

FINAL REPORT**RAINBOW FAMILY OF LIVING LIGHT 1997 NATIONAL GATHERING****OCHOCO NATIONAL FOREST BIG SUMMIT RANGER DISTRICT
INDIAN PRAIRIE**

July 29, 1997

To: Washington Office Review Team and Region 6 Regional office
Subject: 1997 Rainbow Family National Gathering Final Report

The Final Report of the 1997 Rainbow Family National Gathering does not include background information regarding previous events; site selection; Rainbow Family values, organization or decision making; or Forest Service policy except where it is relevant to the issues identified during this event.

The intent of this report is to identify issues associated with the event, present alternatives for handling the issues and recommend a selected alternative. This report also includes a summary from each of the Command and General Staff sections associated with the Incident Management team that managed the event. Appendices are attached that provide additional information regarding some of the selected issues or section summaries.

It is recognized by all team members that further discussion of these issues will be necessary before they can finally be resolved.

The final documentation package for this event will reside in the Ochoco National Forest Supervisor's Office. If additional information is needed from this package, contact Mike Lohrey. Mike can identify the appropriate source for the information and assure that all Freedom of Information Act procedures are followed, if appropriate. No law enforcement information is included in the final documentation package. John Carpenter, Law Enforcement Operations Section Chief, removed all of this information and has it in his personal files. Any information about the law enforcement activities on this event must be gathered from John Carpenter.

The Rainbow Family has been gathering on the National Forests throughout the United States for the last 26 years. Resolution of the issues identified in this report should improve the Forest Service's ability to manage the Rainbow Family Gathering in the future

Mike Lohrey, Incident Commander

ISSUE:

Should the annual Rainbow Family gathering be managed as a recreation event with a law enforcement presence, or as a law enforcement event with a resource presence?

DISCUSSION:

This issue must be resolved prior to next years event. A decision in either direction has ramifications for aspects of all the other issues needing attention. Failure to resolve will likely lead to an inability to meet management expectations for future events.

This became a critical issue early in event management, it was incompletely resolved and created significant problems from the beginning to the end of the gathering. At the center of the problem are mutually exclusive objectives provided in the Regional Foresters (and the Forest Supervisors) delegation of authority, and those that were handed out as the national strategy for managing large group activities.

The delegation of authority provided by the Regional Forester included making... "the Gathering a positive event for the attendees, the Forest Service, other agencies and organizations, and the local community." Further, the Regional Forester, in a 2700 memo dated 4/10/97 to Forest Supervisors et al, stated that ... "Rainbow Family Gathering participants are among our many National Forest customers and that-we will welcome them and their use of the National Forests." The National strategy, on the other hand, was "To establish a consistent national approach to managing large group activities that redeems our responsibility for the protection of life and resources, and maintains our credibility with our publics." Nowhere in the national strategy are any references to customer service to large group uses. In fact, it appears that it is one of tolerating the activity because we have no choice, rather than meeting the agency mission of serving people. In addition, the bulk of the national strategy for large group activities focuses on law enforcement. Consequently, there is a strong message being sent that this is a law enforcement event, while the Region's expectations were for a recreation event with a law enforcement presence.

The problem manifested itself in expectations from Ops Chief, LE. It was further reinforced with differences in the strategy for developing case law regarding the special use permit (or lack thereof) for the Rainbow Gathering. The Rainbows have historically refused to sign a special use permit, citing first amendment rights and bristling at the notion that a permit is required for something granted under the Bill of Rights from the Constitution. In the eyes of law enforcement, refusal to comply made the event illegal. Therefore, Regional, and Forest expectations for managing the gathering were no longer valid and the team should only do those things necessary for public safety and resource protection. However, the Region had made it clear that the special use permit was only a small bump in the road to success. Regardless of whether or not it was signed, the expectation was to complete the assignment and meet objectives as outlined in the delegation of authority. This created significant internal conflict throughout the assignment. Resolution of this problem is key to successful management in the future.

ALTERNATIVES:

1) Adopt the National Strategy as it currently exists as the primary strategy in the delegation of authority provided to the event management team. This translates into managing this as a law enforcement event with some involvement from resources as needed to ensure that we are meeting stewardship responsibilities. This would also mean a change in the usual makeup of the incident management team assigned. The team should be made up of personnel with a law enforcement background, with the IC coming from the ranks of law enforcement.

