equipment that I thought may be needed for this years operation. The location of the gathering was not known at this time.

On June 7, 2005 it was determined that the gathering would be in West VA. Exact location was unknown. I contacted the local technician, Bruce Cross for locations of forest controlled sights and access. We scouted the area to make an assessment of terrain and possible repeater locations. The team and L.E.O's changed locations to Snowshoe, West VA.

We ordered lines and began setting up phones and DSL Communications for the Team. A number of Rainbow's were camping in the Elkins area and communications was required for both that area and I.C.P. We began setting up Repeaters to accomplish this task.

The site owner of for the repeater to cover the Snowshoe area had concerns regarding the quiet zone. Frank Ealand and Tom Thomison, both of the Washington Office telecom staff handled the quite zone issue.

We issued hand held VHF radios to the assigned L.E.O.'S and found out that most of the vehicles did not have user programmable Mobile Radios. Radios that were installed in most of the vehicles, either we did not have the proper software and cables or attempts to program them with what we did have failed.

Calls were made to local commercial shops to see if they had the capability and if so what were the costs. It was determined that the local shops could reprogram the Midland and Kenwood radios for a cost of approximately \$800 and that they were not able to reprogram the Motorola radios.

Calls were made to attempt to obtain user programmable radios from Forest Service locations. Some were found in California and were shipped to my location Via Fed EX.

Upon their arrival the radios were temporarily installed in the needed L.E.O. vehicles. I would recommend that in the future all L.E.O.'s have at least one Field Programmable Mobile Radio installed in their vehicle. Without a Field Programmable Mobile Radio it would have been extremely difficult to obtain a high quality of communications needed for them to perform their jobs and could have resulted in a safety risk. It would have also caused all radios to be reprogrammed a second time as another repeater frequency had to be added as the rainbow group moved south.

During this time contact was made with the Local State Police and the Dispatch location would be established at their office in Elkins. Contact with the state technician was made

and our command Frequency was placed in the radio at that location. L.E.O.'S could now run 28, 29 reports as needed.

The exact location of the Gathering was still not known however, there was an indication that they maybe going south of Snowshoe, VA. Another Repeater would be required to handle this area. One additional VHF Repeater with link and a UHF repeater was ordered.

Upon arrival of the equipment it was installed in an area called Sharps Knob. The UHF repeater was installed on Snowshoe Mountain as it had line of site to all existing repeater locations. The existing repeaters were then switched over to repeat linking instead of simplex to accommodate the added equipment.

Upon a decision and signing of a permit in the area called Cranberry the repeater at Sharps Knob was removed and relocated in the gathering area. All four repeaters were linked together, so no matter where communications were needed, from the Gathering site to the Elkins area, it would be covered and all communications would be heard by all no matter of their location.

There was an issue when the Rainbows installed a repeater site on the ground in the gathering area. After a discussion with the Rainbow Communication person, and research if FCC and Forest Service lands policies, it was decided by the Forest and Permit administrator to amend the Permit to include this. This should be part of the Permit on Future Gatherings.

From this point on, communications, with only small problems, which were resolved quickly and for the most part ran smoothly.

Frank Ealand was my assistant and his expertise and knowledge were extremely helpful and appreciated. .

Chuck Howard
N.I.M.T. Communications Chief



Radio Type/Cache	Channel	Function	Frequency/Tone	Assignment	Remarks
King	1	COMMAND 1 Direct	AS ASSIGNED	ALL L.E.O.	CAR TO CAR DIRECT
King	2	COMMAND 1 REPEAT	AS ASSIGNED	ALL L.E.O.	NORTH AREA AND TO RUN 28.29 FROM STATE POLICE
King	3	COMMAND 2 REPEAT	AS ASSIGNED	ALL L.E.O.	I.C.P. AREA AND TO RUN 28.29 FROM STATE POLICE
King	4	COMMAND 3 REPEAT	AS ASSIGNED	ALL L.E.O.	CRANBERRY AREA AND TO RUN 28.29'S FROM STATE POLICE
King	5	NATIONAL LE	168.025	ALL DIVISIONS	
King	6	STATE POLICE	158.910	ALL L.E.O.	TONE 6
King	7	TAC ALL F.S.	163.100	AS ASSIGNED	
King	8	NALMARS	155.475	ALL L.E.O.	
King	9	MONOGAHELA FOREST NET	168.675 170.500	AS NEEDED	<u>Tone 1</u> Grindstone / Stuart, <u>Tone 2</u> Olson / Sharp <u>Tone 3</u> N Mt / Red Oak, <u>Tone 4</u> Spruce / Briery <u>Tone 5</u> Meadow Creek

5. Prepared by (Communications Unit)

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ GWARD COMMUNICATIONS



2005 NATIONAL RAINBOW FAMILY GATHERING

SPECIAL USE ADMINISTRATION SECTION

JULY 6, 2005

NOTE: A DETAILED CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IS ENCLOSED WITH SUMMARY. OTHER SPECIAL USE ADMINISTRATION DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE, IS INCLUDED AS SECTION G IN THE IN THE INCIDENT FINAL PACKAGE BINDER.

Introduction

In 1995, a revision of regulations at 36 CFR 251 and 261 requiring noncommercial groups of 75 or more persons to have a special use permit to gather on National Forest System land was implemented. The first permit for a national Rainbow Family of Living Light (RFL) gathering was issued in 2003. In 2004 the permit was signed by a "ghost signer" that was not available on site so that the permit administrators could meet with them and convey any noncompliance issues to them. This caused major problems in administering the NCGU permit.

Prior to the 2005 event, the noncommercial group use permit application was changed to require that the contact signing the permit was available from the date the application is signed until it is accepted, rejected, or denied; and the noncommercial group use permit was changed to require that at least one of the persons signing the permit on behalf of the holder is available to the Forest Service from the date the permit is executed until the use authorized by the permit has concluded.

2005 Special Use Permit Application

An application was received on June 14th for a site adjacent to the Otter Creek Wilderness Area near Glady Fork, just east of Elkins, West Virginia. This application was not submitted prior to 75 people being on site and the application was incomplete. On June 15th, the Forest Supervisor responded in writing to the applicant formally denying the application. Besides the fact that it was submitted after 75 people were on site and the application was incomplete, the permit was denied because of the presence and potential effect on 5 federally listed threatened and endangered species.

The Forest as well as the Special Uses Section Chief, worked daily with the Family to show them a total of 5 additional sites that the Forest felt would not only meet the criteria in the CFR, but also meet the needs of the Family. On June 19th, the Family held a council and decided to leave the present site and hold the gathering at a site on the Gauley Ranger District at a site just across from the Cranberry Nature Center. An application was submitted by [REDACTED] on June 19th and a permit was executed that day for the site. [REDACTED] was also the lone signer of the permit. The start date of the permit was June 19th with an expiration date of July 30th to allow for cleanup and rehabilitation of the authorized site.

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