

To All:

As we prepare for the 2008 National Rainbow Family gathering in Wyoming, several Family Members have suggested that it would be helpful to again clarify the Forest Service's approach to the 2008 Gathering:

The Agency's authority to require group use permits is in place and has been upheld by the Courts. However, the Forest Service does have discretion with respect to the enforcement of this authority. Pursuant to that discretion and a previously negotiated protocol recognizing the unique nature of the Rainbow Family, we will implement the following process:

1. The Forest Service has forwarded several sites on the National Forests in Wyoming for the Rainbow Family to consider as gathering sites.
2. The Rainbow Family will select 2 or 3 alternate locations for the Forest Service to consider as soon as possible. Initial scouting of sites is being done in cooperation with local Forest Service personnel.
3. The Forest Service will quickly evaluate the sites (if other than the recommended Forest Service sites) and give the Rainbow Family an answer on suitability before Spring Council.
4. Beginning at Spring Council, an operating plan would be prepared in advance of the gathering in collaboration with the Rainbow Family. The plan would be subject to mutual modifications as the Gathering sets up. No permit would be issued. The Forest Service would exercise its discretion and refrain from any enforcement of a permit requirement provided that the operating plan is followed. Failure to comply with the operating plan will result in enforcement of the current regulations.
5. All laws will be enforced on the National Forests similar to other recreation gatherings and forest visitor use.
6. A declaration of emergency will be for the purpose of addressing resource impacts.

Please feel free to circulate within the region and with members of the Rainbow Family. Welcome home.

MARK REY