2) Revisit the national strategy, and change management expectations that more closely align with the agency mission: caring for the land and serving people. This would take the form of managing large group activities as a recreation event with a law enforcement presence. It would require establishing better working relationships with the Rainbow family, closer coordination,

and collaboration (which fits with the Chiefs emphasis). It would also require a delegation of authority from the Chief to the assigned IC for managing the law enforcement side.

Gathering management would change significantly, starting with a 30% reduction in law enforcement personnel assigned. The current OPS Chief, LE, would become a Branch Director, Operations, and additional personnel would be assigned from NFS to work the main gathering area. Law enforcement would concentrate on A camp and Bus village, and ingress and egress. The main gathering would be managed by resources with assistance from law enforcement if needed.

3) Tailor management to fit the culture and public expectations in the area of the country where the gathering is taking place. While this alternative provides maximum flexibility, it also creates a huge problem with consistency, and may make it impossible to meet some expectations/objectives of different Regions. Particularly if one Region took a hard line and the next a soft one.

Recommendation:

Adopt alternative 2, it's time to recognize the legitimate use of the National Forests for large gatherings and redeem our responsibilities for customer service. If this is adopted, we need to make sure that the right balance of personnel is included in the team that drafts the strategy. The last team appeared to be significantly skewed toward law enforcement. We recommend the following mix, all with Rainbow experience: A Regional Forester or Deputy; an Incident Commander; one person from law enforcement; a Regional Director of Recreation; a Forest Supervisor; a District Ranger.

1997 RAINBOW FAMILY GATHERING

WASHINGTON OFFICE REPORT

ISSUES: ORGANIZING FOR MANAGEMENT OF FUTURE EVENTS

The organization necessary for managing future Rainbow Family Gatherings should be determined once the Washington Office determines whether the event is to be managed as a recreational event or law enforcement event. The most appropriate organization will depend upon the answer to the above question.

Alternative Organizations to be considered for future management:

1. National Team composed of resource (ICS) and law enforcement personnel. This is the organization that was used this year. This organization provides all of the necessary skills to manage the event with the direction that was given this year. There are some specific issues that must be resolved before next year, if this organization is to be successful. This final report provides the information about the issues that should be resolved before this organization is selected.

2. National Team composed of law enforcement personnel who have skills in ICS positions. This team could provide all of the skills needed to manage the incident while reducing or eliminating the secrecy and trust issues that become so important when mixing law enforcement and non-law enforcement personnel on one team. This will continue the confrontational attitudes developed between the Forest Service and the Rainbow Family.

The selection of a National Team would be the most appropriate if the Rainbow Family Gathering is to be managed as a law enforcement event. This reduces the conflicts with the law enforcement "stove pipe" organization and provides consistency from year to year in the management of the event. Personnel would make a 2-3 year commitment to the team and would travel to where ever the event occurred. This would allow the team to develop good working relationships and complete team building exercises or training prior to the beginning of the event.

In this time of reduced budgets and downsizing, it may be difficult for find 7 people who would have the time to commit up to two and a half months to management of this event. This is a very stressful event for all team members and retaining those team members may be difficult.

Once a National Team has been established, it may be possible to use their skills to manage other law enforcement events.

3. Area Team with national advisors. The area team would provide the local expertise to manage the resources and make the community contacts while the national team could provide specific advice about issues that are specific to the Rainbow Family Gathering. The national advisors would provide a national perspective to the management of the event

4. Area Team with advisors from the previous year's area team. The area team would provide the local expertise to manage the resources and make the community contacts. The area team who managed the event the previous year would be able to provide specific information about how they managed the event and what they had learned from the experience. The area team would provide a more local perspective to the management of the event.

The use of Area Teams to manage this event would be most appropriate if the decision is made to manage the Rainbow Family Gathering as a recreational event. Area Teams would have more local knowledge and working relationships with the forest where the event occurs. Event management could then be "tailored" to meet local forest/community issues and concerns.

