



**Pacific Northwest Region
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News Release

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National Rainbow Gathering to be Held on the Malheur National Forest

John Day, Ore. – Forest Service officials announced today that The Rainbow Family of Living Light has chosen to hold their 2017 Annual Rainbow Gathering on the Malheur National Forest, on the Blue Mountain Ranger District. The gathering site will be located at the Flagtail Meadow off of Forest Service Road 24 near the towns of John Day and Seneca, Oregon.

The Rainbow Gathering could draw anywhere from 10,000 -- 30,000 people. Participants are beginning to arrive and officials expect the attendance to peak the week of July 4th.

The Rainbow Family is a loose-knit group of people without leadership or organization who participate in a national gathering once a year. Attendees come from across the country. Since 1972, the event has taken place on a different national forest during a two-week period surrounding the Fourth of July holiday.

Any event of this size can have significant impacts on local communities, natural resources, traffic, and visitors. Local businesses can expect to see large numbers of Rainbow Family participants visiting stores, buying food and supplies along routes to the gathering site.

“We are working closely with the local community to raise awareness about the event and plan accordingly before the majority of participants arrive,” said Ryan Nehl, Agency Administrator and Malheur National Forest Deputy Forest Supervisor. “Ensuring public safety, minimizing impacts to local communities, and protecting natural resources will be our top priorities.”

Because of the magnitude of this event, the Forest Service has established an incident management team consisting of natural resource specialists, law enforcement officers, health and safety coordinators, and community liaisons. The incident management team is coordinating closely with county officials and law enforcement officers to provide for public safety and resource protection.

The gathering will take place under the conditions and guidelines provided through a Forest Service Operating Plan addressing public health and safety concerns, minimizing impacts to natural resources, and outlining post-event rehabilitation procedures.

Once the incident management has established its official command post, contact phone numbers will be provided so that members of the public, business owners, and visitors can ask questions and share concerns.



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