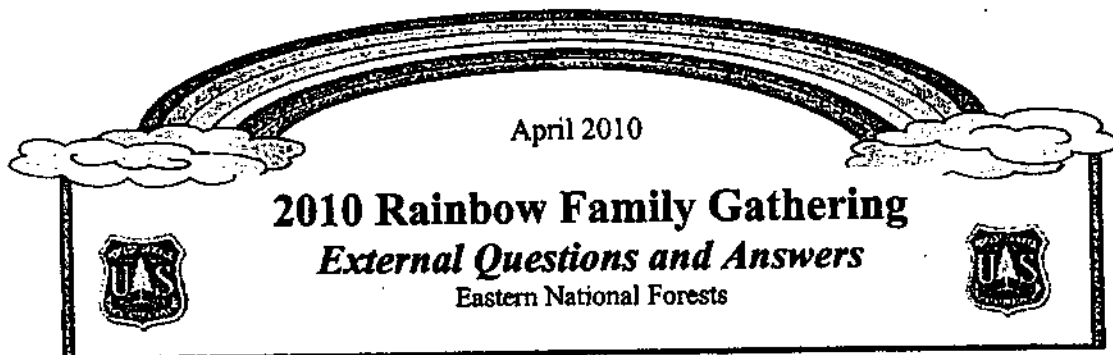


Talking Points – 2010 National Rainbow Gathering

1. Any large group including the Rainbow Family is welcome to gather on the National Forests.
2. In order to protect forest resources, groups over 75 people in size must have a Forest Service Special Use Permit, and comply with the conditions of the permit. Permits are free.
3. Large groups improperly managed and gathered without a permit can have undue impacts on sensitive forest resources, threatened and endangered species, research projects and cultural resources.
4. Large groups can impact local social services, law enforcement, hospitals, food banks, and strain local government budgets.
5. The Forest Service is dedicated to creating a cooperative environment with the permit holder, local residents and forest visitors.
6. Large groups are encouraged to work early with the Forest Service to locate suitable gathering sites, avoid environmental and social conflicts, and help to provide for a more successful event.
7. Failure to obtain a Forest Service Special Use Permit or comply with the conditions of the permit may result in a fine or imprisonment.



What is the Rainbow Family of Living Light?

The Rainbow Family is a loose-knit group of people from very diverse backgrounds. They gather on National Forests to discuss political and environmental issues, pray for world peace, and celebrate life. They describe themselves as having no leaders and no organization.

Who can be a Rainbow?

Anyone who wants to be. They come from all walks of life and from a variety of backgrounds. One web site states that anyone with a bellybutton can be a Rainbow.

What is the National Gathering?

The Rainbow Family holds a national gathering once a year. Since 1972, the event has taken place on a different National Forest during the Fourth of July holiday and has fluctuated in size. The largest gatherings attracted more than 25,000 people. However, recent National Gatherings have attracted approximately 10,000. Smaller local and regional gatherings occur during other times of the year.

How does the Rainbow Family decide where to gather?

At the end of each annual gathering, members form a "vision council" to discuss the location of the following years event. In New Mexico in 2009, they agreed to come to the Eastern National Forests in 2010. The potential states are North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Vermont. It is unknown at this time exactly what part of the state the gathering will occur at this time.

How and when is the specific site selected?

During the spring and early summer, Rainbow scouts research and visit areas to find a suitable location - according to their standards. Scouts may visit local Forest Service offices requesting information and maps. Sometime around June 4-6, the "spring council" occurs, often at the location of the annual gathering. The specific location and time typically is not revealed to the Forest Service until it happens.

When does the National Gathering begin?

Within one week of the "spring council," about 1,000-2,000 attendees arrive on site. There will be a continual build-up of Rainbows reaching 10,000+ people by July 4th. Once the site is determined, the Rainbow Family will utilize Internet resources and

informational recordings to let Rainbow Family members know the location and directions to the site.

When does the gathering end?

The event peaks on July 4th. After that, there is a drastic reduction in attendance. However, there is a group of Rainbow's that stay to clean up and rehabilitate the site. There may be other "stragglers" as well that remain for a couple weeks.

How do 10,000+ people live in the woods?

As soon as Rainbow Family members select a site, they set up a welcome tent, camping and social areas, parking and shuttle areas, health care areas, several "kitchens," they develop water sources, and dig trench latrines. There is no fee for attendance, but they collect donations for food and other necessary items for distribution. They designate special areas for group gatherings, families w/children, men, women, and party goer areas to name a few. Attendees are advised to bring their own camping gear. Family members use campfires exclusively to cook on. This could be a significant issue during the spring and summer of 2010.

What social impacts can we expect?

As with any typical population of people, you can expect a certain percentage of gathering participants to engage in illegal or socially unacceptable behaviors. In part, some activities may include public nudity, civil disobedience, drug and alcohol abuse, confrontations between Rainbows and locals, abandoned or disabled vehicles, and traffic congestion and parking for 4-6,000 vehicles.

What resource impacts may occur?

Typical potential resource impacts include: compacted soil, water quality degradation, sanitation issues, sensitive archeological sites, T & E plant and animal species, and potential for fire danger.

How does the Forest Service manage this event?

The Forest Service formed a National Incident Management Team (NIMT) in 1997 to cover Rainbow Family national gatherings. The objectives of the 2010 NIMT are:


- Address health and safety risks to the public and participants
- Minimize environmental impacts with Law Enforcement presence and action
- Recognize and mitigate social and political impacts
- Respect civil rights of all public
- Gain compliance from the Rainbow Family in the permitting process
- Locate a suitable site for gatherings before they occur.
- Utilize unified command. The NIMT is working in partnership with state, county, and local law enforcement, health, and other organizations. Informational meetings involving the NIMT, the Forest Service, other Federal agencies and state agencies will take place in New Mexico with appropriate agencies.

In the event that the gathering occurs on a National Forest, a joint communication plan will be in place to keep employees, the public, and Forest Service cooperators informed.

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