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Blue Mountain Eagle  
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re: **'Rainbow' Reportage & Editorial, 6/28/2017**

In 4 articles, an editorial & featured hostile comments, the *B.M. Eagle* of June 28 did a hack job on the Rainbow Gathering and Reality (pp. A1,4,6).

The smear on 'detrimental impacts' was spoon-fed by USFS personnel under Incident Command – wholly speculative, ignorant of environmental standards and routine protective practices on the land. Habitats are undamaged... some critters may move within their normal range, then return... latrines & compost pits are sensibly located, respectful of "heritage resources"... streams are protected by on-site water systems and temporary crossings... trails and campsites are scarified, mulched and seeded, to mitigate surface compaction and let plants spring up fast.

Yet USFS officials allege that "*The site will never be back to normal*" – actually it will be fine by Fall after a few rains. They should know that the Rainbow Gatherings have done effective restorative cleanups for decades, with no significant impacts on NFS lands, but didn't do the homework. In fact the USFS deemed them "categorically exempt" from formal environmental assessment, with minor transient effects not requiring prior review. Fed.Register, 60:168, 45257 (8/30/95).\*\*

So it's misleading to raise false fears: There is no "double standard", as the editorial intones, where special use tests have been met consistently – and ranchers have no gripe about compatible public access in multiple-use NFS primitive areas.

Then it's onerous to impugn this Gathering as "unauthorized": It is a public assembly, joined voluntarily by individuals... there is no 'group' party or agent power to sign a permit. In recent years the Forest Service adopted Operating Plans as a fitting means of compliance – now they revert to a "Design Criteria" contract, conjuring a fictional 'group' and demanding signatures, again.

Gatherers could not sign it fraudulently. 18 UCS 1001. That's all it's about; it has no bearing on their ability to assemble peacefully and care for public lands.

What's missing from the *Eagle* news is the First Amendment – any respect these rights or concern over targeted enforcement against them. The writing was derisive and got facts so wrong, it was obvious collusion with the Feds to disinform the public and foment division.



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\*\* FS Handbook 1909.15, Sec. 31.1b(8).