

**2005 National Rainbow Family Gathering
Monongahela National Forest
June 10 – July 7, 2005**

Planning Section

Introduction

The Planning Section is responsible for five primary areas surrounding the management of the 2005 National Rainbow Family Gathering. These areas include (1) incident planning (IAPs), (2) incident mapping, (3) briefing, strategy, and unified command meeting facilitation, (4) natural resource management, mitigation and rehabilitation coordination and (5) incident documentation and final report coordination. The following is a summary of the planning section operations and accomplishments.

Planning Operations/ Accomplishments

(a) Plan and develop agendas, facilitate shift briefings, daily (2-3 shift briefings daily) strategy/ information meetings, incident action planning, unified command and team meetings. The incident briefing schedule was as follows:

| Meeting | Objective/ Comments | Attendees | Time |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Strategy and Information Meetings | Overview of previous and current management situation (27 meetings) This meeting was attended by all NIMT members and WO, Regional, Forest, and District representatives and line officers when on-site. | NIMT, WO, RO, Forest, District Ranger | 0700 |
| IAP Briefing | Daily assignments, objectives, safety, etc (■ total briefings) | ■ | ■ |
| Unified Command | Briefing to and input from all cooperators, discussion of needs, objectives, issues and concerns; primarily attended by federal, state, county, and local police and EMS agencies. (2 meetings) Attendance ranged from 20-45 in individuals. | IC, Team, Cooperators | 1000 - 1200 Thursday from 6/23-6/30 |
| Strategy/ Planning Meeting | Develop strategy, resource and special assignments, prepared 26 Incident Action Plans | IC, Operations and Special Uses Section | 1800 |

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|--------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| | | Chief, and Safety Officer as needed | |
| Incident Close- out meeting | The purpose of this meeting was to transfer the management of the gathering back to the Gauley Mountain Ranger District and the Monongahela National Forest. Each section gave a brief summary of their operations, and recommendations for future gatherings. Forest and District personnel asked questions for clarification and gave their thoughts on the NIMT performance in managing the gathering | Forest Supervisor, Acting District Ranger and the NIMT IC, and Section Chiefs | 7/17/05 @ 1000 |
| | | | |

(b) Incident Action Planning

Developed and updated the daily incident action plans (26 IAP's completed). Divisions included Day, Afternoon, Night, Mounted Unit and Special Use Administration Shifts. It should be noted that officers were be given a notebook at the beginning of the assignment with an original IAP. Only updated information was passed out at daily briefings for inclusion into the officer notebook. Special Use Administrators where also provided daily IAP's and updates. The following information was included in the IAP:

- Incident Cover Sheet
- Incident Objectives (ICS-202)
- Organizational Assignment List (ICS-203)
- Division Assignment list (ICS-204)
- Medical Plan (ICS -206)
- Daily Safety Messages
- Communication Plan
- Site Visitation Guidelines for Resource Incident Workers
- Officer Advisories
- Bolo's
- Special Use Permit, Application, Operating Plan and Correspondence
- Incident, Vicinity, Forest, and State, and resource/ structure maps
- Contact List
- Officer Guidebook (covered in Operations Section)

Note: Copies of all of the Incident Action Planning information is located in the Incident Final Package. A copy of this package is located at the Washington Office, R-9 Regional Office, and the Monongahela National Forest Supervisors Office.

(c) Incident Mapping

The planning section worked with and received excellent support from the Forest GIS Coordinator. This resulted in extremely high quality and timely map production. A variety of maps were produced for the incident and were revised as needed to add addition information which was primarily the identification and GPS location of kitchens, information areas, primary camps, springs and waterlines, slit trenches, compost pits, gray water pits, primary camps and trails. All maps were produced in color including Display Maps (28"x36" and 16" by 24") and Incident Action Plan Maps (11"x17"). The following is a list of maps produced for the incident:

- a. General vicinity and location map (8 1/2"x11"),
- b. Area Topographic Map,
- c. Closure Order Maps (2 total),
- d. Ortho and Topographic IAP and Display Maps,
- e. Special Use Permit Area Maps,
- f. EMS pick-up points and Landing Zone Maps,
- g. Resource and Special Use Administration Ortho and Geographic Maps,
- h. Forest Visitor and West Virginia Highway maps were also provided to patrols, resource specialists, and special use administrators.

A display of Incident maps and objectives was developed and maintained at the ICP and at the command post at the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center to be used for daily briefings and orientation of agency officials, and other Federal, State, County and local law enforcement and emergency management agencies.

(d) Unified Command

The Unified Command process and agenda was very successful this year. There were on 2 scheduled unified command meeting held this year compared to 6 the previous year. The reason less meetings were scheduled was due to the fact that state and local law enforcement and EMS set up command posts adjacent to the Forest Service operations trailer at the Cranberry Mountain Nature center allowing for on-going planning and coordination. The scheduled Unified Command Meeting were used primarily for introduction and information meeting and to listen and address the issues and concerns of local government officials and hospitals and clinics. The meetings were held on June 23 and June 30 at the Shavers Fork Fire Hall. Meeting Attendance ranged from 20-45 individuals and included the following agencies:

- * Davis Memorial Hospital
- * Greenbrier County Health Department
- * Marlinton Police Department
- * Nicholas County Sheriffs Department

- * Nicholas County Health Department
- * Pocahontas County 911
- * Pocahontas County Health Department
- * Pocahontas Memorial Hospital
- * Pocahontas Office of Emergency Services
- * Pocahontas County Sheriff
- * Randolph County EMS
- * Richwood Police Department
- * Seneca Health Services
- * Shavers Fork Fire and Rescue
- * Snowshoe Public Safety
- * USDA Forest Service, NIMT and Monongahela National Forest
- * West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
- * West Virginia Department of Natural Resources
- * West Virginia State Police

The primary issues and concerns identified included; communications, public safety, limited jail space, significant event response, resource protection, limited resources, financial impacts, animal control and child protection.

