



News Release

Pacific Northwest Region
Malheur National Forest
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INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM ACTIVATED TO MANAGE NATIONAL RAINBOW GATHERING

John Day, Ore. – On Monday, U.S. Forest Service officials announced that a National Incident Management Team focused on managing the National Rainbow Gathering had been activated and was fully operational in John Day, Oregon. In an effort to share information and answer questions from the public, the U.S. Forest Service will hold a community meeting on **Friday, June 23rd from 5:00 – 6:30 PM**. The meeting will be held in the Juniper Hall Conference Room of the Malheur National Forest Headquarters (431 Patterson Bridge Road) in John Day. Cooperating agencies, including the Oregon State Police, John Day Police Department, Grant County Sheriff's Department, and Blue Mountain Hospital, as well as local elected officials are invited to attend and present information at this meeting.

Local residents will see a heightened presence of U.S. Forest Service employees and cooperating law enforcement agency vehicles in the area as the team works to manage the un-authorized gathering located at Flagtail Meadow off of Forest Road 24 near the towns of Seneca and John Day. The Forest Service requires a non-commercial group use permit for an event this size in order to mitigate significant impacts to the forest and community. The Forest Service is currently working with the group to obtain a signed permit. If a permit is not signed, the Forest Service will issue and implement an Event Design Criteria document that outlines expectations to provide for the welfare and safety of all forest users and protection of natural and cultural resources that could be affected.

The team will consist of a mix of personnel focused on emphasis areas such as law enforcement and investigations, public information, safety, communications, planning, logistics, finance and natural resource protection. A public information line has been designated (541-575-3131) so that the public can have two-way communication and is able call in with questions or report concerns.

Local residents can expect to see a gradual increase of Rainbow Family members in the area through the week. It is estimated that about 500 participants are currently on site at the gathering location. The largest influx of gathering participants will likely start during the week of June 26.



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NEWS RELEASE

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