The need for law enforcement would be incorporated into Operations Section. The local Special Agent could be included in the Operations Section as the Law Enforcement Branch Director. This should help reduce the conflicts due to secrecy and trust issues, as team members would all have previous working relationships.

5. "Pick up" team consisting of all Command and General Staff positions. This team would have all the skills necessary to complete the assignment but because of the lack of previous working relationships, the potential for success of this team is very low. With the complexity of the issues and the need for trust between all team members, this group may not be able to function together at all. The alternative would require a great deal of time and money to develop a team that would be able to work together in this situation. This alternative has the highest potential for failure of all of the alternatives identified here.

6. Forest/District management. This alternative would keep the management of the event on the forest or district where the event occurs. District personnel would act as resource advisors. The Rainbow Family would have the responsibility for community coordination and contingency planning.

Although this is the least costly alternative, it have many problems associated with it. Community impacts could be significant. Local community relations with the Forest Service could be damaged and contingency planning would not be expected to be at an acceptable level. Impacts to the district personnel, in the form of time commitment and additional funding needs, may also be a problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Any team selected for future management should consist of an entire Command and General Staff organization. The 3 person national team that is in place now is not large enough to handle all of the aspects associated with this event. Besides the current 3 positions of Incident Commander, Public Information Officer and Law Enforcement Operations Section Chief; the other staff areas should be represented. (DO YOU WANT ME TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS THAT EACH SECTION ACCOMPLISHED, THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN WITH THE 3 PERSON ORGANIZATION?)

Any team selected to manage this event should complete a team building exercise or training, prior to the beginning of the event. All team members should participate. The objective of the team building should be to develop good working relationships and trust between all team members. This should-reduce the amount of frustration felt by team members due to secrecy issues.

Law enforcement team members should attend ICS and team building training.

ICS (resource) team members may benefit by attending "Law Enforcement for Managers" training.

All team members should have the same expectation for the assignment. This will require time spent discussing expectations, roles, and responsibilities. This may require training, counseling or advise from others who have participated in management of the event. This clarification will reduce the amount of stress and frustration felt by many team members during the event.

The team assigned to this event should cultivate close working relationships with the local forest and district. This is essential to providing a good transition from the team back to the forest, once the Gathering is over and the rehabilitation is in progress.

ISSUE:

Our requirements for a signed Special Use Permit create an air of confrontation and anxiety, has little to do with the success, or lack thereof, of gathering management, and costs far more in litigation than it is capable of accomplishing on the ground.

DISCUSSION:

The Rainbow Family has a long history of refusing to sign a permit for something they view as a Constitutional right. This creates an immediate point of confrontation within the first few days of the event. Handling the problem sets the tenor for management. Once refused, and citations or arrests made, we are obligated to follow-up with notifications that the site must be vacated by a specified time and date. Because of our confrontational history, this creates significant consternation, rampant rumors, and reduces the cooperation with attendees, significantly

complicating the situation. In reality, there isn't any reason, other than legal implications, for the bluff. We have no intention of forcibly removing 1-2,000 people from the site. Even if we wanted to, the logistics of accomplishment would require a military operation.

The objective of the Special Use Permit is to provide us with the legal teeth to ensure that the governments interests are protected. Despite the lack of a signed permit in previous gatherings, it appears that, for the most part, those objectives have been met, which means there are other ways to meet this need. Accomplishment has occurred through the cooperative development of an operating plan and a restoration plan. Thus, there appear to be viable alternatives to the permit that will meet our objectives. It's time we seriously considered these alternatives, and resolved the problem.

ALTERNATIVES:

1) Develop a waiver for the special use permit for large groups that have demonstrated the ability to meet objectives outlined in the operating plan and restoration plan for a 5 year period. Rely on a signed operating plan/restoration plan to meet our needs to ensure that our interests are protected. The Rainbow Family agrees with this approach and those with significant influence have stated they would sign. They agree that we need to have some assurance that resources will be protected and rehabilitated. This would completely negate the confrontational nature of the permit, and put us in the mode of working cooperatively to develop site specific plans. The waiver would be available to all large groups that meet the criteria, thus placing us in the position of being fair and consistent with all potential users.

2) Continue with the current process. We have developed some legal standing with the new approach, and have invested significant resources and have won initial court battles on the constitutionality issue.