All of these issues were resolved or mitigated to the extent possible. The potential economic impacts to Pocahontas County and the cities of Richwood and Marlinton, WV for garbage disposal and unpaid medical assistance are unknown at this time but are expected have a significant impact on these communities. County Commissioners has indicated that their local budgets will not be able to absorb these additional costs. All participants/ agencies attending the meeting were extremely complimentary of the Incident Management Teams operations and overall management of the incident.

The Unified Command System was definitely instrumental in bringing a variety of interested and affected agencies together to meet our common goals. This system did increase the positive relationships between the Forest Service and the affected local communities.

(e) GPS and Identification of Gathering Improvements

The planning and special use sections began to identify, map, and take pictures of improvements at the rainbow gathering on June 15 after the gathering site moved from an unauthorized area in the Lower Glady Area to the permitted sites adjacent to the Cranberry Glades and continued this task until July 2, 2005 Improvements located and mapped included; kitchens, primary camps, information stations, CALM units, slit trenches, gray water and compost pits. Assigning 4 Special Use Permit Administration Teams significantly increased our ability to locate and map these improvements in a more timely and effective manner. See the Special Use Administration section for additional information.

(f) Preparation/ Coordination of the Final Incident Summary and Final Package

The Planning Section was responsible for the coordination and completion of the Final Incident Summary and Final Incident Package.

The incident summary (this document) is an overview of all of the incident operations by section which includes a introduction, operations/ accomplishments, recommendations/ observations, and conclusions. This summary also provides digital photographs by section as well as general gathering area photographs. This year the document is available to unified command and local agencies on a CD rather than hard copy and CD as in previous years. This change is based on input from Unified Command members who indicated that they could print out hard copies from the CD if desired. Hard copies and CD's were provided to the Gauley Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest, R-9 Regional Office, WO and Incident Management Team members.

The Incident final package is a comprehensive document which is tabbed and indexed and includes all planning implementation, and managerial documents associated with the incident operations. Three copies of this document are completed. One each will be given to (1) Monongahela National Forest, (2) R-9 Regional Office LEI, (3) Incident Commander/ Washington Office. This document is an excellent reference for compiling information needed for and operations of future years large group non-commercial group events.

Recommendations/ Observations

The following recommendations and observations are not specific to the planning section but reflect the Planning Sections Chiefs observations and recommendations for meeting this years incident objectives and for managing future National Rainbow Gatherings and other large non-commercial group use events.

* Overall, I believe, the Incident Management Team, Forest Supervisor, District Ranger and staff, resource specialists, special use administrators, and our cooperating agencies and partners did an excellent job in managing this years gathering. All operations were conducted in a safe, professional and efficient manner. There were no injuries to Forest Service employees or cooperating agency personnel.

* The early deployment of the NIMT and assigned officers was instrumental in shutting down the initial gathering site picked by the Rainbow Family. This site could not be authorized/ permitted due to on-site T&E species, experimental plots and other resource concerns. I strongly recommend that unless the Rainbow Family begins working early with the Forest Service for the 2006 gathering location that this early deployment occur again next year to assure that the gathering does not occur at a location that can not be permitted based on the 8 criteria.

* Communications both internally and with our cooperating agencies was excellent. This resulted in safe and efficient operations for law enforcement, resource specialists, special use administrators, and emergency management services,

* The Unified Command was very successful and enhanced relationships with numerous federal, state, local, and tribal governments and agencies as well as local communities.

* Based on incident staffing levels, I believe that law enforcement, special use administration and resource protection officers did an excellent job managing the event. It appears that all resource concerns were mitigated or can be rehabilitated in a relatively short timeframe (1-2 years) with the exception of the numerous trails which have been widened significantly. These trails will probably take longer (5-10 years) to return to their pre-gathering condition.

* I believe that there is a big difference in managing group sizes of 75-500 and 10,000-20,000 people and that the regulations and permitting requirements should be reviewed and revised to consider a variety of group sizes.

* In my opinion, it is critical to successfully managing any special uses permit that the permittee or a designated representative be on-site and can be held accountable for permit non-compliance and resource damage.

* It is unrealistic to believe that an adequate environmental assessment and consultation can be completed within 48 hours of notification on groups sizes of 8,000 -20,000. There is a big difference between evaluating the environmental effects of a 200 person family reunion at a campground and a 8,000 to 20,000 person gathering that covers hundreds or thousands of acres and occupies the land for 4-8 weeks.

* If a permitted event continues, agency leaders need to recognize that the overall costs are going to increase.

* Based on personal observations and incidents that occurred at this year's Rainbow Gathering, I do not believe that it would be safe or reasonable to reduce the current level of law enforcement. I would recommend increasing the number of mounted unit officers.

* Consider combining Officer and Special Use Administrator orientation. I believe this would benefit both functions in gaining a better understanding of roles and responsibilities associated with the management of non-commercial group use gatherings.

* I personally believe that it is very important for resource specialists, special use administrators and law enforcement to pair up and work together when working inside the gathering area. We need to break down the US and THEM (resource/ LEO) that is inferred by gathering participants. It would also very beneficial for LEO's who don't come from a natural resource background to understand the resource concerns and for resource specialists and administrators to gain a better understanding of LEI's role and responsibilities.

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



