



Forest
Service

Washington
Office

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

File Code: 5300
Route To:

Date: July 21, 2008

Subject: National Rainbow Family Gathering 2008

To: The Wyoming Rainbow Team

As I sit at my desk in Washington, DC answering inquiries from Congress, Rainbow family members and others about the 2008 Rainbow gathering, I am reminded of the incident on July 3, 2008. I immediately think of the teamwork, professionalism and courage I observed that evening. I saw law enforcement officers standing shoulder to shoulder holding back the crowd protecting each other; remaining calm and restrained backing each other up and implementing the crowd control training you had been given.

I watched new and experienced officers work side by side to escort 3 violators from the gathering while assuring each others safety from a pursuing mob. I saw shift leaders providing clear direction and officers volunteering to take the more hazardous positions in the team's exit. I observed BLM officers arrive to provide backup, and I noted that everyone pitched in and no one shirked their responsibilities.

As we arrived at the parking lot, I noted another group of officers help with the violators and organize an orderly withdrawal. I saw individuals volunteering to bring up the rear or to be the last one out. There were continual checks to assure that no one was left behind, and that everyone was safe and accounted for. The teamwork was superb and there was not a hint of panic.

At that moment and today, I have never been more proud of any group of people. You were champions and the consummate Forest Service law enforcement professionals. I get emotional even writing about this and am so thankful that you chose law enforcement as your profession and that you chose the Forest Service as your Agency. Each of you showed that evening that you are that strong person who will stand up to lawlessness while protecting the public and looking out for each others safety.

In the months to come we will be criticized for our actions that evening. There will be many accusations and inquiries. People will disagree with our actions in enforcing the law. That is normal in a democracy. With my concurrence there will be an Office of Inspector General (OIG) review of the incident that evening.

I believe we did everything right and nothing wrong. You deserve the highest respect and gratitude. I encourage your full response to any questions, reviews or inquiries as we must always be able to articulate our actions.



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The National Rainbow Gathering Team

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In conclusion I encourage you to reflect on how well you managed this years Rainbow gathering and the great service you provided. I take great pride in your performance and professionalism.

/s/ John C. Twiss
JOHN C. TWISS
Director
Law Enforcement and Investigations

Cc: LEI NLT