RECOMMENDATION:

Alternative 1 is recommended. Since the waiver would still be part of the process it should not affect current litigation, and will end the confrontational aspects of managing the event.

TRUST AND SECRECY:

For a team to function well together, there must be a high level of trust between the team members and in their working relationships. All members must feel that they can trust the other team members and that they are trusted by them. When this does not occur, the team does not function effectively and frustrations can be so pronounced that the required work is not accomplished.

The management of the 1997 Rainbow Family Gathering was delegated to the Central Oregon Interagency Incident Management Team with the addition of a three person team appointed by the Washington Office. One of those positions was Operations-Law Enforcement. Under this position was a team of LE&I personnel. This resulted in the appearance of two teams managing the Rainbow Family Gathering (Resources and LE). Unfortunately these two groups had differing sets of objectives and very little sharing occurred. This caused an atmosphere of distrust.

For these two teams to function efficiently together they must have a high level of trust in each other. This trust can be developed through working together for a common objective. As an example - trust is developed on teams during wildfire suppression through clear objectives (put the fire out) and all members are working for that same objective. The team that manages the Rainbow Family Gathering needs the same clear direction and commitment to obtaining common objectives.

The clear direction can be provided by the Washington Office, Regional Office, Forest or District. All team members should know what the objectives are and be committed to achieving those objectives. The objectives should be the same for all team members. It causes frustration and distrust among team members if all team members are not working toward the same objectives. If there are differing or conflicting objectives given to the team, the Incident Commander should reconcile these differences and inform all team members what the agreed upon objectives are for their team. Team members must be professional enough to put aside their personal opinions about the assignment and work toward the objectives identified by the Incident Commander. These actions will increase the trust and reduce the secrecy concerns that were experienced in the 1997 management of this event

It is important for the management of this event that each of the team members feel trusted by the other team members. All team members may not need to know all the details about all activities related to this event, but the Incident Commander does need this information. If the IC is trusted, the rest of the team will feel that they are also trusted.

Additional time spent working together on team building exercises or training may also increase the trust between team members.

Working toward one common objective/objective for all team members will increase trust and reduce the need for secrecy in the management of this event.

ISSUE: Notification of State Agencies (or lack thereof)

The Oregon State Police made it clear that they would have appreciated an early alert that the 1997 Rainbow Gathering was scheduled to be held in the Pacific Northwest.

Officials in Region 6 knew in February 1997 that the 1997 Rainbow Gathering was going to be held in either Oregon or Washington. Although the exact location was not known until June 12, 1997 it would have been a proactive move by the Forest Service to have notified State Agencies in both Oregon and Washington.

Those agencies would include state police, state health departments, state social service agencies as well as the Governors Office. This would provide an opportunity for those agencies to contact counterparts at previous gathering sites in order to know to what type of impact to expect.

The impact on the state agencies varies. Some, like the State Police, may need to plan for additional staffing, while others may just need to be prepared to answer questions from the public.

COMMUNICATIONS Issue:

1. A delay in relaying information to our LEO's was noticeable due to our process in calling County 911 Center for LEMS information. In all cases the LEO would have to wait with the individual until we could obtain information from the County. Because we used the County's dispatch system, it created delays and possibility put our LEO's in jeopardy.
2. Having to learn a new CAD system while dispatching did create some delays for our LEO's in the field. The CAD system usually required the attention of a single dispatcher during the entire Gathering.
3. The last, and most important issue is the radio system that was used to provide coverage for the Gathering. The radio repeaters are the same repeaters that we use to communicate on forest fires. They are two watt (low power) repeaters with no interference filtering equipment. When we initially set up the repeaters, it was discovered that neighboring radios were causing interference with our system. To rectify the problem we exchanged the repeaters on mountain tops and cleared up the interference problem. As on previous fires, we also experienced equipment failures that required replacement systems to be sent from NIFC. This caused us to be out of service until replacements arrived, about 24 hours. This is a serious safety problem!

Discussion:

The following list of equipment was placed in service to support the Rainbow Family Gathering Incident Command Post (ICP). Due to this complexity, it is imperative that the team include a skilled radio technician.

