



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY 28 2008

To All:

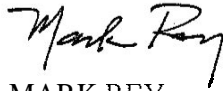
As we prepare for the 2008 Annual Rainbow Family Gathering in Wyoming, several Gatherers have suggested that it would be helpful to again clarify the Forest Service's approach to the 2008 Gathering:

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 to facilitate a Gathering in accordance with the Forest Service Regulations:

1. The Forest Service has forwarded several sites on the National Forests in Wyoming for the participants in the 2008 Gathering to consider as gathering sites.
2. The participants in the 2008 Gathering 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 participants in the 2008 Gathering an answer on suitability before Spring Council.
4. Beginning at Spring Council and after a site has been mutually agreed upon, an operating plan would be prepared in advance of the Gathering in collaboration with the participants in the 2008 Gathering. The plan would be subject to mutual modifications as the Gathering sets up. For this purpose the Forest Service is committed to meeting on the land daily with Gatherers involved with the 2008 Gathering during the Gathering.
5. 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.

6. All laws will be enforced on the National Forests similar to other recreation gatherings and forest visitor use.
7. The Gathering will be managed **thru** the Forest Service Incident Command System for the purpose of addressing social and resource impacts.

Please feel free to circulate within the region and with Gathers involved with the 2008 Gathering. Welcome home.



MARK REY