18 Telephone lines 2 Fax machines 3 N.I.F.C. Command repeaters 14 Data General Terminals
1 Data General Printer 2 Multi line dispatch consoles 3 Laptop personnel computers with
printers

The telephone system totaled 18 telephone lines as follows: - Two of them were used for fax machines. - A single line was used to provide Data General connectivity. - A single line was used to connect into the internet and IBM system. - Six lines were connected to a PABX system to establish 16 extension phones placed throughout the school. - Two lines were dedicated to the dispatchers for NCIC inquires. - Two lines were used by the Public Affairs Office. - The remaining four lines were assigned to the cooperators (i.e. Oregon State Police).

A total of 14 Data General terminals, 1 DG printer and 3 laptops where used at ICP. The laptops where used to connect into the Internet, prepare the required ICS forms and fax needed documents.

The radio and dispatch systems consisted of three repeaters. Two command repeaters were linked together for LEO operations. One was located near the Gathering and the other in town. A third command repeater was assigned to Logistics and located near the Gathering.

In the dispatch center, two multi-line consoles where set up to communicate and monitor our LEO's and cooperators. We had radio access to the Crook County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon State Police project channel and the Big Summit Ranger District frequency. Six dispatchers where assigned and we operated 24 hours a day for the duration of the gathering. Dispatcher's responsibilities not only included working the consoles, but also included directing incoming telephone calls to the appropriate person at ICP or taking messages when needed.

The dispatch office used the following procedure: Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer's (LEO's) who required information on a suspicious vehicle or person, would contact ICP and provide a license plate number or the person's name. Once given the information, the dispatchers would contact the County 911 center and relay that information so it could be input into the LEDS system. In most cases we would receive a response immediately. At other times, depending on how busy the County was, they would either call us back or fax the information to ICP. Once received by dispatch, the LEO in the field was contacted and provided a status on the vehicle or individual. The dispatchers kept a written log of all radio calls, plus entered them into a computer aided dispatch reporting system (CAD) when possible. When radio traffic became intense they would only keep the hand written log and make entries on the CAD system during lulls in traffic.

For the most part the dispatchers performed admirably, considering only two had previous law enforcement dispatching experience. The reports generated at the end of each day provided a good indication of what type of incidents were happening in the field, but the daily log of the LEO's could also provide that information.

Recommendations:

1. To establish our own LEDS terminal or establish connection out of area for faster response. Another option would be to co-locate our dispatch operation with one of our cooperators.
2. To place a digital recording tape on the radio systems. This way you get ICP radio traffic as well as all the other traffic on that frequency for the incident.
3. If the Forest Service is to continue to monitor the Rainbow Family Gathering the following recommendations for the radio equipment:
 1. Given the problems we have with the quality of our NIFC repeaters and the limited coverage, it would improve safety for the LEO's if there were available repeaters that operated at +25 watts. This would increase our coverage area and provide us greater reliability in using a radio system. One of our cooperators operated a repeater just for the Gathering at 100 watts. We had 2 watts!
 2. The Forest mountain tops that are suitable for repeater sites are also becoming electronic sites in some cases. Due to this, some type of filtering equipment needs to be included to prevent interference.
 3. The most important requirement is to improve the reliability of our NIFC equipment. Almost every year we have to deal with equipment failures. Sometimes this is two or three times per incident. The antiquated equipment needs to be updated!

ISSUE:

Funding for management of the 1997 Rainbow Family Gathering was inadequate. This contributed to the inability to appropriately charge as worked during this event.

DISCUSSION:

The organization selected to manage this event will determine the amount of funding necessary to support event management. Funding should include a mix of NFS and law enforcement dollars. The specifics about how much NFS and how much law enforcement money allocated, should be determined based upon the objectives identified for event management.

The budget for this event, and the type of money it is, will determine the emphasis for management.

Agreements for the expenditure of cooperative law enforcement dollars will help determine the budget needed to manage the event.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Establish a "P-code or R-code" to charge all incident expenditures. (Use the same concept as a wildfire.) Include Law Enforcement and NFS dollars in this code. The entire team will be responsible for management of the funding and there will not be conflicts about whether it is a LE expenditure or NFS expenditure. This will alleviate the concerns about complying with the "charge as worked" concept.

NEXT SECTION